

**TRENDS AND PATTERNS IN EDUCATION POLICY OF BHUTAN,  
1985-2011**

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**DECLARATION**

I declare that the dissertation entitled "Trends and Patterns in Education Policy of Bhutan, 1985-20011" submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this or any other University.

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*Dedicated*

*To*

*My Father*

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*The responsibility for all errors of fact and interpretation rests on me only.*

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## **ABBREVIATION**

BMSC	Bhutanese Movement Steering Committee
BNDP	Bhutan National Democratic Party
BNP	Bhutan National Party
BPP	Bhutan People's Party
BSC	BhutanState Congress
CEA	Central Advisory Council
DAC	Dzongkha Advisory Council
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DDC	Dzongkha Development Commission
DNC	Druk National Congress
DPT	DrukPhuensumTsongpa
FYP	Five Year Plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNH	Gross National Happiness
GNLF	Gorkha National Liberation Front
GNP	Gross National Product
GOI	Government of India
MSS	Ministry of Social Services
NAPE	National Approach to Primary Education

NEA	National Education Assessment
NOC	No Objection Certificate
PC	Planning Commission
PDP	People’s Democratic Party
RAC	Royal Advisory Council
RGoB	Royal Government of Bhutan
RBP	Royal Bhutan Police
SDC	Swiss agency for Development and Cooperation
UK	United Kingdom
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
US	United States
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme







# CHAPTER 1

## EVOLUTION OF BHUTAN'S EDUCATION POLICY

Bhutan is a small nation known for its isolationism and its cherished Lamaist traditions. The introduction of modern education in Bhutan started only in 1960s during the reign of Jigme Wangchuck, before that the only form of formal education available for the Bhutanese people was through the Buddhist institutions that is the monastic education system. This Himalayan nation was geographically isolated from the rest of the world until 1961 when the third *DrukGyalpo*<sup>1</sup>, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck opened its nation to the rest of the world. The country is located in the eastern Himalayas and is spread over of an area of 38, 394 sq. km which is largely mountainous with altitudes ranging from 300 meters in the south to 7300 meters in the north. Of the total land area, 72.5 percent is covered with forests which include 26 percent of land designated as protected areas and 9 percent as biological corridors<sup>2</sup>. Bhutan is geo-strategically located in between China and India. It has 470 kilometers long border with Tibet (China's Xizang Autonomous Region) to the north and northwest and 605 kilometers with the Indian state of Sikkim to the west, West Bengal to the southwest, Assam to the south and southeast, and Arunachal Pradesh to the east. The Indian state of Sikkim separates Bhutan from Nepal, while West Bengal separates Bhutan from Bangladesh. The border with Tibet is traditional following the watershed of the Chumbi Valley in the northwest and the crest of the Himalayas in the north while, the southern border with India was established by treaty with the British in the 19th century and basically follows the line made by the Himalayan foothills with the plains.

Bhutan has been declared as one of the ten global biodiversity 'hotspots' because of its rich biodiversity. The country is largely an agrarian economy with 79 percent of its population engaged in agriculture and livestock farming<sup>3</sup>. Even though a huge amount of Bhutanese are engaged in cultivation, only about 7.8 percent of the total land is arable.

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<sup>1</sup>*DrukGyalpo* means ruler or king of Bhutan in *Dzongkha*.

<sup>2</sup>Gross National Happiness Commission (2010), *Population and Development Situation Analysis: Bhutan*, Research and Evolution Division, Thimphu, Bhutan.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Cultivators experience limitations due to steep terrain and not much have been done by the government to modernise the farming practices. Bhutan takes proud to the fact that they were never colonized and has been an independent nation. After the modernization process started in Bhutan, for the smooth running of the administration, the country is divided into 20 *Dzongkhags*<sup>4</sup> comprised of 205 *Gewogs*<sup>5</sup>.

The nation of Bhutan took a leap in the year 2008 from an absolute Monarchy to a Democratic Constitutional Monarchy. *DrukGyalpo* Jigme Singye Wangchuck introduced parliamentary democracy in Bhutan in 2008. Presently, the fifth *DrukGyalpo* Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck is taking initiatives for strengthening the democratic institutions in Bhutan. The first ever democratic election was held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2008, two political parties: *DrukPhuensumTsongpa*<sup>6</sup>(DPT) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) contested for 47 seats of the *Tsongdu*<sup>7</sup>. Both the political parties contested for power with similar manifestos, utterly loyal to the king<sup>8</sup>. The Director of Centre for Bhutan Studies, Karma Ura mentioned that the proper functioning of a democracy requires strong opposition and the results of the election, where DPT won 45 seats out of 47 shows the absolute weakness of the other party, which he said is not an ideal situation for functioning of democracy. There was a third political party, Bhutan National Party (BNP), but its application for registration was cancelled. It constituted of retired Civil Servants, officials and businessmen<sup>9</sup>. There are other political parties of Bhutan but they are functioning in exile and were not allowed to participate in the election, they are: Druk National Congress (DNC), Bhutanese Movement Steering Committee (BMSC), Bhutan People's Party (BPP), and Bhutan National Democratic Party (BNDP). The Royal Government of Bhutan labeled these political parties as anti-national after the political

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<sup>4</sup>*Dzongkhag* means district in *Dzongkha*.

<sup>5</sup>*Gewog* means blocks in *Dzongkha*.

<sup>6</sup>*DrukPhuensumTsongpa* means Bhutan Peace and Prosperity Party.

<sup>7</sup>*Tsongdu* means parliament in *Dzongkha*.

<sup>8</sup> Morris, Chris (2008), "Bhutan Experiments With Democracy", *BBC News*, Thimphu [Online: Web] Accessed on August 9, 2011, URL: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/7313325.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7313325.stm)

<sup>9</sup> *Bhutan Gets Third Political Party*, *The Hindu*, May 6, 2007 [Online: Web] Accessed on August 9, 2011, URL: <http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/003200705061012.htm>

tensions in the southern part of Bhutan which stemmed out of pro-democratic movements by the minority *Lhotshampa*<sup>10</sup> community during 1990s.

There was a heavy turn-out of voters in Bhutan during its first ever democratic elections in 2008, surprising the whole world. But the election procedure got a lot of criticisms from both inside and outside the country. The Election Act stipulates that western educated graduates will be eligible for contesting elections<sup>11</sup> which will enable only a section of Bhutanese who can afford education abroad and excludes a vast majority of people. This approach by the government is not at all inclusive considering the ground realities of Bhutan, coupled with the official data on education and lack of facilities for preparing Bhutanese children for western education. Moreover, this is also not in alignment with the government's approach to promote *Dzongkha*<sup>12</sup> for safeguarding its larger goal of Bhutan's unique identity with the help of Gross National Happiness principles and objectives. A huge number of people belonging to Nepali community who fled or were expelled after the agitation of 1990, were excluded from participating in the elections, government alleges that they were illegal immigrants<sup>13</sup>. The religious persons like monks, nuns and *gomchens*<sup>14</sup> were barred from exercising their voting rights and also from participating in elections<sup>15</sup>. This action by the government is repressive in nature where a section of Bhutan's citizens are barred from practicing their democratic and fundamental rights. Thus, Bhutan has to analyse its policies if it really wants to build up a strong democratic nation.

In order to understand the change due to the introduction of modern education in Bhutan, we must understand the political, economic and social environment existing up until then

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<sup>10</sup>*Lhotshampa* means people residing in southern borderland in *Dzongkha*.

<sup>11</sup> Drukpa National Congress (2007), *Bhutan: On A Democratic Path?* p. 1, [Online: Web] Accessed on July 11, 2011,

URL: <http://www.bhutandnc.com/Democracy%20booklet.pdf>

<sup>12</sup>*Dzongkha* is the national language of Bhutan from 1961, which is the language of the Drukpa community.

<sup>13</sup>Sengupta, Somini (2008), "Heavy Turnout in First Bhutan Election", *The New York Times*, March 25, [Online: Web] Accessed on September 3, 2011, URL:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/25/world/asia/25bhutan.html>

<sup>14</sup>*Gomchens* are lay priests or yogis.

<sup>15</sup> Drukpa National Congress (2007), *Bhutan: On A Democratic Path?* p. 3-4, [Online: Web] Accessed on July 11, 2011,

URL: <http://www.bhutandnc.com/Democracy%20booklet.pdf>

1960s. This nation remained isolated and because of this isolation most of its people remained illiterate and were happily living a traditional lifestyle based on subsistence agriculture. The result was political and economic stagnation thus; modern education had no role to play so as to develop the rational thinking of the people. The modern education was only important for a handful of ruling class people and for commoners monastic education was there. This state of peace and isolationism came to an end and the concerning factor was China's occupation of Tibet. The king realized the importance of modernization in order to reduce the country's vulnerability and to maintain its sovereignty.

The Buddhist monastic institutions maintain the traditional indigenous education system which has its own traditional *literati* and teaching is imparted through *Choekey*<sup>16</sup>. But this has certain limitations for meeting the development strategies in Bhutan like handling the complex problems of modern administrative system<sup>17</sup>. Bhutan's monastic institutions were responsible for running the administration in a traditional way which came to a halt in 1907 when Ugyen Wangchuk became the first hereditary ruler of Bhutan. The policy-makers of modern Bhutan had realized the importance of modern education to enhance its development policy. Therefore, modern education is at the roots of Bhutan's development process. The first two hereditary rulers, Ugyen Wangchuk (1907-1926) and Jigme Wangchuk (1926-1952) made certain efforts to teach Hindi and English in the kingdom of Bhutan. But only the privileged people were able to study as there were no community schools. Only Hindi and English were taught because Bhutan was very much dependent on India and some students were sent to Indian schools for further studies. It was the visionary efforts taken by the third king Jigme Dorji Wangchuk (1952-1972) that the modern education system became a reality in Bhutan.

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<sup>16</sup>*Choekey* is the classical Tibetan language taught in monastic schools.

<sup>17</sup>Sinha, A. C. (2001), *Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan: Tradition, Transition and Transformation*, New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, p. 188.

## **Importance of Education Policy**

Education plays a very important role in an individuals' life, it is the pillar for developing critical thinking among human beings. Mass education is vital for primary shaping of values and behavior of people in regions and nation state. The aim of education is to enable the individuals to cope or solve problems with scientific and rational knowledge. The international community also focuses on education and various conventions are held for the development of education and for promoting education all around the world. The dominant idea of promoting education has been linked with economic factors, the reason behind this linking is the commonality among most of the nations is that the economically developed nations had high literacy rate as compared to developing and under-developed nations. It is true that economic factors are important for developing the education system but education is also related to social and cultural sphere of a nation. The western education model has been adopted by most of the nations in their education policy to enhance their literacy rate in order to develop their socio-economic conditions. It was convenient to adopt western model of education because to develop a model of their own involves a lot of time and capital.

The western education system was developed over a long period of time. The adoption of this model by developing nations has till now not showed a very impressive result. One trend has been noticed that although the quantity of education continuously increases, social and environmental problems are worsening. The ideas and proposals by the western educationist are not appropriate for certain nations like Bhutan as their socio-economic and political conditions are totally different from that of the western nations. International community is of the view that education can alleviate poverty but it resulted in quantitative increase in education sector along with the increasing gap between the rich and the poor.

Therefore, serious thinking should be done to improve the education policy which is very instrumental for bringing about a true development. If education really is the means to reduce social inequities and redressing the skewed development followed in the last few

decades, the education priorities should be changed, it has to be redefined with a strong and visible affirmative action<sup>18</sup>. Planning of education must begin with a vision of a new society that offers all its people the choices “to lead valuable and valued lives”<sup>19</sup>. Education being a key factor for developing a nation, the nations should make their policy on education with the prime objective of making its citizens capable of developing the nation in a sustainable way.

### **Bhutan’s Interactions with the Outside World**

The British Indian rulers, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were actively pursuing the ‘forward area policy’ in the Himalayan region, in which, Bhutan was destined to play an important role as it was the region between two giants of South Asia i.e. India and China. The then *Tongsa Penlop*<sup>20</sup> of Bhutan, Ugyen Wangchuk was a dependable British ally, who played a very vital role in Lhasa expedition (1903-1904) in various ways. Due to the emergence of a political crisis like situation in Bhutan, on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1907, he was chosen as the first hereditary ruler. It was a welcome development, which was anticipated, encouraged and promptly accorded recognition by the British<sup>21</sup>. Bhutan was brought under the British sphere of influence with the signing of the Anglo- Bhutanese Treaty on 8<sup>th</sup> of January 1910. Bhutan was recognized as an Indian princely state with a salute of 15 guns to its ruler by the British. The first political officer, Charles A. Bell, encouraged the newly established royal family to maintain the pattern of style like other Indian princely states<sup>22</sup>. Thus, the first efforts were taken to familiarize the Bhutan Durbar (royal court) with Hindi and English. The ruler of Bhutan also realized their linguistic barrier and took efforts to teach Hindi and English in their country.

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<sup>18</sup>Rampal, Anita (2000), “Education for Human Development in South Asia”, *EPW*, Vol. 35, No. 3, July 22, p. 2523.

<sup>19</sup>Dreze, J and A. Sen (1995), *India: Economic Development and Social Opportunity*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.

<sup>20</sup>*Tongsa Penlop* is a Dzongkha title meaning "Governor of the Province of *Tongsa* (Chhoetse). It is generally given to the heir apparent of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

<sup>21</sup>Sinha, A. C. (2001), *Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan: Tradition, Transition and Transformation*, New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, p. 191.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*



After the first *Drukpa* ruler, Ugyen Wangchuk realized the importance of modern education, a mobile court school was established which used to move around with him around the kingdom. The medium of instruction of this mobile school was Hindi and *Choekey* (traditional Buddhist language of Bhutan). He used to select the intelligent young Bhutanese, they were trained and educated in solving problems of the villages, apparently, these selected group of people became the first *Dzongkhags* (state or district functionaries) of Bhutan. For instance, Charles A. Bell in a confidential report on Bhutan written on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1914 mentioned that a total of 46 boys were selected and educated by the teachers appointed by Scotland Mission at Kalimpong and the expenses were undertaken by the King himself<sup>23</sup>. An amount of Rs. 49,629 was sanctioned by Government of India in the year 1923 on the request of the King to the Viceroy of India for the training of the selected Bhutanese boys in various professional fields with the view of developing his state, mentioned in F.M. Bailey records. The Graham School in Kalimpong also played a very significant role in the evolution of the education policy of Bhutan. On 25<sup>th</sup> June 1925, the principal of the school, John Graham sent a letter to the King, proposing that the royal children be sent to India and England for education.

The second hereditary ruler of Bhutan, Jigme Wangchuk, took a step further by establishing 7 to 10 Hindi medium schools at Bumthang, Ha, Wangdiphodrang, Tashigang, Damphu and Paro. This was the first organized effort to lay the foundation of the modern education system in Bhutan<sup>24</sup>. One of the Political Officers in Sikkim, Col. J.L.R. Weir, in the year 1931, mentioned the fact that the King of Bhutan can speak, read and write Hindi very well and had a very good grounding in English.

The Government of India offered 30 seats to Bhutanese students in English medium schools in India only after 1955; this development generated a strong desire of modern education system among the Bhutanese. As India's educational system has gained some maturity already by this time, Bhutan Durbar decided to take help from India initially. It was the third *Drukpa* King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk (1952-1972), who decided to go for

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Mackey, Rev. Fr. W. (1993), 'How It All Began', A note on development of education in Bhutan, Thimphu.

English medium schools in Bhutan. The then Prime Minister of Bhutan Jigme Palden Dorji, in the year 1962, approached the Jesuit Brothers of St. Joseph's School in Darjeeling in order to take help in establishing educational institutes. The infant Education Department of the Royal Government of Bhutan was guided by Father W. Mackey; and he along with some teachers recruited from Kalimpong and Darjeeling were able to establish English medium schools in the interior rural areas of Bhutan. In the same year some more teachers were recruited from Kerala, one of the states of India. This very effort of starting a modern education system in Bhutan proved to be successful as it broke the isolation of villages in Bhutan to build a Bhutanese system of Education.

### **Education Policy of Bhutan**

The evolution of Bhutan's education policy was made possible due to the concerted effort by the Government of India. The process of development in Bhutan started in 1961 and education had to play a pivotal role in this context. A level of dilemma was there on the part of the policy makers regarding the medium of instruction in Bhutanese schools as Bhutan has a number of languages and dialects spoken by different ethnic groups. Multiplicity of underdeveloped Bhutanese languages such as Dzongkha, Sarchop, and Nepali etc. was a hurdle in front of the initial developers of the education system in Bhutan. *Dzongkha* was made the official language of Bhutan, neglecting the fact that it is the mother tongue of only 20 percent<sup>25</sup> of the total Bhutanese and yet it had to be developed properly into a rich language to make it appropriate for medium of instruction. The traditional classical language *Choekey* was also left behind and the Royal Government of Bhutan gave more emphasis on developing *Drukpa* language. Bhutan had to depend very much on foreign aid for developing its education system and thus, initially the crucial elements of education were imported from outside the kingdom.

Education sector in Bhutan receives a huge amount of fund nowadays but during the initial years of development process, funds were allocated mostly for infrastructural

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<sup>25</sup>Sinha, A.C, *Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan: Tradition, Transition and Transformation* (New Delhi: 2001), p.194.

enhancement to overcome the structural hindrances for the development of the nation. The introduction of modern education is an important element of modernization process. Rather we can say that educating the Bhutanese people was very much important for inculcating critical thinking about politics or to train manpower to understand the outside world. Bhutan cherishes its unique culture therefore; the policy of education has to be made in such a way that it harmonizes with Bhutan's unique culture which is based on Buddhist principles. The desire to maintain this position had guided much of Bhutan's policy direction. This approach by Bhutan has forced to confront the challenges arising from a clash between outside cultural influences and its traditional culture. For instance, the implementation of the coercive process of homogenization of multi-lingual and multi-ethnic society of Bhutan was done in order to maintain its cultural integrity.

Education contributes to the knowledge, values, creativity, skills and civic sensibility of citizens. A domain such as education is not intended merely to measure the success of education in itself, but rather to assess the effectiveness of education in working towards the goal of collective well-being. It is a very important element for a small nation like Bhutan because it will be helpful for maintaining diversity in policy making agendas in the field of education. Mainly, economic imperatives shape the education policy thus; there is hegemony of U.S. and U.K in the field of education as well. Therefore, other countries may be compelled to follow their model; however, in the process, a possible diversity of approaches may be missing to the issue of education policy development, one that is more holistic and sustainable towards the culture. Because countries like Bhutan are at the periphery and they are not competing to be a global power in terms of education, Bhutan adds to the hopes for maintaining diversity in policy agendas in the field of education.

The study of Bhutan may add to the discourse of small country in developing education policy. However, apart from relevance for local issues, examining how education policy works in unique environments would add to the discussion about the relationship between education and nation building in terms of economics, culture and politics.

India played a vital role in developing Bhutan's education policy. India-Bhutan relations are a colonial legacy, the "forward area policy" of British Indian rulers in the Himalayan region led to the exposure of Bhutan to the outside world. Ugyen Wangchuk was a dependable ally of British and he helped them in various ways during their Lhasa expedition. With the signing of the Anglo-Bhutan treaty in 1910, Bhutan came under the British and was recognized as an Indian princely state. Thus the effort to familiarize the Bhutan Durbar with Hindi and English was taken. Initially the schools in Bhutan used to teach Hindi, English and Nepali as a medium of instruction but the third ruler decided to go for English medium schools. The royal children were sent to India and England for education.

Since 1960s, education has achieved a steady growth in the kingdom of Bhutan in terms of its expansion, quality and contribution to the welfare of the Bhutanese people and society. In the year 1961, the First Development Plan provided for a Central Education Authority (CEA) and an organized modern education system with free and universal primary education. Until the 1950s, except for few numbers of schools in Ha and Bumthang used to teach Hindi and English and formal education was imparted through Buddhist monasteries to the majority of Bhutanese people.

The core curriculum set by the National Board of Secondary Education included English, mathematics, and Dzongkha. Although English was used as the language of instruction throughout the primary and secondary school system, Dzongkha and, in southern Bhutan until 1989, Nepali, were compulsory subjects. Students also studied English literature, social studies, history, geography, general science, biology, chemistry, physics, and religion. Curriculum development often has come from external sources. Most Bhutanese history is based on oral traditions rather than on written histories or administrative records. The RGoB is taking initiatives to promote their traditional oral folktales. A project sponsored by the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the University of London developed a ten-module curriculum, which included four courses on Bhutanese history and culture and six courses on Indian and

world history and political ideas. Subjects with an immediate practical application, such as elementary agriculture, animal husbandry, and forestry, also were taught.

Nepali language was banned in the year 1989, which was taught in southern Bhutan from all the educational institutions and was used in administrative services. The merger of Sikkim in India led to the belief that Bhutan may lose its sovereignty to India if large scale migration of Nepalese continues in Bhutan. Therefore the government of Bhutan adopted repressive measures to discriminate Nepalese in Bhutan. They adopted the policy of “one nation, one people” which led to systematic discrimination of Nepalese.

The school curriculum do not include political studies, the emphasis is more on value education. The other way of seeing this approach of royal government of Bhutan, one may say because of the fear psychosis in the minds of the Royal blood that if the commoners are made aware of their rights then it may lead to a revolutionary uprising against the present political elites of Bhutan. The Buddhist ideologue i.e. following the “middle path” is prevalent in Bhutan, which is also a tool to cover-up the loop-holes in the education policy.

The rendering of scholarships is also done in a biased manner. The Drukpas get good scholarships and government assistance to study abroad but the case is not same with the other communities especially the Nepalese in Bhutan. Scholarships are mostly given to students pursuing technical, vocational and non-political subjects. Therefore, the youth in Bhutan are mostly graduates of degrees from technical institutes.

The new Constitution of Bhutan which was adopted in the year 2008 has no provision for education to all or equality in education and opportunity. Article 9 of the Bhutan’s Constitution has provision on education which is not enough; the government should include more progressive provisions. Though, India assisted Bhutan in writing the Constitution of the kingdom of Bhutan, it did not have similarities in education provision which is safe guarded in Indian Constitution.

The introduction of modern education is relatively new in Bhutan therefore it has to be seen that how a newly imported education system and its GNH values will shape the young generation. There are examples of discrimination by the ruling elite through certain policy implementation in order to meet their traditional values. Therefore, the way in which education shapes the outlook of the young generation needs to be checked and adjusted accordingly. The education system inculcates both individualistic competition and predominance of a scientific rational world view which contradicts the traditional indigenous values. Whether the young educated Bhutanese people will continue to uphold the Gross National Happiness principles in their policy implementations has to be seen. Since Bhutan projects an image of itself as a nation founded on Buddhist values, the indoctrination of people into a secular scientific perspective has the potential to undermine Bhutan's construction of its own national identity.

### **Review of Literature**

The proposed research work has been broadly reviewed under following themes:

1. History of development of education in Bhutan.
2. The nature of Bhutan's education policy.
3. Impact of Bhutan's education policy on the minority community.

### **History of development of education in Bhutan**

Education system in Bhutan is in its developing stage as the modernization process started only in 1960s. Sinha (2001) explains how the education policy of Bhutan has transformed from its indigenous education tradition to the present modern education system. He has given emphasis on the structural hurdles that Bhutan faced for developing its education policy. The content of the curriculum were imported from other countries, which resulted in the poor application of knowledge in the respective fields. The school system was the typical British school model which was not adequate to suit the needs of the rapid social transformation in the newly literate country. So, Bhutan had to ultimately create its own model of educational system suitable for its national cultural policy. In the

modern education system consists of seven years of primary education, four years of secondary education and two more years of higher secondary education. Efforts were also taken to make the content of the curriculum more relevant to Bhutanese culture and the needs of the nation. The focus of it was to improve the ability of the students, to apply their knowledge in practical life. So, the academic standards were enhanced through more efficient process of teaching and learning. There was a lack of institutions and universities for higher education due to the fact that the monasteries were the center of teaching and training for the clergy and the administrators. Hence, the students had to go abroad to complete their higher education. Bhutan primarily converted the Sherubtse College into a university type college. Initially, only three faculties (sciences, humanities and commerce) with about a dozen academic departments were created. In the recent years, many tertiary institutions like Royal Institute of Management (RIM), National Institute of Education (NIE), Royal Bhutan Polytechnic (RBP), etc., have been instituted.

Gallenkamp (2010) gives an explanation on why modern education system was seen as an unnecessary luxury for lifestyle. Bhutan being an absolute monarchy followed the “tradition of consensus”. So there was no role for a modern education system for fostering critical thinking amongst the masses. After 1961, Bhutan started the process of modernization .Reinfeld (2003) is of the view that Bhutan’s path of development could not be sustainable in the long run due to the fears of being taken over by China in 1960s the king recognized the urgency to undergo the process of modernization of which education was pivotal, in order to reduce the country’s vulnerability and maintain its political sovereignty. Carnoy (1974) focuses on how education would legitimize the existence of Bhutan in the international community. He is of the view that by linking Bhutan’s university with the international community of learning and research, the Bhutanese will be able to understand the international environment. Chakravarti (2002) emphasizes on education being an important component for preparing the masses for a functioning and democratic society. Education bridges the gap between the Bhutanese people and the outside world. The development of Bhutan’s education policy has helped in developing the critical thinking of the people which is very important for a developing society and a newly democratic nation like Bhutan.

## **The nature of Bhutan's education policy**

For a relatively young state like Bhutan education is one of the important tools for development. So, its education policy and its development agenda are inter-linked and shaped by factors peculiar to the Himalayan state. Nestled in the Himalayas, the Bhutanese way of life, spiritual orientation and the economy itself greatly depends on the natural resources of the region. Hydel power, timber etc. are the main venues of revenue. So, a development strategy that is not sustainable or environment friendly cannot give great dividends in the long run. Concepts of sustainable development and conservation are thus, inculcated in the curriculum to make the goal of sustainable development achievable. Bhutan is a tiny state hidden between the two giants, India and China. So, it has to preserve its unique cultural identity and individuality. Hence, the consolidation of the national identity is also promoted in its education policy. There is a cultural gap between the Buddhist Dzongkha speaking Drukpas and Hindu Nepali speaking Lhotshampas. The Lhotshampas have more cultural similarity and affinity with Nepal. This cultural gap not only leads to ethnic tensions but is perceived by the Drukpas as a threat to their identity. So, more efforts are taken to assert their Buddhist Drukpa identity as the national identity in its education policy by various means.

Kumar and Oesterheld (2007) stressed on the fact that how education played a crucial role in improving relations between people of different continents. The education system in South Asian nations have been borrowed from west, therefore, it does not help in sustainably developing a small nation like Bhutan. Nath (2004) says that Bhutan has a unique non-traditional path of development that is Gross National Happiness as opposed to Gross National Product to measure its progress towards its goal. The GNH principles are: sustainable development, preservation and promotion of cultural values, conservation of natural environment, and establishment of good governance. GNH represents an indigenous model of development unique to Bhutan and inspired by its Buddhist principles. Like Bhutan's other institutions, the country's education policy is also intended to uphold and promote GNH values.



Tertiary Education Policy (2010) prioritizes education for the well-being of people and society over economic benefit. Therefore, higher education has been pushed in Bhutan not only to bring the country or individuals ahead economically but to strengthen and integrate the values of Bhutanese society in the midst of modernization. Gallenkamp (2010) is of the view that the introduction of education to the common masses would have to be careful and calculative. Because of the vast disparity between their existing traditional way of life and the one that the Bhutanese would now be exposed through education and the media, the homogenized social fabric that the government safeguards and promotes has the potential to rapidly disintegrate. According to Bhutan's Planning Commission, fostering a sense of nationalism and promoting Bhutan's culture as distinct from others in order to establish the nation's legitimacy. The establishment of The Royal University of Bhutan has led to the fulfillment of both the objectives. Besides being a national symbol, a university would be able to form its curriculum and training to Bhutan's distinct needs, thus further imparting a sense of Bhutanese identity among the students.

Ueda (2004) explains that the structure of modern education is compounded with urban migration and has led to an increase in competitive and individualist values in Bhutan. The selection of students based on examination has introduced the concept of competition and success which was never a part of traditional Bhutanese society. Nath (2004) is of the view that the modern education system through its 'hidden curriculum' based on rewards through assessments and credentials is enforcing a mindset of "competitive individualism". Before the introduction of modern education, decisions were based on a collective basis, and competition among individuals and material success was not part of the Bhutanese society.

### **Impact of Bhutan's Education Policy on the Minority Community**

Consolidating the national identity is an important goal for Bhutan in order to preserve its unique culture and traditions. Mother tongue is one of the key determinants of a person's identity and ethnicity. Dzongkha is the official language and the medium of instruction in

the government schools. Nepali, the language of the minority community is not taught in schools. This effectively alienates the minority in the formation of the national identity. Language that is recognized and nurtured by the government and used as a medium of communication effectively becomes the language of the nation. Teaching Dzongkha as a language and using it as a medium of instruction in schools has the subtle agenda of assimilation in it. It is not just an objective medium of communication but rather an important tool of socializing the young minds. For example, the education index has Dzongkha language indicator; and folk and historical literacy indicator as its components. This clearly shows that proficiency not only in the language but also in the culture and values of the Drukpa community is aimed at.

The Civil Services Act of 2010, states that a citizen who is married to a non-citizen is ineligible for administrative posts. This does not sound malignant if we fail to read it along with the Citizenship Act of 1985 which is applied retrospectively. This effectively excludes many in the minority community from being citizens of Bhutan. Such hurdles in the employment opportunities decide the course of education and the choice of field of study. This is just one example of how the minority is discouraged from holding important government positions.

Hutt (2005) reconstructs the history of Nepali community in Bhutan, from the first settlers' migration to its southern belt in late nineteenth century up to the exodus of many of their descendants to Nepal in the late twentieth century. He analyzes the policies on citizenship, language and dress which were adopted by the Bhutanese government in the 1980s. Dahlburg (1995) has analyzed that the following four factors are responsible for the discontent among the minority Lhotshampas in Bhutan: territorial concentration in the southern Bhutan, where they constitute a majority of population, and significant political, economic and cultural discrimination. Since 2006, the repatriation of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal still remains a crisis which can be solved through negotiations and political will of Nepal and Bhutan.

## **Definition, Rationale and Scope**

Education is important for the wholesome development of any society. In modern societies, education is linked not only to the development of skills and knowledge but also linked to material benefits such as job opportunities and livelihood choices. The education policy also reflects how a state seeks to visualize the development of its society and its citizens. The process of education is imbued with the state's efforts to inculcate a sense of national identity in its citizens and the creation of the state's own image. Thus, it is important to make sure that an education policy seeks to give equal rights and opportunities to various communities existing in a state for two reasons: to create a sense of identity and belonging to the state; and to enjoy the benefits and material goods resulting from a sound education.

These two aspects are interlinked as material well-being that result from education opportunities and the interlinked career choices determine a community's growth and development. This is also important in securing a community's loyalty to the state. If the state is not able to provide the above then it will result in discontent, especially when the state is partial to any particular community in providing these goods. Comparison and contrast may further heighten the level of underdevelopment and discontent.

These groups may feel isolated and excluded from the state, which will become the breeding ground for identity politics. As it is a relatively young state, it is important to look at its education policy which will decide its course of development and progress. This will also decide the condition of its citizen's livelihood and lifestyle. As Bhutan has aspects of a welfare state, it is inevitable that its citizens will look to it for providing the basic goods and benefits. In this context, this research work seeks to analyze if the education policy of Bhutan is inclusive and if it will help in the wholesome development of the entire society. Progress and development cannot be wholesome and sustainable, if it happens only in pockets. This will only lead to discontent and strife. Bhutan cannot fulfill its vision of itself as a developed and enlightened nation state. Inclusive growth and providing equal opportunities are very important in Bhutan's context, to maintain the

state's integrity and security, as it is constituted of many ethnic groups. The proposed research aims to critically analyze the drawbacks in the current education policy of Bhutan and also to look at the process of exclusion and discrimination that stems from the creation of exclusive national identity, through its education policy. This research shall also analyze the various factors influencing the homogenization of national identity.

### **Objectives**

1. To analyze the various factors influencing the homogenization of national identity, through education policy in Bhutan.
2. To understand how education can be an effective tool of sustainable development.
3. To assess and understand if Bhutan's education policy would disrupt the unique cultural diversity of Bhutan.
4. To examine Bhutan's education policy this could be an effective cause for discontent among the minority community.
5. To critically examine the nature of Bhutan's education policy.

### **Research Questions**

1. How does the education policy of Bhutan universalize or nationalizes the majoritarian Drukpa identity?
2. With limited resources at its disposal, how Bhutan is evolving its education policies?
3. How education policy affects the socio-economic and political development of Bhutan?
4. What are the different trends and patterns in the education policy of Bhutan?
5. How the overall development of Bhutan's education policy is affecting different identities in varying manner?
6. What are the limitations and constraints in the education policy of Bhutan?
7. How is the fostering of national identity through education reconciled with globalization?

## **Hypotheses**

1. Education policy in Bhutan instills and fosters homogenized national identity which is essentially the majoritarian identity (Drukpa).
2. Bhutan's education policy is discriminative in nature; this could be an effective cause for discontent among the minority identities.

## **Research Methodology**

The study will be based on descriptive and analytical methods. For this both primary and secondary data will be collected. Primary sources will be mostly documents and data published by the Royal Government of Bhutan and some regional and international organizations like UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF in conjunction with other international donors. Secondary sources will include books, journals, newspapers, internet sources, etc. If necessary, field study will be taken into consideration.

## **Chapterisation**

Chapter 1: Evolution of Education Policy of Bhutan

Chapter 2: Bhutan's education policy: Changing Trends and Patterns

Chapter 3: Bhutan's Education Policy: Tool of Socio-Economic Development

Chapter 4: Bhutan's Education Policy: Causes for Discontent

Chapter 5: Conclusions

## **Study Limitations**

This research is based on primary as well as secondary sources. Primary sources include documents by Royal Government of Bhutan and secondary sources include books and articles published in various journals and periodicals, internet sources and newspaper clippings. But these cannot substitute for the value of direct human interactions and field experiences. A field trip to Bhutan is important to get a better understanding about its people, culture and the socio-economic, political and geographical conditions, which was not fulfilled due to the shortage of time.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **BHUTAN'S EDUCATION POLICY: CHANGING TRENDS AND PATTERNS**

The education policy of Bhutan has witnessed changing trends and patterns in its budgetary allocation and policy implementation to achieve its goal of development for the nation. In this chapter, the changing trends and patterns of Bhutan's education policy will be reviewed. There are a number of external and internal factors which are responsible for bringing this change in education system. The role played by these influencing factors will also be analyzed.

#### **Analysis of Five Year Plans**

The five year plans started in 1961 with the help of Government of India as the main policy document of the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB). The highest authority in Bhutan's policy-making process, the Planning Commission Secretariat prepares these public reports. Five year plans from its inception includes a section on education. Each plan starts with a review of gaps and accomplishments with respect to previous plan's goals. In this proposed research, Fifth to Tenth Five Year Plans (FYPs) are reviewed, currently Tenth one is active.

The analysis of these Five Year Plan documents is relevant because it gives an idea of emerging patterns in the education system of Bhutan. The numeric expansion of school enrollments and the level of consistency in delivering results of these five year plans will give us an understanding of the trends and patterns evolved during the period of 1985-2011. The focus of these five year plans was on maintaining the quality of education which led to a number of innovations from plan to plan and how government responded to the emerging problems will be known through a careful study of these documents.

## **Fifth Five Year Plan (1981-1987)**

The Fifth Five Year Plan marked the change from a centralized to a decentralized policy making and implementation process to ensure development appropriate to the Bhutanese people's needs at the local level. The Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) had allocated 519.1 million Ngultrums to education sector in this plan, which was 11.2 percent of the total government budget for the fulfillment of its objectives<sup>26</sup>.

The Fifth FYP identified four objectives:

1. To raise literacy through the expansion of primary education.
2. To provide educated and trained manpower to meet the growing needs of developmental programmes.
3. To bring about a modernization of society by introducing the people to science and technology, and thereby enabling them to join the mainstream contemporary civilization.
4. To preserve and promote country's cultural and spiritual heritage, preventing the alienation of the educated from their tradition.

During this period the projects of decentralization was adopted by the Royal Government of Bhutan. The policy-makers emphasized more on creation of native Bhutanese teachers because in the year 1982, 42 percent of the total teachers were from India; which means Bhutan was not self-sufficient in number of Bhutanese teacher which in turn justified the presence of Indian teachers in Bhutan in the time of rapid educational expansion. This is one of the reasons why the government emphasized more on implementing national culture oriented curricula for which more native Dzongkha-speaking teachers were needed. The National Approach to Primary Education (NAPE) policy also came into light in the year 1985. This policy was designed to safe guard national culture of Bhutan .In this context, the contrast between the third and fourth objectives mentioned above is important which showcase the dilemma affecting Bhutan in the beginning of the 1980s. On one hand, the effects of western economic approaches through education expansion

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<sup>26</sup> GNH Commission, Bhutan Planning Commission, *Fifth FYP Document* [Online: Web] Accessed on January 12,2012 URL: <http://www.gnhc.bt/five-year-plan/>

plans were forcing Bhutan to immerse in the technology based modernization process; and on the other hand Bhutan wanted to prevent ‘alienation’ of the educated Bhutanese youth from their heritage. The quality of education was very much emphasized for they made planned interventions to increase the number of national teaching staff, improvement of the quality of buildings and facilities in educational and also textbooks and curricula with a “strong national- cultural orientation to the educational content which is at the same time consistent with the needs of the modern socio-economic system”<sup>27</sup>. The development of secondary education along with technical or vocational education was also gaining momentum during this period.

### **Sixth Five Year Plan (1987-1992)**

The Sixth FYP was widely considered to have been quite successful in terms of efficient use of external aid and in furthering the evolution of domestic institution for balanced development<sup>28</sup>. The Royal Government of Bhutan allocated a sum of 778.8 million Ngultrums to the education sector in this plan, which is 8.1 percent of the total government budget of 9,559 million Ngultrums<sup>29</sup>. The National Approach to Primary Education (NAPE) was implemented in this plan, which coincided with the beginning of tensions between the dominant class and the Bhutanese of the Nepali origin. This system was designed and implemented in Bhutan which aimed to preserve the traditional Bhutanese culture, and contribute to the nation’s identity and cohesion. The medium of instruction in educational institutions were English and Dzongkha after the implementation of NAPE and Nepali language as medium of instruction eliminated from the school curriculum. The Royal Government of Bhutan adopted a policy of “one nation, one people” during this period and the adoption of NAPE was one of its tools to homogenize the nation. The curriculum in primary education was revised to incorporate the history, values and environment of the Bhutanese people under the new NAPE programme. Before this plan primary education was largely based on the Indian system.

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<sup>27</sup> Bhutan MSS, *5<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan Education Sector*, (1983-1987), 1982, p. 21

<sup>28</sup> RGoB, *Achievements in Planned Development: A Review of 6<sup>th</sup> FYP*, (Thimphu:1992)

<sup>29</sup> GNH Commission, Bhutan Planning Commission, *Sixth FYP Document* [Online: Web] Accessed on January 12,2012 URL: <http://www.gnhc.bt/five-year-plan/>



The western education, western perspectives were gaining momentum which emphasized more on technical and scientific education, competitiveness and individual achievements. All this provided a little space for the Bhutanese value system but the policy makers excluded Buddhism which is the core of Bhutanese culture<sup>30</sup>. The western style of education was expanding rapidly from 500 students in 1961 to 70,000 students in 195 schools in 1990. This trend marked considerable progress in expanding formal education provision.

Before 1998, Nepali was taught as an attempt to integrate ethnic Nepali, many of which were granted citizenship and were working with the Royal Government of Bhutan. But, as part of implementation of NAPE, the study of Nepali language was banned from school curriculum. This led to the emergence of resentment among some Nepali people in the southern Bhutan. The government now concedes that the resentment was exacerbated by the overzealous enforcement of the policies by some district officials<sup>31</sup>.

After that government made an attempt to preserve national identity and for this, a census was done in Southern Bhutan districts to identify the illegal immigrants, this process degenerated and led to violent acts. As a result, thousands of legitimate Bhutanese of Nepali origin who had no proper documentation to prove their citizenship were forced to leave Bhutan and take refuge in Nepal.

### **Seventh Five Year Plan (1992-1997)**

The primary goal of Seventh FYP was to achieve universal primary education access by the year 2000. This was declared by the Bhutan Government at the 1990 Jomtien “Education for All” conference<sup>32</sup>. The emphasize was also to develop alternative forms of education such as , Non-Formal Education(NFE) and Adult Literacy programmes and

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<sup>30</sup>Ezechieli, Eric (2003), A Monograph on *Beyond Sustainable Development: Education for GNH in Bhutan*, Stanford University, p.52.

<sup>31</sup>Armington, S. (2002) *Bhutan*, London: Lonely Planet Publications , p.27.

<sup>32</sup> UNESCO (1992), Agenda 21, Geneva: United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. [Online: Web] Accessed on September 3, 2011, URL: <http://www.unesco.org/education/esd/english/chapter/chapter.shtml>.

also to enhance and strengthen technical and vocational education in order to meet the needs evolved due to modernization and also to develop private sector in Bhutan.

The Royal Government of Bhutan increased the percentage of its total budget earmarked for the education sector, which was 1,738 million Ngultrums that is 11.1 percent of the total budget of 15,590.7 million Ngultrums<sup>33</sup>. We can see an increase in the budget allocation to education sector from Sixth Five Year Plan to the Seventh. A plan was made for the activation of Bhutanese Secondary Education Certificate to distinguish the Bhutanese system from the Indian certificate for school examination in 1995. In the year 1997, redesign of primary school curricula was proposed which included production for textbooks on English, Geography, History, Physics, Chemistry Biology, Economics and Dzongkha.

Bhutan wanted to reduce the number of non-Bhutanese teachers who had very limited knowledge of Dzongkha, Bhutanese culture values and history and were considered to be less suited for teaching the new curriculum. The trend of the new curriculum was aimed to preserve the traditional Bhutanese culture and values which is more harmonized with the Bhutan's policy of Gross National Happiness (see Figure 1).

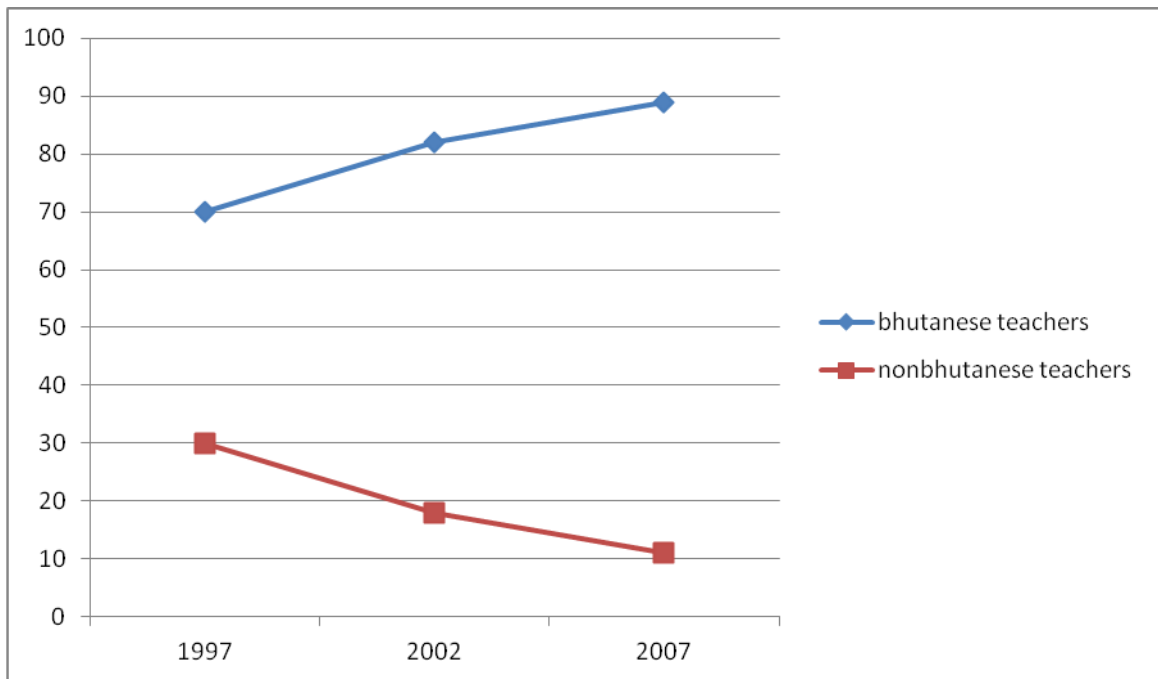
Bhutan also wanted to make it self-reliant by increasing the number of national teachers which will ultimately cut the dependence on “costly imports of intellectual capital”<sup>34</sup>. In order to achieve this objective, the Royal Government of Bhutan emphasized more on teacher training, capacity building, distance education and intensive in-service training.

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<sup>33</sup> GNH Commission, Bhutan Planning Commission, *Seventh FYP Document* [Online: Web] Accessed on January 12, 2012 URL: <http://www.gnhc.bt/five-year-plan/>

<sup>34</sup> Eric Ezechieli, A Monograph on *Beyond Sustainable Development: Education for GNH in Bhutan*, (Stanford University 2003), p.54.

**Figure 1: Proportion of Bhutanese and Non-Bhutanese Teachers (in %) 1997-2007**



*Source: General Statistics, 2008, Policy and Planning Division, Ministry of Education, Thimphu.*

### **Eighth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)**

The budget amount earmarked for this plan showed an increase in amount to 3,292 million Ngultrums but percentage allocated to education sector was decreased to 9.4 percent of the total budget of 15,590 million ngultrums. This plan clearly highlighted the emerging challenges resulting from the expansion of mass education in the Bhutan's development plan. The increasing expectation among the students for 'white collar jobs' in the government sectors is one of the growing concerns resulting out of the development of the education system. Bhutanese are more inclined towards office related jobs no matter how unproductive or lowly paid this may be rather than any manual work. This trend has led to disproportionate demand for academic education compared to training in technical or agricultural skills. This has further contributed to the emerging problems related to youth and rural-urban migration. While these problems are a reflection of wider social and economic influences but education is playing a very

significant role. Therefore, there is an increasing demand from public and private sector institutions as well as the common Bhutanese people to the education system to tackle these challenges

For the first time, the Eighth Five Year Plan gave emphasis on the importance of providing cost effective education to optimize the use of scarce resources .the creation of more accessible, small, local and community schools helped to some extent to improve the number of students getting enrolled especially female population of Bhutan. This document emphasized on a goal to increase female access to education. A plan for social mobilization was made to reach this objective, where the parents were requested to send and keep their daughters in school. In terms of curriculum for schools, inclusion and up-gradation of environmental studies in Dzongkha, was to be include till grade three; moral science and value education was to be incorporated in the current syllabi and teachers manual; and also appropriate class readers based on Bhutanese themes both in Dzongkha and English were to be developed in order to raise awareness of the Bhutanese values which are implicit in the rich folk tales of the country. At the primary and secondary level of schooling active and experimental learning was proposed as a part of the standard curriculum. During this plan, more vocational options were also made available.

### **Ninth Five Year Plan (2003-2007)**

The ninth five year plan was extended by one year; therefore the period under this plan covers 2003-2008. This extension was done to start Tenth FYP in the year 2008, which coincides with the introduction of the first democratically elected government. This plan's budget allocation to education sector was 10,204.4 million Ngultrums which is 14.5 percent of the total government budget of 70,000 million ngultrums<sup>35</sup>. This budget for education sector was further distributed between the Centre, *Dzongkhag* (districts) and *Geog* (blocks) administration. This plan for the first time mentions “human happiness” as a part of education policy. From the very beginning of formal education the

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<sup>35</sup> GNH Commission, Bhutan Planning Commission, *Eighth FYP Document* [Online: Web] Accessed on January 12,2012 URL: <http://www.gnhc.bt/five-year-plan/> .

children should be provided with a great sense of Bhutanese values which is in harmony with the Gross National Happiness.

There are five goals which feature in this plan<sup>36</sup>:

1. improving the quality of life and income especially the poor of the nation,
2. ensuring good governance,
3. facilitating private sector growth and employment generation,
4. preserving and promoting cultural and environment heritage, and
5. achieving rapid economic growth and transformation.

The education plan focuses on some issues like

- creating mechanisms for early childhood education
- achieving complete primary education enrollment by 2007, the deadline for 'Education for all' was 2000 but was not achieved
- expanding guidance, career counseling and educating values to the youth
- upgrading basic level education from class VII to X.
- developing higher education system and a national university
- establishing inclusive program for special children
- strengthening school management and education system management
- improving education through the involvement of private players and cost sharing.

The use of multimedia public information system (radio, television, national newspapers) and other emerging technologies were to be used for early childhood education programs, which will help in a rapid enhancement of the learning opportunities for both students and teachers, even in the remote areas. The curriculum of the school was reviewed and revised to enhance mastery of literacy and numeracy, greater choice within the curriculum, computer literacy, values education, multi grade instruction and continuous formative assessment. The success of the increasing enrollment in the primary education

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<sup>36</sup> RGoB Planning Commission (2000), *Eighth FYP: Mid Term Review Report* (July 1997-December 1999), Thimphu.

resulted in pressuring the education system to expand its secondary and tertiary levels. This can be achieved only with the help of foreign donors. The policy makers felt that there is a need to create a work force in alignment with the requirements of the job market. Thus more emphasis was given to vocational training and career counseling.

There is a great emphasis on imparting value education to the youth. A booklet in English ‘learning to be’ on moral education was included in the curriculum which is to be taught from pre-primary level till class XII (higher secondary level). This plan also emphasized on the need to further enhance tertiary education after the foundation of the Royal university of Bhutan in June 2003. The expansion of teachers’ education, modern and traditional medicines, engineering, humanities and sciences, commerce and computer sciences were the programs which found relevance. The cooperation with the foreign educational institutions for designing and delivering the above programs was recognized in this phase.

### **Tenth Five Year Plan (2008-2013)**

Education in Bhutan has a very important role to play, therefore The RGoB views that public resource expenditure on education at all levels have both immediate and long term benefits for the Bhutanese people. Therefore, the education sector continues to receive high priority within the Tenth FYP. Under this plan, the total government budget was 141,692.2 million Ngultrums out of which 23.6 percent was allocated for the education sector which amounts to 33,453.5 million Ngultrums<sup>37</sup>. The government has tremendously increased the budget in education sector as compared to previous five year plans. Following are the areas emphasized by this plan<sup>38</sup>:

- sustaining universal basic education in terms of enhanced net enrolments
- providing equal opportunities and access to education in all levels
- improving education quality and standards

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<sup>37</sup> GNH Commission (2009), *Tenth Five Year Plan 2008-2013* (GNHC), Thimphu: Royal Government of Bhutan, Vol.1.

<sup>38</sup> Tenth Five Year Plan 2008-2013, Volume 1: Main Document, published by Gross National Happiness Commission, 2009, Royal Government of Bhutan.

- further enhancement of value education
- promotion of national literacy program and further making education more relevant to work place.
- Further expansion of higher education, particularly technical and management education
- Promotion of lifelong learning opportunities

The above mentioned objectives are given utmost priority by the government because they can considerably advance the quality and level of human capital formation. The Tenth FYP focused on achieving near 90 percent enrolment by the end of 2013. By 2008, Bhutan's net enrolment ratio reached 88 percent; this was made possible through community primary schools and boarding facilities in rural and urban areas. Almost 12% percent of children could not enroll due to various problems. This category includes children of nomad communities, children living in remote parts of country, children with disabilities and learning difficulties. Extended classrooms, midday meals, stipend and other necessary facilities can be helpful for children living in remote areas. The strengthening of the inclusive education system will be done to facilitate children with disabilities in order to give better access to education. A wide range of objectives and strategies for primary, secondary and tertiary education has been enlisted in this plan. The National Education Assessment (NEA) is a program which the government wants to establish to monitor the quality of education at various levels of schooling and across subjects. Because the focus was on quantity i.e. numbers of teachers, number of students enrolled and establishment of institution have been more by the Planning Commission and the assessment of quality of education was lagging behind. The focus is more to develop Mathematics, Science and to advance competency in languages i.e. Dzongkha and English to meet the international standards. To provide continuing education programme in different parts of the country, their plan is emphasizing on encouraging private sector. This is a measure to maintain a sustainable quality of education and cost sharing.

The government wants to provide 20 scholarships in Sherubtse College in mathematics and physics and an additional of 5 to 10 scholarships for undergraduates to attract

students to take mathematics, science and English to build up critical mass of educational leaders in these subjects. Even now the Indian government provides 50 scholarships a year to Bhutanese to pursue education in India in medicine, law, engineering, management, etc. and 70-80 scholarships are under RGoB<sup>39</sup>. Career counseling programs are one which the government wants to enhance to meet the needs of job market. Along with this, it is also focusing on value education program, improving and expanding the school health program and youth guidance for the wholesome development of children and youth.

The government is taking initiative to strengthen and improve education management system at all levels. Bhutan is still lagging in sufficient number of quality teachers, therefore improving both pre-service and in-service teacher education is one of the objectives. For this establishing teacher training center is being supported by this plan. The teachers who are serving in remote and rural areas will be provided with incentives from the government in the form of scarcity allowance and difficulty allowance. This plan is also encouraging equitable distribution of teachers in schools spread all over the nation. One of the objectives in this plan is to guide and facilitate the development of higher education in order to offer diverse opportunities of higher learning both within and outside Bhutan. This plan aims to achieve gender parity in secondary and tertiary levels of education. This affirmative action will be helpful in effective utilization of female human capital in the labour market and to address gender imbalance in more remunerative jobs of higher profile occupations. The government wants to enhance the enrolment of girls in tertiary education at least 80 girls for every 100 boys.

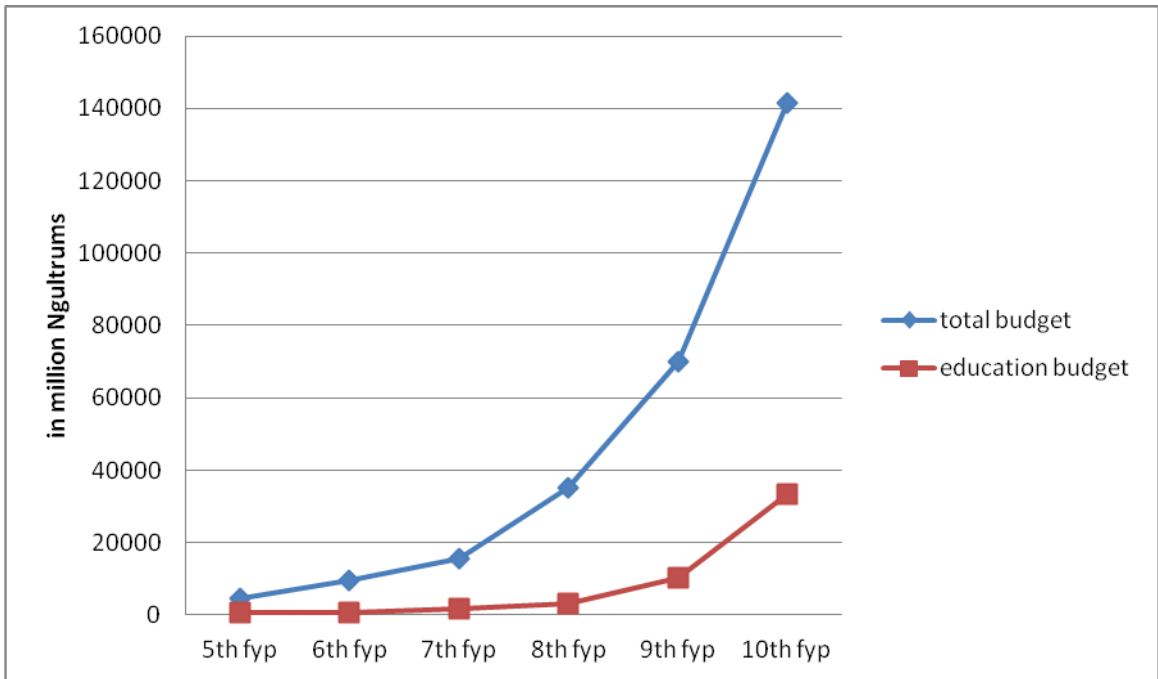
Government aims for the expansion of technical and vocational clubs in schools in order to promote education in these fields. An NFE (Non Formal Education) program has to be expanded by strengthening decentralized policy for establishment and management of NFE programs in *Dzongkhags* and *Gewogs*. Adult education are being strengthened to increase literacy rate of the nation and to make Bhutanese more capable. The government

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<sup>39</sup>Deki, K (2008), National Report: *The Development of State of Art of Adult Learning and Education*, Thimphu: Ministry of Education, p. 10.



**Figure 2: Budget Allocation in Each FYP (in million ngultrums)**



*Source: National Report of Kingdom of Bhutan, Ministry of Education, RGoB, Thimphu (August 2008).*

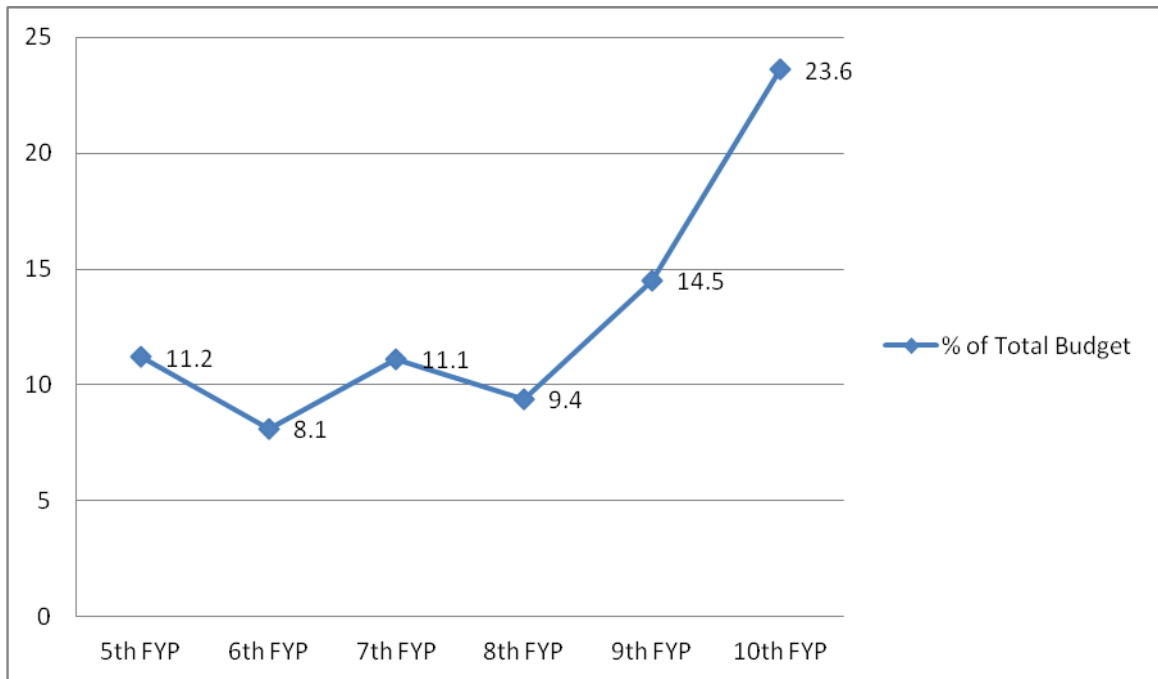
wants to achieve full adult literacy by 2015. The plan emphasizes on encouraging students who passed higher secondary education to become NFE instructors as part-time job in order to encourage their participation in development of the community. The access to higher education still remains low at 8.2 percent, thus the Tenth FYP focuses on enhancing access to higher education through expansion of tertiary education institutions, facilitating transition from secondary education and developing a comprehensive policy for the maintenance of the quality of tertiary education. One of the hindrances is the admission capacity in colleges and university which is limiting higher education opportunity to students. The Royal University of Bhutan wants to develop a master plan in order to provide admission to around 9000 students but there is a need to develop the

**Figure 3: Education sector outlay**

FYP Plans	Total Government Budget	Education Budget	% of Total Budget
5 <sup>th</sup> (1981-1987)	4,648.3	519.1	11.2
6 <sup>th</sup> (1987-1992)	9,559.2	778.8	8.1
7 <sup>th</sup> (1992-1997)	15,590.7	1,738.0	11.1
8 <sup>th</sup> (1997-2002)	34,981.7	3,292.7	9.4
9 <sup>th</sup> (2002-2008)	70,000.0	10,209.4	14.5
10 <sup>th</sup> (2008-2013)	141,692.2	33,435.5	23.6

*Source: National Report of Kingdom of Bhutan, Ministry of Education, RGoB, Thimphu (August 2008)*

**Figure 4: Percentage of Total Budget allocated to Education**



*Source: National Report of Kingdom of Bhutan, Ministry of Education, RGoB, Thimphu (August 2008)*

infrastructure to create additional academic space suitable for catering tertiary education programs.

The development of human resources is an important issue to take higher education to the next level. For this, there is urgent need to make investments into public sector institution of higher education and introduce reforms in service conditions to attract best academic faculty. This plan also emphasized on the need to conduct an external review to check the health of educational institutions which will be relevant to assess the institutional effectiveness. The development of database and proper utilization of present resources is also important for enhancing the education system in Bhutan. The choice of language for instruction in educational institutions has changed from time to time i.e. English and Hindi in the beginning to Dzongkha , English , and Nepali (in southern districts) and finally the focus is on to develop Dzongkha and English as medium of instruction. An early inclination of policy makers for western education delivered in English was made in order to have an effective and convenient means to access available western scientific knowledge and also to utilize the higher education opportunities available outside Bhutan. This was a positive tool to achieve the goal of rapid mass education instead of developing Bhutan's own education system which would have been time consuming.

RGoB has also adopted a policy based on Bhutanese culture and values to counter the influences of western education. This policy took the shape of GNH principles from the Seventh FYP. The government realized that for developing and inculcating Bhutanese values in schools they need more Bhutanese educators who have in-depth knowledge about their traditional culture. Therefore for reducing the number of foreign teachers which they said was a costly affair, the focus was more for the capacity building of the Bhutanese teachers.

The NAPE program was introduced during the Fifth FYP which has led to tensions in southern Bhutan. Nepali language was banned and uprooted from the school curriculum which was an outcome of NAPE policy. The forceful enforcement of Dzongkha language and culture on a heterogeneous society of Bhutan where ethnic Nepali has

considerable population was a determining factor for causing tensions in Bhutan resulting in migration of thousands of people out of Bhutan between 1988 and 1993. There is a deep connection between implementation of NAPE and the creation of a huge number of refugees belonging to *Lhotshampa* (Nepali) community of Bhutan. There are other ethnic minorities of Bhutan and if the government keeps on disregarding their identity and culture, the problem like 1988 may emerge again.

The government is focusing more on developing Dzongkha language, English, Science and Mathematics as evident in most of the five year plans. In the Tenth FYP also, the government is providing a number of scholarships to students to attract them to take these subjects. Other important subjects belonging to social science fraternity have got very less preference by the government. This newly democratic government should focus on all the aspects of education, if they want to develop and build a strong nation. Social Scientists are also very essential for the health of a society and nation at large. May be the government does not want its common citizens to learn about the nuisances of their political rights or may be this is a tactic of the ruling class who do not want to make the citizens of Bhutan politically aware in order to continue their authority over Bhutan. The government is not encouraging its people to take up social sciences by not providing any scholarships, basics of social sciences are taught only in junior levels of education but the irony here is that the members of royal family are taking up these subjects while achieving their higher education abroad. The present king Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuk has M.Phil. Degree in the subject of Politics from Oxford University.

The government is advocating and encouraging the preservation and propagation of unique Bhutan culture through its GNH principles but the western education it is imparting in schools is economic based and promotes individualistic competition and predominance of scientific rational view which totally contradicts the traditional indigenous values of Bhutan. Mr. Wangyal has also pointed out that the

present curriculum seems to fall short in reflecting Buddhist and GNH principles<sup>40</sup>. The education department has taken measures to maintain its national values and culture by publishing textbooks in English to inculcate values through stories and folktales. It was only under 8<sup>th</sup> five year plan in the year 1994 that the government introduced value education as a compulsory subject to be taught in schools from preprimary to grade twelve. He also pointed out that even though such initiative of imparting values education are timely and appreciated, is isolated and completely removed from Bhutanese context. The elements of GNH principles were present in all five year plans but its happiness related goals were explicitly emphasized only in the Ninth FYP. The concept of GNH which was initiated by King Jigme Singye Wangchuk is being promoted strongly and its presence can be found in the Bhutanese policy making process.

In the Eighth FYP, the growing concern of the government over the preference of the educated people to government jobs rather than manual work is seen as the government is not equipped to provide government jobs to all the educated people. The necessity of creating more job avenues was felt during this period. The government responded to this problem by designing and implementing specific measures whose ultimate goal was to control rural-urban migration and the risk of rising unemployment. The nation of Bhutan whose almost 80 percent of population is involved in agriculture but the recent trend shows that a huge number of rural population are migrating to urban areas for employment. Therefore the government adopted some tools to reduce the risk of unemployment through emphasizing more on vocational training, career counseling, further educational expansion and increased provision of NFE (Non Formal Education) for both youth and adults. The government is also involving private sector to cater to the needs of job market.

The Eighth, Ninth and Tenth FYP have mentioned to advocate and promote involvement of private sector for enhancing the quality of education but the monitoring of the private educational institutions like fixing the school fees is under the government. The fee of

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<sup>40</sup> Wangyal, T. (2001), "Ensuring Social Sustainability: Can Bhutan's Education System Ensure Intergenerational Transmission of Values?" *Journal of Bhutan Studies*, Thimphu, 3-1(Summer 2001), 106-131.

private education ranges from 12000 to 73000 Nu. per annum<sup>41</sup>, it varies for different subjects which is a big amount for a nation categorized as least developed country. Moreover, the highest position in government service, the civil servants' salary ranges from 8030 to 5958 Nu. per month<sup>42</sup> only. This trend is dangerous, as they may lead to a situation like in India where privatization in health and education sector has led to deterioration of the function of institution under public sector.

One more challenge that the five year plans so far have not mentioned is the problem of high percentage of school dropouts due to various reasons like unavailability of jobs , long distance of schools from homes etc. the government is now focusing on developing tactics to retain students in schools to decrease the rate of drop outs. The transport and communication system has not developed fully across the country, which is a big hurdle for achieving 100 percent literacy. Moreover, nomad communities and communities residing in remote areas are the ones who are not sufficiently touched by the public education system. There was a huge rise in number of schools from 1997 to 2002 with the inclusion of Non-Formal Education centers and the inclusion of monastic education institutes. To counter the challenges mentioned above the NFE system was started which provides literacy and numeracy skills in Dzongkha to Bhutanese who have not received any form of education<sup>43</sup>. Along with this, the government has also started continuing education program on a pilot basis in 2006 for those who are already in the labour market in order to enhance their education level. This program has proved to be both popular and successful. The non-formal education and continued education division under the department of education is a good trend towards decentralization of education system. The private educational institutes are increasingly offering education that is not provided by the government or supplementary government run programs.

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<sup>41</sup>Fee structure of Private Schools in Bhutan [Online: Web] Accessed on September 6, 2011, URL: <http://www.education.gov.bt/documents/10156/38720/FEE+STRUCTURE+OF+PRIVATE+SCHOOL>

<sup>42</sup>RGoB (2010), Civil Service Pay Commission, Ministry of Finance, Thimphu: RGoB [Online: Web] Accessed on September 6, 2011, URL: <http://www.mof.gov.bt/downloads/civilservicepayscaleorderjune2010.pdf>

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

The “Vision 2020”, which is a long term Planning Commission document, also underlines the need to open and sustain a carefully managed private sector<sup>44</sup> and education is no exception. One more fact here is that the private players will obviously open educational and training institutes in urban areas where is a chunk of population who can afford private education by paying a huge amount of money. Thus, there will always be a chance of creating two Bhutan’s, one urban with availability of all modern facilities and the other rural with fewer amenities. India is a good example, where the rapid pace of modern development has created two sections of society, scholars refer to it as India and Bharat. The Royal Government of Bhutan, on the other hand views the private sector as a tool to overcome the budgetary constraints arising along the expansion of educational provisions.

### **Role of International Donors in Bhutan’s Education System**

The five year plans from its inception was dependent for a large part on foreign aid. Initially India was funding Bhutan and later on other international organizations like World Bank, world food program , DANIDA, UNICEF, SDC(Swiss), Save the Children(USA) and foreign nations (Canada, Japan etc.) have also started funding heavily on the education sector over a span of 50 years. Bhutanese students were sent outside the country to pursue education because of the unavailability of modern western educational opportunities within the nation. This process shows the desire of the Bhutanese to enlarge the educated mass base and also to learn and acquaint themselves with the knowledge which will be helpful in the internal development of the nation. Indian educational institutions and educators have played a tremendous role in educating the Bhutanese during its initial years. But there are complaints by the teachers of Indian origin about the anti-Indian attitude<sup>45</sup> which is not good for the longstanding friendship between the two countries. The programs started by other external organizations and countries have helped in creating opportunities for Bhutanese students to study abroad. But most of them come

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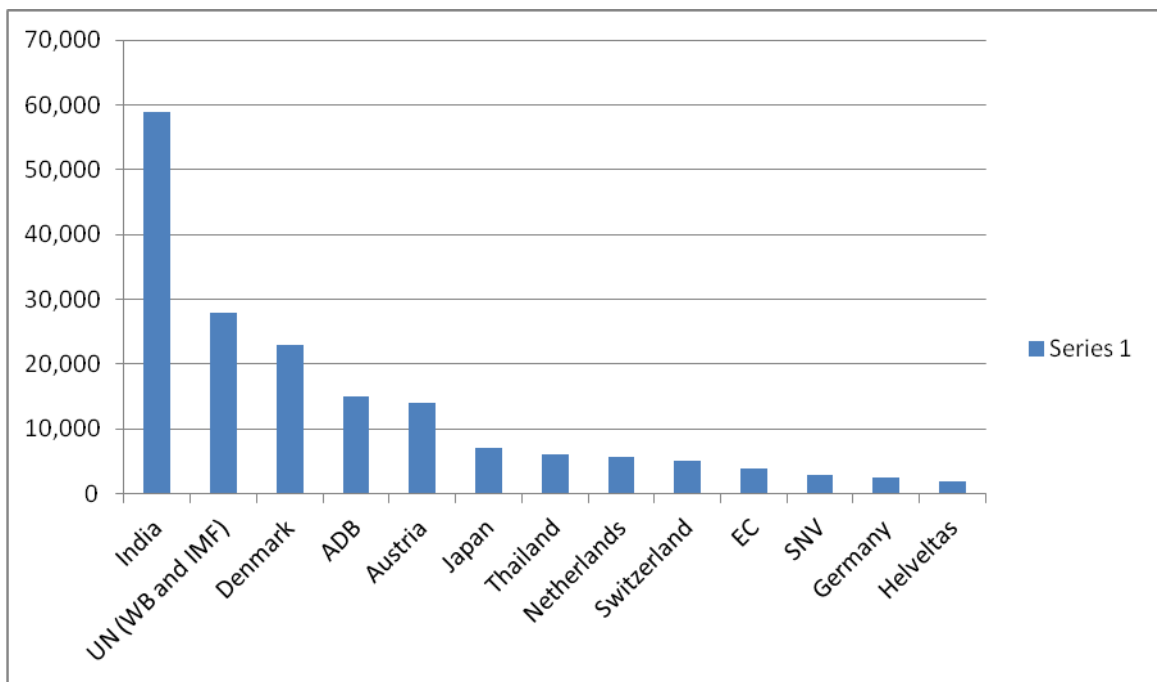
<sup>44</sup> Bhutan PC (1999), *Bhutan 2020: A Vision of Peace, Prosperity and Happiness*, RGoB: Thimphu.

<sup>45</sup>Ramachandraiah, C (1994), “On Bhutan” in Letters to the Editor, *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 16, p. 1818.

back to their country which helps in developing their nation and is also in full alignment of GNH principles.

Due to scarce of resources resulting out of Bhutan’s small size and starting of its modernization process very late as compared to the other nations has made Bhutan heavily rely on external aid for its development. The importance of external aid has declined from before when the whole development budget of Bhutan was financed by external donors<sup>46</sup>. Till now, Bhutan claims its ability to reject offers of assistance with discretion and dictate pre-conditions for international donor agencies by carefully choosing the donor agencies to operate in Bhutan, rejecting projects and programs which are not in alignment with Bhutanese values and by carefully exploiting its competitive advantage which includes its geo-strategic location, natural resources, its small size and

**Figure 5: External Assistance to Bhutan (amount in thousands of dollar, 1999-2000)**



*Source: UNDP 2001 Joint Donor Database*

<sup>46</sup> Bhutan Planning Commission (1999), Bhutan 2020: A Vision of Peace, Prosperity, and Happiness, Thimphu: Royal Government of Bhutan Planning Commission [Online: Web] Accessed on April 27th, 2011 URL: <http://www.bhutan.gov.bt/visiondoc/vision.pdf>



population. From 9<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, Bhutan planned to meet its recurrent expenditures with internally generated resources. At present, a number of international organizations and foreign nations are working in Bhutan. India tops the list, but most of its finances go for construction and maintenance of hydro-electric power projects, which Bhutan exports to India and is the main source of revenue generation in Bhutan.

The external assistance in total is about \$92 million mostly in grants and \$ 13 million were loans in the year 2000. Education sector receives the second largest area of assistance (17 percent of the total funds), first being the energy generation and supply (24 percent). Other sectors includes health; government and civil society; agriculture and forestry; environment protection; and social infrastructure and services<sup>47</sup>. The second largest fund comes from the World Bank and its interventions are in increasing the access of education by constructing schools, environment protection and developing the local and decentralized infrastructures like hospitals and government offices. James Wolfenshon, the President of WB visited Bhutan in 2003 and was impressed by Bhutan's policy of maximizing human happiness by focusing on encompassing values rather than money<sup>48</sup>. The WB supports Bhutan's long term plan to achieve universal primary education, full adaptation of secondary education to Bhutanese context, enhancing distance learning programs, full enrollment in high school and achieving full adult literacy. The implementation of the WB strategy will be based on intensive bottom-up consultative process, with the goal to improve the quality of life, as demanded by the "Vision 2020" document<sup>49</sup>.

The focus of the present WB development strategy for Bhutan is on secondary education, it is the follow-up of the previous project which focused on primary education. The "Education: Program Development Project" includes WB in cooperation with Swiss and Danish development agencies along with UNICEF will build and upgrade schools. This

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<sup>47</sup> European Commission (2002), Country Strategy Paper "Bhutan and the European Community Cooperation Strategy 2002-2007" Bruxelles, UNDP, Joint Donor Database.

<sup>48</sup> Penjor, U. (2003), World Bank President Comments Projects in Bhutan, *Kuensel*, 10<sup>th</sup> May.

<sup>49</sup> World Bank EP III (2003), Third Education Project : Secondary Education, Washington DC: WB [Online: Web] Accessed on January 9, 2012 URL: <http://www4.worldbank.org/sprojects/Project.asp?pid=P074114>

development plan focuses to enhance capacity of the districts and monitoring the outcome of the schooling process. Enhancing teacher training and quality of instruction, curricula development and upgrading the quality of schools are part of this development plan. The first Bhutanese university, The Royal University of Bhutan was inaugurated in 2003 which was supported by this project.

United Nations Development Program (UNDP) highlighted on Bhutan's development path which is based on GNH rather than GNP reflects Bhutan's anxiety to avoid some of the glaring failures of the blind pursuit of economic development<sup>50</sup>. Bhutan prefers using mostly grants from bilateral donors instead of loans from multi-national agencies. This approach of Bhutan is in direct cognizance of its values of self-reliance and to build internal capacity in order to ensure future autonomy. However, the nation is also accepting loans for its development. This change increases the potential of social and political tensions which may emerge out of speedy modernization process<sup>51</sup>.

The education system of Bhutan has developed a lot from its embryonic stage in the span of five decades of planned development. The RGoB is focusing on education sector as it is a vital tool for an overall development in Bhutan. The analysis of six five year plans from 1981 to 2013 shows the emphasis given to the education sector by the Bhutanese government. The international donor agencies has an important role and are involved in developing the education sector, but question arises how far the RGoB will be able to sustain its unique identity which are getting influenced from the contacts with the foreign agencies. The trends and patterns that emerge from the analysis of the Bhutanese development plan is very relevant in proper understanding of the growth of education system in Bhutan.

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<sup>50</sup>UNDP. (2000), Bhutan Human Development Report 2000 "*Gross National Happiness and Human Development: Searching for Common Ground*", Thimphu: United Nations Development Program Bhutan, p. 20.

<sup>51</sup> World Bank DPR (2003), *Bhutan Country Brief : Development Progress Report*, Washington DC: WB [Online:Web] Accessed on January 9, 2012 URL: <http://wbln1018.worldbank.org/sar/sa.nsf/88c14925eec19059852567d7005d5308/aa73ed5105fb144485256804005deaa1?>

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **BHUTAN'S EDUCATION POLICY: TOOL OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The education system is a vital tool for socio-economic development in Bhutan. The RGoB has realized very early this in order to develop Bhutan in all spheres; it has to make its citizens capable by educating them. The isolation of Bhutan has ended with its first contact with British India rulers. Bhutan decided to take foreign help in order to develop its socio-economic conditions. The development of a nation is very much influenced by its socio-economic factors. The education system and socio-economic conditions of a nation are inter related and inter dependent on each other. For instance, in Bhutan the continuous development of its education system has led to improved socio-economic conditions of the Bhutanese on one hand and on the other hand , to the improvement in social infrastructures like schools, hospitals , roads etc. along with the recent trends of growth in the economy resulting in directing more funds to education sector for its development. In addition to this, Bhutan has built a small but well-motivated cadre of development administrators<sup>1</sup>.

The nation of Bhutan remained isolated from rest of the world until the middle of the last century because of its geophysical and political situation. It stepped into the world of modernization with the launch of its first five year plan in 1961. The priority was initially given to development of base infrastructures which included roads telecommunications, health and education services and the modernization of agriculture system. In all the five year plans, there is an immense effort to strengthen its national identity and culture, improving the quality of life, maintenance of sustainable services, conserving its natural resources and rich biodiversity and attaining self sufficiency of the nation. The government has made investments in its basic economic sector which includes hydropower, mining, forestry, and limited tourism. Bhutan has adopted a very cautious development strategy so that their unique culture and heritage can be safe guarded from

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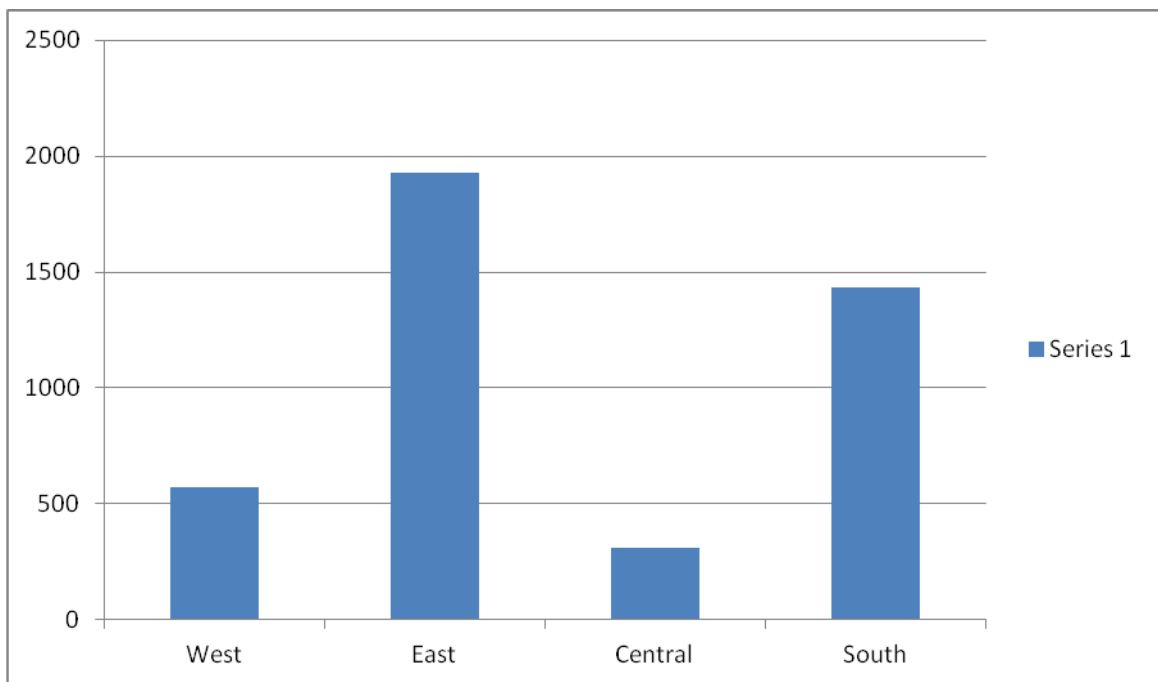
<sup>1</sup>Karan,P. P. (1987), "Environment and Development in Bhutan", *GeografiskaAnnaler*. Series B Human Geography, Vol. 69, No.1 , pp. 15-26

the rapid pace of modernization. The strict environmental policy of the Bhutan aims to maintain a minimum of 60 percent of its land under forest cover, presently it is 72.5 percent.

### **Relationship between education and socio-economic factors**

Education covers vast field of study areas as it is related to social, economic, political and cultural factors of a society. In the same manner all these factors also influences the construction of education policy. This inter-dependence is evident from Bhutan’s development strategy. When its economy was non-monetized and modernization process was not started the only source of education was the monastic institutions. Initially, when Bhutan’s economy was very poor, the education system was also not that developed, but with the help of the foreign aid Bhutan was able to produce some educated youth who

**Figure 6: Number of out-of-school children (aged 6 – 16 years)**



*Source: Ministry of Education, Policy and Planning Division*

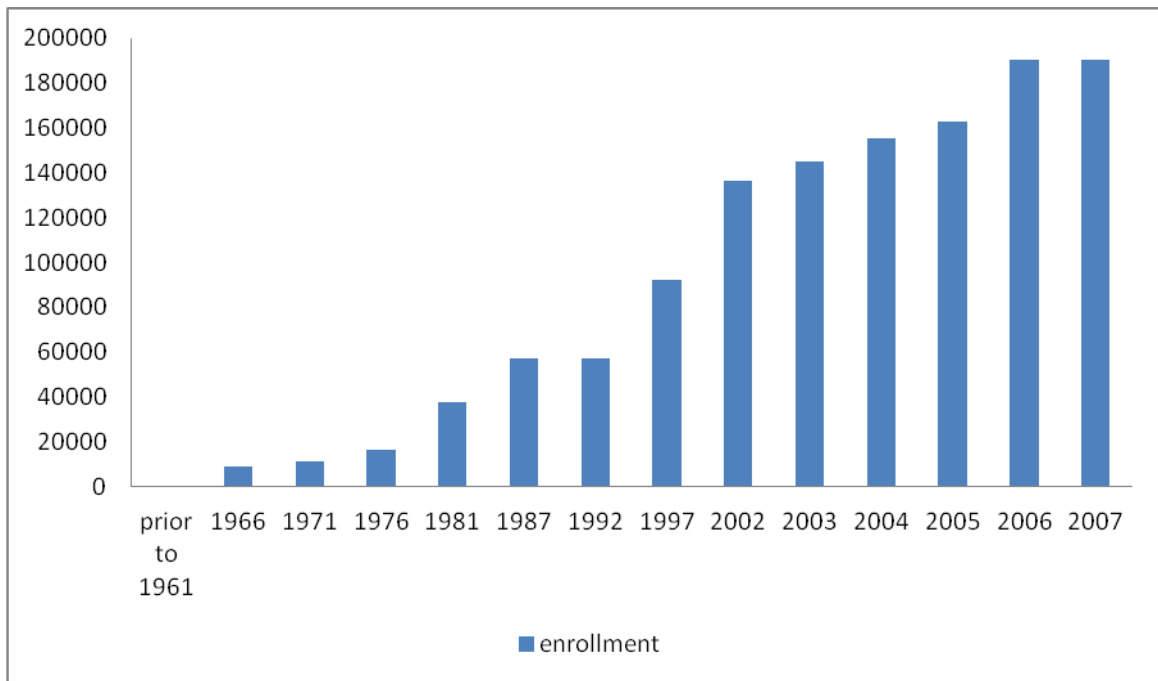
became the first batch of government administrators. Presently, Bhutan is able to generate revenue internally and is also getting funds from external donors for instance WB, ADB, Japan, India, Austria, etc. along with the development of its economy the education sector is developing at a fast rate. Similarly, when Bhutan was undergoing political tensions during 1990s, the education system in Bhutan faced a setback because a large numbers of schools were shut down. This has also de-generated the social fabric of Bhutan. Most of the documents on education cover only the developmental aspects of education; there is a growing trend of dropping-out of students from school before completing their education. The number of out-of-school children is also high in Bhutan and the main reason behind this is the poor economic condition of the people and the other the cause is the growing unemployment among the educated youth. Therefore the government is taking up initiatives to retain students in school, till they complete their basic education. Figure 7 shows distribution of out-of- school children aged between 6 – 16 in the four regions of Bhutan. The pattern of the figure shows that children from the eastern and southern zone of Bhutan are left out of becoming literate, the central and western part have very low out-of-school children that means that these zones are doing well in the educational front.

Figure 8 show the growth of student enrollment from 1961-2007 Bhutan advocates its development philosophy of Gross National Happiness which strives to “maximize the happiness of all Bhutanese and to enable them to achieve their full and innate potential as human being.”<sup>2</sup> Recently, Bhutan has articulated ‘Realizing Vision 2020’ which is asset of goals and strategies for Bhutan’s aspiration in the education sector as part of the initiatives taken towards developing Bhutan as a progressive sovereign nation. This framework of developmental principles address the unique needs of Bhutan by attaining the objectives of GNH, human development, culture and heritage, balanced and equitable development, good governance and environmentally sustainable development are the focal points of the vision. Through this Vision 2020, RGoB wants to fulfill the long term outcomes.

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<sup>2</sup> Bhutan PC (1999), *Bhutan 2020: A Vision of Peace, Prosperity and Happiness*, RGoB: Thimphu, p.47.

**Figure 7: Enrollment 1961-2007<sup>3</sup>**



*Source: National Report of Kingdom of Bhutan, Ministry of Education, RGoB, Thimphu (August 2008)*

Education is recognized both as basic right and a pre-requisite for achieving the wider social, cultural, and economic goals. Bhutan is a small country of 38,394 sq. kilometers (statistical year book 2002), with a population of 600,000<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, the nations' small size provides a unique challenge for socio-economic development. Bhutan is strategically located between China and India. The country can be divided into three geographical divisions in correspondence with the climatic conditions; they are the subtropical southern belt, the central inner Himalayan temperate zone and the higher Himalayan region. Only 8 percent of the total land is cultivable and around 79 percent<sup>5</sup> of the total population is engaged in subsistence agriculture.

<sup>3</sup> Figures in 2002 include NFE learners and from 2006 monastic education was included. While learners in pvt. Schools are included, learners in pvt. Training institutes are not included.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

The development of basic road network and the communication system has linked major population areas and taken them out of their isolation. It has also helped the nation in its nation building process. It facilitates marketing of agricultural products access to services. But, more than half of the Bhutanese population is still dependent on trails and mule tracks for communication. A comprehensive health care system and improved access to potable water has reduced the infant mortality rate from 142 to 60.5 per 1000 live birth and has also increased the life expectancy from 48 to 66 years during 1990-2000. In the year 1994, the population growth was estimated to be about 3.1 percent which has declined in 2000<sup>6</sup>.

King Jigme Singye Wangchuk in 1996 stated that most of the socio-economic indicators are an attempt at measuring means and do not measure ends therefore he proposed “happiness” as a policy concern and policy objective. The GNH objectives are thus a policy initiative opposed to traditional GNP. The principles of GNH include: sustainable development preserving and promotion of cultural values, conservation of natural environment and establishment of good governance. GNH represents an indigenous model of development unique to Bhutan and inspired by Buddhist principles<sup>7</sup>. In 1960s, Bhutan was far behind in term of development indices.

Therefore, the first FYP was initiated for the social and economic development of Bhutan. There were no motorable roads in Bhutan; the nation was connected only by mule tracks and footpaths. At this point of time, besides the monastic administration, there was no organized sector nr skilled labor, no financial institution. There was barter economy and the per capita GDP amounted to 51 US Dollars in 1958 and 56 US Dollars in 1963<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, the Chinese claim over Bhutan was one of the factors which made Bhutan to end its isolation and join the rest of the world. Thus a planned economic development for modernizing its infrastructure was the priority for Bhutan’s progress. The First to Fourth FYPs concentrated mostly on infrastructural development including

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Nath, Partha and ChandanSengupta (2004), *Indegenity and Universality in Social Science:A South Asian Response*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, p.43.

<sup>8</sup> Sharma, B. N. (1972) *Bhutan: Blueprint of Development* in Yojna, 16<sup>th</sup> April, p. 291.

primary and secondary education, construction of roads hospitals, exploiting natural resources available in the country, developing the skill of manpower and developing the basic amenities for Bhutanese. The first task taken up for developing Bhutan was the construction of a class 5 road with class 18 bridge between Darang (Samdrup Jongkhar ) and Tashigang by the Indian engineers. India and Bhutan was connected by developing and construction of roads Rangiya and Fakiragram in Assam and Hashimara in West Bengal. Mainly this construction of roads was to develop North-South National Highways<sup>9</sup>:

1. Phuntshoing –ThimpuRoad
2. Sarbhang-wangdiphodrang Road
3. Geylegphug-Tongsa Road
4. Samdrup Jongkhar-Tashigang Road

Cottage industries were one of the fields which made good progress without any serious efforts. This included carpets, weaving, and handicrafts made out of bamboo, wood carvings and traditional Buddhist paintings. Development of industries based on natural forest and mineral resources were also taken up. Along with the development of roads and communication network, agricultural and horticultural programs were also taken up to maintain a high output. For development of rural areas animal husbandry and poultry projects were also initiated. The first ever public school Sherubtse Higher Secondary School was inaugurated by *DrukGyalpo*(King) Jigme Dorji Wangchuk at Kanglung. Bhutan has a rich water resource and to trap this, first hydroelectric project i.e. the Chhukha project was started in the year 1973. This project was very fruitful, especially for southern Bhutan which has no coal deposits and has difficulty importing oil. The electricity was exported to India and Bhutan used to get 250 kW free but to meet the national need electricity was imported from India for central and eastern regions of Bhutan.

The initiatives undertaken by the RGoB in the form of FYPs has a shift from the fifth five year plan in terms of policies and strategies. The aim was to increase the nation's

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<sup>9</sup> Karan, Pradyumna (1996), "Geo-Political Structure of Bhutan", *India Quarterly*, New Delhi, Vol.19,July.



economic self-reliance and to encourage greater public participation in developmental activities. As the first step the government decentralized the administration into districts (*Dzongkhangs*). District administration officials National assembly members, village headmen and others were constituted into District Planning Committees (*DzongkhagYargayTschogchung*s-DYT). These committees discussed the grassroots' requirements for initiating any developmental projects, thus people's direct participation was ensured in developmental projects.

The economic cooperation of Bhutan with India for reaching structural changes in Bhutan shows the characteristic of an inward looking policy for a substantial period of time<sup>10</sup>. Agriculture sector which used to receive hardly 2 percent of the total plan outlays in the initial phase has increased to a massive 23 percent. Its share again saw a drastic fall in the next plans. But in the Seventh FYP, its share was again raised. Moreover, agricultural sector is the one which is giving maximum profit to the nations GDP. Thus, The RGoB is focusing in this sector. The huge amount which was 59 percent of the total outlay during the 1960s was allocated to the PWD was due to the massive infrastructural development tasks undertaken by Bhutan. The other sectors like power, trade and industry, education and health received fluctuating allocation of funds.

The continuous aid assistance from government of India and the availability of the UN Development Assistance which started when Bhutan joined UN in 1971 and kind gestures from other countries such as Australia, Japan and Switzerland to participate in the development in Bhutan resulted in increasing the confidence of Bhutanese in external aid. The RGoB continued to add developmental projects, rehabilitate settlements, reduce taxes and subsidize prices on essential commodities, fertilizers, agricultural implements and cement. This led to making Bhutanese people more dependent on the government for jobs, education and health care. The Bhutanese were pre-occupied with the 'Perpetual Aid Syndrome'<sup>11</sup>. The royal government evaluated a feedback of its development plans

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<sup>10</sup> Lama, M.P. (1996), "Bhutan: A Changing Development Paradigm" in *Bhutan: Society and Polity*, New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, p.156.

<sup>11</sup> Dhakal, D.N.S. (1987), "Twenty-Five Years of Development in Bhutan", *Mountain Research and Development*, Vol. 7, No. 3, p. 220.

in 1982 and noted a record of food deficit of 25,000 metric tons; unbalanced regional development and a huge overhead cost due to burgeoning bureaucracy which consumed most of the revenue from capita; investments. This made the government realize that there is a systemic flaw in its approach to develop the nation socio-economically. Thus, the government decided to slowly lead its people from 'Perpetual Aid Syndrome' to 'Self-reliance'<sup>12</sup>. Thus, this resulted in decentralization of the Bhutanese administration.

The socio-economic developmental plans in Bhutan from 1990s onwards emphasized more on sustainable development to attain self-reliance. For this, they focused on mobilizing internal resources. The steady socio-economic advancements of the nation have been largely possible because of the assistance of its development partners and in future also foreign assistance will play a significant role for the necessary development in the infrastructure. However, the RGoB is determined not to perpetuate more dependence on foreign assistance. Bhutan is a small nation which has a serious attitude to the cultural dimensions of development and is determined policy to develop the country in its own term<sup>13</sup>. A positive achievement of Bhutan's development policy is that it is one of the developing nations which are able to meet its recurring costs from its domestic revenue<sup>14</sup>. Bhutan is doing everything to generate sufficient amount of domestic resources to meet the increasing recurrent costs. Some tactics that the Bhutanese government is using to generate domestic resources are- commercialization of public enterprises, increasing taxation and phasing out subsidies and concession. The emphasis is more on exporting goods and services to earn resources and pay for imports. A reasonable level of technical capacity will be achieved through human resource development strategies. Therefore, the government is emphasizing on developing human resources, and will continue as the nation still lacks sufficient amount of manpower in various sector. The government is maximizing technical and professional training to the Bhutanese nationals to meet the demands of skilled manpower. Huge investments are made on health, education and various training programs to support socio-economic priorities of the nation. Education

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Lama, M.P. (1996), "Bhutan: A Changing Development Paradigm" in *Bhutan: Society and Polity* (New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, p.156.

<sup>14</sup>Zimba, D.Y. (1996), "Bhutan: Three Decades of Planned Development" in *Bhutan: Society and Polity* (New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, p.171

being the key component for developing the nation, therefore a major investment is emphasized particularly on technical and vocational education training with the help of donations from Asian Development Bank (ADB), relevant UN agencies and the World Bank along with few bilateral donors including Japan, Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands. These donors have also been active in other sectors like agriculture, energy, infrastructure and finance<sup>15</sup>

A balanced development all over Bhutan is necessary; therefore, the emphasis was to provide uniform services and facilities in all the Dzongkhags (districts) of Bhutan. The decentralization process was started to achieve equity in development projects. However, for a region to develop industrial ventures and economic activities for an overall socio-economic advancement availability of natural resources and geographical characteristics also plays an important role. Educating people about environment through the introduction of environmental studies was an initiative by the government for its goal towards achieving sustainable development which emphasizes on environment protection and sustainable development. The exploitation of the forest resources is carefully controlled and monitored by the government. While framing important policies the government has taken advice from the ecologists' view which is inherent in Bhutan's Buddhist ethos. The forest policy of Bhutan declared that a minimum of 60 percent of its total land should remain under forest cover, and within this 20 percent should be managed as wildlife sanctuaries, national parks and forest reserves for the conservation of biodiversity. It is a matter of pride for Bhutan for being the first nation to introduce environment trust fund which aims to protect its fragile ecosystems which is still in pristine state<sup>16</sup>.

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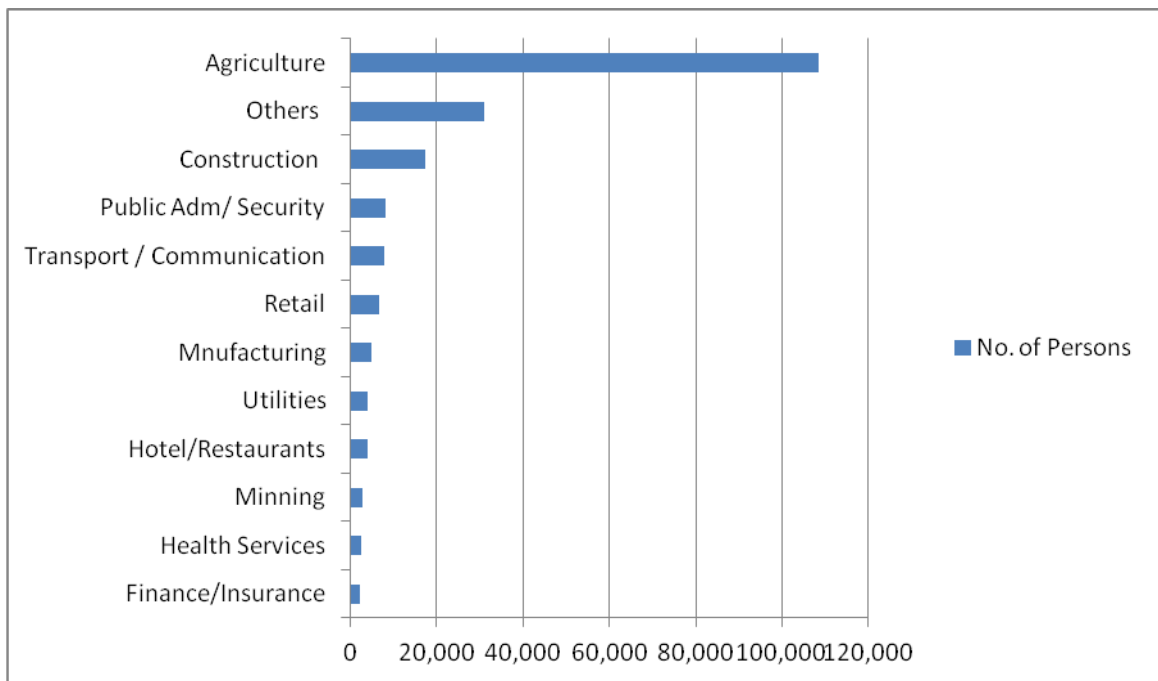
<sup>15</sup> Frame, Bob (2005), "Bhutan: A Review of Its Approach to Sustainable Development" in *Development in Practice*, Vol.15, No. 2 (April),p. 218

<sup>16</sup>Zimba, D.Y. (1996), "Bhutan: Three Decades of Planned Development" in *Bhutan: Society and Polity*, Ramakant and R. C. Mishra (eds.), New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, p .175

## Challenges emerging from the development plans of Bhutan

Bhutan has developed a number of exports oriented and resource based industries over the years in order to lessen its dependence on foreign capital. These development strategies have given rise to regional disparity<sup>17</sup>. The central and eastern Bhutan is less developed than southern Bhutan which is a hub of industrial activities. This has led to the emergence of few urban centers which channelizes many socio-economic problems, migration, growing food shortages, depletion of resources and environmental degradation. Forests in southern Bhutan are being cleared in some areas which used to protect the mountain slopes from eroding. This resulted in frequent floods and soil

**Figure 8: Employment by Industry in 2005<sup>18</sup>**



*Source: RGoB, Policy and Planning Division Ministry of Education, Education for All: Mid-Decade Assessment Report, 2008*

<sup>17</sup>Mehrotra, Smitra (1996), "Economic Development in Bhutan: Recent Trends" in *Bhutan: Society and Polity*, Ramakantand R. C. Mishra (eds.), New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, p. 189.

<sup>18</sup>Deki, K (2008), National Report: *The Development of State of Art of Adult Learning and Education*, Thimphu: Ministry of Education, p. 8.

erosions. The migration of people from rural to urban areas in search of a better livelihood earning has resulted in housing problem in urban centers. Since 1990s, demographic changes due to socio-economic development have raised a twin phenomenon of high population growth rate and a large young population. The youth constitutes about 57 percent of the total population. The life expectancy of the population has also increased in the recent years due to improved health facilities available today in Bhutan.

The challenge before the government of Bhutan is to provide employment to the young population. The civil services of Bhutan which initially employed almost all the educated Bhutanese now encourage them to seek employment in private and corporate sectors<sup>19</sup>. The expansion of education system has resulted in producing a sizeable number of educated youth who do not see cultivation or agriculture as a respectable option of livelihood which is raising the burden on the government to provide them with employment opportunities. The initial trend of engulfing almost all the educated people in public jobs has made youth preferring ‘white collar jobs’ more than manual or labour intensive jobs. Moreover, a survey conducted by ADB in 2001 showed that the employers generally do not consider Bhutanese youth to have relevant skills and job related experience. There is a presence of more than 50,000 Indian expatriate workers who are filling shortages in the supply of domestic skilled and unskilled labor (ADB Survey: 2001). The Bhutanese government role has changed from a ‘provider’ to an ‘enabler’<sup>20</sup>. Thus the issue of power sharing between the government, private sector and community organizations will become more complex in the coming days. This will further develop contradictions between market economy and GNH, centered on two opposite sets of values<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup>Kinga, Sonam and Lham Dorji (2005), *Youth in Bhutan, Education, Employment and Development*, Thimphu: the Centre for Bhutan Studies, p. 34 [Online: Web] Accessed on February 6, 2012.

URL: <https://www.mms.thlib.org/typerscripts/0000/0313/1650.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Frame, Bob (2005), “A Review of Its Approach to Sustainable Development” in *Development in Practice*, Vol.15, No. 2 (April), p. 218

<sup>21</sup>Mathou, Thierry (2000), The Politics of Bhutan: Change in Continuity, *Journal Bhutan Studies*, Thimphu: Centre for Bhutan Studies

The socio-economic enhancement of urban areas like Thimphu has increased job and business opportunities for urban women. This led to modernization of child rearing practices. The rural uneducated or school dropouts are migrating to urban centers for becoming *alu-tani* (baby sitters). This practice is an indicator of the emerging nuclear family units in urban areas. The only good part in this is that it is making uneducated rural youth economically self-subsistent for a short period of time<sup>22</sup>. Bhutan is signatory to international convention for protecting child rights. The issue on domestic violence against babysitters surfaced on *kuennselonlineforum* where readers proposed separate legislation for this job for looking after work environment of the baby sitters. Therefore, there is a need on the part of the government to look into the matter seriously from the view point of the rural youth.

**Figure 9: Employment Figures for 2007**<sup>23</sup>

AREA/ SEX	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED
<b>Urban</b>	60,400	4,400
Male	39,000	2,200
Female	21,400	2,300
<b>Rural</b>	213,600	6,200
Male	107,700	3,200
Female	106,000	3000
<b>Bhutan</b>	274,100	10,600
Male	146,700	5,400
Female	127,300	5,200

*Source: National Report, Ministry of Education 2008.*

<sup>22</sup>Kinga, Sonam and Lham Dorji (2005), *Youth in Bhutan, Education, Employment and Development*, Thimphu: the Centre for Bhutan Studies, p. 120 [Online: Web] Accessed on February 6, 2012.  
URL: <https://www.mms.thlib.org/typerscripts/0000/0313/1650.pdf>

<sup>23</sup>Deki, K (2008), National Report: *The Development of State of Art of Adult Learning and Education*, Thimphu: Ministry of Education, p. 7.

Both economic and social sustainability are engraved in Bhutan's development philosophy of GNH. The priority accorded to social sustainability is apparent in the inclusion of "preservation and promotion of cultural and traditional values" as one of the objectives and strategies. But on the flipside, this very strategy has led to social and cultural discrimination of the minority communities such as Lhotshampas (Nepali) and Sharchops. The policy of *Driglam Namza* (one nation, one people) has enforced homogenous code of conduct including dress code and language undermining the minority communities' aspirations. Bhutan in the international forum talks about its traditions and has been justifying their practices in the name of safe guarding Bhutanese culture but internally is doing just the opposite by undermining the culture, traditions and language of the minority communities. For a multi lingual, multiethnic and multi religious nation of Bhutan, the prevalence of Drukpa culture and tradition on other communities has already resulted in anti-government demonstrations which resulted in migration of 100,000 ethnic Nepali people from southern Bhutan to seven refugee camps administered by UNHCR in Nepal (Amnesty International, 2002). The western model of education which helps in developing critical thinking of the people may in the future lead to further tensions in Bhutan.

The Bhutanese people are more concerned nowadays for preserving their traditional values which is one of the policy objectives of the government itself. The introduction of a market based economy and monetization of economic activities as a part of development process in itself introduced new values in the society that used to be dependent on exchange and barter of goods and services<sup>24</sup>. The introduction of mass media in Bhutan is one of the greatest sources of external influence and values apart from tourism. The attitudes values and expectations of the Bhutanese are changing which on one hand unleashes the uglier aspects of modernization- alienation, self-centeredness materialism etc. and on the other hand threatens Bhutan's traditional cultural and spiritual

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<sup>24</sup> Wangyal, Tashi, *Ensuring Social Sustainability: Can Bhutan's Education System Ensure Intergenerational Transmission Of Values*, Journal of Bhutan Studies, p. 112 [Online: Web] Accessed on November 12, 2011,  
URL: [www.thlib.org/static/reprints/jbs/JBS\\_03\\_01\\_04.pdf](http://www.thlib.org/static/reprints/jbs/JBS_03_01_04.pdf)

fabric that has till date enabled Bhutanese to live in harmony with each other and with the environment.

From the above discussion, we can conclude that even though the fruit of modernization has uplifted the socio-economic conditions of the Bhutanese but it has also resulted in posing many challenges to the traditional cultural and spiritual values of the Bhutanese along with the challenge of unemployment to more than half of the total population of Bhutan. The RGoB has to take initiatives and plan its policies to meet the hurdles emerging out of its rapid development plan.



## CHAPTER 4

### BHUTAN'S EDUCATION POLICY: CAUSES OF DISCONTENT

Bhutan is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and a multi-religious nation, although the Royal Government of Bhutan emphasizes on a homogenous national culture that is the Drukpa culture. The three major ethnic communities include the Ngalongs in the west, the Sharchops in the east and the Lhotshampas in the south. The popular meaning of Ngalongs is 'first risen' used in the sense that they were the first Bhutanese community to have adopted Buddhism. The term Sharchops means 'easterners' and Lhotshampas means 'southern border landers'.<sup>25</sup> The people of central Bhutan represent the fourth grouping; they are distinguished from the use of various dialects, centered in the Bumthang region. The central Bhutanese, the Ngalongs and the Sharchops collectively constitutes the majority Drukpa community, all of them follow Buddhism whereas the Lhotshampas follow Hinduism. The national language is Dzongkha from 1961<sup>26</sup>, instead of availability of other languages and various dialects in Bhutan.

The Lhotshampas are a Nepali-speaking people who migrated from Nepal and India to Bhutan, where they settled along the Bhutan-India border between 1865 and 1930<sup>27</sup>. They were initially encouraged by the British colonial representatives to settle in this borderland and, since this area was malarial and uncultivated, their settlement was not resisted by the inhabitants of northern Bhutan. However, in the 1980s, concerns over demographic changes and fears of a plot to create a 'Greater Nepal' exacerbated by a violent Gorkhaland movement in India prompted the Bhutanese Government to push for a national identity that reflected the culture of the country's prevailing ethnic groups. Similarly to developments in other South Asian countries (e.g. Nepal), this included the adoption of a 'one nation, one people' policy, symbolized through the promotion of a national dress and language. In Bhutan, these differed from the traditional clothing and

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<sup>25</sup> Hutt, Michael (2003), *Unbecoming Citizens: Culture, Nationhood and Flight of Refugees*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-5.

<sup>26</sup> vanDriem, G. (1994), "Language Policy in Bhutan" in M. Aris and M. Hutt (eds.), *Bhutan: Aspects of Culture and Development*, Gartmore: Kiscadale Publications, pp. 87-105.

<sup>27</sup> Hutt, Michael (2003), *Unbecoming Citizens: Culture, Nationhood and Flight of Refugees*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p.24.

language of the Lhotshampas. In response to this policy, some *Lhotshampas* protested against the government and formed political groups to defend their right to maintain their distinct cultural and linguistic identity. The Bhutanese Government suppressed this dissent, precipitating the flight of over 80,000 Lhotshampas, who became refugees in Nepal in the early 1990s. Most of the refugees continue to live in ‘temporary’ camps today, demonstrating the perils of being a borderland people caught up in conflict over national identity and citizenship.

### **Primordial loyalties and its importance**

Primordial loyalty means that individuals develop primary loyalty towards its community sub-consciously. The factors like language, ethnicity, culture and religion constitutes the primordial loyalties. Hamza Alavi is of the view that social anthropology deals with aspects of social organization such as kinship, caste that is the primordial loyalties with a focus on cultural norms<sup>28</sup>. Clifford Geertz states that “Primordial Loyalty” is generally used to handle some of the pragmatical and more expressivist dimensions of new state politics<sup>29</sup>. It has been noticed that citizens of a nation is closer to their primordial loyalties when it comes to safeguarding it if certain sort of discrimination is done by the centralized authority. There are end numbers of examples where people belonging to certain community started protest movements when the state machinery tries to dictate its authority by giving more preference to one and neglecting others. For instance in India when Hindi was made the national language, the non-Hindi speaking states started protests and the Indian government had to give official status to many languages. Similar kind of discontent started in Bhutan when the Monarchy tried to homogenize the nation, enforcing everybody to follow the majoritarian Drukpa culture, neglecting the other ethnic groups. Primordial loyalties are very dear to every individual and it leaves long term effect in the minds of the people if they are discriminated because they belong to some other community or culture or they speak a different language.

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<sup>28</sup>Alavi, Hamza (1973), Peasant Clashes and Primordial Loyalties, *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol.1, No. 1, p. 23.

<sup>29</sup>Geertz, Clifford (1994), Primordial Loyalties and Standing Committees: An Anthropological Reflections on Politics of Identity, Budapest: Institute of Advanced Studies [Online: Web] Accessed on April 22, 2012 URL: <https://www.cilbud.hu>

In Bhutan the Royal Government has strictly applied the code of etiquette “*Driglam Namza*”. The dress code was forcefully enforced in the southern Bhutan. This discriminative policy affects the minority communities in Bhutan; they are forced to follow the culture and tradition of the *Ngalongs* and speak their language i.e. *Dzongkha*. Everybody should wear the national dress *gho* and *kira* in government offices, schools, hospitals and monasteries. While the national dress is thick and is very comfortable for northern Bhutanese where the climatic conditions is cold, on the other hand, southern Bhutan is very hot during summers and wearing the *gho* and *kira* every day is uncomfortable. The *Sharchops* is an ethnic community in the east of Bhutan. They follow the *Nyingma* sect of Buddhism, they have alleged that the national identity policy also extends to religious matters. The *Nyingma* sect Buddhist institutions have been converted into *Drukpa Kargyu* by replacing the leaders; those who opposed have been imprisoned or fled the country<sup>30</sup>.

The kingdom of Bhutan has recently adopted its constitution in 2008. While at first glance the Constitution may appear to be in harmony with international human rights treaties since many of its provisions seem to guarantee fundamental rights associated with these treaties, a closer examination reveals that on the contrary, it is intended to exclude vast segments of the population of Bhutan from being able to enjoy even the most basic of human rights in an attempt to ensure the dominance of certain ethnic groups – and the exclusion of others based solely on their ethnicity<sup>31</sup>. All in all, this unfortunate constitutional aberration – seemingly welcomed in the West – makes the Land of the Dragon anything but a Shangri La<sup>32</sup>. The minorities claim that there are human rights violations against them but, Bhutanese authority always negates these claims and supports its discriminative policies by claiming that for a big nation heterogeneity and cultural diversity may be a blessing, but it is a threat to small nations like Bhutan. Though Bhutan is a democratic nation, it lacks the vision of a true democratic and open society,

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<sup>30</sup> Norwegian Refugee Council (2008), NRC Reports: “*Bhutan: Land of Happiness for the selected*”, Issue 1, p. 6.

<sup>31</sup> de Varennes, Fernand (2008), Constitutionalising Discrimination in Bhutan: The emasculation of Human Rights in the Land of Dragon, *Asia-Pacific Journal on Human Rights and the Law*, Vol. 2, pp. 47, Netherlands, p. 47.

<sup>32</sup>. Ibid.

based on ideas of social justice and tolerance and for a rights based approach in development planning. Bhutan has not ratified the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) which is main international treaty that contains a specific minority provision, Article 27<sup>33</sup>. The Constitution of Bhutan is a document does not clearly have any provision for the protection of the rights of the minorities.

The government of this nation aspires to single cultural identity i.e. *Drukpa*, which constitutes the ruling class of the kingdom. But a number of other ethnic communities are also present in Bhutan. As mentioned earlier, major among them are *Ngalongs* (which constitutes the ruling *Drukpa* community), Sharchops in the east and the Lhotshampas in the southern part of Bhutan. All these ethnic communities have their own languages. *Dzongkha* which is the national language from 1961<sup>34</sup> is the language of the Drukpa ruling class, the Sharchops speak Tshangla, the *Lhotshampas* speak Nepali and other than that, there are a number of local dialects spoken in different parts of Bhutan. The Drukpa community has similarities with the culture and traditions of Sikkim and the Sharchops has linkages with the people of Arunachal Pradesh in the east. The present political boundaries have led to the dilution of the older ties of ethnicity and language<sup>35</sup>. Both the communities follow and practice the Mahayana Buddhism. The Drukpa Kargyu sect is predominant in western Bhutan and *Nyingmain* the east. The Drukpa Karyu has statutory representation in the states recommendatory and consultative institutions and enjoys state patronage. The *Nyingma* sect does not have such patronage<sup>36</sup>. The population in southern Bhutan is called *Lhotshampas*. They follow Hinduism and speak Nepali language. A total of 160,000 speakers of Dzongkha, 1,38,000 speakers of Tshangla and 156,000 speakers of Nepali was recorded by the Dutch linguist, George van Driem, out of the total

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<sup>33</sup> Article 27 states: 'In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.'

<sup>34</sup> vanDriem, G (1994), "Language Policy in Bhutan" in *Bhutan: Aspects of Culture and Development*, M. Aris and M. Hutt (eds.), Gartmore: Kiscadale Publications. p.

<sup>35</sup> Aris, Michael (1994), "Introduction" in in *Bhutan: Aspects of Culture and Development*, M. Aris and M. Hutt (eds.), p.27.

<sup>36</sup> Hutt, Michael (2003), *Unbecoming Citizens: Culture, Nationhood and Flight of Refugees*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p.

population of 602,800<sup>37</sup>. However it was not clear whether these figures included the Nepali speaking Bhutanese who are presently taking refuge in Nepal<sup>38</sup>. Even though there are large number of non-*Drukpa* speakers the RGoB has imposed their language on the plural society of Bhutan.

The Nepali speaking *Lhotshampas* migrated to Bhutan Nepal and Darjeeling and settled in the Indo-Bhutan borderlands in between 1865 and 1930<sup>39</sup>. This migration of huge population was encouraged by the Britishers initially and the northern Bhutanese did not resist it because the southern Bhutan was uncultivable and malaria was endemic in that region. Most of the southern settlers were engaged in subsistence agriculture and contributed to good amount to country's gross domestic product. They were educated and economically well-off compared to the indigenous Bhutanese population. Because of their geographical and cultural ties to India and Nepal they were aware of their rights. Therefore when *Dzongkha* was made the national language, along with their systematic discrimination in employment sector resulted in discontent among the *Lhotshampas*. They were also not allowed to buy land in northern Bhutan. The first official royal tour of the King to southern Bhutan was as late as 1957<sup>40</sup>. Till then the Nepali Bhutanese were running their own affair for more than half a century with minimal contact with the North<sup>41</sup>. There was rapid economic development and 'ideological penetration from India' 'within a community which has not been integrated socially or politically into the broader Bhutanese society'<sup>42</sup>. The RGoB had not taken any initiative to integrate the *Lhotshampas* into the mainstream.

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<sup>37</sup> vanDriem, George (1994), "Language Policy in Bhutan" in *Bhutan: Aspects of Culture and Development*, M. Aris and M. Hutt (eds.), p. 92.

<sup>38</sup> Aris, Michael (1994c), "Introduction", in *Bhutan: Aspects of Culture and Development*, M. Aris and M. Hutt (eds.), p. 14.

<sup>39</sup> Hutt, Michael (2003), *Unbecoming Citizens: Culture, Nationhood and Flight of Refugees*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 24.

<sup>40</sup> Dhakal, D.N.S and C. Strawn (1994), *Bhutan: A Movement in Exile*, Jaipur: Nirala Publications, pp. 146-147.

<sup>41</sup> Hutt, Michael (2003), *Unbecoming Citizens: Culture, Nationhood and Flight of Refugees*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 145.

<sup>42</sup> Rose, Leo (1977), *The Politics of Bhutan*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 47.

More discrimination was done towards *Lhotshampa* community during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Lhotshampas paid taxes heavily in cash and labour whereas Drukpas paid taxes in kind and labour until 1960<sup>43</sup>. The recruitment policy of the Bhutanese was also biased and the Lhotshampas were not recruited in the police force and army until 1950s<sup>44</sup>. During this period, the Britishers left Bhutan and a strong movement in southern Bhutan started for social reform and development. This movement was referred to as ‘*Jai Gorkha*’ movement. In 1952, Bhutan State Congress (BSC) was formed in Assam under the leadership of D.B. Gurung, their agenda was a demand for a democratic system of government and equal rights for Nepali Bhutanese with regard to government taxes and recruitment to government administrative services and military forces<sup>45</sup>. The Bhutan State Congress organized public demonstration in Bhutan, but failed to attract popular support amongst the *Lhotshampas*<sup>46</sup> and was suppressed by Bhutanese authorities<sup>47</sup>.

The third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk had his first official visit to southern Bhutan in 1957; he realized that building a sense of belonging amongst the *Lhotshampas* in the broader Bhutanese context is the necessity for integrating the nation. During his reign, the modernization process was started and the government changed its attitude and made efforts to encourage the *Lhotshampas* to identify with the nation<sup>48</sup>. In 1958, the Nationality Law of Bhutan was promulgated and official citizenship was granted to all the *Lhotshampas*<sup>49</sup>. These inclusive steps taken by the RGoB was a direct response to the demands of the Bhutan State Congress<sup>50</sup>. To encourage marriage between the northerners and southerners, the government provided financial incentives. The *Lhotshampas* were recruited into general administrative services and the police force and were politically

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<sup>43</sup> Hutt, Michael (2003), *Unbecoming Citizens: Culture, Nationhood and Flight of Refugees*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 74-76.

<sup>44</sup> Rose, Leo (1977), *The Politics of Bhutan*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 113.

<sup>45</sup> Hutt, Michael (2003), *Unbecoming Citizens: Culture, Nationhood and Flight of Refugees*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 122-123

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Joseph, C.M. (1999), *Ethnic Conflict in Bhutan*, New Delhi: Nirala, p. 65.

<sup>48</sup> Hutt, M. (1993), Refugees from Shangri-La. *Index on Censorship* 22, pp. 9–14.

<sup>49</sup> Rose, Leo (1977), *The Politics of Bhutan*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 11.

<sup>50</sup> Whitecross, R. (2009), “Intimacy, Loyalty and State Formation: The Spectre of the ‘Anti-National’” in S. Thiranagama and T. Kelly (eds.), *Traitors: Suspicion, intimacy and the ethics of state-building*, Philadelphia: Penn. Press, p.13.

represented<sup>51</sup>. Even though government declared *Dzongkha* as their national language, the schools in southern Bhutan continued with teaching Nepali and Sanskrit<sup>52</sup>.

This soft attitude of the government however changed under the fourth King Jigme Singye Wangchuk in 1972. The regime focused more on promoting the idea of a united and homogenous Bhutanese population<sup>53</sup>. There was enforcement on the southern Bhutanese to follow *Drukpa* culture<sup>54</sup>. This new attitude of the government may have developed due to the development in the neighboring state of Sikkim which has cultural similarities with the kingdom of Bhutan. A huge migration of Nepali people has resulted in making the indigenous Bhutia and Lepcha communities into a minority. Moreover Sikkim joined India in 1975 which made the monarchy lose its power and rule. The Bhutanese feared a similar fate if its minority *Lhotshampas* were not controlled. In addition to this, the violent movement started by Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) led by Subhash Ghising in 1985 against the state of West Bengal added to the dilemma of the ruling class in Bhutan. All these developments resulted in Bhutan's anxiety of 'Greater Nepal' conspiracy. Although, the *Lhotshampas* of southern Bhutan had nothing to do with Subhash Ghising and were settled in Bhutan for generations, they were perceived as a potential threat and as a potential conduit for a secessionist movement in southern Bhutan<sup>55</sup>.

The government passed a stricter Citizenship Act in 1985 which required people to be able to speak *Dzongkha* language and to prove their residence in Bhutan before 1958 to qualify for automatic citizenship<sup>56</sup>. This act of citizenship made it more difficult for non-

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<sup>51</sup> Hinton, R. 1996. *Health in Transition: The Bhutanese Refugees*, Cambridge: Cambridge University, p. 26

<sup>52</sup> Hutt, M. (1993), Refugees from Shangri-La. *Index on Censorship* 22, pp.

<sup>53</sup> Whitecross, R. (2009), "Intimacy, Loyalty and State Formation: The Spectre of the 'Anti-National'" in S. Thiranagama and T. Kelly (eds.), *Traitors: Suspicion, intimacy and the ethics of state-building*, Philadelphia: Penn. Press, p. 15.

<sup>54</sup> Strawn, C. (1994), "The dissidents" in Bhutan: Perspectives on Conflict and Dissent, (ed.) M. Hutt, Gartmore: Kiscadale Asia Research Series, pp. 97-128.

<sup>55</sup> Bhutan: pushing out, EPW June 25, 1994 p.1556

<sup>56</sup> Evans, R (2010), "The perils of being a borderland people: on *Lhotshampas* of Bhutan" in *Contemporary South Asia*, Vol. 8, No. 1, p.28 [Online : Web] Accessed on November 12, 2011, URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09584930903561596>

Bhutanese women who married Bhutanese man to gain citizenship and their children were no longer entitled to citizenship by birth since they only had one Bhutanese parent<sup>57</sup>. During the enumeration process of 1988, the government reclassified many *Lhotshampas* as non-nationals who had previously been granted citizenship cards. TekNath Rizal, a southern Bhutanese who was a member of Royal Advisory Council was made aware of the grievances of the *Lothsampas*. He raised this matter with the king but the government expelled him from the committee and he was arrested for three days. He left to Nepal shortly afterwards<sup>58</sup>. But he was extradited from Nepal and was imprisoned and tortured in Bhutan<sup>59</sup>. Few years back he was released from the prison. The Bhutanese government justifies their new citizenship policy on the basis of ‘Greater Nepal’ conspiracy theory, arguing that the ‘minority ethnic community’ was attempting to turn themselves into majority through illegal migration in order to take political power<sup>60</sup>

### ***Driglam Namzha*(the Buddhist Code of Etiquettes)**

During 1988 census, the RGoB claimed that ‘large numbers of illegal migrants are flooding the country’ that had been attracted by the free health care, education and other development projects in southern Bhutan since 1961<sup>61</sup>. This demographic pressure was presumed as a threat to Drukpa Buddhist culture which could result in its extinction<sup>62</sup>. Therefore the government initiated certain laws and policies to protect their cultural identity, one of which was homogenizing the country by imposing Driglam Namza, a traditional Buddhist code of dress and etiquette. Driglam Namza is basically the ‘one nation, one people’ policy which aims to preserve national Bhutanese culture. The dress

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<sup>57</sup> Hutt, Michael (2003), *Unbecoming Citizens: Culture, Nationhood and Flight of Refugees*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 148-149.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. pp. 197-200.

<sup>59</sup> Dissent in Bhutan (1990), *EPW*, Feb 17, Vol.25, No. 7, Accessed on July 7, 2011

URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4395938>

<sup>60</sup> Royal Government of Bhutan (1993), *The Southern Bhutan problem: Threat to a nation’s Survival*, Thimpu, Bhutan: Ministry of Home Affairs, p. 34

<sup>61</sup> Royal Government of Bhutan (1992), *Anti-national activities in Southern Bhutan: An update on the terrorist movement*. Thimpu, Bhutan: Department of Information, p. 32.

<sup>62</sup> Thinley, J.Y (1994), “Bhutan: A kingdom besieged” in *Bhutan: Perspectives on conflict and dissent*, ed. M. Hutt. Gartmore, :Kiscadale Asia Research Series, p. 72.



law which people were forced to wear ‘gho’ and ‘kira’<sup>63</sup> was strongly imposed by the local officials with fines for those who refused to conform<sup>64</sup>. There were reports that some Lhotsampa people who went to the hospital without wearing national dress were not treated and others were prevented from getting married wearing traditional Hindu clothing, although this was denied by the RGoB<sup>65</sup>. This was followed by political tensions in southern Bhutan which hampered the political, economic and social fabric of Bhutan, leading to large scale migration of southern Bhutanese to refugee camps in Nepal.



**Bhutanese traditional dress *gho* and *kira***

### **Education Policy: Tool for Discrimination**

The education policy of Bhutan has been utilized as a tool for discriminating the minority. Education sector plays a critical role to develop a nation and when it is used to discriminate a certain sections of the nations, it damages the whole fabric of the society. Earlier, even after *Dzongkha* was made the national language, Nepali and Sanskrit was still being taught in the southern schools. Even though, *Dzongkha* was not fully developed as a language, the government enforced *Dzongkha*. Dzongkha Advisory Council and Dzongkha Development Commission were established to develop Dzongkha

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<sup>63</sup> Dissent in Bhutan (1990), EPW, Feb 17, Vol.25, No. 7, Accessed on July 7, 2011  
URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4395938>

<sup>65</sup> Michael Hutt, *Unbecoming Citizens: Culture, Nationhood and Flight of Refugees* (New Delhi: 2003), p. 175.

into a full-fledged national language. The classical Tibetan language called *Choekey* was used in Bhutan for official purposes and Dzongkha that was taught in school until 1971 was *Choekey*. The introduction of new approach to primary education policy in 1985 made it compulsory to stop teaching languages other than Dzongkha and English. The Nepali language was removed from the school curriculum and official usages. The Nepali school textbooks were reportedly burnt by government officials<sup>66</sup>. The scope of employment for Nepali youths who were teaching Nepali in southern Bhutan decreased. A total of 84 schools and health centers were closed down in southern Bhutan. The government said that due to disturbances going on in that region of the nation, the attendance has decreased to zero, which led to the closure of schools. Moreover, *Kuensel* reported that the *Ngolops* (anti-nationals) who are against the state had destroyed many schools in southern Bhutan. All the development activities came to a halt during this period. The only source of information in Bhutan i.e. the *Kuensel* recorded a dramatic increase in violent crime and robbery in southern Bhutan during the 1990s, and blamed all such crimes on *Ngolops*.

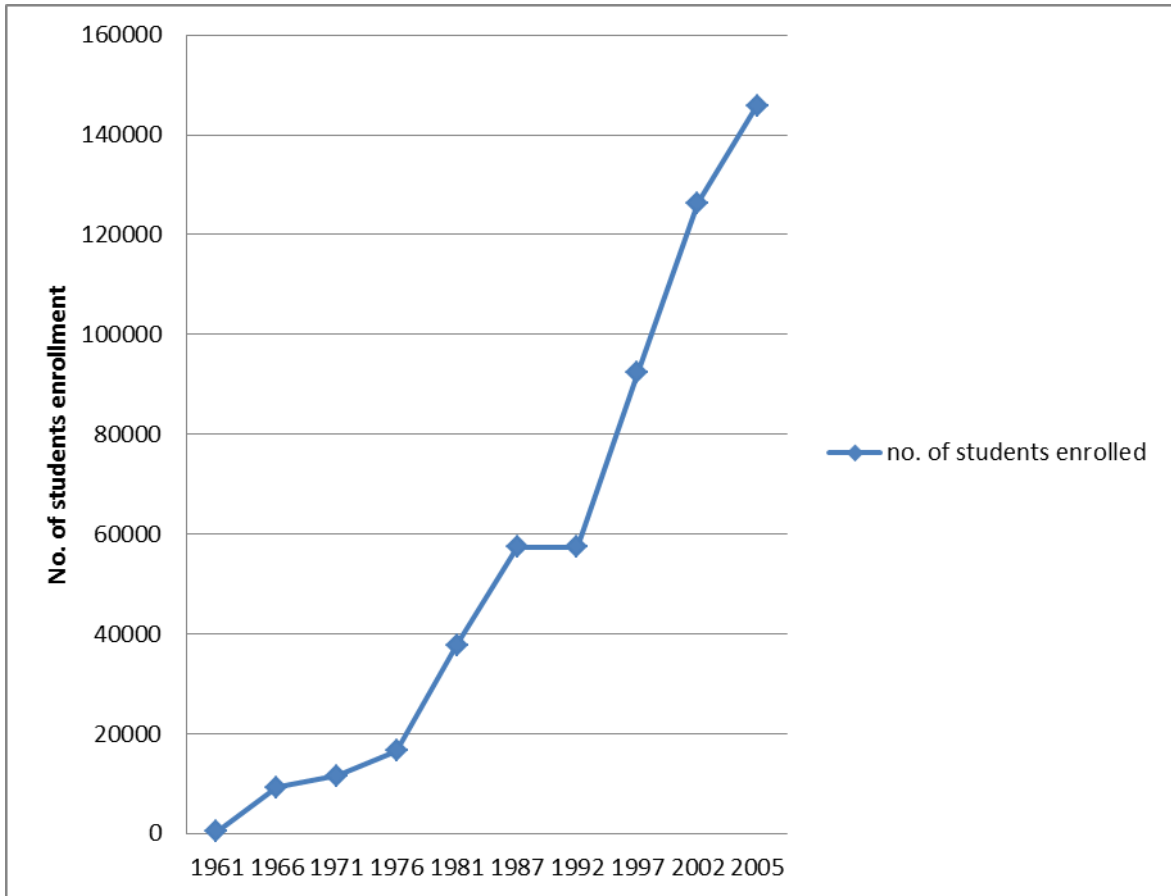


**Nepali traditional dress**

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid. p. 185.

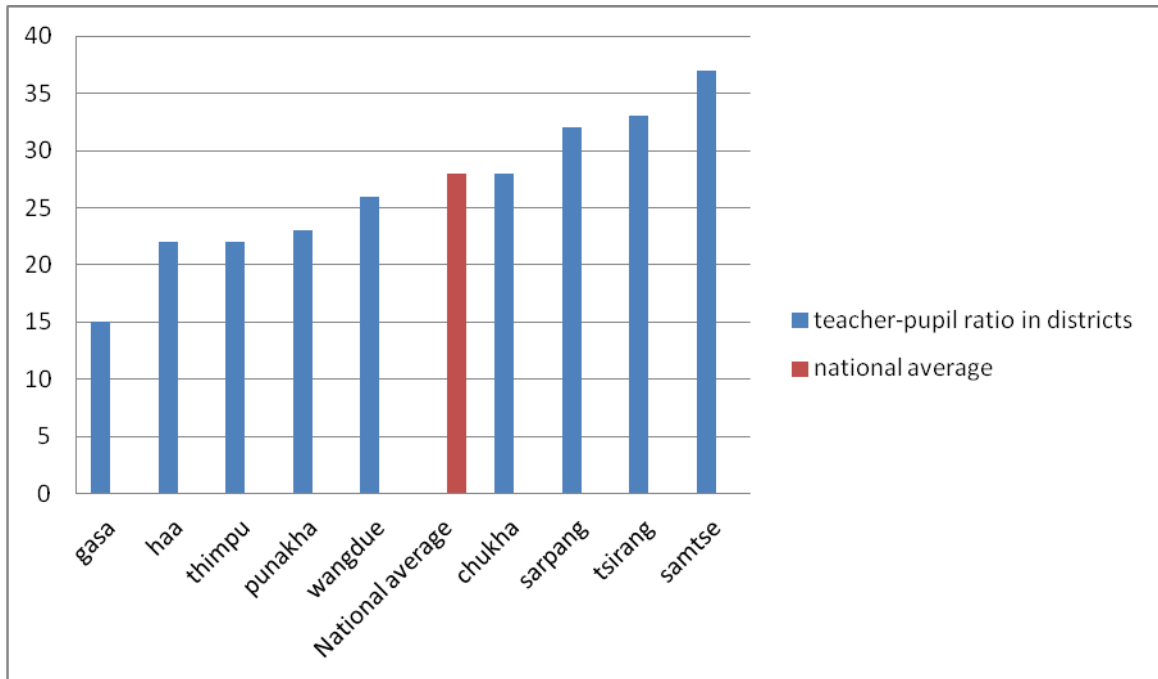
**Figure 10: Growth Rate of Student Enrollment (1961-2005)**



*Source: Policy and Planning Division, Ministry of Education, RGoB.*

After the demonstrations of 1990 by the *Lhotshampas*, the Bhutanese government introduced many new rules and procedures in the south, the *Lhotshampas* described it as a measure designed to attack economic and social basis of their communities. Restrictions were placed on transportation of essential commodities like salt. Applicants for scholarships and civil service appointments had to produce No Objection Certificate from the Royal Bhutan Police. All these repressive measures affected the education system of Bhutan. Figure 10 shows that the enrollment rate did not increase in between 1987 – 1992.

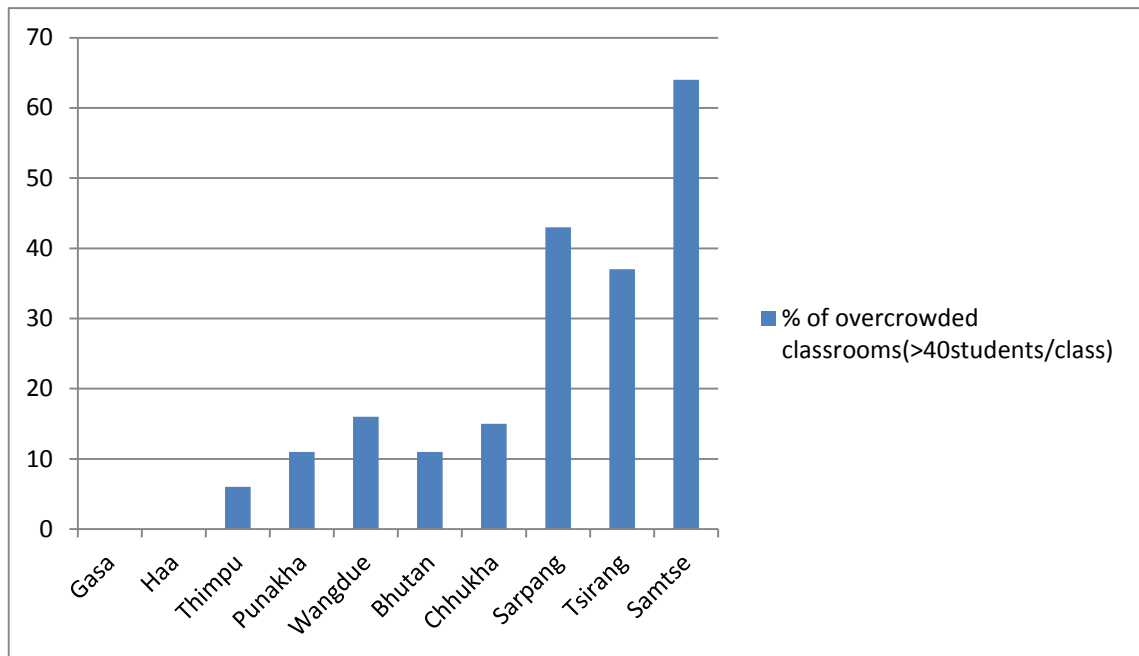
**Figure 11: Teacher-pupil ratio in specific districts**



*Source: General Statistics, 2008, Ministry of Education, RGoB.*

The NOC was also required for seeking admission in schools. This led to difficulties in day to day lives of the *Lhotshampas* because for getting NOC the person should not have any relation with the anti-nationals who demonstrated against the government. This procedure has also made access to education very difficult for the children belonging to the ethnic Nepali. After analysing the education facilities and the availability of teachers in the different *Dzongkhags*, it seems that RGoB is not too keen to develop the minority dominated areas. In the Drukpa dominated areas, the teacher-pupil ratio is much better than the national average (see Figure11). At the same time, the districts of southern Bhutan, has not fared well in both teacher-pupil ratio and has high number of over-crowded class as compared to the northern Bhutanese districts (see Figure 12).

**Figure 12: Percentage of overcrowded classrooms in Dzongkhags (>40 students/class)**



Source: General Statistics, 2008, Ministry of Education, RGoB.

The school curriculum basically consists of value education in Dzongkha, science, mathematics, English and skill development courses. The subject of political science is missing in the Bhutanese school curriculum (see Figure 13). Education is necessary element for developing secular, critical and scientific mindset of individuals. Political science is one of the oldest subjects known for its critical analysis of all the events occurring in a society. Therefore, education without imparting political tenets is an incomplete education. Moreover, Bhutan being a newly democratic nation needs scrutiny from the citizens for its proper functioning. The irony is that the present Monarch of Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuk himself studied politics in Oxford University but the same government headed by him discourages political education. The political demonstrators in southern Bhutan was the result of political consciousness of the *Lhotshampas* who chose to revolt for their rights against the systematic discrimination they were facing. May be the ruling elite does not want this to happen again as Bhutan is a plural society and the government is taking measures to showcase homogenous national identity. Nearly two decades is over of the political tensions that emerged in southern

Bhutan but still the number of educational institutions is very less as compared to the earlier development of education sector. Some vocational training institutes are available which were established during the earlier years.

**Figure 13: Subjects taught in schools**

<b>SUBJECTS TAUGHT</b>	<b>CLASSES</b>
<b>Dzongkha</b>	PP - X
<b>English</b>	PP - X
<b>Mathematics</b>	PP - X
<b>Science</b>	VI – XI
<b>Physics</b>	IX – X
<b>Chemistry</b>	IX – X
<b>Biology</b>	IX - X
<b>Computer Applications</b>	IX - X
<b>Environmental Studies</b>	PP – III
<b>Social Science</b>	IV – VI
<b>History</b>	VII – X
<b>Geography</b>	VII – X
<b>Economics</b>	IX - X
<b>Co-curricular Activities</b>	PP - X

Co-curricular activities include moral value education and other skills development subjects.

*Source: World Data on Education(2008), 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2006-2007*

The higher education system is not properly developed in Bhutan. Therefore to make its citizen attain higher education abroad the government started certain scholarships that too mainly in technical education. It has been noticed that most of the government scholarships are awarded to people belonging to *Drukpa* community. Thus, the other communities are lagging behind in terms of attaining scholarships (Figure: 14 ). The

RGoB heavily funds the technical and vocational education to make Bhutan self-reliant in skilled manpower. Moreover, the first department started was Bhutan Engineering Services where mostly Indian engineers were recruited. This may be one of the reasons behind the great emphasis given by the government for developing technical education.

The employment scenario in Bhutan is not very satisfactory. One of the reasons behind this is the rapid expansion of the education sector and the absence of quality employment for a good number of educated youths. Moreover, the RGoB lacks the vision of formulating policy from the rural youth's point of view which is resulting in heavy migration from rural to urban centers. The newly framed constitution of Bhutan laid down that no one can contest elections without having a graduate degree<sup>67</sup>. Moreover, the Election Act also stipulates that a western university graduate can only become parliamentarians<sup>68</sup>. The ground reality of Bhutan is that there is lack of facilities to prepare the young Bhutanese for a western education. Thus vast majorities of the Bhutanese are left out and loses a chance for contesting elections and getting elected to parliament. Another implication is that by preferring western education as the main criteria for contesting elections, Bhutan has given a second class preference to its national language. Here, the phenomenon of utilizing language can be seen which the RGoB uses for its disposal to meet whatever goals it wants to achieve. The employment scenario in Bhutan is not very satisfactory. One of the reasons behind this is the rapid expansion of the education sector and the absence of quality employment. The employment scenario in Bhutan is not very satisfactory. One of the reasons behind this is the rapid expansion of the education sector and the absence of quality employment for a good number of educated youths. Moreover, the RGoB lacks the vision of formulating policy from the

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<sup>67</sup> Muni, S.D(2008), All The Kings Men, *Frontline*, Vol. 25, No. 8, April 12-25 [Online: Web] Accessed on July 9, 2011, URL: <https://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2508/stories/20080425250804900.htm>

<sup>68</sup> DNC (2007), *Bhutan: on a democratic path*, (New Delhi: 2007), p.1.

**Figure 14: Teton Scholarship for Teachers 2012**

Sl. No.	Name	Subject	Remarks
1.	NimaTsering	Biology + PCS	Shortlisted
2.	PemaTsering	Physics + PCS	Shortlisted
3.	SangyePenjor	Physics + PCS	Shortlisted
4.	JampelWangmo	Chemistry + PCS	Shortlisted
5.	SushmaPradhan	Biology + PCS	Shortlisted
6.	ChogyelTempa	Chemistry + PCS	
7.	SonamGyeltsel	Primary Science + PCS	
8.	Jamyang Tenzin	Biology + PCS	
9.	ChoneyDuba	Biology + PCS	
10.	Tsedup Dorji	Biology + PCS	

*Source: Ministry of Education, RGoB (2012)*



rural youth's point of view which is resulting in heavy migration from rural to urban centers.

**Figure15: List of candidates shortlisted for scholarship**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>DESCIPLINE</b>	<b>FUNDING</b>
<b>Karma Tenzin</b>	MBBS	RGoB
<b>Pema Thinley</b>	B. Dental Surgery	GOI
<b>SonamJamgey</b>	B. Microbiology	GOI
<b>SonamLhundhup</b>	B. Food Sc. Technology	GOI
<b>Ugyen Dorji</b>	B.Sc. Agriculture	GOI
<b>GovindAdhikari</b>	B. Architect	GOI

*Source:Royal Government of*

*Bhutan*<http://www.education.gov.bt/documents/10156/163141/selection+result+for+undergraduate+scholarship+2012?version=1.0>

The employment scenario in Bhutan is not very satisfactory. One of the reasons behind this is the rapid expansion of the education sector and the absence of quality employment for a good number of educated youths. Moreover, the RGoB lacks the vision of formulating policy from the rural youth's point of view which is resulting in heavy migration from rural to urban centers. The newly framed constitution of Bhutan laid down that no one can contest elections without having a graduate degree<sup>69</sup>. Moreover, the Election Act also stipulates that a western university graduate can only become parliamentarians<sup>70</sup>. The ground reality of Bhutan is that there is lack of facilities to prepare the young Bhutanese for a western education. Thus vast majorities of the Bhutanese are left out and loses a chance for contesting elections and getting elected to parliament. Another implication is that by preferring western education as the main criteria for contesting elections, Bhutan has given a second class preference to its national

<sup>69</sup> Muni, S.D(2008), All The Kings Men, *Frontline*, Vol. 25, No. 8, April 12-25 [Online: Web] Accessed on July 9, 2011, URL: <https://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2508/stories/20080425250804900.htm>

<sup>70</sup> DNC (2007), *Bhutan: on a democratic path*, (New Delhi: 2007), p.1.

language. Here, the phenomenon of utilizing language can be seen which the RGoB uses for its disposal to meet whatever goals it wants to achieve.

Thus, it is visible from the above discussion that how Bhutan is using its education policy to fulfill its own needs, neglecting the aspirations of the citizens. Education has also been used as a tool in Sri Lanka for discriminating the Tamil ethnic minority there which resulted in a civil war. Political tensions in a nation are a stumbling block for its proper development. A plural nation cannot become prosperous if integration among the different ethnic communities is not there. The RGoB should understand this and integrate all the communities in Bhutan with the help of a progressive inclusive policy. Otherwise, there is already discontentment among the minority communities of Bhutan and if Bhutan continues to discriminate them through various tactics, the socio-economic and political fabric of the nation will be greatly hampered and it will affect everybody including the ruling Drukpa community.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

Bhutan is a nation which emphasizes on the education sector for achieving its goal of developing the nation like most of the other countries of the world. Basic education received highest levels of attention, the world over, during the last few decades following the child rights convention in 1989 and the first global conference on basic education in Jomtien in 1990. These two events have enormously influenced the course of development in basic education in almost all the countries. Till 1990, the success and failure of education system was considered essentially as a domestic affair of a nation. But now days the basic education has become a universal priority and brought under the international scanner. The millennium development goals also firmly place basic education alongside the goal of poverty reduction for concerted action during the years to come.

Bhutan has also made education a key factor for uplifting its socio-economic and political conditions. The enormous amount from its GDP has been allocated to develop its education sector. Education is being viewed as the “passport to enhance the living standards by the Bhutanese. This perspective of the citizens of Bhutan emerges from the historical development of the Nation with the help of education. The chunks of educated Bhutanese were being absorbed in government administrative jobs during the beginning of the development process. Therefore, they think that after being educated they are entitled to government jobs. The fast expansion of education in the Himalayan Nation resulted in an increase in the number of educated youth. Now the government is facing challenges in providing employment to all of them. The unemployment problem is a point of concern on the part of the government.

The migration of people from rural to urban areas in search of jobs has doubled the problem. The country which generates most of its revenue from the agriculture sector is lagging behind. Educated youth demean cultivating in the farms as compared to government jobs. This dilemma is a direct outcome of the Bhutan’s education system modeled in western style which promotes getting qualified and getting a job to sustain life.

The modern education lacks to teach the students utilize the resources already available in the nature and to develop the traditional skills to earn a livelihood from it. Though modernization has provide Bhutanese with electricity, motorable roads, telecommunication etc. which was not imaginable a few decades ago, but this has also led to serious environmental hazards like soil erosion and floods. The western modern education has been adopted by most of the countries; one of the reasons behind this is the development of western countries. But while adopting these models, the policy makers often forget that there are differences in social cultural and political sphere between the western developed nation and the newly developing countries. Therefore, the education policy should be modeled or designed on a native nation's demands and needs.

Even the international community is being skeptic of the role of education in making really capable human resource. The instrumental role of education in alleviating poverty has led to greater emphasis on education but poverty still prevails which means that there is something wrong in our education system. Even though the quantity of educated people are expanding day by day certain problems like unemployment still prevails. Therefore serious consideration should be given on quality of education. The development index is based on numbers which cannot sufficiently indicate the level of development or the root cause of any socioeconomic problems of the nation. To counter this, the RGoB came with the GNH principles and objectives to develop its nation. This index focuses more on quality than on quantity. The Himalayan kingdom gained international admiration for propounding GNH Index and some western developed nations have applied this index to acknowledge themselves, the health of their nation and its people. These objectives focus on preserving the unique culture of Bhutan along with a sustainable development. The education system in Bhutan has also brought tremendous changes to align with the GNH principles. But imparting of these principles along with the modern education provided to the Bhutanese are just opposite to each other. Therefore, further research should be done to accommodate both the diverse trends through the adoption of 'middle-path' for the development process.

The education policy in Bhutan has been successfully used as a tool to universalize the majoritarian Drukpa identity; a number of policies were implemented to achieve this goal. The heterogeneous character of Bhutan is perceived as a threat to the nation by the government. So the RGoB is trying to homogenize the nation by adopting and implementing policies like 'one nation, one people', one dress code and one national language. The implementation of these policies led to serious repercussions in the southern Bhutan which resulted in displacing around 100,000 ethnic Nepalis who are presently seeking refuge in different refugee camps in Nepal. By doing this the government is trying to make the Drukpa identity, culture and language as the single culture of the nation. A person's identity cannot be changed by doing all this; a Lhotshampas will be a Lhotshampas only even if he or she wears '*gho*' or '*kira*' or even if he uses Dzongkha language for official purposes.

The RGoB is trying to systematically discriminate the minority communities in Bhutan, it is apparent from the policies that the Government adopted for the development of its nation. These policies include NAPE, requirement of NOC for *Lhotshampa* community, the school curriculum and the GNH principle which is the guiding principle for the policy of development. Though, Bhutan has gained popularity in the international community for giving more preference to happiness of the Bhutanese rather than the economic factors. The question arises here that how a nation which is responsible for displacing thousands of people by using different tactics to harass them, can claim to follow the 'middle-path' based on Buddhist principles. The claims of Bhutan that it gives more importance to spiritual and moral values, becomes all vague when there are reports of human rights violation where the state machinery which is meant to protect the lives of the people is the main .

The evolution of education policy was possible with the help of Indian government. Bhutan is strategically located between the two Asian giants India and China. Bhutan remained unknown to the world until Britishers came to explore the Himalayan belt which was a part of its 'forward area policy'. Bhutan has very limited resources at its disposal, therefore external aid from international organization like the World Bank ,

ADB, UNICEF, WFP ,etc. and nations like India , Japan ,Switzerland the Netherlands etc. was helpful in developing the education sector in bhutan. The influences of the outside sources are very minimal till now as Bhutan is very conscious about its development strategies. Bhutan wants development but in its own terms.

There is a direct connection between education policy and socioeconomic and political condition. Education makes people more capable for earning their livelihood along developing skills of the individuals to contribute in the development of the nation. The recent development in the socio-economic sphere of Bhutan has led to capital generation which in turn resulted in huge amount of funding on education. This is like a give and take relationship. The education development has generated a good number of educated people and they will play a significant role in the political scenario of the nation by critically analyzing the government policies and functions. A political dimension of a nation is interrelated with the education.

Globalization is a phenomenon which touches all the aspects of an individual's life. It eliminates the barriers, including legal, to the free flow of goods and services, and capital. International human rights law defines education as a basic human right and international trades law defines it as a service. This results in two conflicting legal regimes of education. International human rights mandates state intervention in at least providing free and compulsory education for all children, while international law on trade in services legitimizes the sale and purchase of education which results in excluding those who are unable to purchase it. The developing and underdeveloped nation like Bhutan is also a victim of this jeopardized international status of education. As a result, in Bhutan education is both a right and a traded service. The RGoB is promoting private sectors in its recent plans both in education sector and also to cater jobs to educated youth. The private educational institutions are charging a huge amount of money for imparting education. The private sector considers the educated Bhutanese as less skilled than immigrant workers. Both are detrimental to the development process of Bhutan the fostering of national identity by the royal government of Bhutan which focuses on preservation of its values and culture along with development process has been severely

affected by the process of globalization. The gifts of globalization that is mass media and exposure to internet exposes the Bhutanese to the outside world, if not used intelligently it may tarnish the social sustainability of Bhutan. The Bhutanese government is trying hard to avoid the ill effects of modernization by emphasizing on its traditional values and culture but somehow it has already penetrated into the social fabric of Bhutan. People have become more competitive regarding material achievements and getting jobs. More and more individualistic attitude are evolving whereas in the past materialistic benefits were considered least in Bhutan. The modernization process goes just opposite the Buddhist principles on which Bhutan's development philosophy is based. This is one of the emerging trends in Bhutan which has to be addressed cautiously if it wants to safeguard its unique cultural identity.

# **APPENDIX 1**

## **ARTICLES FROM THE CONSTITUTION OF BHUTAN**

### **EDUCATION**

#### **Article 9 Principles of State Policy**

**9(15)** The State shall endeavour to provide education for the purpose of improving and increasing knowledge, values and skills of the entire population with education being directed towards the full development of the human personality.

**9(16)** The State shall provide free education to all children of school going age up to tenth standard and ensure that technical and professional education shall be made generally available and that higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

### **EQUALITY**

#### **Article 7 Fundamental Rights**

**15.** All persons are equal before the law and are entitled to equal and effective protection of the law and shall not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, sex, language, religion, politics or other status.

#### **Article 9 Principles of State Policy**

**3.** The State shall endeavour to create a civil society free of oppression, discrimination and violence, based on the rule of law, protection of human rights and dignity, and to ensure the fundamental rights and freedoms of the people.

**6.** The State shall endeavour to provide legal aid to secure justice, which shall not be denied to any person by reason of economic or other disabilities.

**7.** The State shall endeavour to develop and execute policies to minimize inequalities of income,



concentration of wealth, and promote equitable distribution of public facilities among individuals and people living in different parts of the Kingdom.

**8.** The State shall endeavour to ensure that all the Dzongkhags are treated with equity on the basis of different needs so that the allocation of national resources results in comparable socio-economic development.

**17.** The State shall endeavour to take appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination and exploitation against women including trafficking, prostitution, abuse, violence, harassment and intimidation at work in both public and private spheres.

**18.** The State shall endeavour to take appropriate measures to ensure that children are protected against all forms of discrimination and exploitation including trafficking, prostitution, abuse, violence, degrading treatment and economic exploitation.

**22.** The State shall endeavour to provide security in the event of sickness and disability or lack of adequate means of livelihood for reasons beyond one's control.

## **LANGUAGE and CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

### **Article 4 Culture**

**1.** The State shall endeavour to preserve, protect and promote the cultural heritage of the country, including monuments, places and objects of artistic or historic interest, Dzongs, Lhakhangs, Goendeys, Ten-sum, Nyes, language, literature, music, visual arts and religion to enrich society and the cultural life of the citizens.

**2.** The State shall recognize culture as an evolving dynamic force and shall endeavour to strengthen and facilitate the continued evolution of traditional values and institutions that are sustainable as a progressive society.

## **RELIGION**

### **Article 7 Fundamental Rights**

**4.** A Bhutanese citizen shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. No person shall be compelled to belong to another faith by means of coercion or inducement.

### **Article 9 Principles of State Policy**

**20.** The State shall strive to create conditions that will enable the true and sustainable development of a good and compassionate society rooted in Buddhist ethos and universal human values.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **BHUTAN'S CITIZENSHIP ACT, 1977**

#### **Conditions Required for the Grant of Citizenship:**

- KA
1. In the case of government servants an applicant should have completed 15 years of service without any adverse record.
  2. In the case of those not employed in the Royal Government, an applicant should have resided in Bhutan for a minimum period of 20 years.
  3. In addition, an applicant should have some knowledge of the Bhutanese language both spoken and written and the history of Bhutan. Only those applicants who fulfill the above requirements may apply for grant of citizenship to the Ministry of Home Affairs, which will ascertain the relevant factors and submit the application to the Royal Government for further action.
  - 4.

#### **Eligibility and Power to Grant Citizenship:**

- KHA
1. The power to grant or reject an application for citizenship rests solely with the Royal Government. Hence, all applicants who fulfill the above conditions are not necessarily eligible for grant of citizenship.
  2. Any applicant holding the citizenship of another country or with criminal records in other countries or those who are related to any person involved in activities against the people, the country and the King shall not be granted citizenship even if all the other conditions are fulfilled.
  3. A person granted citizenship by the Royal Government is required to register his/her name in the record of the Royal Government from the date of the grant of the citizenship.
  4. All those granted citizenship are required to take the following oath to be administered by the Home Minister.
    - Henceforth, I owe allegiance only to His Majesty the DrukGyalpo of Bhutan.

- I shall abide by observe and the laws and regulations of the Royal Government with unswerving reverence.
- I shall observe all the customs and traditions of the people of Bhutan.
- I shall not commit any act against the TSA-WAS-SUM of Bhutan (the country, the people and the King).
- As a citizen of Bhutan, I hereby take this oath in the name of YesheyGoempo and undertake to serve the country to the best of my ability.

### **Special Grant of Citizenship**

- GA 1. A foreigner in possession of special or extraordinary qualifications will be granted citizenship without consideration of the required conditions except for the administration of the oath of allegiance.

### **Renouncement & Re-application of Citizenship:**

- NGA 1. In the case of a Bhutanese citizen, who having left the country returns and applies for citizenship, the Royal Government shall keep the applicant on probation for a period of at least two years. On successful completion of the probation period, the applicant will be granted citizenship provided the person in question is not responsible for any activities against the Royal Government.
2. A foreigner who has been granted Bhutanese citizenship may apply to the Royal Government for permission to emigrate with his/her family. Permission will be granted after an investigation of the circumstances relating to such a request. After grant of permission to emigrate, the same person may not re-apply for Bhutanese citizenship. In the event of adult family members of any person permitted to leave the country, who do not wish to leave and makes an application to that effect, the Home Minister will investigate the matter and will permit such persons to remain in the country after ascertaining that the country's interest is not harmed.
3. If anyone, whether a real Bhutanese or a foreigner granted citizenship, applies for permission to emigrate during times of crises such as war, the application shall be kept pending until normalcy returns.

### **Procedure for Acquisition of Citizenship:**

- CHA
1. When a Bhutanese woman is married to a foreigner, only she is a citizen, her husband and their children will not be considered as Bhutanese citizens. If they desire Bhutanese citizenship, such cases will be considered in conformity with the procedure laid down in this Act applicable to foreigners applying for citizenship.
  2. When a Bhutanese man is married to foreign woman their children will be considered Bhutanese. The wife will have to fulfil the requirements of this Citizenship Act as applicable to foreigners applying for citizenship.
  3. In the case of Bhutanese citizens residing in other countries, the Citizenship Law subhead KA-12 No. 2 which is reproduced below, shall be applicable.

### **Reproduction of Thrimyic KA 12-2:**

- KA-12(2)
1. With the exception of a genuine Bhutanese whose family is domiciled in Bhutan but he himself has to stay away in another country in connection with the works of the Royal Government, private business or religious practices, all others who live in foreign countries and serve the government and people of such countries or have settled in a foreign country or are holding official posts in a foreign government are considered non-nationals.

### **Registration Procedure:**

- CHHA
1. All children born of a father who is a Bhutanese citizen should be registered in the official record within one year of their birth whether the children are born inside or outside the country
  2. All children born within the country are required to be listed with the Dzongkhag or the Dungkhag of their birth. Children of Bhutanese parentage born in other countries should be recorded with the Royal Bhutanese Embassies. Where they are no Embassies nearby the information should be conveyed to the Home Ministry through correspondence.

3. If a child is more than one year old and still not registered in the official record, registration is not permitted but may be applied for to the Home Ministry by the concerned local authority. The Home Ministry will then investigate the matter before granting permission for the registration.

**Validity of Census Record:**

- JA 1. All census records must bear the seal of Royal Government and the signature of an officer not lower in rank than a Dzongdag. Other records will not be acceptable.

**Enquiry of Kashos:**

- NYA 1. All Kashos with the people which were not granted by His Majesty the King will be investigated by the Home Minister and reported to the Royal Government.

**Penalty of Violation of Rules:**

- TA 1. Any one having acquired Bhutanese citizenship if involved in acts against the King or speaks against the Royal Government or associates with people involved in activities against the Royal Government shall be deprived of his/her Bhutanese citizenship.
2. In the case of any person knowingly presenting false information at the time of applying for citizenship, the Kasho granting him/her citizenship will be withdrawn after due verification of the false information presented.

**Status of the Provision:**

- THA 1. In case of conflict between the provisions of this Act and the Provisions of any previous laws, rules and regulations, the provisions of this Act shall prevail.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **BHUTAN'S CITIZENSHIP ACT 1985**

This Act may be called the Bhutan Citizenship Act, 1985. It shall come into force from the twenty third day of the fourth month of Wood Bull year of the Bhutanese calendar corresponding to 10th June, 1985. In case of conflict between the previous laws, rules and regulations relating to citizenship, the provisions of this Act shall prevail.

#### **Citizenship by Birth:**

A person whose parents are both citizens of Bhutan shall be deemed to be a citizen of Bhutan by birth.

#### **Citizenship by Registration:**

A person permanently domiciled in Bhutan on or before 31st December 1958, and, whose name is registered in the census register maintained by the Ministry of Home Affairs shall be deemed to be a citizen of Bhutan by registration.

#### **Citizenship by Naturalization:**

A person desiring to apply for Bhutanese citizenship to the Ministry of Home Affairs in Forms KA-1 and KA-2 must fulfill all the following conditions to be eligible for naturalization:

The person must have attained the age of 21 years, and 15 years in the case of a person either of whose parents is a citizen of Bhutan;

The person must be mentally sound;

The person must have resided in Bhutan for 15 years in the case of Government employees and also in the case of applicants, either of whose parents is a citizen of Bhutan, and 20 years in all other cases, and this period of residence must be registered in the records of the Department of Immigration and Census;

The person must be able to speak, read and write Dzongkha proficiently;

The person must have good knowledge of the culture, customs, traditions and history of Bhutan;

The person must have good moral character and should not have any record of imprisonment for criminal offences in Bhutan or elsewhere;

The person must have no record of having spoken or acted against the King, Country and People of Bhutan in any manner whatsoever, and

The person must be prepared to take a solemn Oath of Allegiance to the King, Country and People of Bhutan according to the prescribed Form KHA.

On receipt of the application Form KA-1 for naturalization, the Ministry of Home Affairs will take necessary steps to check all the particulars contained in the application. The Ministry of Home Affairs will also conduct written and oral tests to assess proficiency in Dzongkha and knowledge of the culture, customs, traditions and history of Bhutan. The decision of the Ministry of Home Affairs on the question of eligibility for naturalization shall be final and binding. The Royal Government of Bhutan also reserves the right to reject any application for naturalization without assigning any reason.

### **Grant of Citizenship:**

A person, whose application for naturalization has been favourable considered by the Ministry of Home Affairs, shall take the Oath of Allegiance according to Form KHA of this Act.

A person shall then be deemed to be a citizen of Bhutan upon receiving a Kasho from His Majesty the King of Bhutan according to Form GA of this Act.

### **Termination of Citizenship:**

Any citizen of Bhutan who acquired the citizenship of another country shall cease to be a citizen of Bhutan. The wife/husband and children shall have the right to remain as citizens of Bhutan provided they are permanently domiciled in Bhutan and are registered annually in the Citizenship Register maintained by the Ministry of Home Affairs.



Any citizen of Bhutan who has acquired citizenship by naturalization may be deprived of citizenship at any time if it found that naturalization had been obtained by means of fraud, false representation or the concealment of any material fact.

Any citizen of Bhutan who has acquired citizenship by naturalization may be deprived of citizenship at any time if that person has shown by act or speech to be disloyal in any manner whatsoever to the King, Country and People of Bhutan.

If both the parents are Bhutanese and in case of the children leaving the country of their own accord, without the knowledge of the Royal Government of Bhutan and their names are also not recorded in the Citizenship Register maintained in the Ministry of Home Affairs, then they will not be considered as citizens of Bhutan. (Resolution No. 16(2) adopted by the National Assembly of Bhutan in its 62nd Session).

Any citizen of Bhutan who has been deprived of Bhutanese citizenship must dispose of all immovable property in Bhutan within one year, failing which, the immovable property shall be confiscated by the Ministry of Home Affairs on payment of fair and reasonable compensation.

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **LIST OF ACTS IN BHUTAN**

Anti-Corruption Act of Bhutan, 2006 (English/Dzongkha)

Audit Act of Bhutan, 2006 (English/Dzongkha)

Bankruptcy Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 1999 (English/Dzongkha)

Bhutan Citizenship Act, 1985 (English)

Bhutan Citizenship Act, 1977 (English)

Bhutan Information Communications and Media Act, 2006 (English/Dzongkha)

Bhutan Municipal Act, 1999 (English/Dzongkha)

Bhutan Postal Corporation Act, 1999 (English/Dzongkha)

Bhutan Standards Act, 2010 (English/Dzongkha)

Bhutan Telecom Act, 1999 (English)

Biodiversity Act of Bhutan, 2003 (English/Dzongkha)

Census Hand Book, 1993 (English)

Chathrim for the office of the Speaker of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 1996 (English/Dzongkha)

Civil and Criminal Procedure Code (Amendment) Act of Bhutan, 2011 (English & Dzongkha)

Civil and Criminal Procedure Code of Bhutan, 2001 (English/Dzongkha)

Civil Aviation Act of Bhutan (English/Dzongkha)

Civil Society Organizations Act of Bhutan, 2007 (English/Dzongkha)

Civil Service Act of Bhutan, 2010 (English & Dzongkha)

Co-operatives Acts of Bhutan, 2001 (English/Dzongkha)

Cooperative (Amendment) Act of Bhutan, 2009 (English/Dzongkha)

Commercial Sale of Goods Act, 2001 (English)

Companies Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2000 (English)

Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008 (English)

Copyright Act of Bhutan, 2001 (English)

DzongkhagYargayTshogduChathrim, 2002 (English/Dzongkha)

Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008 (Dzongkha & English)

Electricity Act of Bhutan, 2001 (English)

Enabling Act for Suppression of Terrorism, 1991 (English)

Entitlement & Service Conditions Act for the Holders, Members & Commissioners of Constitutional Offices of Bhutan, 2010 (English & Dzongkha)

Environmental Assessment Act of Bhutan, 2000 (English/Dzongkha)

Evidence Act of Bhutan, 2005 (English)

Extradiction Act, 1991 (English)

Financial Institution Act, 1992 (English)

Fire Arms and Ammunition Act of Bhutan, 1990 (English/Dzongkha)

Food Act of Bhutan, 2005 (English)

GeogYargayTshogchhungChathrim, 2002 (English/Dzongkha)

Immigration Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2007 (English/Dzongkha)

Income Tax Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2001 (English)

Industrial Property Act of Bhutan, 2001 (English)

Inheritance Act of Bhutan, 1980 (Dzongkha)

Jabmi Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2003 (English)

Judicial Service Act of Bhutan, 2007 (English/Dzongkha)

Kadyon(ka, kha, ga, nga, cha &chha), 1976 (English)

Labour and Employment Act of Bhutan, 2007 (English & Dzongkha)

Land Act of Bhutan, 2007 (English/Dzongkha)

Land Act of Bhutan, 1979 (Dzongkha)

Legal Deposit Act, 1999 (English/Dzongkha)

LhengyeZhungtshog Act of Bhutan, 1999 (English/Dzongkha)

Livestock Act of Bhutan, 1980 (Dzongkha)

Livestock Act of Bhutan, 2001 (English)

Loan Act of Bhutan, 1981 (Dzongkha)

Local Government Act of Bhutan, 2009 (English & Dzongkha)

Local Governments Act of Bhutan, 2007 (English)

Marriage Act of Bhutan, 1980 (English)

Mechanism for Vote of Confidence in the DrukGyalpo, 1999 (English)

Medical and Health Council Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2002 (English/Dzongkha)

Medicine Act of Kingdom of Bhutan, 2003 (English)

Movable Cultural Property Act of Bhutan, 2005 (English/Dzongkha)

Moveable & Immovable Act, 1999 (English)

Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances & Substance Abuse Act of Bhutan, 2005 (English & Dzongkha)

National Assembly Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008 (English/Dzongkha)

National Assembly Committees Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2004 (English)

National Council Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008 (Dzongkha & English)

National Environment Protection Act of Bhutan, 2007 (English/Dzongkha)

National Referendum Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008 (English & Dzongkha)

National Security Act of Bhutan, 1992 (English/Dzongkha)

Nationality Law of Bhutan, 1958 (English)

Negotiable Instruments Act of Kingdom of Bhutan, 2000 (English)

Office of the Attorney General Act of Bhutan, 2006 (English/Dzongkha)

Parliamentary Entitlements Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008 (English/Dzongkha)

Penal Code (Amendment) Act of Bhutan, 2011 (English & Dzongkha)

Penal Code of Bhutan, 2004 (English/Dzongkha)

Pesticides Act of Bhutan, 2000 (English/Dzongkha)

Plant Quarantine Act of Bhutan, 1993 (English)

Prison Act of Bhutan, 1982 (English/Dzongkha)

Prison Act of Bhutan, 2009 (English & Dzongkha)

Public Election Fund Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008 (Dzongkha)

Public Finance Act of Bhutan, 2007 (English/Dzongkha)

Religious Organizations Act of Bhutan, 2007 (English/Dzongkha)

Road Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2004 (English/Dzongkha)

Road Safety and Transport Act of Bhutan, 1991 (English)

Royal Bhutan Police Act of Bhutan, 2009 (English & Dzongkha)

Royal Monetary Authority Act of Bhutan, 2010 (English & Dzongkha)

Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan Act, 1982 (English)

Sales Tax, Customs and Excise Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2000 (English)

Seeds Act of Bhutan, 2000 (English/Dzongkha)

Speaker's Act of the National Assembly of Bhutan, 2004 (English)

Speaker's Act of the National Assembly of Bhutan, 1996 (English/Dzongkha)

Tenancy Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2004 (English/Dzongkha)

ThrimzhungChhenmo, 1953 (Dzongkha)

Thromde Act of Bhutan, 2007 (English & Dzongkha)

Tobacco Control Act of Bhutan, 2010 (English & Dzongkha)

Wage Rate, Recruitment Agencies & Workmen's Compensation Act, 1994 (English)

Water Act of Bhutan, 2011 (English & Dzongkha)

ZhaptoLemiChathrim, 1996 (English)

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