

## Chapter 8

### **Role of the Government of India and the Indians in the Spread of Education in Bhutan**

This chapter has been divided in the two parts-

- (A) Role of the Government of India in the spread of Education in Bhutan
- (B) Role of the Indians in the spread of Education in Bhutan

#### **(A) Role of the Government of India in the spread of Education in Bhutan**

For centuries India and Bhutan have been sharing frontiers. But with India being a colony of the British Empire, the nature of political relations it shared with Bhutan was guided initially by the East India Company and later by the British Crown. In the beginning of the Company's rule the relation between the two countries was hostile. There were frequent attacks in the Duars plains of British territory by the Bhutanese. There were altogether eighteen Duars, eleven in Bengal and seven in Assam. In 1772, The Battle of Cooch Behar broke out and hostilities continued between Bhutan and Company. In 1841 the Company captured all the eight Assam Duars and by the Duar war in 1864 the British Government ceded all the Bengal Duars from the Bhutan. A treaty of peace was concluded at Sinchula in Bhutan in 1865 by which the British agreed to pay to Bhutan an amount of Rs.25, 000 annually which they offered to double if the treaty obligations were faithfully adhered to. Bhutan was by that time weakened by domestic strife and finally the Tongsa *Penlop*, Ugyen Wangchuck assumed political supremacy over *Deb Raja*, the legitimate ruler of the country. In the meantime the British wanted to establish a relation with Tibet. The military expedition of Tibet in 1904 by a British force under the command of Colonel Younghusband had changed the relationship between Bhutan and the British. The Tongsa *Penlop*, Ugyen Wangchuck joined with the British and the expedition proved to be successful. In 1907, the British Government through the then political officer in Sikkim, John Claude White, installed Ugyen Wangchuck as the first hereditary King of Bhutan and unanimously supported by the lamas and chiefs of the country. A fresh treaty, the treaty of Punakha was concluded in 1910 by the British Government with Bhutan which increased the annual payment to Rs.100,000. A significant event occurred in 1906 when the British Government had decided to

transfer responsibility for the conduct of relations with Bhutan from the Presidency of Bengal to the Government of India. Bhutan was thus brought into direct contact with the British Indian Government whose headquarters were then at Calcutta in the winter and Simla in summer.<sup>1</sup> From 1906, India's relations with Bhutan were taken care of by the British political officers in Sikkim. Contacts between the officials of the Governments of India and Bhutan were superficial, limited to ceremonial courtesies with occasional visits to Bhutan by the political officer and his staff. The second hereditary King, Jigme Wangchuck who ascended in the throne in 1926 made repeated requests for British aid through the Political officers in Sikkim. Finally in 1942, the British subsidy was doubled and increased to Rs.200, 000 annually. After the independence of India a new treaty was signed in 1949 and the Government of India further increased the allotted payment to Bhutan Rs 500,000 a year.

Ugyen Wangchuck and his able agent to the Government of Bhutan, Kazi Ugyen Dorji realized that monastic education might not be adequate to develop the country and to make links with other countries. They took steps to establish schools to impart modern education. Initiatives were taken to send some students to India for studies and training in various fields. Government of India helped Bhutan in both of these ventures. When the first schools was established in Bhutan the teachers were sent from Kalimpong.<sup>2</sup> Charles A. Bell, the Political Officer of British India at Sikkim, filed his confidential report on Bhutan on May 12, 1914: "46 boys are being educated by the teachers appointed by the Scotland Mission at Kalimpong and they stay with Raja Ugyen Dorji at Kalimpong and Haa"<sup>3</sup>, as the school functioned for six months each at Haa and Kalimpong. Since the beginning period of the modern education in Bhutan British Indian government supported and assisted it which is clear from the Report of the Political Officer in Sikkim W.L. Weir of the year 1917-18, "The schools in Bumthang and Ha are in a flourishing condition. The school at Ha was visited by the Hon'ble Mr. W.W. Hornell, Director of Public Instruction, Bengal and the Reverend Dr. W.S. Sutherland of Kalimpong in October 1917. This visit, and the advice in educational matters which was offered at that time, were much appreciated by the Bhutan Durbar."<sup>4</sup> First King had a strong preference for technical education which was then urgently required for initiating economic development. So he felt that the Bhutanese students would be trained in different technical fields in India so much so that their services could be utilized for the development of his

country. But lack of funds prevented his projects. So he appealed to the Viceroy of India, Lord Reading, for financial assistance in training Bhutanese boys in various professions with a view to develop his country. In the year 1924 the Government of India sanctioned an amount of Rs. 49,629 in connection with the education of the Bhutanese boys.<sup>5</sup> In between 1924 and 1929; a few selected Bhutanese who had passed the matriculation examination were imparted training in different technical institutions in India. For example, “Two of them were trained as teachers at the Training School at Bhagalpur, two as Sub-Assistant Surgeons at the Campbell Medical Schools of Calcutta, two as tanners at the Harness and Saddlery Factory at Cawnpore, three as Rangers at the Forest Schools of Dehra Dun, one as a mining engineer at the Bengal Engineering College at Shibpur in Calcutta, two as Veterinary Assistants at the Veterinary College of Calcutta and two received training in lac cultivation in the Palamu district of Bihar.”<sup>6</sup> F.M. Bailey, Political officer in Sikkim, in his annual report Bhutan for the year 1927-28 mentioned that, “All the three students who went for the Ranger’s course have now completed their training and are working in the State Forests. One boy who has been trained in Survey since the year 1922 has now completed his training and has returned to Bhutan. The boys who are being trained in various other lines at the expense of the Government of India are making satisfactory progress.”<sup>7</sup> Again L. Weir, Political Officer of Sikkim in his annual report on the Bhutan state for the year 1928-29 mentioned about the contribution of the British Government in such a way, “The two Bhutanese boys under training at Bhagalpur completed their two year’s course as teachers in May 1928 and returned to Bhutan. One Bhutanese boy was sent for training as a Mining Engineer to the Bengal Engineering College at Sibpur, near Calcutta. He returned to Bhutan after completing his three year’s course in March 1929. Two boys were sent for training as Veterinary Assistants to the Bengal Veterinary College, Calcutta, for a three years’ course. One of them passed in the final examination in March 1929 and returned to Bhutan, while the other, who failed, remained at the College. Two Bhutanese boys received practical training in lac cultivation in the Palamau district in Bihar and Orissa. They completed 2 months’ training in September 1928 and returned to Bhutan. One of them was one of the three Forest Rangers, who had been trained at Dehra Dun. The expenditure on their training was borne by the Government of India.”<sup>8</sup> According to a report of the Indian Government 15 selected Bhutanese boys completed training as soldiers with a Gurkha Regiment on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1934.<sup>9</sup>

Till the 1950s, education in the schools in Bhutan were confined to primary levels, so the brighter students were sent to Darjeeling and Kalimpong, in India, for secondary and higher education and also for training in different fields in different technical institutions of India. Thus from the introductory period of the growth of modern education in Bhutan, Indian Government helped in many ways.

On 29<sup>th</sup> January 1953, the UNESCO Secretariat, who were preparing the second edition of the World handbook of Educational Organization and Statistics had approached the Government of India to provide them with information on education in Bhutan indicating the following-<sup>10</sup>

- i) Short description of educational structure
- ii) Adult education
- iii) Books production
- iv) Basic statistics

Joint Secretary of the Government forwarded the letter to the Political Officer in Sikkim to provide him the necessary information. Political Officer, in his letter dated 21<sup>st</sup> February replied that, “.....there are perhaps half a dozen primary schools in Bhutan where instruction of an elementary kind is imparted. No census has ever been undertaken in Bhutan nor has any budget been published leave alone estimates of population density, population between compulsory age limits etc.....I therefore see no advantage in referring the matter to the Bhutan agent and suggest that the UNESCO authorities might be sent a reply to the effect that the type of information called for is not available in Bhutan where educational facilities of an elementary kind only exist.”<sup>11</sup> Again in a letter dated Gangtok, the 18<sup>th</sup> August 1953 he replied that, “Bhutan has no literature of its own, and uses Tibetan books printed in Tibet on wooden blocks. A negative reply may kindly be sent.”<sup>12</sup> So the UNESCO questionnaire could not be completed in so far as Bhutan was concerned.

India was eager to develop the educational condition of Bhutan which is clear which is clear from a letter by the Mr. Apa B. Pant to Shri T. N. Kaul, Joint Secretary to the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi dated June 2, 1955,

“After my trip to Bhutan I have been thinking of the various ways and means of the friendship between the people of Bhutan and India and the process through which Bhutan would be drawn closer into the pattern of our life. At the outset we

have to take into account the fact that the Bhutanese are people with a very independent outlook. Apart from the vested interests of the ruling family or other members associated with this family the lack of contact between India and Bhutan for centuries has made them strongly desirous of keeping to their way of life; but they do recognize and specially the Maharaja does that friendship and greater association with India is not only inevitable but would be of great benefit to them. I think that this process of coming together should be encouraged on the following lines:

1. Educational- Bhutan wants to develop a system of education that would suit the country and its people. I had long talks with the Maharaja about this matter and I suggested to him that he should study the system of basic education on those lines. As I have told you elsewhere that the Maharaja and his councilors are very keen to study this method and he himself may travel to India this November. In the schools also the Maharaja is keen to introduce Hindi and I am sure that all the curriculum in the schools would be modeled somewhat on the lines of the curriculum followed in India, and their high schools would link up to our universities. For the purpose of building their system of education the Bhutan Government would require training for their teachers and we should be able to afford facilities for this purpose.”<sup>13</sup>

The real steps for educational development in Bhutan were initiated only after 1955, when the Government of India offered 30 seats for the Bhutanese students a year to the English medium schools in India.<sup>14</sup> This generated a stronger urge to the Bhutanese for modern formal education. The students from Haa, Paro, Thimphu and Wangdiphodrang were sent to Birla Mandir (Nainital) and St. Roberts (Darjeeling) for secondary schooling. After returning, many of them held posts of ministers, secretaries and directors under the Royal Government. They were followed by students schooled in institutes such as Dr. Graham’s Home and St. Augustine’s in Kalimpong and North Point School and St. Paul’s in Darjeeling.<sup>15</sup> Apart from gaining knowledge in the schools the students gained knowledge as well as insights into different values. In the year 1970 about 500 Bhutanese youth, both boys and girls were studying in schools and universities in India and among them many were on scholarships granted by the Government of India.<sup>16</sup> Many Bhutanese, who after educating in India hold many key positions in Bhutan fondly remember their Indian

teachers who laid strong educational foundations in their lives with their strictness and affection for the student, rigour in training, and above all their passion for the subjects they taught.<sup>17</sup>

Interestingly, in Bhutan in the 60s of the last century Hindi medium schools had been in vogue. This was an effect of the neighbouring country India. Father William Mackey, the Jesuit missionary and educationist to Bhutan remembered, “I arrived in Paro, early October, 1963. At that time Bhutan had some 20 Hindi/English medium primary schools.”<sup>18</sup>

The foundation stone of the modernization of Bhutan and introduction of modern education was furthered by the visit of the third hereditary King, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, to India in 1954. In September 1958 the Indian Prime Minister accompanied by a small team of officials and his daughter Mrs. Indira Gandhi visited Bhutan. This visit culminated in substantial enhancement of aid to Bhutan by India. Bhutan’s fear of India’s intentions to interfere in Bhutan’s internal affairs was also allayed by the speech of Nehru where at a large public gathering at Paro on 23 September he said, “...I make it clear to you that our only wish is that you should remain an independent country choosing your own way of life and taking the path of progress according to your will. At the same time, we two should live with mutual goodwill. We are members of the same Himalayan family and should live as friendly neighbors helping each other.”<sup>19</sup>

Nehru’s visit to Bhutan is also significant in that it gave rise to planned socio-economic development through ‘Five Year Plans’. The First Five Year Plan was launched in 1961. The country had virtually no resources to implement the First Five Year Plan.<sup>20</sup> The Indian Government totally financed the Plan. In the same year, a technical team of the Planning Commission of India led by Shri M. S. Shivaraman, visited Bhutan which assisted with the planning and implementation of the First FYP.<sup>21</sup> Since then, India has been extending financial assistance to Bhutan’s FYPs. While the First and Second Five Year Plans were funded entirely by India, in the Third Plan India’s contribution was 90%, in the Fourth Plan it was 77%, in the Fifth Plan 30.2%, in the Sixth Plan 42.1% and in the Seventh Plan 31.9%.<sup>22</sup> It is with the extraordinary gesture of support and assistance from the Government of India that

Bhutan launched its Five Year Plans. Apart from assistance in the launching of Five Year Plans Government of India are helping Bhutan in the following ways-<sup>23</sup>

1. Scholarships are being given to Bhutanese students to pursue, in India, their college or school studies.
2. Bhutanese are being trained in defense establishments in India, as well as in Central Police Training College.
3. A large number of Indians are on deputation in Bhutan, assisting the Government in various fields.

Gradually India became deeply involved in Bhutan's efforts toward educational advancement. We can cite some examples of Government of India's co-operation in the process of educational development in Bhutan-

i) At the end of 1950s when Bhutan has opened some schools and was preparing for more, educated Bhutanese were sent to India to get the basic training in teaching. According to Dasho Jagar Dorji, an eminent educationist of Bhutan, "During the initial planning period in Paro, students from the earlier schools who had completed class VIII were sent to Kalimpong in West Bengal, India, to get basic training in teaching, which at that time was called Guru Training."<sup>24</sup> Thus India showed the way to the Bhutanese people about how to become a perfect teacher.

ii) On September 1, 1963, Mr. N. K. Rustamji, I.C.S. became the first Indian Advisor to the King of Bhutan, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. Rustamji had a great concern for establishing educational institutions. He visited Eastern Bhutan to examine the feasibility of establishing a residential school, with the help of Jesuit Fathers, near and about the eastern head quarter of Tashigang. In fact, he has in writing claimed that he had taken the initiative to invite the Silesian Fathers to set up a technical school at Phuentsholing. He had seen the splendid activities of the Silesians at Don Bosco Technical School in Shillong and felt that a newly developed country like Bhutan had need of mechanics, carpenters, electricians, welders, masons etc.<sup>25</sup>

iii) The Dantak (Indian Border Roads Organization) project in Bhutan began in 1961. With assistance from the Indian Government the project was entrusted with the mission of constructing roads and bridges. Project Dantak has contributed greatly in the transformation of Bhutan to a modern society. The Bhutan Government had asked

Dantak to suggest possible sites for the country's first high school.<sup>26</sup> The Indian road construction organization has a good sense of where a school might be built. The construction of motor roads made it easier for setting up schools in different parts of the country and the officers had become familiar with the land while building the roads. Dantak, in 1965, laid the foundation stone of 'The Peak of Learning', i.e., the public school at Kanglung, the present day Sherubtse College in Tashigang district.<sup>27</sup> In 1968 Dantak completed the construction of classrooms, laboratory block, clock tower, hostel staff quarter etc. In the opening ceremony of the Sherubtse High School His Majesty the third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck congratulated Brigadier O. P. Datta, Chief Engineer, Dantak, Task Force Commander and Lieutenant General Colonel U. S. Anand and all officers and men of Dantak for having 'worked day and night through rain and snow' to complete the greater part of the project in such a short period of time and declared that 'so long as Bhutan remains, the name of Border Roads will not be forgotten'.<sup>28</sup>

iv) In 1969 a high school had been set up at Tashigang in Eastern Bhutan. The Government of India extended generous assistance in the building of this educational institution.<sup>29</sup>

v) IMTRAT played an important role in constructing a playground in Yadi Lower Secondary School in Mongar which was established in 1976.<sup>30</sup>

vi) A historic symbol of friendship between Bhutan and India was the establishment of Chukha Higher Secondary School on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1977, known as Indo-Bhutan Central School. The architecture is a blend of Indo-Bhutanese design which is quite distinct from other school buildings of the country.<sup>31</sup>

vii) To make the Indo-Bhutan relation more close, in January 22, 1968, a special office of India in Bhutan, a residential mission was opened in Thimphu with B.S. Das as its head. Prior to that it was the Indian political officer based in Sikkim who looked after the Indo-Bhutan diplomatic relations. Later this special office was changed to Embassy of India in Bhutan and B.S. Das became the first ambassador of India to Bhutan in 1971.<sup>32</sup> On April 29, 1996 Indian Ambassador to Bhutan Mr. Dalip Mehta inaugurated the Damthing Primary School in Haa which was constructed by the fund from the Government of India. The Ambassador also made a contribution of children's books for the school's library and assured the gatherings of *dzongkhag*

officials, students, parents and others that India would support the construction of additional facilities for the new school including hostels, staff quarters, and a water supply system.<sup>33</sup>

viii) Most of the students of Bhutan after their primary level of education were selected to go to India for further education. According to a report of the Kuensel of November 1970, “According to information received from the Thimphu Junior High School, the pre selection tests for applicants from Phuentsholing, Wangduephodrang, Sibsoo, Samchi(Samtse), Punakha, Chengmari, Paro and Thimphu area will be held on school premises on November 20 and 21. Parents who have applied for schooling for their children for studying in India through local *mondal*(village head) and school boards are requested to make a note of this”.<sup>34</sup> The Kuensel of July 1972 reported that the Bhutanese students who appeared for Higher Secondary and School Finals from Indian Institutes were called on July 10, 1972 by Ashi Dechhen Wangmo Wangchuck, Representative of the King in the Ministry of Development, for selection to join Government service or further studies. Some of them joined Government service and a few were selected for technical, medical and humanity courses in India and overseas.<sup>35</sup>

ix) Sherubtse College in eastern Bhutan developed into a leading institution for higher education following its affiliation to the Delhi University in the year 1983. After two formal approaches to the authorities of the Delhi University this foreign college was affiliated to the University.<sup>36</sup> The University of Delhi was co-operative enough and made an amendment in the University constitution to accept Sherubtse as one of its affiliated colleges. A high level inspection team from University of Delhi visited the college to find out the feasibility and adequacy of infrastructural facilities pertaining to the college affiliation. It was decided to have only three faculties, i.e., Sciences, Humanities and Commerce with about a dozen academic departments. The College Advisory Committee was to replace the Board of Governors prevalent in other colleges under the federated Delhi University. The problems related to Dzongkha examinations, recruitment of teachers on deputation, winter vacation instead of summer etc. were discussed and decision was taken in favour of Bhutanese needs. In fact, the Royal Government had been given the autonomy in regard to administration of the college, thus implicating its accountability to Delhi University only in academic matters. The College was thus pursuing Indian curriculum, taught by Indians and

examined by Indians. The inspection team recommended that Sherubtse College should become a university type college and minutes recorded that “---affiliation of Sherubtse College with Delhi University shall continue till such time Bhutan establishes its own university. Once Bhutan sets up its own university, affiliation shall cease automatically.”<sup>37</sup>

x) Sherubtse College which originally was a school was constructed by the Dantak. In 1986 during the first convocation ceremony of the college the Principal of the College, Father LeClaire expressed his appreciation of the construction work done by Dantak which took the responsibility for impressive infrastructural development.<sup>38</sup> Again in the fifth convocation ceremony of the Sherubtse College, Zangley Dukpa, the College Principal thanked the Indian Government for the kind and generous assistance in the development of the College and acknowledged the continuing support of the University of Delhi .<sup>39</sup>

xi) In 1960s Tashigang Primary School in Eastern Bhutan was gradually upgraded to High School and Bhutan’s first matriculation examination was held in 1968. But the examination system was not affiliated to any recognized board so the students were unable to get admission into Indian colleges, so five students were sent to Australia and New Zealand under Colombo Plan scholarship.<sup>40</sup> The Bhutanese authorities appealed to New Delhi to affiliate Bhutan’s high schools with the Indian School Certificate System (class XI or old Cambridge system). Affiliation was granted by New Delhi and thus India took the responsibility of Bhutan’s class X examination. Later this system underwent a change into Indian Certificate of Secondary Education(ICSE/class ten) and the Indian School Certificate(ISC/class twelve).<sup>41</sup> Even when the Bhutan Board of Examinations was established ICSE assisted it to conduct the class X board examinations and ISC in class XII examinations in the mid 90s.

Apart from studying in Indian schools and institutes by the Bhutanese students, administrators from the Education Department, students and teachers occasionally visited India, generally funded by the Indian Government in order to expand their practical knowledge. Some of the examples are-

i)According to a report of Kuensel of January 1968, “A 40 member delegation led by Mr. Angko Tshering, Assistant Director of Education, and consisting of Inspector of

schools Sherub Thaye and teachers Parsuram Sharma, Ugyen Chhogyal, Tika Prasad Ghaley and 34 students left on a 'Bharat Darshan' tour on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1968. Among other places of interest, the delegation is expected to visit the Mig Factory at Nasik, the National Defence Academy at Khadakash and the Taj Mahal at Agra. The Bhutanese delegation is also expected to see the Republic Day parade at Delhi on 26<sup>th</sup> January. The tour is expected to be last for one month."<sup>42</sup>

ii) As reported in Kuensel of May, 1970, "Teachers and students of Teachers Training Institute of Samtse went on a four days excursion to Darjeeling."<sup>43</sup>

iii) Kuensel of March 19, 1972 reported that, "A 10 member teacher-students delegation left Bhutan on March 15 in a twenty day tour of India at the initiatives of Government of India. The teachers are Lopen Nado of Paro and the head of the Paro Central School while the 8 students have been selected from central schools of Tashigang and Sarbhang together with from Thimphu school and St. Augustine School, Kalimpong."<sup>44</sup>

v) After their visit, Kuensel reported on May 1972 that the 10-member delegation of students and teachers to India was a good opportunity to the participants to see various parts of India, the people, customs, manners and their livelihood. Visit to the historical places, monuments, tombs was of great importance to the students for their educational background. The students visited The President's Estate's Higher Secondary School in Delhi, The Bal Bhavan in Delhi and The New Era Higher Secondary School of Bombay. The important historical places visited were Imam Bara of Lucknow, Kutub Minar, Humayun's Tomb, The Red Fort, Jama Masjid in Delhi, Taj Mahal, Akbar's Tomb at Agra, Agra Fort at Fatehpur Sikri, The Buddhist temple of Gaya, the old ruins of University of Nalanda and Buddhist Temple of Raj Gir near Patna, several museums at Lucknow, Chandigarh, Delhi, Patna and Nalanda. During the tour in Lucknow, the students visited a few small scale industries and studying the different stages of production the students generalized it to be the easiest process to start in Bhutan. They were also given a great opportunity to see the Bhakra Nangal Dam of Punjab. The tour provided them the opportunity to meet some of the important dignitaries of India such as the Director of Education of the Government of U.P, Governor of Bihar and Vice Chancellor and the faculties of Magadh University.<sup>45</sup>

v) Kuensel of January 1977 reported that, “A group of 16 students and teachers drawn from the schools of Bhutan are promoting on a sight-seeing tour in India led by S. Penjor, an Inspector of schools.”<sup>46</sup>

vi) According to a report of the Kuensel of June 1990, “35 class VII students including seven girls from the Pemagatshel Junior High School, left for Gwahati, India on a geography sturdy tour on June 10. The students accompanied by their headmaster and teachers are expected to visit the zoo to learn more about animals and their behavior and habits.”<sup>47</sup>

vii) Kuensel of 15<sup>th</sup> February 1992 reported that, “A 15 member delegation of Principals and Heads of Institutions will leave for India on an educational cum cultural tour tomorrow. The two week tour has been extended by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations and the Indian Embassy in Thimphu. The delegation led by Dasho Lam Sangha, will visit all places of religious and cultural significance and renowned educational centres in Delhi, Dehradun, Bangalore, Madras and Calcutta. A spokesman from the Education Department said the department hoped that such a programme would enable the senior educationists to get a clearer insight of the people and culture of India and thereby generate further closer ties between the younger generations of India and Bhutan in the years to come. The delegation will also acquire fruitful educational experiences, he added.”<sup>48</sup>

viii) Kuensel of November 1995 reported that, “A group of Bhutanese students and teachers attended a three week SAARC Astronomy Workshop in New Delhi, India, coinciding with last week’s solar eclipse. According to the Vice Principal of Sherubtse College, Tshering Tenzin, the participants took part in discussions on various issues related to astronomy and attended lectures on space sciences, astronomy and planetarium education from scientists. The last programme of the workshop was the observation of the October 24 complete solar eclipse from Fatehpur Sikri. The workshop was organized by the Bal Bhawan Society, an organization within the Indian Ministry of Education”.<sup>49</sup>

ix) According to a report of Kuensel of February 1996, “Fifteen selected heads of school and educational institutes left for a two week religious, cultural and educational tour to India. The group left on February 4 to visit, besides cultural centres, popular educational institutes such as the Doon School, Woodstock, St.

Steven's College, Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University. They will also visit Indian Council of Secondary Education Board and attend a book fair in Delhi where books by Bhutanese authors are to be exhibited. The tour is an opportunity to interact and pick up different ideas and knowledge, said Dasho T. J. Rixin, Deputy Minister for Education and Health. The tour is coordinated by the Indian Embassy in Bhutan and funded by the Indian Council for Cultural relations."<sup>50</sup>

For an overall development of educated manpower in Bhutan the Government of India (GoI) helped Bhutan in different ways. The annual Indian Government scholarship was extended from thirty to fifty Bhutanese students for their higher studies in India.<sup>51</sup> Such as -

(i) Under Graduate and Post-Graduate Scholarship

India provided various scholarships every year at undergraduate level to Bhutanese students in many professional courses like MBBS, Engineering, LLB, B.Sc (Nursing/ Agriculture), BDS etc. The entire cost even including travelling allowance and medical fees were borne by Indian Government. The Scholarships were awarded by the Indian Government on the advice of Department of Adult and Higher Education (DAHE), the nodal agency in Bhutan's Ministry of Education, based on the merit of the students in Class XII. Government of India also provided several Post Graduate Scholarships each year to worthy Bhutanese students selected by the Royal Civil Service Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan.<sup>52</sup>

(ii) ITEC Scholarship

The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme, instituted on 15 September 1964, in conjunction with the Technical Cooperation Scheme of Colombo Plan, more than 160 countries (which included Bhutan) were invited to share India's developmental experience and various scholarships are offered. There were training courses in diverse subjects ranging from Information Technology, Public Administration, Rural Development etc. A number of Bhutanese availed these facilities every year.<sup>53</sup>

(iii) Sainik School Scholarship

10 slots are provided by the Government of India Scheme to Bhutanese students for admission into class VI in different Sainik Schools in India with all

expenditure being borne by GOI. A written assessment was held in Thimphu by the Indian Embassy and qualified candidates again had to face interview in India, before their joining in various Sainik Schools.<sup>54</sup>

(iv) SAARC Scholarship

Within this scheme, the GoI provides one fellowship and two scholarships for commendable Bhutanese scholars.<sup>55</sup> In 2013, V.P. Haran, Ambassador of India to Bhutan mentioned that to expand the reach of tertiary education in Bhutan, the Government of India declared of providing tele-education facilities through the Indira Gandhi National Open University. The Government of India also offered post-graduate and under-graduate scholarships, apart from offering vacancies in various technical training courses.<sup>56</sup>

The friendship shared by both India and Bhutan is age old and strong. India keeps Bhutan on top priority with regard to monetary grants and donations since India has been Bhutan's leading development partner. India has always given generous assistance to Bhutan in establishing economic and social infrastructure. Construction of roads constituted the main components of Indian assistance. Later on it included construction of schools, hospitals, agricultural centers and hydropower industry. Taking into account that the formal system of education in Bhutan was only established in 1950s, and that it would take a few decades to produce the first generation of qualified Bhutanese civil servants, many Indian personnel were recruited by the Bhutanese Government to fill administrative posts. However, with the passage of time Bhutanese graduates gradually replaced Indian expatriates in various professions including teaching.

Thus the two Asian neighbours have always enjoyed close co-operation and co-existence. Buttressing Bhutan's educational aspirations is only a corollary of the age old Indo-Bhutan friendship and co-operation. In his convocation address at Nagarjuna Sagar University, India, on March 16, 1982 the fourth King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, said that, "When Bhutan decided about two decades ago to embark on a programme of socio-economic development; India provided generous financial and technical assistance. The policy on the part of India to befriend a small neighbor like Bhutan has added a new dimension to the traditionally close relationship

between us two neighbors. May the relationship between India and Bhutan flourish and prosper for all time to come.”<sup>57</sup>

### **(B) Role of the Indians in the spread of education in Bhutan**

The beginning of the Bhutanese system of education was purely in monastic form before the formal pattern of schooling that was initiated during the first quarter of the last century. Here small groups of students were taught by lay monks in *lhakhangs* (Buddhist temples) choosing the course content of their convenience but based on Buddhist philosophy. As the country advanced towards modernization lifting the veil of its self-imposed isolation they felt the need of more and more educated manpower to handle the growing responsibilities of different sectors in an organized and systematic order that was followed by the neighbouring countries of the region particularly the India. Such a need of the state prompted the Royal Government to send a few dozens of selected students in pursuit of modern education outside the country in missionary schools of West Bengal, a neighbouring state and later to other parts of India. When the first few cohorts of those students returned to the country on completion of their secondary and degree level of education majority of them were placed in administrative and technical positions prioritizing the need of each sector while a few were absorbed in teaching profession. So, the first few batches of Bhutanese officials had acquired their education purely from the Indian teachers who were on Government of India’s scholarship to study in India.

First hereditary King of Bhutan, Ugyen Wangchuck who ascended the throne in 1907 took initiative to introduce modern education. His Chamberlain, Ugyen Dorji requested Dr. Sutherland, the principal of Scottish University Mission Institution in Kalimpong, to send teachers to open schools in Bhutan. Dr. Sutherland responded gladly by sending Ugyen Chirring and Dawa Namgyel Targyen to Haa, in western side, where the first school was opened in 1914.<sup>58</sup> In 1915, a mobile school attached with the Royal Court in Bumthang in central Bhutan was established under the direct initiative of the King.<sup>59</sup> By 1918 more teachers went to Bhutan from Darjeeling. Education gained momentum during the reign of second hereditary King Jigme Wangchuck (1926-1952).<sup>60</sup> Primary schools were started in the interior parts of the country. Both the curriculum and the medium of learning were in Hindi, because of the ease in finding study material and teachers from across the border. Thus first

schools in Bhutan were run by teachers, mostly recruited from neighbouring India, who had to endure the hardship of trudging over hazardous mountain passes to take education to the secluded parts of the country.<sup>61</sup> After completion of primary level, brighter students were sent to Kalimpong and a few students continued to proceed for further studies in other places and institutions in India. The third King, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, who was enthroned in 1952, took more strenuous initiative in the development of modern education. He realized the need for changing the medium of instruction from Hindi to English and implemented it so that this isolated nation could benefit from, through communicating with the rest of the world. This led to the foundations of secondary and post-secondary schools across the country. With the launch of its First FYP in 1961 the Government took a giant leap to expand its service sectors, particularly the education to meet its immediate need of skilled man-power in diverse fields. Such a need then necessitated the government to recruit more teachers from different parts of India, especially from Bengal and Kerala.

During the 1960s Bhutan had many primary schools but there was severe scarcity of teachers. The then foreign minister *Lyonpo* Dawa Tshering was given the task to recruit teachers from India. The first teachers were from Kalimpong in 1961 namely Madam Sangay, Mr. Shankar, Mr. David, Mr. Karthak, Mr. Som, Mr. Thapa, Mr. Laxman etc.<sup>62</sup> The minister travelled to South India and another batch from Kerala were brought. The teachers had agreed to work in Bhutan, but had no idea where Bhutan was. When they arrived at one of the frontier towns, they were shocked to find the country had no roads, electricity or tap water.<sup>63</sup> In Samdrupjongkhar, south-eastern Bhutan, the Foreign Minister who was then also the Director of Education, gave the teachers their first briefing. Father William Mackey, Jesuit missionary and pioneer of modern education in Bhutan, memorized that “He (*Lyonpo* Dawa Tshering) collected 40 teachers, supplied them with some sugar and a bit of rice and dropped two at a school, walked on and dropped another two and so on. He told them he would pick them up at the end of the year” and father said jokingly “They couldn’t leave because they couldn’t find their way back”.<sup>64</sup> In the villages where they were left there were no shops, certainly no post office, and anything else. They had to get whatever food they could. There was not a lot to do apart from teaching so most of them became accomplished teachers. Some of them spent their two months long winter holiday in travelling on foot from locations such as Lhuntshe in the distant

north-eastern hills to Samdrupjongkhar, then by train to and from Kerala, a thousand miles away. They had to work in Bhutan without any medical, commercial or social facilities and they led a really deprived life. Himalayan region's established historian A. C. Sinha commented, "Their sincere contribution and enormous devotion to duty weaved the isolated villages into an effective chain of Bhutanese system of education".<sup>65</sup> Those teachers also had to confront with the multiplicity of Bhutanese languages such as Dzongkha, Sharchopkha, Bumthangkha, Lhotshamkha etc. Moreover, Bhutan had to depend much on foreign aid for finance also. Thus the Indian teachers who were employed in 1960s had to face all kinds of pedagogical, cultural, geographical and personal problems.

The Indian teachers faced difficulties unflinchingly and taught with full sincerity. According to Dasho Pema Thinley, former Vice Chancellor of the Royal University of Bhutan, in 1962 three teachers, K.R. Shivadasan, K.G. Nair and Harish were brought from Kerala to his school at Mongar and "they, for the first time taught in English. This represented a new phase and we began to learn History, Geography and Science in addition to Dzongkha, English and some Mathematics".<sup>66</sup> When Father William Mackey arrived in eastern Bhutan in 1963 he found that an Indian woman named Miss Pant ran the Tashigang elementary school. She was the sister of an Indian Political Officer for Sikkim and Bhutan and very much dedicated to the cause of education in Bhutan. Howard Solverson, biographer of Father Mackey has mentioned about Miss Pant that, "For an Indian woman of her position to work in a place like Tashigang was remarkable. She lived in one room with no glass in the windows, no electricity, no inside water and only cold water outside- conditions that would be considered extremely primitive by Indians of her class...Miss Pant had run the school for two years and had earned the respect of the teachers, the Dzong administration and the children".<sup>67</sup> Again in Eastern Bhutan, "Father Mackey found the headmaster at Lhuntse, an Indian named R. Krishnan, running 'a fine little school'...To get there before the Tashigang road was built; teachers like Mr. Krishnan had to walk for at least two weeks from the Indian border. Then they would face feelings of remoteness, cultural differences and a complete lack of amenities like entertainment and electricity, as well as difficulties in getting supplies".<sup>68</sup> It might be appropriate to add that Mr. and Mrs. Krishnan spent 33 years (1962-1995), teaching in remote schools of Bhutan. Solverson also adds, "At Mongar, Father Mackey found a school even better

than Lhuntse, with the Indian headmaster, Sivadasan, doing an excellent job. This was the only school he found that attempted to follow a syllabus".<sup>69</sup> Some alumni of Logodama Primary School, which was established in 1950s, in Punakha Dzongkhag, recounted their personal experiences about the Indian teachers. They were of the opinion that over the decades many Indian teachers had come and gone and most of them were found to be very helpful. They not only taught but also "...initiated the activities like classroom construction, improvement of pathway, providing first aid services to the sick students and some of them had even introduced games like volleyball, basketball and badminton for the students to play during the leisure hours".<sup>70</sup> The wives of the Indian officers posted in Bhutan also took the initiatives in the educational development of the country. For example, in 1970 a nursery section of the Thimphu Public School was opened in the Government Rest House at Thimphu. The school was staffed with volunteer teachers, mostly wives of senior Indian officers, who offered their services on an honorary basis. The Special Officer B.S. Das was one of the initiators of the scheme for nursery section and contributed Rs. 1000 for purchasing equipment.<sup>71</sup> Again Ms. Rao and Ms. Reddy, wives of the Dantak officers at Dewathang (SamdrupJongkhar *dzongkhag*), served in Dawathang Primary School which was established in 1962. They were committed to their profession and played an active role in construction and beautification of the school.<sup>72</sup> In retrospect, the contribution of Indian teachers, who came and serve to Bhutan was very commendable to say the least. They had to trudge through dense forests and difficult terrain often crossing swollen rivers during monsoon risking their lives against wild animals and rocky footpath while commuting to the place of their postings and vice-versa for official and personal works. According to Father William Mackey "Without their devoted and sincere teaching in isolated difficult rural areas, Bhutan could never have reached its present high standard of education in the interior schools".<sup>73</sup> The British Council report attests the difficult living conditions of teachers: "It is difficult to imagine how arduous they are during the monsoon. In some places in east Bhutan, the only means of crossing rivers is by means of a single split-tree-trunk laid above the water. Teachers in most schools work in isolation".<sup>74</sup>

The fourth King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, who ascended the throne in 1974 gave more emphasis on education sector in the five year plans. Hence, there was dearth of educated manpower Bhutan had the need of Indian teachers for the newly

established primary, junior and high schools. Besides teachers appointed under direct recruitment system there were also teachers deputed directly by the Indian Government to fulfill the demand of teaching force who taught in junior secondary and higher secondary levels of schools during late seventies. Mr. M. M. Devsia, Mr. Faqir Chand Gupta, Mr. Om Prakash Arora, Mr. M. K. G. Kaimal, Mr. K. G. Nair, Mr. R. D. Nair, Mr. G. B. Kurup, Mr. Nima Tshering Sada, Tika Prasad Gurung, Mr. Mani Kamal Chhetri, Mr. T. B. Chhetri, Mr. M. N. Mondal, Mr. K. R. Sivadasan, and Mr. A. N. Bhaskaran were the pioneers who made noteworthy contributions in the early stage of the progress of modern education.<sup>75</sup> In this context, it would be worthwhile to elaborate on specific roles played by some of the above named noteworthy persons. Persons like Mr. G. B. Kurup, Mr. Faqir Chand Gupta, Mr. M. M. Devsia, Mr. Om Prakash Arora, Mr. A. N. Bhaskaran, Mr. K. G. Nair and a few others not only risked their lives in remote corners of Bhutan performing their routine duties but also emerged as efficient educational administrators. The dedicated Indian teachers have left behind memorable images which some of the distinguished citizens of the country often recount. Jagar Dorji, former Director, National Institute of Education, Samtse, remembered his school life: “As we moved to the new school in Sherabling (eastern Bhutan), Mr. Sanguth came from India as our new headmaster. Many teachers with higher qualification from Kerala, Darjeeling and Kalimpong in India had come to teach in other schools”.<sup>76</sup> Lyonpo Zangley Dukpa, ex Health Minister, recounting his early life at Yurung School in eastern Bhutan recalled having several good teachers and a qualified headmaster, Mr. G.M. Mukherjee from Calcutta. He wrote, “Sacrificing the comforts of city life, he worked in Yurung for more than eleven years, a rare non-Bhutanese teacher committed to his profession and clientele. Yurung was to see many other good Indian teachers among who was Mr. Girijan who later resigned as the Principal of Mongar High School”.<sup>77</sup> Dorji Thinley, now the Director of Samtse College of Education recalled that, “I was blessed with teachers who loved their job and cared for the children. One such teacher who I remember with great fondness was Mr. Kabirajan, who taught me math in class four and introduced me to Thomas Hardy and his books ‘A Pair of Blue Eyes’ and ‘Far From the Madding Crowd’ in class six! He was very unconventional and I guess his dedication to his discipline made him quite like that---Kabirajan, I am not sure if he is alive, was a life giver, energy booster, warmth generator, ego-tamer, a genuine guide to students and someone who could be trusted and relied upon from a thousand miles.”<sup>78</sup> Again he

remembered, “Another teacher in school whose memory I cherish with joy was Mr. Banerjee. Mr. Banerjee taught me maths although I was never destined to learn it well enough even with his refreshing and inspiring methods of teaching it. Yet it was because of his frequent reference to the process of mathematical thinking by alluding to mathematicians dead and alive, I was inspired to read the biographies of A.K. Ramanujan and John Nash years later. Mr. Banerjee was ordinary, yet extraordinary, a rare soul.”<sup>79</sup> It was the Indian teachers, committed to hard work and discipline, who introduced the subject-teacher system unknown in Bhutan earlier.<sup>80</sup> They were indeed the true agents of change who became successful in lighting the path of numerous Bhutanese citizens some of whom are still shining in important positions. The present Bhutan Council for Secondary School Examinations was started by Mr. Om Prakash Arora as the Controller of Examinations in 1976, who had joined Education Department as headmaster during mid-sixties and later worked as Inspector of Schools before becoming the Controller of Examinations.<sup>81</sup>

Many teachers from India have nostalgic memories of rustic Bhutan of those days in the 60s when they came to teach in the first Bhutanese schools. For those teachers, their efforts in those early years were not just important contributions to the initial stages of growth in the education system of Bhutan, but also constituted fond memories and unforgotten adventures. Most of the Indian teachers who came to Bhutan with the progress of modern education system in 1960s, remember two aspects of Bhutan: rugged lifestyle and the hospitality of the people. Mr. Maheswar Prasad, who had arrived at Paro High school in 1969, recalled that, “Life at Paro was not altogether a bed of roses; the school was far from the market; there was no motorable approach road to the school, and fresh vegetables, meat and fish were not available.”<sup>82</sup> Later he became the deputy chief inspector of schools. Beside teaching English and inspecting schools he also worked as a principal, vice principal and assistant principal in different schools. In spite of various hardship he had, in a matter of speech, brought up countless Bhutanese children and came to consider Bhutan as his second home and said that teachers were regarded highly in Bhutan in ‘those days’.<sup>83</sup> Mr. A.G. Gopinathan, who became the headmaster of Rinchen Kuenphen Primary School of Thimphu in 1990s, and remembers his first sight of Bhutan when he came to teach in Surey in central Bhutan in 1964. He arrived on the back of a truck and was dropped at the end of a motorable road in Geylegphug. Unable to find the

direction or coolies he was preparing to return home. He was lost until he met some other school teachers. According to his own words, “It’s because of the moral support and friendly attitude of the local government and village officials in the places of our postings that made us feel at home in a strange land. They treated us like a long lost friend.”<sup>84</sup> Another teacher, Mr. M.K.G. Kaimal, who came to Bhutan in 1962, recounted the friendship offered by the local officials and people in all the remote schools he has taught since he came to Bhutan. He says, “The Bhutanese people never allowed us to feel that we were from a different country. People were well behaved in their own rustic way and had the pristine innocence that was not found in the outside world.”<sup>85</sup> For John M. Chiramal, who came to Bhutan in 1976, his experience at Jakar High School in central Bhutan was a true Bhutanese experience. He lived in a wood cutter’s shack, lived and ate with the students, thus his was an experience which confirmed the best of his impressions in Bhutan. Mr. K. R. Pillai, who in 1991 was transferred to Chhukha higher secondary School had come to Bhutan in 1978 and started his career in Thinleygang primary School and later served in Paro High School, Samtse High School, and also in National Institute of Education, Samtse. He recounted about his experience in this country, “Away from home for the first time, it was a terrible but wonderful experience for me. Life at Thinleygang was a turning point to me. I have seen the hardships of life. Also I have seen the family bondage, hospitality, belongingness and mutual respect. My evenings at Thinleygang were so lonely. The room with no electricity aggravated my problems. But all these feelings melted down in the next morning when I saw enthusiastic students coming to school to learn. The natural exuberance of the young children elevated my thoughts and decided to be a part of Bhutanese education system.----- Truly I became a real teacher in the Bhutanese soil.”<sup>86</sup>

G. B. Kurup has made a lot of personal contributions like campus development through mass plantations and developing playground for his school. The contributions made by other individuals are equally noteworthy in different aspects of school life. In fact, they have done more than what was expected of them. Despite the fact that the teachers were relatively well remunerated it will be a fair assessment to say that the valuable services rendered by Indian teachers under strained circumstances went far beyond the salaries they were paid and the facilities they availed. In other words, they gave much more to Bhutan than what they received in

return. At the same time, in this connection, it must also be recorded that the people in Bhutan were most friendly and did their best to retain the teachers. They responded with hospitality, frankness, simplicity and respect for their teachers and cumulatively it must rank as one of the high contributions from the Bhutanese side in educating themselves.

Reproduced below is a note written by late G. B. Kurup which serves as an authentic evidence about the lives of Indian teachers on their first arrival in Bhutan:

### **FIRST DAY IN BHUTAN**

“With acute pain of swollen knee (arthritis), I have been lying in my bed, thinking about my past: why did I come to Bhutan leaving a fairly good job at home? Why did I stay here for 26 years.....?”

Kurup reminisces his first day at Tongsa School in 1962 saying that it took 10 days to reach from Geylegphug. He had a horse which he could not ride since it was loaded with supplies and so had to walk the 10 days with a horseman as a companion. During the long march he learnt a few Dzongkha words from him. Kurup light heartedly called him his first Guru in Bhutan.

On reaching Tongsa the horseman dumped Kurup’s luggage in a classroom of the old school building and went away. Kurup stood there looking at the disappearing horses and the mule track that linked him to the outside world for “There was not a single human being around.”

His note says, “I went inside my room. The floor was covered with dust an inch deep. I spread my bedding on the dust and stretched my body thinking of the ways and means to escape from the forlorn place at the earliest, if possible, the next day. My aching body did not allow me to stay awake for long.

I woke up hearing somebody knocking at the door. I couldn’t believe somebody would come to see me at night. All around, it was pitch dark. Was I dreaming? I pinched my body to check whether I was dreaming or not. No, I was not dreaming.

The knock was still continuing, now followed by giggles. Collecting all my courage got up and opened the door. It was neither ghosts nor dacoits. A small boy

and a girl with a kettle full of *suja* and *bangchu* full of red rice and *emadatchi* stood there.

I accepted the '*manna*' with gratitude. I tried to thank them. They continued their giggles. They said something. I did not understand the language, but I understood the meaning. "Sir, as long as we are here, you have nothing to worry about." Language cannot create a barrier between love and affection.

Leaving the kettle and *bangchu* with me, the children left with their bamboo torch."

His eyes had welled and fighting back his tears of happiness he changed his mind to "... work for these children" and to give whatever necessary "...to make them better persons."

*Suja* and *emadatchi* were absolutely unusual food for the stranger in Bhutan but he found it to be the "most wholesome meal in my life."

Despite the remoteness, the change of climate, new language and culture, etc he looked at Bhutan with ultimate love and appreciation which can only be described in his own words: "What those two children did was the real culture of Bhutan. Since then I have had innumerable experiences of this nature. These experiences enriched my life, changed my life and made me what I am today. I learned more than what I taught....." <sup>87</sup>

Dasho Nado Rinchhen, the first Bhutanese Education Director who was appointed in 1973, mentioned about the system of recruitment of Indian teachers, "Advertisement in Indian newspaper was done and teachers interviewed and selected".<sup>88</sup> The Indian teachers thus appointed left behind their beloved parents, spouses, friends, relatives and comfortable homes travelled to Bhutan and walked further for several days to reach their respective schools. Their working conditions in Bhutan being very harsh in they had to live a tough life to earn their livelihood. While some of them were not able to adapt themselves in the strange environment of the new place and returned home immediately after joining their duties and some even without joining duties, maximum numbers of them continued working against all odds and became familiar with Bhutanese customs, traditions, languages, dialects, food habits and diverse culture of Bhutanese societies. Records point to the fact that "At

the remote schools teachers had to live in temporary shacks with little or no furniture, and slept on hard mud floors away from the spots where raindrops seeped in through holes in thatched roofing”.<sup>89</sup>

The Education Sector being the largest organization under the Government of Bhutan, numbers of Indian employees were generally higher than in any other organization. They constituted not only teaching force but also clerical staff, drivers, technicians, headmasters, principals, school inspectors and even the Head of the Education Department like the Education Director (1960s and 1970s) Mr. A. R. Bose, Dr. S. P. Mittal, Mr. R. S. James and Mr. A. N. Dhawan (the last expatriate Director of Education in Bhutan). Mr. R.A. James who became the Director of Education in 1971 had taken many innovative steps. H.B. Vishwa, an eminent educationist of Bhutan, wrote regarding Mr. James: “Among the things he initiated the introduction of common examination at class V level is remembered most vividly.... The common examination was also introduced in class VIII as a screening process for admission to higher classes.”<sup>90</sup> The common examination brought about the uniformity of standard in education and served as an instrument to measure the functions of subject teachers. H.B.Vishwa, said some words about the contribution of Mr. A. N. Dhawan as a Director: “He framed the code of conduct for teachers and recommended the forms of punishment to be applied to the students in a constructive manner. He also introduced the concept of in-service training for the in-service teachers, the first one having been held in Kanglung Public School under the direction of late Father W. Mackey, the Principal of the school, from July 25 to August 10, 1974.”<sup>91</sup>

Up to 1970s education in Bhutan was an adoption of education system of India. The development process in the education sector had to be initiated with everything imported from outside. Curriculum, syllabus, textbooks, teaching aids and methods, educational stores and supplies, teaching personnel and even headmasters/principals of schools as well as officers in the education headquarters were based on the system prevailing outside the kingdom and recruited amongst expatriates or imported directly as efforts to develop such systems or resources of their own were rather limited.<sup>92</sup> The next two decades, that is, 1980s and 1990s, can be marked as a period of evolution or ‘Bhutanization’ of the education system and can be said to have begun in the 1980s.<sup>93</sup> To this extent, the appointment of nationals as heads of all schools during the year 1988 was a major step towards the

‘Bhutanization’ of education system.<sup>94</sup> But still in 1990s there was scarcity of national teachers and according to a government report of 1992, “Our search for good head teachers for all our schools and institutes shall not henceforth be limited amongst the Bhutanese nationals only. We have still 856 (37% of the total teaching force) non-national teachers, mostly of Indian nationality. Many of them are not only highly qualified but have already proven themselves with credit in the past as head teachers. Our research for good head teachers shall, therefore, also include such non-national teachers. It was because of these that Mr. A. G. Gopinathan, a teacher of Indian nationality and of very high reputation, has been promoted to be the headmaster of one of our most important schools in the capital, We have many good non-nationals Second-in-Commands in several schools and institutes providing very strong support to our national headteachers”.<sup>95</sup>

Bhutan has been making rigorous efforts to develop its national teaching force and the proportion of Bhutanese teachers in the education system has seen a dramatic increase, yet a good number of expatriate teachers of Indian origin are still required in secondary and tertiary level of institutes and this trend is expected to continue further till the country is able to strengthen its teaching force to Masters and Doctoral levels.

So, a significant credit in the progress of educational development in Bhutan goes to those devoted, sincere Indian teachers who led the beginning and sacrificed a large part of their lives in difficult circumstances. It will not be unfair to state that the beginning of Bhutan’s modern education system would have had a very difficult start and equally demanding in the continuing period without the support from hundreds of Indian teachers. Those educators were not only educated the Bhutanese youth but also built the Bhutanese manpower required by the government. They lived their lives in the true Bhutanese style, walked through wild animals infested forests to reach the schools, ate local food, learnt every major dialects of the country, and came to adopt several important aspects of Bhutanese culture. They came to promote the concept of school in arduous conditions and modelled bravery, resilience and endurance for the cause of education in a largely unknown country. Bhutan has in several comments and reports recognized and lauded the contribution of the Indian teachers but ground reality show that the expression of gratitude somehow lacks to sincerely and completely compare with the endeavour of the pioneering Indian teachers.

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