

**THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF  
MODERN EDUCATION IN BHUTAN  
(1907 TO 1997 A.D.)**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL  
FOR THE AWARD OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
IN HISTORY**

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## Declaration

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## ANTI-PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

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## ABSTRACT

**Title:**

**“THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN EDUCATION IN BHUTAN (1907 TO 1997 A.D.)”**

The march of modern Bhutan actually began since the year 1907; and the introduction of modern education under the hereditary kings began thereafter. Before the advent of modern education, monasteries were the centres of learning. The monastic education system was considered as a part of religion as it included the study of religious scriptures as well as literacy, numeracy, philosophy, astrology, arts, painting, traditional medicines etc. Monks and the nuns still hold a high position but with the introduction of modern education system, the monastic education has lost much of its influence.

Ugyen Wangchuck, the first hereditary King, directed his Chamberlain, Ugyen Dorji to make contact with Dr. Sutherland, the principal of the Scottish University Mission Institution and Dr. John Graham, founder of the Graham’s Homes School in Kalimpong. Dr. Sutherland sent two teachers to Bhutan and the first school of modern education began at Haa in western Bhutan in 1914. A mobile school was also opened at Bumthang in central Bhutan in 1915 by the first King to teach crown prince and other children. Hindi was the medium of instruction while English was also taught. Students after completing their primary schooling at Haa and Bumthang were sent to India for further studies.

The second hereditary King Jigme Wangchuck, with the assistance of Sonam Tobgey Dorji, his Chamberlain, set up many schools throughout the country. Under the third hereditary king, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck the launching of the First Five Year Development Plan in 1961 led to the establishment of numerous development projects including that of education. At the end of the 1960s first high school was also set up. English was introduced as the medium of instruction and the Jesuit missionaries of Darjeeling were invited by the Prime Minister Jigme Palden Dorji to establish English medium schools. A technical school was also opened. Two public schools were opened which provided food, lodging, tuitions, uniforms and books. A teacher training college

was also founded in 1968. The fourth King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck followed a policy of decentralization of administration and development. Sherubtse College, the first junior college of the country was upgraded to degree level in 1983. The King also introduced a new concept of Gross National Happiness which emphasized on sustainable development.

Bhutan's real development in education started with the launching of the Five Year Development Plans. The First Five Year Plan (1961-62 to 1965-66) focussed on establishing schools. The Second Five Year Plan (1966-67 to 1970-71) aimed at improving the quality of education. The Third Five Year Plan (1971-72 to 1975-76) aimed at printing text books in English and Dzongkha. The scope of the Fourth Five Year Plan (1976-77 to 1980-81) was a major expansion of primary education. The Fifth Five Year Plan (1981-82 to 1986-87) aspired to extend the physical facilities in schools such as buildings and equipments. The Sixth Five Year Plan (1987-88 to 1991-92) emphasized on the introduction of New Approach to Primary education where curriculum was made according to the need of the children. The Seventh Five Year Plan (1992-93 to 1996-97) aimed at compulsory primary education.

In the initial years after the introduction of modern education system, Bhutan had to face several problems- scarcity of teachers, communication to schools, non availability of text books etc. Parents were also very much reluctant to send their children to schools. But gradually the people's view changed and ultimately the communities took the responsibilities of establishing schools.

Government of India played a significant role in the growth of modern education in Bhutan. On the request of the first king, the British Government granted an amount of Rs.49, 629 in 1924 for the education of the Bhutanese boys. In 1955, the Government of India offered 30 seats annually for the Bhutanese students to study in India and later it was extended to 50. The first and second five year development plans were entirely financed by India. Dantak (Indian Border Roads Organization) built many schools along with the country's first college. Beginning from 60s till 90s of the last century, high schools in Bhutan were affiliated to the Council for the Indian School Certificate

Examinations, New Delhi. Sherubtse College was affiliated to the Delhi University till the establishment of the Royal University of Bhutan in 2003.

Indian teachers contributed a lot in the growth of modern education in Bhutan. They endured great hardships for the cause of educating Bhutanese children. Without the selfless sacrifice of Indian teachers Bhutan could not make so much progress in education within a short span of time. The Indian not only constitutes the teaching force but also served as clerks, drivers, school inspectors, controller of examination and even the Director of education.

Christian missionaries also played a crucial role in the growth of modern education in Bhutan. Canadian priest Father William Mackey was the main architect behind the establishment of the country's first high school. Salesian missionaries established the first technical school. Many indigenous Bhutanese, such as, Ugyen Dorji, his son Sonam Tobgey Dorji and grandson Jigme Palden Dorji contributed a lot in developing the country's modern education. Dawa Tshering, the foreign minister in the 60s did the tasks of bringing teachers from Kerala. The names of some other pioneers are Nado Rinchhen, Jigme Yodzer Thinley, Gagey Lhamu, Chandrakala Gurung, Jagar Dorji etc.

Modern education system has gradually been expanded and the literacy rate increased through non-formal and adult education programme. This led to an all around development of the country. By 1997, the progress was so impressive that the country was ready to elevate itself to the level of promoting universalization of primary education by the year 2000.

## PREFACE

Bhutan is probably the last of the closed countries in our times to open its frontiers to the world at large. Notwithstanding our geographical proximity to the country, as well as our long and sustained historical ties and the convergence of mutually acceptable political direction, very few academics from our country have academically ventured into this country of myth, mysteries, monasteries and mountains. In fact, the major bulk of the research work on history, culture, geography, religion etc. of Bhutan has been done not by us Indians but by the Europeans and Americans. In the field of “Modern Education in Bhutan” research work has been grossly ignored by us as well as by the European and American scholars. Except some simple works by the scholars in this path, this topic is exemplified by disinterest and apathy by all. Keeping these unpleasant facts in mind a serious probe into the history of modern education in Bhutan was not only relevant but also particularly necessary. It was the view of the researcher that a profound research, which will be seminal in many ways, would naturally benefit the Bhutanese but at the same time it would put on record an important aspect of nation building and it would also erase to some extent the vast emptiness we encounter whenever we touch the subject. India grants a huge amount of budget for development of education in Bhutan. This money could have been better channelized if history, data and critical study of the education system was available. It is a true fact that Bhutan’s rapid progress and development in education has made possible in overall development of the country. In order to know the complete history of the country it is essential to have the knowledge on the progress of its education.

The present study is an attempt to compose a comprehensive history on the subject, “THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN EDUCATION IN BHUTAN (1907 TO 1997 A.D.)” because it is totally an unexplored area and a large vacuum or void that has been present for so long will be filled up by this writing. The researcher has tried to put on record an important aspect of Bhutanese nation building with the growth of modern education.

The term modernization implies many things, but in respect of Bhutan we find partial modernization. In one sphere we find modernization and in other sphere

traditionalism. In the heading “The Growth and development of Modern education” I wish to mean transition of education from monastic to modern. Without understanding the spirit of monastic education it is difficult to know the modern education –its prospects and necessity. An endeavour to present a systematic study on the topic has been made here in the subsequent pages.

In writing the dissertation the researcher had to face on acute problem in maintaining the proper system of reference. She noticed that the Government of Bhutan did not maintain the names of writers/editors/authors of the books/pamphlets mostly published by Government Organizations including the Department of Education. In the reference part, therefore, no citation could be made of the names of the authors, except the names of the main documents and the year of publications.

The researcher wishes to confess that the process of writing the dissertation was confronted by her inability to read or understand *Dzongkha* words particularly in case of monastic education and she also confess that in spite of her earnest try she could not maintain equilibrium in the size of the chapters.

In embarking upon a thesis relating to a country like Bhutan where there are scarcity of resources to do research work particularly in the field of history I had every possibility to lose my way. But due to the support, assistance and encouragement from many quarters at last I have reached to the required destination and I want to acknowledge my contribution to all.

I gratefully remember and acknowledge gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Sailen Debnath, Associate Professor, Alipurduar College, West Bengal. Being himself expert in the studies of Bhutan, he has helped me with many valuable and scholarly suggestions in preparing my dissertation. He has always helped and guided me in completing my thesis. I take this opportunity to express my deep sense of gratitude to another supervisor, Professor Ananda Gopal Ghosh, retired Professor, University of North Bengal. He has always been the pathfinder in my life; always inspired me to exploit the new field of work. Under his inspiration I took this topic as a field of study and his worthy suggestions has enriched me in preparing this dissertation.

I gratefully acknowledge my deep sense of indebtedness to Dr. Sonam Wangyel of Jaigaon, who has helped me with the books, documents of his own collection related to Bhutan, I have been always benefitted by his scholarly suggestions. I gratefully acknowledge my deep sense of indebtedness to the staff of the Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan, staff of the Curriculum and Professional Support Division, Thimphu, Director and staff of the National Library, Thimphu, staff of the Paro College of Education, staff of the Royal University of Bhutan, editor and staff of the Kuensel Corporation, staff of the Centre for Bhutan Studies, Thimphu, staff of the Central Statistical Organization, Thimphu, Bhutan-India Friendship Association, Phuentsholing- all of them extended their helping hands with primary and secondary sources available to them. Moreover I am indebted to Radha Venkataraman, former HOC of Ambassador to India in Bhutan and all the staff of Indian Embassy in Thimphu for their guidance in collecting source materials in an unknown country. I am also indebted to the staff of India House Library, Nehru-Wangchuck Library in Thimphu for providing me with valuable resources. I am indebted to Mr. J. K. Sharma, former Consulate General of India in Phuentsholing for his helping hands to acquire permit as a research scholar several times to Bhutan. I am thankful to the principals and staff of the schools I visited in Bhutan. I am indebted to some pioneering personalities of Bhutan who have shared with me about their experience of the growth of modern education in Bhutan such as T. S. Powdyel, former Minister of Education, Nado Rinchen, Deputy Minister, Privy Council, Royal Government of Bhutan, Dasho Pema Thinley, former Vice Chancellor, Royal University of Bhutan, Dasho Zangley Dukpa, former Vice Chancellor, Royal University of Bhutan, Dr. Dorji Thinley, Director, Samtse College of Education, Aum Sangey Zam, former Secretary, Ministry of Education, Dasho Jagar Dorji, former Director, Paro College of Education, Dasho Karma Ura, Director, Centre for Bhutan Studies, Dr. Singye Namgyel, former Director, Sherubtse College and many more. I am benefitted from many valuable suggestions at several times given by H. B. Vishwa, former Dzongkhag Education Officer, Royal Government of Bhutan and K. C. Jose, former Lecturer, Samtse College of Education. I express a deep sense of gratitude to all of them.

I am grateful to the Director and staff of the National Archives, Delhi as they provided me with all the relevant source materials I needed for my dissertation. I am also

grateful to the staff and members of the State Archives, Kolkata; they extended their full co-operation in spite of the fact that very little matters are preserved there related to my topic. I am also thankful to the staff of the National Library, Kolkata as they have helped me with some rare books and documents on Bhutan. I express my deep sense of gratitude to the staff of Central Library, University of North Bengal, for their helping hand in collecting materials from the library.

I am indebted to Professor Bijoy Kumar Sarkar, Head, Department of History, University of North Bengal, for his scholarly suggestions regarding my study. I am thankful to Prof. Ratna Roy Sanyal, Prof. Ichhimuddin Sarkar and Prof. Anita Bagchi, retired Professors and also to the faculty members of the Department of History, University of North Bengal- Dr. Dahlia Bhattacharya, Dr. Sudash Lama & Mr. Varun Kumar Roy for their encouragement in my study.

My heartfelt thanks to all my colleagues who have helped and co-operated me to finish my research work in time. Lastly, I take this opportunity to acknowledge a deep sense of indebtedness towards my mother-in-law, father-in-law, brothers (Borda, Bapi, Raju), sister-in-laws, nephew Bimbo, sister Mamon who have always helped me in their every possible way and encouraged me in continuing higher education. I wish to give special thanks to my 'Mejda' for his constant support. My husband (Mohit) was always with me during my several time visits to Bhutan and Delhi and helped me a lot. He along with my daughter (Maninee) and son (Maitreya) sacrificed for me at all times; no acknowledgement is enough for their contribution in my research work. I remember my dearest parents, who are no more in this material world but their blessings is always with me.

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## GLOSSARY

<i>Acharya</i>	Sanskrit term used in Buddhism as a sign of master's degree
<i>Amochu</i>	Mother River or the Torsa
<i>Anim</i>	Nun
<i>Anim Dratshang</i>	Central Religious Council for nuns
<i>Ashi</i>	An honourific term used to denote a woman of the royal family or aristocracy
<i>Babu</i>	An old honourific title for Bhutanese working for the government with education outside the traditional monastic order
<i>Bangchu</i>	A beautiful basket made by Bhutanese people from bamboo fibres.
<i>Bhotanta</i>	Sanskrit term for the end of Tibet (bhot: Tibet, anta: the end)
<i>Bodpas</i>	Tibetans
<i>Bon</i>	The ancient religion of Tibet before the advent of Buddhism
<i>Bumthaps</i>	People from Bumthang
<i>Bumthangkha</i>	A dialect of Bumthang
<i>Chhoejung</i>	Religious literature
<i>Chiwog</i>	Group of households/ an unit under a gewog
<i>Choekey</i>	The classical Tibetan language
<i>Dantak</i>	The alternative title for the Indian Border Roads Association also known as General Engineering Reserve Force (GREF)
<i>Dasho</i>	A title given to a citizen by the King for meritorious services to the country
<i>Deb Zimpon</i>	Chamberlain to Deb

<i>Desi</i>	Title given to the temporal ruler of Bhutan (1851-1907), the full term being Druk Desi which in the Indian corruption became Deb/ Debraja
<i>Dewan</i>	Finance Minister
<i>Dharmaraja</i>	This was the term, meaning a religious leader, used for Shabdrung by the British
<i>Dolma</i>	Dzongkha term for the goddess Tara (Sanskrit)
<i>Druk</i>	The mythical thunder Dragon after which the country is named and the people style themselves as Drukpa (Dukpa) or Bhutanese.
<i>Druk Gyalpo</i>	The King of Bhutan
<i>Drukpa Kagyu</i>	A sect of the Mahayana Buddhism which is the official state religion of Bhutan
<i>Drukyul</i>	The official Dzongkha name for Bhutan translating as “The Dragon Kingdom”.
<i>Duars</i>	Sanskrit word, <i>dwar</i> or a door, meaning the passes leading to Bhutan from Assam and Bengal
<i>Dzong</i>	Fortress, an administrative head-quarter and the residence of monk body
<i>Dzongda</i>	District administrator
<i>Dzongkha</i>	language of dzong, the national language of Bhutan
<i>Dzongkhag</i>	Administrative judicial district
<i>Dungkhag</i>	A sub division of a district
<i>Dzongpen</i>	Governor of a fortress
<i>Dzongrab</i>	Deputy district administrator

<i>Dungpa</i>	Administrator of a sub-division
<i>Dratshang</i>	Dzongkhag Monastic Branch
<i>Dratshang Lhentshog</i>	Council for Religious Affairs
<i>Drubdey</i>	Meditation centre
<i>Emadatchi</i>	A special type of Bhutanese curry prepared using Bhutanese chillies and cheese
<i>Gelong</i>	An ordained monk
<i>Gelukpa</i>	One of the four orders of Mahayana Buddhism
<i>Gewog</i>	County
<i>Glu</i>	Folk song
<i>Goenpa</i>	A fully consecrated monastery
<i>Gomchen</i>	A lay monk
<i>Gomdey</i>	Monastery for lay priests
<i>Gongzim</i>	Chamberlain
<i>Gup</i>	Head of a gewog
<i>Guru</i>	Sanskrit word means teacher
<i>Gyalrab</i>	Historical chronicle
<i>Je Khenpo</i>	Chief Abbot, head of the Central Monastic Body in Bhutan
<i>Kagyupa</i>	One of the four orders of Mahayana Buddhism
<i>Kangyur</i>	It is the name given to the collection of texts containing the “translation of the Buddha’s teachings”.
<i>Kutshab</i>	A government representative/ in-charge for certain large areas

<i>Khangpas</i>	People form Kheng
<i>Kheng</i>	A small group of people found in western Bhutan
<i>Karchang</i>	catalogues
<i>Kidu</i>	beneficial grant from the king or government
<i>Lama</i>	Buddhist priest
<i>Lhakhang</i>	A Buddhist temple
<i>Lho Mon</i>	Land of the south
<i>Lhotshampa</i>	People of the south referring to the Nepalis in Bhutan ( <i>Lhotshamkha</i> is the dzongkha term for the Nepali language).
<i>Lobdra</i>	A Monastic school
<i>Lodroc Tshogde</i>	Royal Advisory Council
<i>Logyu</i>	Records of chronicles
<i>Lopon</i>	A teacher
<i>Lopon Gongma</i>	Headmaster
<i>Lotswas</i>	Translator
<i>Lyonchhen</i>	Prime Minister
<i>Lyonpo</i>	Title for a minister
<i>Mon-yul</i>	The southern country/region
<i>Monpa</i>	People of the southern region
<i>Namthar</i>	Religious biography
<i>Nazir Deb</i>	Defence Minister

<i>Ngolops</i>	Anti-national people
<i>Ngultrum</i>	The unit of currency in Bhutan
<i>Nyamgyur</i>	Religious poetry
<i>Nyan ngag</i>	Ornate poetry
<i>Nyerchen</i>	The Revenue Officer (tax collector)
<i>Nyingmapa</i>	One of the four orders of Mahayana Buddhism
<i>Penlop</i>	Regional governor
<i>Poenkhag</i>	Government official
<i>Rabdey</i>	A resident monk body in the monastic wing of a dzong
<i>Rimpoche</i>	The precious one, A title given to reincarnate or highly revered monks
<i>Sakyapa</i>	One of the four orders of Mahayana Buddhism
<i>Sal</i>	Shorea robusta tree
<i>Sangha</i>	Monastic body
<i>Sarchops</i>	A large community of people in eastern Bhutan. Their language is termed as Sharchopkha
<i>Savana</i>	Grass land
<i>Shabdrung</i>	This was the title of Ngawang Namgyal, the unifier of Bhutan. It literally means “the one before whom one prostrates oneself”.
<i>Shastri</i>	Sanskrit term used in Buddhism as a sign of academic graduation
<i>Shedra</i>	Buddhist College
<i>Sherig</i>	Education

<i>Sikhi</i>	Twenty paise coin
<i>Soelra</i>	Gift
<i>Suja</i>	A special type of Tibetan and Bhutanese tea
<i>Srung</i>	Epics
<i>Tengyur</i>	Collection of the commentaries to the Buddha's teachings
<i>Terma</i>	A hidden religious treasure
<i>Terton</i>	Treasure revealer
<i>Thrimpoen</i>	Chief administrator
<i>Tshigdzod</i>	Dictionary
<i>Tshogdu</i>	The National Assembly
<i>Zhung Dratshang</i>	Central Monastic Body
<i>Zorig Chusum</i>	The traditional thirteen arts and crafts

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

B. A.	Bachelor of Arts
BBE	Bhutan Board of Examination
BCSE	Bhutan Certificate of Secondary Examinations
BDS	Bachelor of Dental Surgery
B. Ed	Bachelor of Education
B. Sc	Bachelor of Science
CAPSS	Curriculum and Professional Support Services
CARTS	Certified and Recommended for Training
CTDT	Curriculum and Textbook Development Division
DAHE	Department of Adult and Higher Education
DDC	Dzongkhag Development Commission
ECR	Extended classroom
EVS	Environmental Studies
FYP	Five Year Plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNH	Gross National Happiness
ICSE	Indian Certificate of Secondary Education
IMTRAT	Indian Military Training Team
ISC	Indian School Certificate
ITEC	Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation

KCIE	Knight Commander of the Indian Empire
KCSI	Knight Commander of the Star of India
LLB	Bachelor of Law
MBBS	Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery
NAPE	New Approach to Primary Education
NFE	Non Formal Education
Nu.	Ngultrum
NIE	National Institute of Education
NWAB	National Women Association of Bhutan
P.G.C.E	Post-Graduate Certificate of Education
PP- Pre	Primary
PTTC	Primary Teachers Training Course
RIM	Royal Institute of Management
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
TEP	Tertiary Education Policy
TTC	Teachers' Training College
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Emergency Fund
W.B.B.S.E.	West Bengal Board of Secondary Education
WFP	World Food Programme

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## MAP OF BHUTAN



(Source- Bhutan 2020, A Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness, Planning Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, 1999)

## Chapter 1 Introduction

The topic of my dissertation entitled “THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN EDUCATION IN BHUTAN (1907 TO 1997 A.D.)” is an attempt to explain thoroughly and critically the growth and development of modern education there.

Bhutan is situated in the Himalayan Mountains, with China to the north and India to the east, west and south. Nearly the entire tract of the country, apart from a small area along the Indian boundary, is hilly. The country had no contact with outside world for a long time, partially because of its mountainous terrains and partially because it wanted to keep itself aloof from the outsiders especially in view of the rapid conquests of Indian territories by the East India Company.<sup>1</sup>

It was in 746 A.D. the Indian saint Padmasambhava first made his influence in the religious life of Bhutan.<sup>2</sup> In 1616, Ngawang Namgyal, the great Lama of Tibet came to Bhutan and established *Drukpa Kagyu* School of Mahayana Buddhism<sup>3</sup> as the state religion. He consolidated his authority over the whole country and established himself as the undisputed ruler. For the overall governance of the country he created the office of the *Desi* which in western parlance came to be known as *Deb Raja*. He also founded the state clergy headed by a spiritual leader titled *Je Khenpo*<sup>4</sup> (the Chief Abbot). This system of diarchy continued for almost three centuries; though the internal dissention, conflicts and even chaos were not uncommon in separate bids to gain power and control over the State. Ultimately a hereditary monarchy was established in the year 1907 under the leadership of Ugyen Wangchuck the *Penlop* (Governor) of Tongsa. He brought the entire country under the rule of an absolute monarchy.

The initial relation between India and Bhutan during the British period was characterized by misgivings, hostility, and eventual armed conflicts because of claims and counter claims over 18 passes leading out and into Bhutan. Ultimately the war culminated with the Treaty of Sinchula which was signed in 1865 restoring friendly relations. In 1910, the King Ugyen Wangchuck signed a treaty of friendship with the British India. Under the influence of the British Political Officers assigned to look after the Bhutan affairs, Ugyen Wangchuck first introduced the system of modern

secular education by opening two schools in Haa and Bumthang.<sup>5</sup> Thus the newly established kingdom commenced its historic initiation of modern western system of education. He died in 1926 and his son Jigme Wangchuck ascended the throne.

Being an educated person he demonstrated support for his father's initiative but not just supporting the two old schools but also by establishing new schools in various parts of the country thereby cementing the foundation and broadening the reach of modern education system.

The third King, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck (1952-1972) is known as the 'Father of Modern Bhutan' due to his far reaching political reforms, introduction of the Five Year Development Plan which included provisions for better education. The fourth King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck (1972- )<sup>6</sup> initiated a concept of Gross National Happiness which laid emphasis in the holistic and sustained development in education and all aspects of the Bhutanese life. During his reign the Bhutanese society saw the rapid growth through the establishment of various educational institutions such as schools, institutes, colleges and also the country's first university.

The beginning of modern education in Bhutan was not an easy process. People resided in isolated valleys and there was no communication among them. Geographical features of the country and the distances between the settlements made it difficult to provide education in every part of the country. These drawbacks were underscored by lack of common facilities like roads, electricity, wired and wireless communication, effective postal services etc. It cannot be overlooked that there was also no political unity till the beginning of the twentieth century. Even when the kingdom was united under a hereditary monarchy the ethnic diversity came as a hindrance to the establishment of a universal education system since there was no common language amongst the numerous castes and tribes in the country.<sup>7</sup>

Even after the establishment of modern education system there were still several problems to surmount - scarcity of teachers, communication to schools, scarcity of textbooks etc. It is understandable, therefore, that the growth of education system was not uniform in the whole country. In those valleys which had access to facilities schools were constructed and remote and inaccessible areas had to wait for years and even decades. Establishment of educational institutions started gradually

from few elementary schools to a laborious schedule in establishing higher learning institutions.

Formerly, education in Bhutan meant only the monastic education. This traditional education served the spiritual and intellectual needs of the country. Education was considered as a part of religion and monasteries were the centres of learning. When modern education system was introduced it was an untraded path for most Bhutanese and understandably parents did not want to send their children to schools. They even used to beg not to admit their children to school. But since the launch of development activities, peoples' views gradually changed. Modern English medium education ultimately became the dominant mode of education system in the country.

Modern education system, when it was first introduced in Bhutan it was an inheritance of the education system that existed in British India. The country did not have sufficient human and economic resources to introduce a new system, so it followed the pattern of education existed in India. The period of 1980s and 1990s is marked a period of advancement of the Bhutanese education system and eventually nationalization of the education system was introduced.

Today Bhutan has developed a lot in the field of education. At the end of the twentieth century significant changes have taken place in the growth of literacy rate, development of educational institutions, introduction of non-formal education system and over all development through education. Educating all the adult population above 15 years of age is almost achieved in fulfilling the national goal. With national policy of eradicating illiteracy in the country, the Royal Government has aimed to provide educational opportunities in every parts of the country. Besides the government's initiative, private sectors were also encouraged in establishing schools and learning centres to provide more and more educational opportunities to the masses. From the time of its founding, schools across the country catered free education thereby upholding children's right to education.

The dissertation covers the period from 1907 to 1997. The year 1907 was the ascending year of the first hereditary monarch to the throne; and the first monarch did the tasks of initiating the beginnings of modern education in the country. The year 1997 marked the completion of the Seventh Five Year Plan period, with the goal of

compulsory primary education for all along with the introduction of non-formal and adult literacy programme. Thus the span of time covered by this study is nearly the entire twentieth century, a period that actually witnessed the development of modern education in Bhutan.

The present study attempts to make a broad enlarged description of the growth of modern education in Bhutan. There are certain key questions which in the present study have been well resolved in multifaceted analysis in different phases of the dissertation:

i) Were the geographical and historical factors the main obstacles in the growth of modern education in Bhutan? Were also the inadequate communication system between the valleys and aloofness of the country from the outside world the barriers in the development of educational system?

ii) What was the role played by the hereditary monarchy in the growth of modern education in the country?

iii) What was the nature of education in the monasteries in the past till the end of the twentieth century?

iv) What role did India and the Indians play in developing Bhutan's modern education?

v) What was the contribution of the Christian missionaries and the indigenous Bhutanese in the establishments of schools in Bhutan?

vi) How did Bhutan attempt to develop modern education through their Five Year Plans?

vii) What was the overall condition of education from primary to tertiary level in the periods from 1907 to 1997?

viii) What was the impact of modern education in Bhutanese administration, society and culture?

ix) Whether the number of schools, colleges and university established in Bhutan can actually meet the need of the country and the requirement of the people or not?

x) Why residential schools have better served the students in Bhutan; and what connection does the system has with hazardous communication in the country?

xi) Why did the Government introduce English as the principal medium of education in the country; and what extra benefits did the English medium bring to the people and the country?

xii) What is the nature of free education in Bhutan and what is the tremendous role played by the government in this regard?

xiii) What has been the crucial role of modern education in the modernization of Bhutan?

The present work includes eleven chapters consisting of the Introduction as the first chapter and Conclusion on the eleventh chapter. In the second chapter an attempt has been made to study the geographical background of the country. Because it is imperative to know how the hilly terrain, isolated valleys, communication problems, language differences came as the main hindrances behind the growth of modern education. Keeping in mind the geographical disparity in the country the researcher has tried to present a study in the growth of modern education in Bhutan. Background of the condition of education has been presented along with the historical perspective because the primary objective is to study the growth of education from historical background. Bhutanese were conservative and Bhutan was an isolated country but when they came into contact with British India they also came in touch with modern British system of education. So the history of the growth of modern education system of Bhutan has kept a close pace, along with the overall development of the country and this has been viewed vividly.

The third chapter deals with the education in the monasteries of Bhutan. It is well known that Bhutan is a religious country and religion has a great impact in the state system. There was religious or monastic education system from the very beginning. The researcher has tried to highlight the education system in the monasteries till the end of the twentieth century because this system has a great impact in the society and culture of Bhutan. In spite of the introduction of the modern education monastic schools is continuing under the patronage of the Royal Government.

The fourth chapter tries to explain the growth of modern education under the hereditary monarchy. It is very common that the geographical and historical background of the country had a bearing in the mind-set of the people and in the beginning the people were indifferent to modern secular education. Political uniformity established in Bhutan with the ascendancy of the first hereditary King, Ugyen Wangchuck. It was the hereditary rulers who actually led to the growth and development of modern education. Consequently, it has been attempted to study the contributions of the hereditary rulers in the growth of modern education.

In the fifth chapter, it has been attempted to look at the beginning of overall development of the country through the country's Five Year Development Plans stressing on the allocation of funds towards the development of modern education. It has been vividly described that though the country faced many basic problems such as communication, poverty, transportation, unemployment, still education was given prior importance which ultimately led to the overall development of the country.

The sixth chapter attempts to provide an overall description of the development of modern education from Second Five Year Plan to Seventh Five Year Plan. Allocations of funds for education in all the Plan periods have been discussed thoroughly and critically. An attempt has been made to show the initiative of the Royal Government to create opportunities for improving the standards of education in the country by allocating funds and establishing educational institutions.

The seventh chapter explains and analyses the development of education in Bhutan in different levels such as: primary, secondary and tertiary from the very beginning of modern education. This chapter deals with the school administration, curriculum, role of teachers, evaluation system etc. Non-formal education adult education and technical education have played a leading role in the country's development process and the researcher has given attention into these fields also.

The chapter eight has dealt with the role played by the Government of India and the hundreds of Indians in the spread of modern education in Bhutan. The research clearly shows that without the financial and technical assistance from the Government of India, Bhutan would not have found the path of rapid development. The contribution of the Indian teachers in the growth of modern education has been discussed elaborately.

In the ninth chapter an attempt has been made to assess the contribution of Christian missionaries. Because they had contributed a lot in the growth of modern educational system, so assessments of their contribution is very noteworthy. The researcher has also made an attempt to deal with the role played by the indigenous Bhutanese in the development of modern education in the country.

The tenth chapter takes into account the fact that whether the growth and development of modern education has strengthened the cultural aspect of the people. The main aim of the researcher is to highlight how modern education served as an instrument in the process of social and administrative changes in the country.

The study closes with the Concluding chapter which provides a detailed account of researcher's findings. The researcher has tried to prove that though the work is historical it is undeniably an interdisciplinary work because the growth and development of a country is related with the society, administration, cultural and political background as well. Education of a country cannot be examined with any heed to the backdrop from political, social and economic conditions which influence its growth and development. The materials so far collected have been cross-examined and cross-compared in order to arrive at transparent conclusions in the midst of any kind of confusion and contradiction.

It is fully an empirical research work. For source materials the present study depends on archival materials as well as published government sources. The researcher has visited the various wings of the Ministry of Education in Bhutan several times to collect government published and unpublished documents. Various materials have been collected from the National Library, Thimphu to analyze the development of education in Bhutan. Archival materials have been collected from the Indian National Archives, Delhi, to interpret the relationship between India and Bhutan and contribution made by India in the development of modern education in Bhutan. Some archival materials have been collected from the State Archives, Kolkata to study the relationship between the Bengal government and Bhutan during the British period. The researcher has also collected some valuable rare documents related to the study from the National Library, Kolkata. Interviews were held with various personalities in Bhutan who had contributed in the growth of modern education in the country. The researcher met with them several times to tap their experiences as actual field workers in the growth of country's modern education.

Respondents also include many who had no direct contribution to the development but were beneficiary or living witnesses to the benefits of modern education. Most of the data consulted and collected in the process of research work have been presented in the form of tables with necessary notes and interpretations. In preparing this work, all accessible source materials, both primary and secondary sources have been cautiously scrutinized. Primary materials have been accorded more importance whenever conflict has been detected between primary sources and secondary sources. The target of research has always been to arrive at verifiable truth as to the main issue of modern education in Bhutan.

Being a citizen of India which is always a privileged partner and friend of Bhutan, when Bhutan was preparing for celebrations of 100 years of modern education in 2012, then the researcher decided to take up research work on this subject. In preparing the dissertation paper she has faced lots of hardships due to the scarcity of sources related to her field of study. The researcher visited Bhutan several times but found that methodical documentation of historical documents and preservation of archival material is a recent phenomenon there and is still in the process of evolution. Another problem is that uniform spelling pattern of the Dzongkha words are not found in the books or documents or even in governments records, even the names of the places has been mentioned differently in different sources, naturally she followed the spelling as found in the related sources and which also varied according to the sources. So there were many limitations as her work was related to a foreign country and paucity of documents were the main hindrance in the way of documenting the growth and development of modern education of that country.

Anyway the researcher has tried her best to overcome all the difficulties and dedicated herself to put a narrative and analytical record of the growth and development of modern education of Bhutan on the basis of limited primary and secondary sources. The thesis has laid emphasis on the expansion of modern education in Bhutan from the beginning till the end of the twentieth century broadly viewing its effects in the overall development of the country. The dissertation covers the period from the year 1907 to 1997 i.e., covering almost a century. The researcher's endeavour is to draw attention to the problems and progress the small kingdom faced during the first ninety years of the beginning of modern educations.

An attempt has been made to explore, understand and place on record Bhutan's development in the multifarious aspects in the field of education and to render a compact as possible study for future reference of scholars, administrators, historians, educationists and anyone interested in the subject.

## Notes:

1. In the north the Himalaya acted as a natural barrier and in the south the notorious malaria belt became a natural deterrent. Penetration to the interiors was a task for the brave because of the difficult terrain and a general unwelcome attitude of the government. Often internal political struggles and even civil wars foreclosed any official permission for legal entry.
2. Padmasambhava (Sanskrit: Lotus born) is reverentially referred to as *Guru Rimpoche* (The Precious Teacher) by the Bhutanese.
3. Mahayana is divided into four sects or schools of Nyingmapa, Sakyapa, Gelukpa and Kagyupa. Kagyupa has its own sub-sects following different interpretations of the religion as well as some differences in rituals and *Drupka Kagypa* is one such sub-sects.
4. *Je* superior, great, eminent etc and *khenpo* abbot.
5. Haa in South-west and Bumthang are in Central Bhutan.
6. He abdicated in 2006 in favour of his eldest son.
7. There are about 20 different languages/dialects spoken in Bhutan among which Dzongkha (the official national language), Tsangla (Sharchopkha) and Nepali (Lhotshamkha) are the three major languages.

## Chapter 2

### Geographical and Historical Background of Education in Bhutan

#### Geographical Background

There is a great debate regarding from where the name of 'Bhutan' appears. In old Tibetan chronicles Bhutan was called *Mon-Yul* (Land of the Mon). Another theory explaining the origin of the name 'Bhutan' is derived from Sanskrit 'Bhotanta' where Tibet was referred to as 'Bhota' and 'anta' means end i. e. the geographical area at the end of Tibet.<sup>1</sup> Another possible explanation again derived from Sanskrit could be Bhu-uttan standing for highland, which of course it is.<sup>2</sup> Some scholars think that the name 'Bhutan' has come from *Bhota* (Bod) which means Tibet and 'tan', a corruption of stan as found in Indo-Persian names such as 'Hindustan', 'Baluchistan' and 'Afganistan' etc.<sup>3</sup> Another explanation is that "It seems quite likely that the name 'Bhutan' has come from the word 'Bhotanam' (*Desah iti Sesah*) i.e., the land of the Bhotas much the same way as the name 'Iran' came from 'Aryanam' (*Desah*), Rajputana came from 'Rajputanam', and 'Gandoana' came from 'Gandakanam'. Thus literally 'Bhutan' means the land of the 'Bhotas'-people speaking a Tibetan dialect."<sup>4</sup> But according to Bhutanese scholars like Lopen Nado and Lopen Pemala, Bhutan is called Lho Mon or land of the south i.e. south of Tibet.<sup>5</sup> However, the Bhutanese themselves prefer to use the term *Drukyul*- the land of Thunder Dragon, a name originating from the word *Druk* meaning 'thunder dragon', which in turn is derived from *Drukpa* school of Tibetan Buddhism.

Bhutan presents a striking example of how the geographical setting of a country influences social, economic and political life of the people. It is a landlocked country and topographically it may be viewed as a country of mountains and ridges of varying heights, varied climatic and soil conditions, dense vegetation, mineral resources, agricultural practices and population distribution and their interrelation with each other.

#### Location

The country lies in between 26° 45' N to 28° 10' N latitudes and 88° 45' E and 92° 10' longitudes. It occupies a total land area of 46,500 sq. km, the maximum east-west extension of is 300 km and the north-south extension is 150-170 km.<sup>6</sup> It is

bordered by India in the south and south east and by Tibetan occupied area of China in the north and northwest. The Indian states, adjoining Bhutan are Sikkim in the west, West Bengal in the south west, and Assam in the south, south east and on the east there is Arunachal Pradesh.

Major physical divisions- the country may be divided into four major physical divisions from top to bottom-

1. The Greater Himalayas
2. The Inner Himalayas
3. The Southern Foothills
4. The *Duars* Plains

#### 1. The Greater Himalayas

The entire northern region of the country lies within the Himalaya with some of the highest peaks measuring more than 7,300 m. above the sea level. The Chomo Lhari peak (7,320 m) bordering the Tibet's Chumbi valley stands at the western end of the Great Himalaya. The peak is named for the Buddhist deity Dolma, who is worshipped both in Bhutan and in the Chumbi valley.<sup>7</sup> In the east ward there is another snow-clad peak, Kula Kangri (7,554 m). The rugged territory is a barrier to communication and travel both within the region and beyond. For this, both living space and fertile agricultural soil are limited. In the past the Bhutanese traders took cloth, spices, and grains across the mountain passes into Tibet and brought with them rock salt, wool and sometimes herds of yaks but the trade came to an end after occupation of Tibet by China (1959) and gradual opening up of the southern border.

#### 2. The Inner Himalayas

To the south of the Great Himalayas lies the Inner Himalayas. This range runs from north-west to south-east in the western side and from north-east to south-west in the eastern side of the country. Many of the central Bhutan's fertile valleys lie in this part of the country. These valleys are relatively broad, flat with moderate rainfall and are fairly well populated and cultivated. Some of them are Paro (2350 m), Thimphu (2545 m), Bumthang (2700 m), Haa (2575 m), two major population centres- Trashigang (757m) and Mongar (1329 m) lie in the eastern part of the country. Punakha (1,220 m) capital of Bhutan till 1955 and Wangdiphodrang (1,240 m) are also two populated valleys.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. The Southern Foothills

The average height of the outer most ranges of the southern foothills varies between 600-1500 m above the sea level. Some main rivers of the country such as Torsa (Amochu), Raidak, Sankosh and Manas passes through these ranges. Weathering action of the rivers is dominant in this region.

### 4. The Duars Plains

The *Duars* plains are an extension of the Ganga-Brahmaputra plains of India. Only a very small part of this (nearly 10-15 km) lies in Bhutan. A greater part of this area of this division is dense forest abounding in wild life. The landscape of the southern portion of this region resembles that of the Assam-Bengal plain. It consists of fertile soil covered by *savana* grass, bamboo and *sal* (*Shorea robusta*) forests. Some of the important market centres such as Samtse, Phuentsholing, Gaylephug, Sarvang and Samdrupjongkhar lie in this division along the Indo-Bhutan border.

### **Administrative Divisions**

Bhutan is administratively divided into four zones from north to south, each having its own peculiar ecology- eastern zone, western zone, southern zone, and central zone. These zones are further divided into twenty *dzongkhags* varying from 100sq km. in Punakha to 4,260 sq. km in Tashigang.<sup>9</sup> Earlier there were 18 *dzongkhags*, 2 new *dzongkhags* were created in the Seventh Five Year Plan (1991-92 to 1996-97). There is local government in each of the 20 *dzongkhags* or administrative districts. Each *dzongkhag* is divided into several *gewogs* (county), while the larger *dzongkhag* are divided into *dungkhag* (sub-division of a district), headed by a *Dungpa* (head of sub-divisions). *Gewog* is the lowest stage of administration which is made of *chiwogs* (group of households). During the Seventh Five Year Plan period there were altogether 191 *gewogs* in the country.<sup>10</sup> Each *dzongkhag* is administered by a *Dzongda* (district administrator) who is assisted by a *Dzongrab* (deputy district administrator). These divisions were made to formulate plans and take decisions on socio-economic development programmes.<sup>11</sup>

### **Population**

Different data about the population of Bhutan are given in different indigenous and non-Bhutanese sources. When Bhutan joined the United Nations Organization in

1971 it gave its population as 1.2 million, which, with an area of 47,000 square km, gives it a density of about 25 persons per square km.<sup>12</sup> As per the Department of Statistics a population projection was made based on 1980 census data.

Table 2.1: Population estimates by dzongkhag, 1980-1990

<b>Dzongkhag</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1986</b>	<b>1987</b>	<b>1988</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1990</b>
Thimphu	64,300	71,674	73,674	75,554	77,336	79,039	80,684
<b>ZONE 1</b>							
Chhukha	97,200	108,347	111,370	111,370	114,212	116,905	119,480
Haa	17,000	19,061	19,593	20,093	20,567	21,020	21,457
Paro	39,800	44,364	45,602	46,766	47,869	48,923	49,941
Samtse	138,400	154,272	158,577	162,623	166,458	170,124	173,666
Total	292,500	326,044	335,142	343,694	351,799	359,547	367,031
<b>ZONE 2</b>							
Chirang	104,500	116,484	119,734	122,790	125,685	128,453	131,128
Daga	27,700	30,877	31,738	32,548	33,316	34,049	34,758
Punakha	34,500	38,457	39,530	40,538	41,494	42,408	43,291
Wangdi	47,700	53,110	54,654	56,049	57,370	58,634	59,854
Total	214,400	238,988	245,656	251,925	257,865	263,544	269,031
<b>ZONE 3</b>							
Bumthang	23,600	26,307	27,041	27,731	28,384	29,010	29,614
Sarbhong	112,800	125,736	129,244	132,543	135,668	138,656	141,543
Shemgang	43,300	48,266	49,612	50,879	52,078	53,225	54,333
Tongsa	28,600	31,880	32,760	33,606	34,398	35,156	35,888

Total	208,300	232,189	238,666	244,759	250,528	256,047	261,378
ZONE 4							
Lhuntshi	36,900	41,132	42,279	43,358	44,381	45,358	46,302
Mongar	71,300	79,477	81,694	83,779	85,755	87,643	89,468
Pemagatshel	35,100	39,125	40,217	41,243	42,216	43,146	44,044
Samdrupjong khar	72,200	80,480	82,726	84,837	86,837	88,750	90,597
Tashigang	170,000	189,496	194,783	199,754	204,464	208,967	213,318
Total	385,500	429,710	441,699	452,971	463,653	473,864	483,729
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,165,000</b>	<b>1,298,605</b>	<b>1,334,837</b>	<b>1,368,903</b>	<b>1,401,181</b>	<b>1,432,041</b>	<b>1,461,853</b>

(Source-*Statistical Yearbook of Bhutan, 1990*, Central Statistical office, Planning Commission, Thimphu, July 1991)

But according to the Seventh Five Year Plan record country's population was corrected to 600,000 (1990) and projected population for the year 1997 varies between 713,211-768,050. Thus the total population figure for Bhutan during the period of our study is highly confusing one. In this connection, the Fourth King Jigme Singye Wangchuck in an interview to Sunday (a weekly published from Calcutta) in October 1990 stated, "Our official population figure is 1.3 million, but actually it is closer to 600,000. People think Bhutan deliberately gave a wrong figure in the seventies, when we joined the United Nations. But in truth, someone had told my father that if he gave a figure less than one million, we would not be taken seriously by the U.N."<sup>13</sup> If we compare the number of population shown in the report mentioned to United Nations with the Five Years Plan record we will find that it is just more than double.

### **Ethnic Groups**

The word ethnic group means "a self perceived group of people who hold common set of culture and tradition which is not shared by others with whom they are

in contact. It denotes a particular group expressed in terms of a sense of continuity in belonging.”<sup>14</sup> On the basis of above mentioned point Bhutanese society is multi-ethnic. The social and cultural base of the country is constituted by many ethnic communities.

The first is composed of several groups of people belonging to Tibetan origin known as *Ngalops* whose ancestors moved to Bhutan in earlier periods. They are predominantly found in North, Central and Western Bhutan. The western Bhutan viz. the valleys of Haa, Paro, Thimphu, Punakha and Wangdiphodrang are traditionally populated by *Bodpas* or *Drukpas*. They are Tibeto-Mongoloid people and considered as heterogeneous, separated into many groups and subgroups. They are the dominant community of Bhutan and distributed all over the country in varied numbers. Among them, there are farmers, labourers, traders and shepherds. Landed aristocracy exists among a section of them. By religion they are the followers of Buddhism. In northern part, the places like Laya and Lunana are inhabited by the yak herders. In central Bhutan there are some groups of unique characteristics such as *Bumpthaps* and *Khangpas* primarily inhabiting the districts of Tongsa, Bumthang, Lhunsi etc. The west, north and central Bhutan may be regarded as pastoral culture area. The pastoral society comprises of different social groups of Tibetan origin. The pastoral groups in general were closely engaged in woollen trade and did lucrative business with the Himalayan shepherds but this has been affected in modern times. The people of pastoral area were the residents of high altitude and interior valleys. But due to population pressure and in search of livelihood they came down to stay in other places. This resulted in a massive social transformation in this area. The people living in pastoral culture area are comparatively more advanced.

The second is a distinct Indo-Mongoloid ethnic community, popularly called ‘*Sharchops*’. The *Sharchops* live in the eastern districts of Mongar, Tashiyangtse, Tashigang, etc. and form the second largest single community though some say they constitute the largest group (*Sharchhopka* 28%, *Dzongkha* (official) 24%, *Lhotshamkha* 22%, other 26% (includes foreign languages)<sup>15</sup> and are considered to be among the earliest inhabitants. They are considered to be, along with the *Khengs* the indigenous communities presumably moved here in the past millenniums. They mostly hail from south-east Asian ethnic stock but a mixture with Tibetan stock cannot be ignored. Their occupation is mainly agriculture. Spinning, weaving, basket

making are some common artistic activities of the women. Animism and Buddhism are the two most important religious traditions followed in this area.

The third group is constituted by the Nepalese who mostly live in southern Bhutan. Nepalese settlers came to work in the southern foothills in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and others had migrated until such movement was banned by Bhutan in 1959. The descendants of these settlers, mostly Hindus, dominate southern Bhutan and are called as southern Bhutanese. Their settlements are in Samtse, Phuentsholing, Gelephu, Samdrupjongkhar, Sarvang, Dagana etc. There are also few Muslims, Christians and people of other faiths as well. Agriculture and trade are the main occupation of this region. Majority of the southern people are called *Lhotshampas* in *Dzongkha*, the national language.

Thus the three major ethnic communities *Ngalops*, *Sharchops* and *Lhotshampas* represent three distinct way of life. But as a result of modern communication and transportation facilities and the inter-ethnic interaction there has been an overlapping of some cultural treats amongst the people of three different ethnic groups.<sup>16</sup>

### **Language**

Bhutan is a multi-lingual country; nearly twenty languages are in vogue. Most of them are dialects do not having any script (character) of their own. Except the national language *Dzongkha* and *Lhotshamkha* (language of the *Lhotshampas*), none of the languages has any developed literature, but all of them have rich oral literature. The government of Bhutan did not have any language policy till 1960's, till that time the classical Tibetan language, *Choekey* used to serve as the vehicle of intellectual discourses. In course of centuries considerable number of scholarly works had been written in *Choekey*. *Dzongkha* (means language of *dzong*/fortress) originated from *Choekey* functioned as the spoken language in the fortresses and places in western Bhutan. In the year 1961 the first formal language policy guideline was formulated when third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck decreed that *Dzongkha* would be the national language of Bhutan.<sup>17</sup> But still in 60s *Choekey* continued as the literary form of *Dzongkha*.

After its recognition as the national language several measures have been taken to modernise the language. In 1971 the Dzongkha Division was created of the

Department of Education in order to prepare reading materials in *Dzongkha* for the school going children. The third King commanded Lopen Pemala and Lopen Nado, monks and scholars to write simple text books in *Dzongkha*.<sup>18</sup> In 1971 a book entitled ‘The New Method Dzongkha Hand Book’ was brought out.<sup>19</sup> It studies the dissimilarity between *Dzongkha* and classical language *Choekey*. In 1986 the Dzongkha Advisory Committee was formed with the mandate to formulate policy guidelines for its development and to standardize the language. In 1989 the Dzongkha Advisory Committee and the Dzongkha Division of the Department of Education were united in the form of the Dzongkha Development Commission<sup>20</sup> (later changed to Dzongkha Development Authority) to develop and modernize the language so that it may be used as medium of modern scholarly and literary works. The Commission has also been entrusted the job to preserve the rich traditions, heritage and legacies, stored in other indigenous languages and dialects. Two useful booklets were published by the Commission in 1990 entitled ‘An Introduction to Dzongkha’ and ‘A New Dzongkha Grammar’ which provided the style of pronunciation and small sentences for the beginners.<sup>21</sup> *Dzongkha* language teachers were trained at Simtokha Rigney School established by the third King. The *Dzongkha* teachers comprised of monks, retired monks, gomchens and even astrologers who had some academic knowledge.<sup>22</sup>

Second biggest indigenous language group is *Sharchop* or *Tshangla* which is predominant in eastern Bhutan. Besides these, there are two other dominant languages which include *Bumthangkha*, spoken in central Bhutan and *Lhotshamkha* or Nepali, a non-indigenous language, spoken in southern Bhutan. English is the medium of learning in secular schools and *Choekey* is used in monastic schools.

Table 2.2: Language and dialects spoken in Bhutan in 1998

Dzongkha	160,000 speakers
Cho-ca-nga-ca-kha	20,000 speakers
Brokpa	5,000 speakers
Brokkat	300 speakers

Lakha	8,000 speakers
Bokha (Tibetan)	1,000 speakers
Bumthangkha	30,000 speakers
Khengkha	40,000 speakers
Kurtopkha	10,000 speakers
Nyengkha	10,000 speakers
Chalikha	1,000 speakers
Dzalakha	15,000 speakers
Monpa	1,000 speakers
Dakpakha	1,000 speakers
Shar chop(Tshangla)	1,38,000 speakers
Lhokpu	2,500 speakers
Gongduk	2,000 speakers
Lepcha	2,000 speakers
Nepali(Lhotshamkha)	1,56,000 speakers

(Source-Driem, George Van(ed.), *Language of the Greater Himalayan Region*, Research School, CNWS, School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies, Leiden , The Netherlands, 1998, p.2)

There were total 19 dialects/languages and 602,800 speakers.

But the above mentioned survey appears to be impractical as it does not indicate whether fluency or conversational ability or both was taken as the basis.

## Historical background of education in Bhutan

Though it is speculated that Bhutan was inhabited as early as 2000 B.C.<sup>23</sup> as evidenced through archaeological discoveries of significant number of stones tools and megaliths in the country<sup>24</sup> its early history remains obscure as she is steeped in the mythology and legends. The country's established political history is closely linked to its religious history and the affairs among the various monastic schools and monasteries. Prior to the Tibetan settlement, small segments of the region were inhabited by the indigenous *Monpa* people who practiced the Shamanistic *Bon* religion. An early indication of some Tibetan influence can be deduced from fact that Bhutan's oldest extant Buddhist temples, the Kyichu *Lhakhang* in Paro and Jambay *Lhakhang* in Bumthang were all constructed by the King of Tibet, Songtsen Gampo (A.D.627-649).<sup>25</sup>

Around the eighth century Bhutan was governed by petty princes who seem to have close connections with India. The most powerful amongst them was Sindhu Raja who upon falling ill invited the well-known Indian saint Guru Padmasambhava for treatment<sup>26</sup> probably around 747 A.D. Padmasambhava established *Nyingmapa* order of monks in Bhutan and Sindhu Raja embraced Buddhism.<sup>27</sup> During the following centuries other monastic orders such as *Kagyupa*, *Sakyapa*, *Gelukpa* from Tibet expressed their sway in Bhutan and *Drukpa* sect of the *Kagyupa* order finally succeeded in gaining control of the country in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The credit goes to Ngawang Namgyel of the house at Gya, at Rauling in Tibet. He arrived in Bhutan in 1616<sup>28</sup> and established himself as the undisputed ruler with the new title of *Shabdrung Rimpoche*. Outsiders referred him as the *Dharma Raja*.<sup>29</sup> For the overall governance of the country he created the office of the *Desi* which came to be known as *Deb Raja* to the outside world.<sup>30</sup> He constructed a number of *dzongs* or forts in various places which not only served as defensive structures but also functioned as religious, political, administrative and educational institutions. To each *dzong* he appointed a *dzongpen* (fort governor) with the exception of Paro, Tongsa and Daga where *Penlop* or Governors were assigned.<sup>31</sup> A huge political vacuum arose following the passing away of Ngawang Namgyal in 1651 and the state of instability prominently underscored by the fact that of the 54 *Deb Rajas* (1651-1907), 22 of them were assassinated, dismissed or made to resign. Despite the relentless struggle for power

some of the *Deb Rajas* have been recorded to have worked for the progress of the country and monastic education continued with its utmost perfection.

Conflict between Tibet and Bhutan continued and in 1730 Tibet occupied some Bhutanese territory. In the south Bhutan's relationship with the kingdom of Cooch Behar was more an exercise in hostility with each party laying claims to and occasionally occupying frontier territories of the other. In 1770 Bhutan captured Cooch Behar King, the *Dewan* and several other officers and confined them and hold sway over Coach Behar by forcibly appointing the King's brother as the new ruler. In 1772 the *Nazir Deb* (the Defence Minister), Khagendra Narayan, proclaimed the boy prince Dharendra Narayan, as the Deputy King but Bhutan refused to accept this and drove away Khagendra Narayan. The latter appealed to the East India Company for assistance and Company marched to Cooch Behar and in late 1773 drove out the Bhutanese. In 1774 a treaty was struck between the East India Company and Bhutan which required the latter to restore the boundaries to the lines that existed before the Bhutanese invasion.<sup>32</sup> Company was also seeking a trade route to Tibet and Governor General Warren Hastings sent several missions to Tibet and Bhutan commencing with George Bogle (1774), followed by Hamilton (1776-77) and Samuel Turner (1783). But conflict continued over the possession of 18 *Duars* (passes), a strip of narrow land ten to twelve miles wide extending from *Tista* River in the west and *Dhansiri* River in the east, eleven were in Bengal and seven were in Assam.

The Bhutanese committed frequent border violations in *Duars*. Captain R.B. Pemberton's embassy was deputed by the Company to Bhutan in 1838 but it did not meet with any success. In 1841 Company captured all the seven Assam *Duars* and in 1863 Ashley Eden, the Secretary to the Bengal Government, was deputed to lead a mission to Bhutan to solve the issue of Bengal *Duars*. But the mission underwent considerable humiliation at the hands of the Bhutanese which resulted in second Anglo-Bhutan war in 1864. Bhutan subsequently lost all the Bengal *Duars* and with the Treaty of Sinchula in 1865 Bhutan relented to free trade and conceded to the Company's right to arbitrate in all disputes that might arise between Bhutan and its neighbouring states. The British Government settled to make an annual grant of a sum of fifty thousand rupees to Bhutan.<sup>33</sup>

The central power in Bhutan collapsed with the defeat at the hands of British and the political authority shifted to a powerful man named Jigme Namgyal of Tongsa

who became Deb Raja in 1870. He appointed his son, Ugyen Wangchuck as the *Penlop* of Paro who again became the *Penlop* of Tongsa in 1883 and rapidly established his influence over the whole of the country. He was aware that British India's influence would be useful to consolidate his power so he joined the Younghusband expedition to Lhasa in 1903.<sup>34</sup> In 1907 the post of the *Deb Raja* was abolished and on 17<sup>th</sup> December he was enthroned as the first hereditary King of Bhutan.<sup>35</sup> Ugyen Wangchuck proved to be an able administrator, an astute diplomat and sharp statesman. He sowed the seed of modern secular education and two Hindi medium schools were opened in order to make communication easier with India where Hindi was the language of the common masses. In 1910 the Treaty of Punakha was concluded with the British Government by which the annual subsidy to the Government of Bhutan was increased from fifty thousand rupees to one hundred thousand rupees.<sup>36</sup>

Jigme Wangchuck succeeded his father Ugyen Wangchuck in 1926 and his reign had been characterized as a period of unification and consolidation of the newly established kingdom. In order to increase the educational facilities he established some Hindi medium schools. This was the first prepared effort to lay the foundation of the modern Bhutanese system of education.<sup>37</sup> After Indian independence in 1947 a new treaty was put to force in 1949 between Bhutan and India. India raised Bhutan's subsidy to half a million rupees and Bhutan agreed to be guided by India in its foreign matters.<sup>38</sup> The signing of this treaty and many reforms introduced brought about major changes in Bhutan's internal and external policies.

With the accession of Jigme Dorji Wangchuck in March 1952 Bhutan witnessed the dawn of a new era. The year 1953 saw the establishment of the National Assembly, followed by the formation of the Royal Advisory Council (1965) and the Council of Ministers (1968). In 1961, First Five Year Development Plan was launched with an outlay of 175 million funded by India.<sup>39</sup> Modern education was a part of the Five Year Plan programmes and the third King made English as the medium of instruction in modern schools. Hindi medium schools were converted to English medium and many new schools were set up all over the country. In 1962 Bhutan joined the Colombo Plan and United Nations Organization in 1971. It is a small wonder that the third hereditary King is known as "the architect of modern Bhutan".<sup>40</sup>

With the passing away of Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, his son Jigme Singye Wangchuck, ascended the throne in 1972 as the fourth King. He adopted a policy of participation in international affairs and socio-economic cooperation in diverse fields with the world at large.<sup>41</sup> He made concerted efforts to the spread of education in modern lines, improved communications, and modernized agriculture and sanctioned the harnessing of the hydro-power resources in the country.

### **Effect on Education in the backdrop of Geographical and Historical context-**

1. Bhutan's geographical contiguity to India and Tibet has greatly contributed in the development of its culture based on which the country's education system grew up. Firstly, the people of Tibetan culture migrated into Bhutan Himalaya and settled down in north, central and western regions. Thus Tibet contributed in framing the ethnic and cultural elements of these regions. Secondly, people of Indo-Mongoloid culture penetrated Bhutan from the east. Thus north-east India contributed to the people and culture of eastern Bhutan. Thirdly, Nepal and the Indian states like Sikkim and West Bengal contributed in forming the ethnic, social and cultural elements of southern Bhutan.
2. The Great Himalaya has largely shaped the psychology, life style, spirituality and religious beliefs of the people of Bhutan. In this 21<sup>st</sup> century's fast moving materialistic thinking it is at times difficult to understand and gauge the spiritual devotion of the Bhutanese traditional monastic teachers and preachers. To someone it may be out-dated but to them it is a matter of national identity, pride and ethos. In this connection another point is to be analyzed- had the Bhutan been subjugated by different ethnic/religious groups, the course of history of education, life style, worship, and politics might have been different. Bhutan never faced any foreign domination despite several invasions allowing it the freedom to plan, execute and monitor education system in her own unique way. Despite Bhutanese tenacity, unity in times of aggression, and the love of independence one must also concede that geography, in the form of rugged and harsh terrain, also played a significant role in preserving the nation's sovereignty and thereby the freedom to frame and execute a type of education policy that suited the country most. Being a small landlocked country it was natural for Bhutan to imbibe some ideas and inspiration from her great and gigantic neighbour in the south but the country

never lost the value of its own culture, language and history while drawing out its plans for modern education.

3. West Bengal is the most easily communicable route between India and Bhutan. If Bhutan wants to establish communication with outside world for trade, commerce and other purposes West Bengal plays a very crucial role. This geo-communicational dependence of Bhutan on West Bengal is determined by geography itself. It can't be changed. The classic example of such dependence of Bhutan on West Bengal is the modern SAARC road which facilitates the trade between Bhutan and Bangladesh. Since time immemorial the Bhutan's traders carried their trade and commercial activities through the Bengal plains with the rest of the world. So, in discussing the Bhutan's educational development one can't overlooked the Bhutan's next door neighbour Indian state- West Bengal.

4. There is a great impact of India in the growth of Buddhism in Bhutan. In the eighth century A.D. an Indian saint Guru Padmasambhaba introduced Buddhism in Bhutan and it became a Buddhist country it developed a religious identity distinctly of its own but it continued to draw inspiration from its neighbours specially India. Having accepted a religion of the neighbouring country it was natural that religious education system of Bhutan also gathered inspiration from India.

5. Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan tradition has a great impact on the Buddhism in Bhutan. Various sects of Buddhism such as *Kagyupa*, *Sakyapa*, *Gelukpa* etc., penetrated into Bhutan from Tibet. Monastic education system of Bhutan followed the same path as the education system of the monasteries in Tibet. The aim of the Bhutan's monastic institutions is to preserve and promote Bhutanese culture which is a legacy of Tibetan monastic education system. From time immemorial many eminent Lamas entered Bhutan from Tibet to preach Buddhism. At the same time, many Bhutanese scholars went to Tibet for higher studies in Buddhism. They returned with a high level of qualification based on the oral and written traditions and preached in Bhutan.

6. Bhutan is known for its monasteries famous for learning and for being in possession of rare manuscripts and excellent paintings. The basis of educational growth in ancient and medieval times was primarily religious and the education imparted was highly pragmatic and practical. But the fragile

political situation in the country for the period from seventeenth century to nineteenth century caused to the hindrance in the educational development. Modern education sowed its seed only after the ascendancy of hereditary King in the twentieth century, when Bhutan opened its door to outside world.

7. Till 1970's *Choekey* or classical Tibetan language was the vehicle of academic activities among the educated classes of Bhutan. Still it is the medium of learning in monastic schools. Naturally Bhutan has an inalienable connection with Tibet and *Choekey* language.

8. Because of varied stocks, the rugged mountainous terrain and its inaccessibility, there is a great linguistic diversity in the country. Though the official language is *Dzongkha*, a number of local dialects have survived within the country and on account of geographic isolation; sometimes people living in one village cannot understand the dialect of other village. Naturally, modern education system in the beginning also varied from valley to valley.

9. In the beginning of modern educational system it was not possible to provide educational facilities in the remote areas because many of the areas were not linked with the roads. Settlement pattern was a factor due to which the availability of educational facilities had become a problem because the size of the villages of the country varied between 2-100 houses and the average was 43 houses only.<sup>42</sup> Due to this random pattern of settlement, many people were not in a position to avail government educational policies benefit and this resulted in more illiteracy in the country.

10. Bhutan's rugged terrain is a severe constraint to the progress of communications and educational system in the country. The population being scattered in small groups among hamlets high in the mountains, the way to school mostly involved a walk of some hours, therefore, many of the school buildings were so laid out that the small pupils could stay there all through the week. Sometimes parents had to make huts by themselves outside the school for their children. It was natural that without the residential system in the school, many parents showed their unwillingness in sending their children to that school.

11. Geographical division and differences inside Bhutan has affected the growth of education system. In those valleys where the communication system

developed, education was also developed. Thus geographical disparities laid to the varied educational development within the country.

12. When Bhutan came in contact with the British Indian government and Anglo-Bhutan Treaty was signed in 1910 the first hereditary King of Bhutan, Ugyen Wangchuck (1907-1926) realized the linguistic handicap and took steps to familiarize Bhutan with English and Hindi. He established two secular schools where the medium of instruction was Hindi. The second King Jigme Wangchuck (1926-1952) set up 7 to 10 Hindi medium schools at Bumthang, Haa, Wangdiphodrang, Tashigang, Damphu and Paro.<sup>43</sup> Actually Hindi was easier for the Bhutanese people as they often visited the Buddhist religious sites in India for pilgrimage purpose and medium of communication was Hindi. The third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck (1952-1972) finalized to opt for the English medium schools in view of the reach and available texts in the language. Jesuit missionary Father William Mackey was invited from Darjeeling to set up English medium schools.

13. Bhutan's actual modernization in the educational system began after India's independence. Bhutan's first and second Five Year Development Plans were fully financed by India in which educational development was a main factor. Indian teachers were the pioneers of the Bhutan's modern educational system. Bhutan followed the curriculum of the Indian schools. The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations conducted the Class X and XII examinations till the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Sherubtse College, was the only college in the country to offer degree courses and was affiliated to the University of Delhi till the founding of the Royal University of Bhutan in 2003.

14. Indian teachers were the pioneers of the Bhutan's modern education system. They responded to the Bhutan's call in establishing a new modern system of education. These pioneers had to work without any medical, commercial, intellectual, social facilities in rugged terrain and led an isolated and deprived life. They could not avail any facilities of modern amenities. Their sincere contribution and enormous devotion to work weaved the isolated valleys into an effective chain of the modern system of education.

So, conservative outlook of the Bhutanese people, their predominantly religious notion combined with country's inaccessible mountains, forests and inadequate communications prevented contact with outside world and this sort of splendid isolation was bound to deter the infiltration of modern education in Bhutan.<sup>44</sup> But gradually modern education holds its sway in this country at the beginning of the twentieth century.

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## Chapter 3

### Education in the Monasteries

#### History of the Growth of Monastic education

One can tentatively place an isolated and sparsely populated Bhutan in its prehistoric period stretching between 500 B.C. to 600 A.C.<sup>1</sup> As mentioned in the later Bhutanese chronicle, *Lhoyi Chhoejung* that in this prehistoric age, groups of people stayed in separate and isolated places without resorting to trade or communication and education, even in the broadest sense, was non-existent.<sup>2</sup>

Prior to 1914, when two schools were started to impart modern education, monastic education system was relied upon for spiritual and human resource needs. Although the two schools, in Bumthang and Haa, opened the gates for modern education the country had to wait till the 1950s for the door to be completely opened to allow for organized system of modern education.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless the traditional monastic education remained despite the leaps and bounds of progress by modern education. Monastic educations here refer to the teachings through the Mahayana Buddhist traditions. Consequently it becomes necessary to refer to the advent of Mahayana Buddhism in the early seventh century A.C. With Buddhism came the monasteries which became centers of education where calligraphy, music, astrology, herbal medicine, philosophy, stylized dances etc were taught. The main texts of literature consisted of “[1] *chhoejung* (religious literature viz. *Kangyur* and *Tengyur*), [2] *namthar* (religious biographies), [3] *gyalrab* (historical chronicle), [4] *logyu* (records of chronicles), [5] *terma* (treasure texts), [6] *srung* (epics eg. Gesar of Ling), [7] *glu* (folk songs), [8] *nyam gyur* (religious poetry), [9] *nyan ngag* (ornate poetry), [10] *karchang* (catalogues), and [11] *tshig dzod* (dictionary).”<sup>4</sup> Monastic education would have also included almost all of the *Zorig Chusum* (the thirteen traditional arts and crafts).<sup>5</sup>

Historian Bikrama Jit Hasrat is of the opinion that Buddhism not only brought a religious transformation of the people but it also laid down a process of historical evolution of the country.<sup>6</sup> It is popularly believed that the Tibetan King, Songtsen Gambo (A.C. 627-649), built two monasteries, the Kyichu Monastery in Paro and

Jambay *Lhakhang* in Bumthang<sup>7</sup> although another authority casts doubts over this belief.<sup>8</sup> Whatever be the merits in these claims, Songtsen Gambo is totally overshadowed by the visit of the omniscient saint and teacher Padmasambhava,<sup>9</sup> about a century later in 746 A.C.<sup>10</sup> He established several sacred religious sites and amongst them Kurjey *Lhakhang* in Bumthang and Taksang Monastery in Paro constitute major spots of pilgrimage for the Buddhists.<sup>11</sup> Through his teachings, it is believed, he shed on the country the initial influence in the social and cultural lives of the people.<sup>12</sup> In second visit to Bhutan he was accompanied by the great scholar and translator Denma Tsemang (750 A.C.) and on his back to Tibet he was accompanied by several Bhutanese students.<sup>13</sup> Gradually various Buddhist schools established in Bhutan which were implanted there from Tibet where they had their origins. The aim of different schools was to promulgate individual traditions. Each had its own set of ritual cycles, meditative techniques and philosophical interpretations. Among them mention can be made of *Bonpo*, *Nyingmapa*, *Brugpa (Drukpa)*, *Kagyupa*, *Gelukpa*, *Sakyapa* etc. *Bonpo* tradition held its sway in Bhutan in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. This school always maintained a complex substratum of pre-Buddhist beliefs and never gained recognition in Bhutan, though some of their ritual practices still hold sway on the village level.<sup>14</sup> *Nyingmapa* with its sub sects flourished in different regions of Bhutan at different times. This sect also has a unique claim to maintain its teaching intact ever since they were introduced into the monarchical phase of the Tibetan history.<sup>15</sup> Padma Lingpa (1450-1521), a great saint of the *Nyingmapa* School, established several institutes that became some of the most robust centers of Buddhist learning.<sup>16</sup> Another important event was the introduction of the *Brugpa (Drukpa)* Kagyu School in the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century by Phajo Drugon Zhingpo who belonged to the Middle *Drukpa* (Bar-druk). The two other *Drugpa Kagyu* also entered Bhutan about the same time (Lower *Drukpa Ma-druk* and Upper *Drukpa To-druk*) but were ultimately absorbed into the Middle *Drukpa*.<sup>17</sup> It was the descendants of Phajo Drugon Zhingpo who spread to different parts of Bhutan establishing monasteries and their rule over the lands. Bhutan historian Michael Aris is of the opinion that this “it was surely due to them that Zhab-drung Ngag-bdang rNam-rgyl...was able to build his state after arriving as a refugee...”<sup>18</sup> *Gelukpa* school was founded in Tibet by Tsongkhapa (1357-1419) and this sect drew its spiritual and doctrinal inspiration from Indian teacher

Atisha.<sup>19</sup> Disciples of Tsongkhapa founded many monasteries in western valleys of Bhutan. But this school did not lie so deep in the Bhutanese soil. Consequently they appear to have collapsed as an integrated force when Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal unified the country under *Brugpa* rule in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>20</sup> *Sakyapa* school was the last to arrive in Bhutan and they too built their monasteries particularly in Northern Bhutan. Each of these sets of Sakyapa monasteries had its own lineage of lamas. Memoirs of the Sakyapas are preserved in folk tales still recited in Thimphu and Punakha valleys.<sup>21</sup> Thus along with the light of Buddhist religion, literature and spirituality of various schools were introduced in different learning centres with monks as a disciples or students. Small residences, built by the students, had emerged in the area to give the appearance of a new settlement which came to be known as “*Drong Sar*”.<sup>22</sup> This was pronounced as “*Trongsa*” in the local dialect, later became the name of the *Dzong* area. Thus the very name “*Trongsa*” is connected with the idea of education.<sup>23</sup>

The medieval society of Bhutan was marked by the existence of a number of petty rulers and different religious traditions in different monasteries. The diversity of traditions and rulers caused great inconvenience to the citizens. Arguably the most vibrant era in Bhutanese history was the 17th century when Ngawang Namgyal, the great leader of the *Drukpa* school of Mahayana Buddhism, arrived in 1616. Commencing with the Simtokha *Dzong* in Thimphu he constructed many important *dzongs*, monasteries and religious institutions leading to the establishment of *Drukpa Kagyu* as the State religion.<sup>24</sup> The *dzongs* provided the space for monastic education. He introduced monastic education as a formal learning system by establishing the first monk body in 1622 with the *Je Khenpo* as the head in the monastery of Chary, Thimphu.<sup>25</sup> The central Monk Body was established to facilitate learning in Buddhist philosophy, linguistics etc.<sup>26</sup> Later *rabdeys* (monastic branches) and *drubdeys* (meditation centers) were initiated in different districts.<sup>27</sup> As a consequence, some of the monks emerged as scholars and authors of repute between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>28</sup> Notable in the list were “Shakya Rinchen (1710 - 59), the ninth *Je Khenpo*, Tenzin Chogyal (1701 - 66), the tenth, and Yonten Thaye (1724 - 84), the thirteenth.”<sup>29</sup>

Ngawang Namgyal also created the office of the *Desi* the head of which came to be known as *Deb*. The *Desis* were the temporal rulers who succeeded one after another from 1651-1907. From the above it is apparent that monastic centres had a crucial role in the progress of the country. It is necessary to add that in the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, monks took up arms and fought with *Desis* in driving away multiple Tibetan and Mongolian incursions. They also gave moral and spiritual support by invoking the blessings of the guardian deities. *Desi* system came to an end with the enthronement of the first hereditary monarch in 1907. Some of the temporal head of the country were also patron of learning. The second *Deb*, La Ngoenpa Tenzin Drugda (1656 to 1668) introduced the study of medicine, carpentry, arts and education.<sup>30</sup> Himself an expert in medicine, arts, sculpture and literature, he established schools for the study of these subjects.<sup>31</sup> The fourth *Deb*, Tenzin Rabgye (1680 to 1694) exhorted families with three children to send one of their sons to a monastery.<sup>32</sup> Though this practice has now completely stopped and children are sent only voluntarily. Sonam Lhundub (1769 to 1773), the 16th *Deb* organized many monastic schools.<sup>33</sup> The 22nd *Deb* Drug Namgyal (1799 to 1803) had many wooden printing blocks made to print many religious books.<sup>34</sup>

In the year 1783 East India Company's first Governor General of India Warren Hastings sent Captain Samuel Turner to Tibet through Bhutan. In his journal "An Account of an embassy to the court of Teshoo Lama and Narrative of journey through Bhutan", Turner wrote in details about the country. He found the Bhutanese monasteries as the educational centres of the country.<sup>35</sup> Government officials were selected from those educated and trained in this educational and religious centers.<sup>36</sup>

Captain Godwin Austen who was attached to the "Mission of Ashley Eden to Bhutan" in 1863 - 64 has left a valuable account on western Bhutan. He saw "one good result of the monastic system viz. that reading and writing is practiced and taught in the monasteries, the latter often not to be surpassed in beauty and evenness of form."<sup>37</sup>

On national scale literary activities declined between the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps because of the political upheavals during the period.<sup>38</sup> However, Bhutan experienced a renaissance in traditional learning in the second half

of the twentieth century. Scholars of repute in this period were “*Je Khenpo* Gedun Rinchen, Lopen Norbu Wangchuk, Lopen Nado, Lopen Pema Tsewang, Dasho Lam Sangak, Lopen Gombo Tenzin, Dasho Tenzin Dorjee” - all of whom contributed in the fields of history, language and religion.<sup>39</sup> A major landmark in the progress of traditional education came about when Semtokha *Lobdra* (Semtokha School) was established in 1961 under the supervision of Tibetan master Dilgo Khyentse.<sup>40</sup> Following the Chinese occupation of Tibet and the subsequent influx of Tibetan refugees in India and Nepal numerous Buddhist institutes were established by eminent scholars and masters towards the last part of the twentieth century. It was to these institutes the Bhutanese monks found a fresh source of learning and hundreds of Bhutanese monks went to study there.<sup>41</sup>

The two collections- *Kangyur*, the words of Buddha and *Tengyur*, treatises and commentaries by later masters, have been well preserved in Bhutan. In the times past several copies were written in gold and ink upon handmade paper. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century these were meticulously carved on wooden blocks for printing. Editions using modern press came about in 1995 with 150 volumes consisting of the *Kangyur* and *Tengyur*: *Kangyur* containing 1,115 texts on 65,420 Tibetan folios (450,000 lines, 25 million words) and *Tengyur* containing 3,387 texts on 127,000 folios (835,000 lines, 48 million words). The texts of *Kangyur* were translated over a number of years by approximately 250 Pundits and *Lotsawas* (translator). *Tengyur* has writings of over 700 great masters and were translated into Tibetan by over 370 *Pundits* and *Lotsawas*.<sup>42</sup>

### **Monastic educational system in the past**

Father William Mackey, the pioneering champion of modern education in Bhutan has mentioned the rich tradition of monastic education in such a way- “Bhutan always had monastic education. Clever young monks were sent to Tibet for 12 to 15 years. They returned to Bhutan with a solid foundation in scripture, astrology, mathematics, medicine and Choeki, the religious of the Kanjur and Tenjur and Zungchen Thusum. These lopons set up centres of Bhutanese religious learning.”<sup>43</sup>

Nearly every valley in Bhutan had monasteries of its own which preserve the greatness of the Bhutanese artistic and religious traditions.<sup>44</sup> But those were not only the centres of ritual and religious offerings, knowledge and learning but also was the core of the material wealth. Nobility, aristocracy and commoners all alike supported

these monasteries, where a large number of monks and nuns were constantly engaged in religious discourses, debates, production of sacred literature and other type of sacred performance,<sup>45</sup> each monastery had a hall for teaching purposes.<sup>46</sup> The religion encourages the monks and the laity to devote their time to meditation and learning.<sup>47</sup>

*Je Khenpo* was the head of the monastic system in Bhutan and post still continues today. *Gomchens* or lay monks and *Anims* or lay female monks studied under various masters in monasteries. When a child was selected for entering a monastery he had to go through certain physical tests against deformity and defects in his limbs. After passing the tests, he entered the probation in which he was taught the alphabets, preliminary prayer books and didactic proverbs. After the probationer had memorized the necessary preliminary texts, he was made to formally apply for admission to novitiate ship. He was supposed to pay necessary fees. As part of the admission tests, he had to answer various questions satisfactorily. Then he had to narrate what he had learnt as a probationer. Once he was admitted to the novitiate ship a vigorous training ensued in which even harsh corporal punishments were inflicted for negligent behaviour. Young novices were attached to senior and respectable masters who took the charge of the young students. They taught how to read, the art of liturgy, how to make various types of ritual cakes, instruction in the use of musical instruments, and monastic etiquette. The instruction was mainly in ritual and dogma, but they were also trained as craftsmen. The candidates had to pass many examinations. Till that time, they had to run around as errand boys to the senior monks. The candidates were to display orational and intellectual capabilities in public disputation.<sup>48</sup> It was the responsibility of the teachers to prepare the novices to master the scripts and also to develop other skills such as learning mask dances, arts and painting.<sup>49</sup>

A young monk learnt his lessons in *Choekey* or dharma language by rote and memorized line after line and verse after verse.<sup>50</sup> At a later stage the monk could choose to go to a *Shedra* and engage in higher studies in literature, language, philosophy and meditation.<sup>51</sup> When the learner was emotionally and intellectually matured to accept the teachings of Buddha, he was given those teachings. Young and promising monks from different monasteries, spread throughout the country, were sent to the monasteries in Tibet for rigorous study. They came back as scholars well

versed in *chhoe-ked* (the religious classical language of the *Kangyur*, *Tengyur* and *Zungchen*), astrology, health and medicine. Ashley Eden, British envoy to Bhutan in his 'Report on the State of Bhutan' in 1863-64 mentioned that, “---an occasional Lama goes to Lassa for his education and brings back with him a reinforcement to the theological knowledge of the Monasteries.”<sup>52</sup> They set up centers all over the country along with places of worship. The rich and devout *Drukpas* patronized shrines as a matter of religious merit. Landed estates were set apart occasionally for the up-keep of such establishments, where monks and nuns were housed and maintained invariably at the cost of the state exchequer.<sup>53</sup>

Difficult living conditions in the isolated hilly terrain of Bhutan led to the growth of a distinct society and culture in that country. Inhabitants were little aware about the outside world and lived happily in their socio - cultural life. In times of crisis they invited monks to recite the dharma scripts so that the harmful spirits would hear the Buddha's teachings and virtues.<sup>54</sup> The local *Gomchens*, lay monks, had even created a small group of literati Bhutanese in many villages. This literati rural folk had a tremendous influence on the common people as they were well versed in *Choekey*, religious literature, Tibetan type of medicine and folk traditions. These grassroots literates were naturally sought upon for guidance, encouragement, and assistance in time of sickness, birth, marriage and death.<sup>55</sup> Monastic institutions were the upholder of the tradition of scholarship and learning and at the same time contributed to the establishment of system of human governance. People of Bhutan continued to turn to religious leaders for advice and guidance, not just for religious matter but also for emotional and psychological counselling. The people relied on enlightened lamas on every occasion and they played a multi-functional role of offering basic education, care of the sick, providing moral and ethical guidance to the people. They held a high social status due to their superior learning as religious practitioners.

When the educational facilities were rare, monasteries were the only form of education available and access to it was only to a privileged few- the monks and children of upper level of the society. But with the gradual of awareness among the masses, many sought their education under a private master, who were themselves trained in Tibet on religion, language, poetry, etc.<sup>56</sup> Thus the monastic education has sustained the Bhutanese society in its spiritual fold for many centuries.<sup>57</sup>

## Development of Monastic Education System

Teaching and learning in the monasteries have remained unchanged for a very long time. As the order of the organization became established, it became a tradition. The traditional system developed by the masters became unchangeable and the traditions passed down the generations and changes, if any, was minimal. It is through the respect, faith, and belief of the followers in the masters of the Dharma that the monastic institutions have been able to preserve what had begun many years ago. Monastic education still follows the traditional way of teaching on Buddhist philosophy, logic, astrology, traditional medicine, literature, religious arts etc. Almost all the subjects are related to Buddhism and religion plays the dominant role. When common sciences such as logic, language etc. are taught, it is with a purely spiritual bend.<sup>58</sup> So traditional education remained more or less traditional strongly steeped in Buddhist morals values. The medium of learning in this system is either *Choekey* (classical Tibetan) or *Dzongkha*. The monks who imparted education in different monastic institutions were trained in meditation and ritual practices. In addition to *gelongs* (ordained monks), there were additionally *gomchens* (lay priests) who undertook monastic instruction in numerous institutions.<sup>59</sup> Traditional training followed the Buddhist monastic methods of learning by rote, contemplation, debates, exposition etc.<sup>60</sup> Although there are a variety of schools of Buddhist teachings, monastic education generally attempted to offer simplicity of living<sup>61</sup> with inner enlightenment as the ultimate goal.

When a novice first joins, often at the tender age of 5-6 years, he sits at the rear end of the row inside the central hall of the *dzong*. He is taught under the pastoral care of an elder monk. With the passing of time, he moves up along the row indicating a promotion compatible with his mastery of the scripts and skills. If anyone does not progress as much as he is required to do, he gets moved out of the row to work as temple caretaker inside the monastery and in small monasteries. Often the mature monks are given responsibilities befitting their intelligence and capabilities to look after certain temples, perform ritual tasks and as masters of various instruments and dances. The top graders attend higher education and are put through long years of meditation and discourses under learned masters. They often return as head of the monastery or sub-monasteries or as officials in various capacities.<sup>62</sup>

A report of the Kuensel published on 3 August 1986, mentioned that, “More than 40 high school students from all over Bhutan were ordained as monks on July 11, the auspicious day of the first sermon by Lord Buddha in Sarnath. They joined the sangha voluntarily from schools in Kanglung, Sarbhang, Samchi, Tongsa, Paro, Yanchenphug, Punakha and Deothang. The initiation was conducted by His Holiness the *Je Khenpo* at Tashichhodzong in Thimphu. The novitiates had to spend a period of acclimatization in Tashichhodzong and then sent to the Tango, Cheri, and Phajoding centres of Buddhist studies. Among other disciplines, they studied the 13 Grade texts of the *Kagyü* and *Nyingmapa* traditions for about nine years. Besides *Choekey*, they had to study Sanskrit, English and Pali. The students were initiated after a special recommendation commanded by His Majesty the King to the *Dratshang Lhentshog* and the Department of Education. An intensive interview was held by the *Dratshang Lhentshog* Secretary and the Director of Education who were later joined by the *Khenpo* of the Phajoding Shedra to base the final recommendation on an in depth understanding of each individual monk. Interviews were held to identify and study their family background, intellectual ability, influences on their decisions, knowledge and understanding of Buddhism, understanding of their choice and its implications and long term religious aspirations. The interviewers were most surprised by the remarkable sense of maturity, confidence and unwavering conviction that was common among all the candidates during the interviews. The interviewers felt that each individual had made his own decisions and had, in fact, been waiting for such an opportunity. Almost every candidate reportedly indicated that the religious inclination had developed in them as early as class five or six. The interviewers report said that at least 75 percent of the students were likely to finish their studies and would play a critical role not only in the promotion and preservation of our country as a Buddhist kingdom but in spreading the Buddhist faith in the world at large”.<sup>63</sup> Again a report in the Kuensel stated that “Eight more students have joined the monk body from schools of Punakha, Samchi, Motithang and Choden, from class eight to ten”.<sup>64</sup>

As mentioned in a report of the Ministry of Education, Thimphu there were following monastic establishment in Bhutan in different districts during the Fifth Five Year Plan period-

- 1) “The monk body of Thimphu district plays an important role in promotion of monastic education. The Education Department renders assistance for

promotion of monastic education in the monastic schools in the form of salaries of 18 teachers. This is felt necessary with a view to preserve our rich cultural heritage and religion. These schools are situated at the monasteries of Tango and Cheri, Dechhenphodrang, Paga Goempa and at Phajoding.”<sup>65</sup>

- 2) “The Education Department renders assistance for promotion of monastic education for Mongar Monastic Body in the form of salaries of one teacher for one school in Mongar dzong. This is felt necessary with a view to preserve our ancient and rich cultural heritage and religion, and further promote it.”<sup>66</sup>
- 3) “The monk body of Wangdiphodrong district is regarded as one of the most important organization. The Education Department renders assistance for promotion of monastic education for Wangdiphodrang Monastic Body in the form of salaries of two teachers of one monastic school in Wangdiphodrang dzong. This is felt necessary with a view to preserve our ancient and rich cultural heritage and religion.”<sup>67</sup>
- 4) “The Education Department renders assistance for promotion of monastic education in the district of Bumthang to the monk body in the form of salary of one teacher in Tang Thodra Goenpa. This is felt necessary with a view to preserve our ancient and rich cultural heritage and religion.”<sup>68</sup>
- 5) “The monk body of the district (Lhuntshi) is regarded as one of the most important organization. The Education Department renders assistance for promotion of monastic education for the Lhuntshi Monastic Body in the form of salaries of one teacher of one monastic school in Lhuntshi dzong. This is felt necessary with a view to preserve our ancient and rich cultural heritage and religion and further promote it.”<sup>69</sup>
- 6) “The monk body of Paro district is regarded as the second next to the Central Monk Body. The Education Department renders assistance for promotion of monastic education for the Paro Monastic Body in the form of salaries of two teachers in one monastic school. This is felt necessary with a view to preserve our ancient and rich cultural heritage and religion. This monastic school has at present 20 students (Gelong).”<sup>70</sup>
- 7) “The monk body of Daga district plays an important role in promotion of monastic education. The Education Department renders assistance for promotion of monastic education for the Daga Monastic Body in the form of salaries of 1 teacher of one monastic school in Daga Dzong. This is felt

necessary with a view to preserve our ancient and rich cultural heritage and religion.”<sup>71</sup>

Not only the government is taking initiative for establishment of monastic institutions but some of the institutions have been established and run by religious minded people. As mentioned in a report of the Kuensel dated 1 April 1995 that, “After five years of construction with an investment of more than Nu.10.00 million, Garab Rimpoche’s monastic school in Ranjung in Eastern Bhutan is well on its way towards becoming one of the biggest private schools for Buddhist studies in the country.--- With contributions and voluntary labour from the people in the area, about 95 percent of the construction was financed by Garab Rimpoche’s overseas sponsors.- ---Side by side with the construction classes are being conducted for more than 200 monks and anims from all parts of Eastern Bhutan. About 50 more will be admitted in the next few years. -----The aim was to produce monks and anims who would serve the religious needs of the people and to uphold the dharma”.<sup>72</sup>

Monastic institutions in Bhutan are offering traditional approach to education by preserving and promoting Bhutan’s inherent culture. Monastic institutions are –

Monastic University Committee - The primary duties of this committee are to evaluate policies and programs related to advanced level of studies in the monastic system.<sup>73</sup> It has a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. It also deputes teachers in the *Shedras*.

Dratshang Lhentshog (Monastic Commission) - Established in 1984, it is the uppermost policy making body for the monasteries with Chief Abbot as the Chairperson assisted by members from notable bodies together with the National Assembly.<sup>74</sup>

Zhung Dratshang (Central Monastic Body) - Central monastic body has its seats in Punakha in winter and Thimphu in summer. It controls the monastic educational system all over the country.

Rabdey (Dzongkhag Monastic Body) - Bhutan has 20 dzongkhags in total, each with a Rabdey and a Lama (Priest). The monks’ strength lies between 50 and 400 in each *dzongkhag*.<sup>75</sup>

Dratshang (Dzongkhag Monastic Branch) – They constitute the branches of Dzongkhag Monastic Body and emphasize on monastic arts & rituals.<sup>76</sup>

Drubdey (Meditation Centers) – These being meditation centers are few in number and are situated in secluded areas.

Lobdra (Schools) - There are the centres where new learners get elementary education on monastic order.<sup>77</sup>

Gomdey (Lay Clergy Body) - These comprise of clergy who are married and their process of learning differs from the usual monk order where emphasis is given on practical & ritual performances of Buddhism.

Anim Dratshang (Nunneries) - In these institutions the learners are only women. They follow the same system like other monastic institutions.

Shedras (Colleges) - Monastic institutes for higher studies are called Shedras where monks of high caliber can continue tertiary level education in literature, philosophy, arts, language etc and devote themselves to long period of meditation<sup>78</sup> unlike in other centres where the primary activities lies in the physical way of conducting ritual and ceremonies. A *Shedra* is arranged as *Zhirim* (Elementary), *Dzingrim* (Middle) and *Therin* (Higher). These are similar to higher secondary (4years), bachelors (2 years) and masters (3 years).<sup>79</sup> Therefore, a monk enrolled in a *Shedra* undergoes 9 years of rigorous learning. Bhutan currently has 15 *Shedras* spread across the country. As far as the admission is concerned monks who would have spent at least 8 years of study in other centers (*Rabdey, Lobdra, Dratshang*) are eligible for admission to *Shedra*.<sup>80</sup> Of the 15 *Shedras* or colleges in Bhutan only two of them offer Bachelors and Masters Degree courses. These are Tango Buddhist College in Thimphu and Sang Chokhor *Shedra* in Paro. Tango Buddhist College in Thimphu is a main *Shedra* in Bhutan which was authorized by the fourth King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck in 1988 to uphold and promote the Buddhist philosophy in the kingdom.<sup>81</sup> It offers graduate and post graduate studies. The first batch of 20 monk scholars graduated from Tango *Shedra* in the year 1996. His Holiness the *Je Khenpo* awarded certificates and prizes to them and advised that “Do not make the mistake of thinking that your education ends here, the teachings of Buddha are limitless”.<sup>82</sup> While some of the graduates had opted to remain in the service of the *Dratshang*,

many of them planned to go into retreat and meditation. In 1765 CE Choglay Trulku Sacha Tenzin founded Sang Chokher *Shedra* in Paro. Ugyen Dorji, Chamberlain of the first King, renovated, upgraded it as a Buddhist college in 1991 with 25 students and began to offer post graduate courses in 2000.<sup>83</sup>

### **Curriculum to Monastic Higher Secondary level**

Before entry in to the degree level students of the monastic order have to take up four years pre university course with a deep curriculum. This includes- Buddhist philosophy, logic, religious history, Buddhist values and monkhood, evolution of Buddhism in Bhutan and functional English language. Curriculum in particular has relevance to discussion of the depth and quality of contents of Royal University of Bhutan's admission of *Dzongkha* candidates into the initial teacher education and their competency in the subject.

Table 3.1: Curriculum Structure of Monastic Higher Education

SL.	Course Concentration	Degree name in Sanskrit	Degree name in English	Year
1	Tenchoe Khenpo Year I (Master of commentarial works)	Shastri	Bachelors	XIII
2	Tenchoe Khenpo Year II (Master of commentarial works)	Shastri	Bachelors	XIV
3	Rigzhung Lopen Year I (Teacher of ten sciences and philosophies)	Acharya	Masters	XV
4	Rigzhung Lopen Year II (Teacher of ten sciences and philosophies)	Acharya	Masters	XVI

(Source-Namgyel, Singye, *Quality of Education in Bhutan: Historical and Theoretical Understanding Matters*, DSB Publication, Thimphu, Bhutan.2011, p.75)

### **Specialization leading to a Doctoral Degree**

A *Shedra* keeps records of the performance of the students in various subjects. A student is expected to give more effort in the specialized subject. When a student finished Masters Degree, he is considered the master of the subjects: Logic, Language and Philosophy. A student completes all the 13 philosophies which can be condensed to the four theologies of Buddhism which both the Tibetan and Bhutanese Buddhism follow. A student with Masters Degree can continue teaching his subject of specialization for two years, equivalent to an M. Phil. During this tenure, the candidate can enrol for rigorous three years Ph.D. course in the same subject of specialization which also requires writing a thesis. Allowing students to specialize in a field has been adopted from the Nalanda University model, the first ever Buddhist University of the time.<sup>84</sup>

### **Drawbacks of the Monastic system**

The chronology of events establishes that education in the monasteries served the intellectual needs of Bhutan for centuries and that monastic higher education was prevalent before similar rung was attained in the secular one. Graduate and post graduate studies in Buddhism were evident from 1988 when the establishment of a National University of secular order remained a policy document as recent as 1999.<sup>85</sup> But there are some drawbacks in the monastic system that is why today it has lost priority over the modern system of education. The Government is on the track towards achieving the so called ‘education for all’ goal by 2020 or even earlier and in this endeavour modern education finds a huge favour. Today, with the majority preferring secular schools only a negligible percentage go to monastic institutions for education. In the year 2000 there were 288 monastic institutions in the country with a role strength of 10,035 comparing with 343 modern school with 107,792 number of students<sup>86</sup> There are various causes behind this -

Firstly, in the monastic system, belief and devotion to the teacher form the crux in this system and the student is discouraged from contest the authority of the

teacher & texts. Although rationality is there in this learning as logic forms the major part in Buddhist philosophy, a learner is seldom given chance to ask questions to fulfill his curiosity. The traditional education is therefore distinguished by passive reception and repetition of an ancient system.<sup>87</sup> It is not uncommon in the *Shedras* to have a lesson, at times lasting for hours, and have it repeated again in the next day, thus feeding monotonous hours to the student. It is also a fact that the syllabi are also not well formulated and lack a systemic & categorized approach.

Secondly, despite the resistance to modern education and a preference to monastic one in the times gone by modern education has stolen a huge march in the recent years. By 1980's modern education gained predominance and the younger generation looked down the traditional education as a resilient system.<sup>88</sup> According to their view point monastic learning is static and repetition of rituals. Most traditionalists have not tried to modernize themselves with country's changing times. Majority of the monks have limited knowledge about the Buddhism of philosophy & principles.<sup>89</sup> The old generation had accepted the liturgical role of the *Dratshangs*, but these are no longer attractive to the younger generations.

Thirdly, actually there is a linguistic and cultural gap between monastic and modern system of education. Medium and mode of communication in monastic education is either *Choekey* or *Dzongkha* and English is absent while in modern system medium of instruction is English though *Dzongkha* is the national language.

Fourthly, among the traditional institutions there is a better system in the *Lobdras & Shedras*. Here the liturgical and pastoral functions are also taken care of besides, as the chief guardians of traditional learning and scholarship, the contribution of preserving and disseminating moral and philosophical leanings as enshrined in the Buddhist canons.<sup>90</sup> The present curricula are more modern and written examinations have been introduced though no attempt has been taken to blend traditional learning with modern method.

Fifthly, earlier it was the wish of every parent to send at least one of their son in monastery, now the parents dream that their children should continue modern education because today education is considered as a means to attain a comfortable

mode of life. Scientific knowledge and knowledge of English language are considered most valuable in modern society. In contrast monastic education is aimed at one's inner enlightenment rather than worldly happiness and material comfort.

### **Government's attitude towards the Monastic education**

With the initiation of planned economic development in the 1960's, there was a paradigm shift in the state's responsibility from one focused to supporting the monastic order to that on delivering social welfare through economic development.<sup>91</sup> By the middle of the last century, the third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, felt a need to de-emphasize priority given to old traditional system if the nation was to prosper.<sup>92</sup> Mr. Apa B. Pant, Political Officer in Sikkim, in a letter to T. N. Kaul, Joint Secretary to the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> may 1955 wrote that, "---- the Maharaja is really a remarkable character. He told me of his plans for the reorganization of the monasteries. He also wants all the monks now to pass an examination before they are formally and permanently taken in. Those who fail are turned out of the monasteries. Formerly all those who were too lazy used to flock to the monasteries. He has also started to give the monks instructions in painting, weaving, curving etc. He said, 'Mr. Pant I want the monasteries to be really places of culture and devotion'. He has been able to get all this done because of his popularity with the common people."<sup>93</sup> The fourth King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, initiated the concept of 'Gross National Happiness' which initiated a fresh concept of philosophy for the kingdom. Bhutanese monarchy has made an attempt towards political liberalization, economic development & social sustainability. In addition to economic sustainability importance was accorded to social sustainability in the objectives and development strategies where it also included the 'preservation and promotion of cultural and traditional values.'<sup>94</sup> The Government has assured to give impetus in traditional education. Owing to the unique history there is a continued political commitment to monastic education and it appears to receive equal attention as the secular one. Religion and monastic education form the root aspects of Bhutanese culture. One of the elements to Bhutan's pride lies in its culture and existence of Buddhism in its pristine form. The Royal Government is aware of the role played by religious bodies in Bhutanese lives, and it worked in close cooperation with the monastic institutions in the establishment and promotion of *Rabdeys*, *Shedras*,

*Rigneys, Drubdeys and Anim Dratshangs*. The *Dratshang* was reorganized in 1984 by Jigme Singye Wangchuck to enable the monks to fulfill their ever-increasing duties and obligations. A high powered body named Council for Ecclesiastical Affairs was set up along with a Secretariat. Since then new *Dratshangs* have been established in Haa, Chukha, Shemgang, Bumthang, Soe, Mongar, Kurtoe, Pemagatsel, Geylephug, Chirang and Samchi. A number of *Shedras, Drubdeys, Gomdeys* and *Anim Dratshangs* have come up.<sup>95</sup> Since 1987, monastic institutions have taken on an unconventional part by being involved in health and rural sanitation programmes.<sup>96</sup> The King had a special concern for the progress of traditional education and he frequently visited the institutions of traditional education. We can cite an example from Kuensel dated August 15, 1987, "On July 28, His Majesty the King graciously attended the first anniversary of the newly instituted *Shedra* in Dordey Drak for the ex students of modern schools who joined the monastic education last year. ----- Addressing the students, the King expressed his appreciation for the great religious devotion displayed by them in joining the monastic order. His Majesty was confident of the progress they would make in their chosen vocation and the benefits they would thereby bring to themselves and to all sentient beings. He acknowledged the challenges and sacrifices facing the students in pursuing a religious life after modern education and career prospects. The Royal Government would make every effort to ensure that they would be well looked after in view of the role they would play in preserving and promoting our religion and culture. His Majesty said that in due course numerous opportunities would open up to the students who pursued their studies conscientiously. Some of them would become Senior *Lopons* or *Netens* in *dzongkhag* monastic bodies, others would become Principals or lecturers in *Shedras* and *Drubdeys*, while a third group might opt for Buddhist medicine. The best and the brightest students also receive training and instructions in various international Buddhist institutions to further enhance their knowledge and understanding of the Dharma. His Majesty advised the students that though traditional education was the most important part of their curriculum, elementary meditation, if carried out side by side, would stand them in good stead by way of mental and spiritual advancement.---- His Majesty's visit was an unprecedented gesture, and is an eloquent reflection of his deep personal interest and involvement in the promotion of the kingdom's religious and cultural heritage".<sup>97</sup>

But following the Five Year Plans of the Government, we notice that a little attention has given to expand country's traditional education. Budget outlay for promoting monastic learning is a very small amount. The total allocation to the Council for Ecclesiastical Affairs, Special Commission for Cultural Affairs and Dzongkha Development Commission during the Eight Five Year Plan was 1.78% of the total budget<sup>98</sup> with five thousand monks coming under the support of the state.<sup>99</sup> Additionally, many traditional training centres ran privately with scholars receiving no government support<sup>100</sup> and about 3000 were living on private patronage.<sup>101</sup>

## **Conclusion**

In spite of various hindrances traditional education in Bhutan is thriving as because of the faith in Buddhism & spread of teachings by Buddhist institutions. After the mushrooming of *Shedras*, and the emergence of many Buddhist scholars, from centres both Bhutan and outside, monastic education nowadays finds itself rejuvenated<sup>102</sup> and is being reinforced through new approaches, methods & curriculum.

Upholding the traditional value system has a deep influence on the Bhutanese majority. The traditional values accords great stress in the proper teacher-pupil relationship keeping in mind the function of the teacher in dispelling ignorance and providing the teachings of knowledge & wisdom.<sup>103</sup> The system requires the students to observe themselves as patients, the teacher as physician, the teachings as medicine, and the adoption of teachings as a cure.<sup>104</sup> Much importance is given to devotion to the teacher and subjects and texts of the teachings are to be treated with respect.<sup>105</sup> In this learning "education is to be viewed as a process of edification and knowledge as a tool for benefiting the world."<sup>106</sup>

Bhutan's basic dilemma and challenge today appears to be a case of striking a balance between modernizing and developing the country without ignoring to preserve its traditional and cultural uniqueness.<sup>107</sup> According to Michael Aris, a great historian of Bhutan studies, "Bhutan was to produce scholars who combine a knowledge and appreciation of its traditional heritage with the new perspectives and methodologies of our own age."<sup>108</sup>

Notwithstanding the country's changing phenomenon, respect for traditional learning is stated in a government document looking to Bhutan in 2020 where it is noted: "Our religious and monastic institutions have played a decisive role in the evolution of our nation."<sup>109</sup> One Government of India's report of the year 1977 mentioned that, "Bhutan is the only surviving Mahayana Buddhist monarchy and the subtle accommodation of a new and modernizing monarchical polity with the long background of the theocratic culture provides unique example of attempting modernization without altering the traditional mould of Bhutan."<sup>110</sup>

However, Bhutan is really facing a sensitive issue because the lion's portion of population are tradition bound people believe in their traditional system, as well as many modern educated people still show strong attachment to the traditional system and they do not perceive it as a conflict but as a question of faith on the traditional system. Perhaps geographical isolation of Bhutan gives shape and supplies impetus to this kind of outlook. Elsewhere the western or modern education has been a bone of contention and conflict but in Bhutan people have adopted modern education despite never having discarded the traditional system of education and approach. Monastic learning systems may be traditional and ancient and at odds with the modern education, but it finds a wide space in the life and thoughts of the Bhutanese where Buddhism teaches spiritual values over material ones, compassion in place of indifference, and detachment rather than accumulation of wealth.

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## Chapter 4

### Growth of Modern Education under Hereditary Monarchy

Bhutan is among the few surviving monarchies of the world. The hereditary kingship is not a very old phenomenon in Bhutan. In fact, hereditary monarchy was established there at a time when the institution of monarchy was already passing through a rough time. However, Bhutan maintained a unique monarchic system for a long time. Its distinct geographical location, isolationism and the cultural uniqueness helped it in maintaining such a system. The institution of monarchy has been an important force in the growth of Bhutanese nation state. For a longtime, the monarchy was identified with the Bhutanese state. However, it has not been possible to keep the country aloof of the winds of change. The monarchy has been constrained to open the country to the forces of change, a result of which was in the modernization and progress of the country where the Kings played a prominent role.

#### Emergence of hereditary monarchy

Bhutan became a unified kingdom under the leadership of Ngawang Namgyal (1594-1651) who had established a theocracy. The Abbot was the chief of religious matters and the King became the head of the religious laws. Both came to be known as *Shabdrung* and *Druk Desi*.<sup>1</sup> As because of the dual authority there was overlapping of powers and it often led to a conflict between the two. The lack of a central power resulted in a struggle between various groups. The prominent among them were two rival factions headed by *Penlops* (Governors) of Paro and Tongsa. Having realized the futility of internal conflict, the state councillors and the state functionaries decided to do away with the diarchy of *Dharma Raja* and *Deb Raja* and selected the Tongsa *Penlop*, Ugyen Wangchuck as the hereditary King of Bhutan.<sup>2</sup> Ugyen Wangchuck had firmly established his influence in the whole country. In the foreign policy also, Ugyen Wangchuck proved to be a man of vision, he maintained close relation with the British Indian government and in the year 1903 accompanied Younghusband to Lhasa. In Report on the administration of Sikkim and the relations between the British Government and Bhutan during the year 1903-1904 there is a letter from Ugyen Dorji, Bhutan Agent to the Commissioner, Rajshahi Division mentioning that, “The Bhutan Government is glad to have good terms and faith with the British Government

and hopes to be so in future also.”<sup>3</sup> The British Government also realized the importance of this man and in 1905 a British mission was deputed under J.C. White, the Political Officer in Sikkim, to present Ugyen Wangchuck with the insignia of Knight Commander of the Indian Empire (K.C.I.E.).<sup>4</sup> In 1905 he was invited by the British Government to attend the reception of the Prince of Wales in India. On December 17, 1907 Ugyen Wangchuck was unanimously elected as the hereditary King of Bhutan.<sup>5</sup> Thus ended the five decades of perpetual civil strife. In 1910, the King signed the treaty of Punakha with the British Government by which British Government agreed to pay an annual grant of Rs 100,000 to Bhutan and also not to intervene in its internal affairs. Bhutan agreed to be guided by them in regard to its external affairs.<sup>6</sup>

### **Contribution of first hereditary King Ugyen Wangchuck in the growth of modern education**

Ugyen Wangchuck was well educated in Bhutanese literacy and monastic education.<sup>7</sup> He was a capable administrator and a wise diplomat. His many reforms in the country intended at the welfare of the people. He was more than a lama<sup>8</sup> and a great patron of learning. In the year 1911 the King was invited to be present at the Delhi Durbar held in honour of the King Emperor of the British Empire, George V. Ugyen Wangchuck travelled to Delhi and the King Emperor decorated him with award of K.C.S.I. (Knight Commander of the Star of India).<sup>9</sup> The visit to India by the King was the precursor to the modernization of Bhutan. The King throughout his stay in India was so impressed with all that he saw there, that on return, he made plans to introduce modern education in Bhutan. While the King had many projects in his mind, lack of adequate resources prohibited him from implementing these. In his endeavor to develop the condition of education of the country, King’s perfect ally was Ugyen Dorji, a trader from Kalimpong who had the unique distinction of being the British agent for Bhutan and also the trade agent of Bhutan. He was promoted to become the King’s Chamberlin, taking the title of *Gongzim* and the Monarch decreed that all offices held by him would pass on to his son on succeeding him.<sup>10</sup>

But before we venture into details of Ugyen Dorji’s role, which will be considered at length elsewhere, it is necessary to see the first western report on Bhutan in relation to education. A letter from the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign and Political department to the Political Officer in Sikkim

dated Simla, the 27<sup>th</sup> May 1914, sheds light on the King's interest in introducing modern education. It states, "It appears that His Highness wishes in the first instance to restrict education to the sons of the leading families, and that the education should be of a technical character."<sup>11</sup> Political Officer in Sikkim, in his letter dated Gangtok, the 18<sup>th</sup> June, 1914 replied that, "Raja Ugyen Dorji informs me that the present intention of the Bhutan Durbar is to make a start on the simplest possible lines. With this object in view he has arranged that some 20 or 30 boys shall be assembled at Ha during the present summer...."<sup>12</sup> *Gongzim* Ugyen Dorji took the tasks of familiarizing the Bhutanese with the learning of English. Ugyen spent half of the year in Bhutan and half in Kalimpong where he had come into contact with Dr. Sutherland, the principal of Scottish University Mission Institution (S.U.M.I.) and other missionaries. He was also impressed by his reliable friend, Dr. John Graham who had founded the St. Andrew's Colonial Homes (later Dr. Graham's Homes) School in Kalimpong. Ugyen Dorji wanted to know about mission workers and their services. When the service of the mission – teaching, preaching and learning was explained to him he asked Dr. Sutherland if he could send teachers to Bhutan to open school.<sup>13</sup> Dr. Sutherland told him that two teachers would be sent at first to Haa in Western Bhutan who would open a school there and it would be a very noble service to Bhutan. In the year 1914 Dr. Sutherland sent Ugyen Chirring and Dawa Namgyal Targyen to Haa and first school was started. The next step to introduce with modern education was to put 46 Bhutanese students into the S.U.M.I.<sup>14</sup> who were from Haa School and came down to Kalimpong in winter months. By 1918 some other teachers were sent to Haa to teach new students- Kiran Kumar Sarkar, R.S. Karthak, S. Sitling, H. Pradhan and Joseph Stein.<sup>15</sup> A mobile school<sup>16</sup> attached with the Royal Court was established under the direct initiative of the King in Bumthang in 1915, the crown prince and other seventeen children were enrolled.<sup>17</sup> A Sikkimese teacher Phento was selected to teach Hindi to the crown Prince Jigme Wangchuck and his 17 friends.<sup>18</sup> In the Annual Report on Bhutan for the year 1915-1916 the following is mentioned by Charles C. A. Bell, Political Officer in Sikkim, "A school has been opened at Bumthang (in Bhutan), the residence of His Highness the Maharaja, where English is taught to the Bhutanese boys besides their mother language, which is Tibetan.... Another school has been in existence for the last two or three years at Haa in Western Bhutan and here there are 46 boys."<sup>19</sup> Father William Mackey, the Canadian educationist in Bhutan, mentioned in his note (in 1995), 'How it all began' about first King's mobile

school – “Like the monks, clever young men were selected by His Majesty and were given experience in dealing with money, solving local problems, directing villagers to take responsibility in improving the surroundings of the villages”.<sup>20</sup> They became the local administrators and were appointed as *Dzongpens* and *Poenkhags* (district functionaries). By 1919-1920, 21 students were studying at Bumthang and 38 at Haa.<sup>21</sup> Out of the Bhutanese students who went to Scottish Universities Mission Institution, Do Thinle, appeared matriculation examination in 1923 and passed in the first division. F. M. Bailey, Political Officer of Sikkim in his letter to the Secretary to the Government of India dated 16<sup>th</sup> June 1924 wrote that, “There are 17 boys at the Bumthang School They made satisfactory progress. One Bhutanese boy passed the matriculation examination in 1923. He is working as a school teacher at the Bumtang School.”<sup>22</sup> Again Bailley wrote to the Foreign Secretary, Government of India in 1926 “There are ten boys at the school at Bumtang. It is reported that they made good progress during the year. They are taught English and Hindi. The Agent to His Highness the Maharaja of Bhutan has again opened a school at Ha for the education of small boys. There are 17 boys on the roll. They are taught Hindi. There are now only 5 boys studying at Kalimpong High School. 8 more boys have passed the matriculation examination, making a total of 11 who have passed since the batch of 46 were sent to Kalimpong about 1915. Out of these eight four have already been sent for training in the following technical lines-

- (a) One as Mining Engineering at the Bengal Engineering College
- (b) Two as Veterinary Assistants at the Bengal Veterinary College in Calcutta and
- (c) One as Forest Ranger at Dehradun.

It is also intended to send the other four for training as under-

- (i) Two as Teachers at the Training School at Bhagalpur and
- (ii) Two as Sub-Assistant Surgeons in the Campbell Medical School in Calcutta.

It is also intended to train two boys as Tanners at the Harness and Saddlery Factory, Cawnpore. One of them is matriculate. One more boy has appeared in the matriculation examination, but the result is not yet out.”<sup>23</sup> The King wanted that the students should be trained in different technical fields so that their services could be utilized for initiating economic development in Bhutan.<sup>24</sup>

The King of Bhutan wrote a letter to the Viceroy of India through the Political Officer in Sikkim dated 5<sup>th</sup> September (He had written in Dzongkha, Political Officer in Sikkim sent a translated version of it in English) that, “By undertaking the training of our first lads to be educated along the modern lines and by giving them an equipment for beginning their work in Bhutan, Your Excellency will set us on the way towards a new and more hopeful national future. By increasing our subsidy, you will enable us to carry on the work which you will have begun and which will require an ever increasing expenditure until the various resultant enterprises themselves can produce their natural fruits.”<sup>25</sup> Lord Ronaldshay, Governor of Bengal visited Bhutan in November 1921 and submitted his proposal to the Viceroy of India Lord reading dated November 18, 1921, “to grant the Maharaja financial and other assistance in training Bhutanese lads in various professions with a view to the development of his country. His Highness estimates that this will cost 1, 30,000, the expenditure being spread over a period of 7 to 10 years and also to increase the Bhutan subsidy from one lakh to three lakhs.”<sup>26</sup> In 1923 the Government of India announces to provide an amount of Rs 49,629 to assist the Bhutanese in the improvement of their country by training selected Bhutanese students in various technical subjects.<sup>27</sup> While an official tour to Bhutan, F.M. Bailey, Political Officer in Sikkim, wrote on July 20, 1922 that the crown prince knew a little English and spoke Hindustani.<sup>28</sup> As the first hereditary monarch, with little or no knowledge of neither Hindi nor English, possibly he might have realized Hindi would be a good instrument as a communicating link with the British functionaries in India.<sup>29</sup> It was chosen as the medium of learning also because of the ready availability of inexpensive textbooks in Hindi from neighbouring India. Although it was neither an international language nor a language of Bhutan, the language seemed a useful one in the beginning of modern education.<sup>30</sup> So in the two modern schools founded by him, Hindi was taught as a major subject.

John Graham, Principal of the famous St. Andrew’s Colonial Homes (later Dr. Graham’s Homes) in Kalimpong had a very cordial relation with the King. D. Macdonald, Political Officer of Sikkim, in his Annual Report on Bhutan for the year 1920-1921 mentioned that, “In October 1920, His Highness the Maharaja of Bhutan wrote to Mr. Bell (Political Officer of Sikkim in 1920), requesting him to obtain necessary permission for Dr. Graham of Kalimpong to go to Bhutan for the purpose of inspecting the schools there.”<sup>31</sup> The Proceedings of the Government of Bengal of

the year June 1921 recorded that Reverend J.A. Graham of Kalimpong was granted permission to visit Bhutan.<sup>32</sup> F.M Bailey, Political Officer in Sikkim in his Annual Report on Bhutan for the year 1921-22 recorded, “At the invitation of His Highness the Maharaja, Dr. J.A. Graham, C.I.E., of Kalimpong paid a visit to Bhutan during the summer of 1921.”<sup>33</sup> It was during this visit that the King, Graham and S. T. Dorji drafted a plea for the Indian Government to help in the modernization of Bhutan and the plea ‘stressed the need for education’.<sup>34</sup> Four years later Dr. Graham sent a seven page long typed letter to H.H. the Maharaja of Bhutan on June 25, 1925 proposing the royal children to be sent to India and England for education. The letter begins with “---that no less than 7 of the Bhutanese boys in the (Graham’s school)<sup>35</sup> have just passed matriculation examination of the Calcutta university-----with these well trained boys you should now be able to carry out some of your plans for the future (development)”.<sup>36</sup> But before he could take any further step in developing the condition of modern education, the first hereditary King of Bhutan passed away in the year 1926.

The initial opposition and aversion of the guardians and religious establishments towards modern education were overcome after the initiatives of the King himself.<sup>37</sup> Those who had initially opposed modern education in time accepted that it was a better system. It is true that Ugyen Dorji emphasized the need of English and the first King visualized this, is remarkable.

Thus the establishment of hereditary monarchy under Ugyen Wangchuck invigorated the country to move forward. The first hereditary King visualized that westernization and modernization of the traditional social life of Bhutan through educational and cultural intercourse with British India could start all round development of the country. He and his able Agent to the government of Bhutan, Kazi Ugyen Dorji, had realized that monastic education alone may not be adequate to develop the country nor to foster links with other countries. Keeping in mind the local sensitiveness to preserve indigenous way of life as well as to usher in modernism the first school was opened in Bhutan and initiatives were taken to send some students to India for studies and training in various fields. Ugyen Wangchuck can truly be called the pathfinder because it was he, who sowed the seeds, under his direction Bhutan saw the light of modern education for the first time.

In 1906, a British Military Intelligence Report recorded the state of literacy in Bhutan in such a way, “Education is practically non-existent. Even amongst the ruling classes it is exceptional for one to find a man who could read and write”.<sup>38</sup> Ugyen Wangchuck brought a change of this situation and laid the beginning of modern education though the progress was very slow.

### **Second hereditary King Jigme Wangchuck’s role in the growth of modern education**

Born in 1905 Jigme Wangchuck was the eldest son of Ugyen Wangchuck. He was brought up in strict discipline and was taught in both traditional and modern education. His attendance at the palace school which his father had set up for him in Bumthung resulted in him acquiring some proficiency both in English and Hindi<sup>39</sup> to the extent that he was somewhat articulate in Hindi. This resulted in his refreshing ability to hold discussions in Hindi with both Indian and British officials.<sup>40</sup> At the same time various Buddhist masters gave him religious instructions and discourses on sacred mantras, rituals and local literacy skill. It is said that he was a diligent student.<sup>41</sup> In 1923 he became the Tongsa *Penlop*. During the time of death of his father he was barely 21 years old and on 14 March, 1927 he was enthroned as the second hereditary monarch of Bhutan.<sup>42</sup> Colonel Bailey, Political Officer of Sikkim attended the coronation ceremony on behalf of British Indian Government and presented the King with the medal of Companion of Indian Empire.<sup>43</sup> This was the assurance of British friendship to the King. The British again conferred him the title of the Knight Commander of the Indian Empire (K.C.I.E.) to him in 1931.<sup>44</sup> In continuing the relation of friendship the King visited Calcutta in the year 1934.

The ruling period of Jigme Wangchuck may be well described as a period of integration and consolidation of Bhutan. For the wellbeing of people he initiated legal and administrative reforms and also made modest efforts at modernization through establishment of schools and training of military personnel. In all his ventures the King was always assisted by his chamberlain, *Gongzim* Sonam Tobgay Dorji who had inherited his father’s post and was educated in the western style school in Darjeeling.<sup>45</sup> The King and his Chamberlain maintained some of the momentum given to education by the founding monarch. The schools and their curriculum at Haa and Bumthang that had been opened earlier, continued to function and provide education

to more children beside the heir apparent. The Bumthang School consisted of 15 boys. They were taught by Babu Phento, Babu Tashi and Babu Karchung on subjects such as from Hindi to Geometry. The evening classes consisted of lessons on military, taught by Jamder Chencho and Jamder Kado. The medium was Hindi.<sup>46</sup> In the 1930s Haa School was well ahead of its time. The Haa School continued under the supervision of Sonam Tobgey Dorji. Based in the old Haa *Dzong*, the school was co-educational and had boarding facilities and taught English and Dzongkha. Lopon Dhago, a teacher with a 1922 matriculation certificate from S.U.M.I., Kalimpong, was deputed by the King Jigme Wangchuck to the Haa School as the pioneer educator of the country. Lopon Paegey, the other teacher in the school, handled the *Dzongkha*. In the years that followed, the Haa School became a launching ground for many students who pursued higher studies in the hill station schools of India. Children from the western and central parts of the country also enrolled in the school heeding notifications sent to all the *dzongkhags*(districts) inviting students.<sup>47</sup> F. Williamson, Political Officer in Sikkim in his Report on Bhutan State for the year 1934-35 mentioned that, “The progress made by the Haa and Bumthang is reported to be satisfactory.”<sup>48</sup> Sonam Tobgey Dorji also looked after the children sent to India for receiving higher education.

Political Officer in Sikkim, Col. J.L. Weir, wrote to the Foreign Secretary, Government of India, in April 12, 1931 with a ‘note’ on Bhutan and its problems, reported that the Maharaja was an extremely intelligent and anxious man. He found His Highness could speak, read and write Hindi very well and had a very good grounding of English and he occasionally made some apt remarks in English. The Maharaja’s son was also reported to speak Hindi fluently. The ‘note’ informed the Government of India that education in Bhutan was inadequate. There was a school at Haa run by Raja Dorji, where some 20 boys received tuition in Hindi and English and another school for teaching Hindi was run by the Maharaja at Tongsa and in Bumthang during the summer.<sup>49</sup>

A few students of Bhutan who were receiving education in Kalimpong continued to proceed for further studies in other places and institutions in India. As proposed by the King, a few selected Bhutanese who had passed matriculation examination were imparted training in different technical institutions in India. Two of them were trained as teachers at the Training School at Bhagalpur, two as Sub-

Assistant Surgeons at the Campbell School of Calcutta, two as Tanners at the Harness and Saddlery Factory at Cownpore, three as Rangers at the Forest School 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. Besides these, the Bhutanese Government also sent two non-matriculate boys for military training at its own expense, who were later attached to the Gurkha Rifles at Shillong.<sup>50</sup> The king's focus was "conservation of forests, improvement of communications, suppression of the more extravagant forms of feudalism and adoption of a system of taxation that would provide revenue for reforms including a system of education."<sup>51</sup> But the paucity of funds was the main hindrance behind the development of the country. The King made request to Viceroy of India through the Political Officer in Sikkim on 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1936 for aid mentioning that, "A system of education is requisite to remove ignorance and overcome hurtful and expansive traditions. That requires money too. The beginning which was made on these lines some years ago has not succeeded to the extent we had fondly hoped because we lacked the means to develop it."<sup>52</sup> Finally in 1942, the British subsidy was doubled and increased to rupees two lakhs.<sup>53</sup> In that year thirty boys were selected for education in India: fifteen boys from Mangde and fifteen from Shar Dar Gyed.<sup>54</sup> Some of them went to Kalimpong to study medicines, agriculture, forestry and education. But out of the subsidy of 2,00,000, Rs 79,000 was provided to the monastic community, Rs 24,000 was earmarked for court officials, Rs 40,000 for palace administration and only Rs 57,000 for general state expense.<sup>55</sup> As such there was very little funds available for education or development purposes.

In 1948, the King sent a delegation to New Delhi to discuss Bhutan's relations with independent India, and ultimately a treaty was signed on 8<sup>th</sup> August, 1949 at Darjeeling. By which-<sup>56</sup>

- a) India enhanced the annual grant to Bhutan to Rs 5, 00, 000.
- b) India assured of not to intervene the internal administration of Bhutan.
- c) Bhutan agreed to be directed by the advice of the Government of India in regard to its external relations.

Education gained momentum from 1950 onwards as the King set up many schools throughout the country.<sup>57</sup> In 1952, at the last part of the reign of second King,

schools were started in the interior at Paro, Thimphu, Wangdiphodrang, Tongsa, Lhuntshi, Mongar and Tashigang and in southern Bhutan at Samchi, Chirang and Sarbhang. Some of these schools were run by the government and some by the local people. All the schools were Hindi medium primary schools where English was taught as a subject. After completion of primary level brighter students were sent to Kalimpong for secondary and higher education.<sup>58</sup> Thus Jigme Wangchuck, second hereditary King of Bhutan took Bhutan's dreams of modern education many steps further. The initiatives taken by the first hereditary King were not only continued but were complemented by the second hereditary King and his *Gongzim* Sonam Tobgey Dorji.

But still during the reign of second hereditary monarch, Bhutan followed a centralized feudal social and political order. Government bodies were scattered and isolated, administration was limited to a few officials. There were a small number of trained people. Students in the newly established schools were very few and there was in a broad sense the presence of almost universal illiteracy. Schools were unattended because teachers were not paid and had to find other means to supplement their income.<sup>59</sup> Compounding this was the distance the students had to travel from scattered villages miles and hours walk from schools. It must also be added that there were some amount of scepticism amongst parents in sending young children to acquire education that was alien and something untried and untested.

### **Role of third hereditary King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck in the development of modern education**

Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, son of Jigme Wangchuck was born in Tongsa in the year 1928. He received his initial schooling from the tutors of the royal family while attending school at Haa and Bumthang.<sup>60</sup> B.J. Gould, Political Officer in Sikkim, in his Annual Report on Bhutan state for the year 1942-43 states that, "The school at Bumthang is reported to be making good progress. Jigme, eldest son of the Maharaja is being taught English and is making good progress."<sup>61</sup> He was also taught with local literary skills and other Buddhist subjects like dialectics, metaphysics, drama, astrology, poetry and composition. Later he went to Kalimpong to study and then to England. Jigme Palden Dorji, the eldest son of Sonam Tobgey Dorji accompanied the prince. Perhaps, the second King could have seen the benefit in having him study with

his son, and this reflects the trust he had on Jigme Palden Dorji and his ancestors who served the monarchy with all their loyalties.<sup>62</sup>

After returning from England Jigme Dorji Wangchuck became the Paro Penlop in 1949. After his father's death in 1952 he ascended to the throne of Bhutan as the third hereditary King.<sup>63</sup> The King was fluent in Hindi and English and also spoke a little French. His Majesty was educated in a British manner and went on to visit many foreign countries, in particular Scotland and Switzerland where he got ideas of modernizing his kingdom and found inspiration to choose elements that were suitable for Bhutan. He was a monarch with clear vision. His rule may be considered as the beginning of a new epoch in the history of Bhutan. He made slavery and serfdom illegal and abolished capital punishment. Exposed to democratic systems in Europe and India he undertook one of the most historic reforms in the country by establishing the *Tshogdu* (National Assembly) and *Lodroc Tshogde* (Royal Advisory Council) in 1953 and 1965 respectively. In the year 1968 he established the Judiciary and also entrusted the National Assembly with the power to pass the vote of no confidence and remove the ministers and the king.<sup>64</sup> This was an unprecedented move.

*Gongzim* Sonam Tobgey Dorji died in 1953 and his son Jigme Palden Dorji became the Prime Minister and also the principal advisor to the Third King. Like his father *Gongzim* Sonam Tobgey Dorji and grandfather *Gongzim* Ugyen Dorji he also served the King and Bhutan with great fidelity.

In 1954, the King accompanied by a team of officials visited India and returned being fairly impressed by the progress India had made in the fields of agriculture, education, health etc. In 1958, the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru visited Bhutan at the invitation of the King. Nehru promised assistance to Bhutan in economic development and thus the first five year development plan was launched in 1961.<sup>65</sup> The King further opened the country to the world when Bhutan joined the Colombo Plan in 1962 and became a member of the United Nations Organization in 1971.<sup>66</sup>

In the growth of modern education although some initiatives had been taken by the first and second monarchs, the overall progress was very slow. Many of the Bhutanese parents loathed sending their children to schools and they came out with all kind of excuses. One of the most prominent excuses was being poor and not able to

provide rations for their children. The richer ones often bribed the government officials who travelled the villages to pick up the children for schools. According to the 1958's census, there were just 72 people in the entire kingdom, who could read and write English.<sup>67</sup>

Jigme Dorji Wangchuck felt that a nation could no longer prosper in the old traditional fashion.<sup>68</sup> He put emphasis on the development of secular education. Numerous development projects were initiated as part of the five year plans. Investments were made in health, education, communication, forestry, agriculture, animal husbandry, banking etc. With the beginning of the first five year development plan from 1961, third King commanded that due priority should be given to education. From the perspective of nation building, mass public education was recognized as an imperative. The 13<sup>th</sup> session of National Assembly passed a resolution to impart modern education to Bhutanese children. Another resolution in the 17<sup>th</sup> session decided to establish two high schools in the country.<sup>69</sup>

The Prime Minister Jigme Palden Dorji, a good diplomat and development strategist stood by the King in the process of developing country's education. The King decided to implement English as the medium of learning in the schools, not only because it was a convenient language but because it was already a lingua franca of the world.<sup>70</sup> Prime Minister asked the Jesuit Brothers at St Joseph's School, Darjeeling, in 1962 with a view to helping Bhutan in this regard. Consequently, Father William Mackey was invited to found English medium schools. In 1961 Department of Education was also established by the monarch.<sup>71</sup> New English medium textbooks were developed for the secular schools and these new course books replaced the Hindi textbooks in 1964.<sup>72</sup> Gradually existing Hindi medium schools were converted to English medium system. On the guidance of the King, Dawa Tshering, the then Director of Education travelled to Kerala in India in 1962 and brought many teachers to teach in the schools.<sup>73</sup> In 1961 the King decreed that *Dzongkha* would be the national language of Bhutan and attempt was made to modernize the national language. In 1971, the *Dzongkha* Division of the Department of Education was established in order to develop materials for instruction in *Dzongkha*. Textbooks and learning materials in *Dzongkha* were developed at a rapid pace for both primary and secondary level of education.<sup>74</sup> Prime Minister in playing a very positive role in

implementing modern education also brought the Italian Don Bosco fathers from Shillong to start the Kharbandi Technical School in Phuentsholing.<sup>75</sup>

The King himself was very keen in opening new schools. He travelled the whole country and took the necessary initiatives in establishing primary, junior high and high schools. Due to the King's farsightedness and modern vision a residential public school called 'The Thimphu Public School' was established at Thimphu in 1965 which provided boarding, lodging, tuitions, uniforms and books.<sup>76</sup> In its initial stages classes were from Pre-Primary to IV. First high school was established in Kanglung in Eastern Bhutan in 1968 named 'Sherubtse High School' where the King performed the opening ceremony of the High school. Delivering the inaugural address, King emphasized the importance of education in the development of Bhutan. He stated that "While religion alone had been adequate in the past to ensure the happiness and wellbeing of our people, education had become essential in the modern world if our independence was to be safeguarded and if the country was to achieve prosperity".<sup>77</sup> He stated that in this respect the students of the country had a vital role to play as the future of the country lay in their hands. He urged them to study as hard as possible in all fields so that they could become useful citizens of the country in the future. He congratulated Dantak, Indian Border Roads Organization, for building the school. He thanked Father William Mackey for his great contribution to education in Eastern Bhutan.<sup>78</sup> The Royal Technical School located at Kharbondi in Phuentsholing initially known as Don Bosco Technical school was founded on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 1965 at the initiative of the King. He visited the school on 6<sup>th</sup> January, 1969 and congratulated the staff for their dedicated service to the boys and country in the area of academic, technical and moral education. He advised the students to derive maximum benefits from the various skills imparted to them by the teachers.<sup>79</sup> The King must have realized the value of teacher education as students from the earlier schools in Bhutan who had completed at least class VIII were sent to Kalimpong to get basic training in teaching. As a result a Teacher Training Institute was founded at Samtse in Western Bhutan on 29<sup>th</sup> May, 1968, which was later renamed as National Institute of Education. The King personally graced the inaugural ceremony of the country's first Teacher Training Institute.<sup>80</sup> These are the some examples of King's endeavour and passion to modernize the country in the field of education.

In 1971, it was felt that the population being sparse and scattered in the Himalayan kingdom, attendance in the schools would not reach the requisite standards unless boarding facilities were provided for the students. Hence King and the Department of Education decided to gradually close down the primary schools in places where attendance was low, and to open instead junior schools and central schools at suitable places with boarding, library and science teaching facilities. In 1970-71 there were 81 primary schools, 15 junior schools, 4 high schools and 2 public schools.<sup>81</sup> Curriculum of modern education was secular consisting of subjects such as History, Geography, Mathematics, Sciences and Literature. The desire of the King was to create administrative and technical workforce needed for the improvement programmes.

Thus the third King is fittingly called the 'Father of Modern Bhutan'. He took the kingdom's modern education to a new level. It was during his reign that Bhutan's education saw dramatic changes the momentum for which can be attributed to his farsightedness. He realized the needs of the time and opened many schools for the purpose of teaching the skills, language and technology appropriate for the new development culture.<sup>82</sup> But the King passed away at an early age of 44 in 1972 and the people lost the architect of the country.

#### **Contribution of the 4<sup>th</sup> King Jigme Singye Wangchuck in the development of modern education system**

King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the fourth hereditary King of Bhutan was born in Thimphu on 11 November, 1955.<sup>83</sup> He started both his Buddhist and modern education at the age of seven. For some period he received his early education at St. Joseph School, Darjeeling. In 1965, he was sent abroad to school first at 'Summerfield' in Hastings and later to 'Heather Down' at Ascot in the United Kingdom.<sup>84</sup> His schooling in the United Kingdom was one of the best times for him that he later recounted to his schoolmate Gregson, "Those four years spent studying in England were a tremendous experience for me. I have very happy memories of those times, playing football and rugby."<sup>85</sup> The stint abroad also helped the prince in broadening his horizon and learning the importance of development.

King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck wished to see his royal son study at home, but the Queen went all her way to make him study at least some years in the U.K. His

Majesty often expressed, “the modern education is useful only if it do not override the traditional values and ideals that Jigme gain at home”.<sup>86</sup> The King used to advise the prince “You must go abroad for studies, but it is also important that you do not neglect what you have learned at home. Eventually, the way you serve the people will be important”.<sup>87</sup> The third King also said, “It is not just what one can learn in the school, but how one can think and act logically. One is otherwise as useless as being uneducated”.<sup>88</sup> The prince returned home from his school in the U.K. on 24<sup>th</sup> July, 1969. He continued his studies in Tashichodzong. In 1970, the young prince and twelve boys moved to Ugyen Wangchuck Academy at Paro, which was established in that year for the prince to continue the next stage of formal education.<sup>89</sup> Mr. Stuart Philby, taught them English and Geography, Mr. Ganga Ram taught them Mathematics and Sciences and Lam Pamela taught them *Dzongkha* language. A retired Dronyer Jangtu trained them in social and cultural etiquettes. Contrary to the syllabus in schools abroad, this school in the country offered the prince with the blend of traditional and modern curriculum and “this was his most formative period in learning the craft of leadership, as it was at this time that the crown prince acquired much knowledge from his beloved father”.<sup>90</sup> The crown prince accompanied his father, the King, on his visits around the country, to arrive at a wholesome and diversified education.

On May, 1972 the prince became the Tongsa *Penlop* and in July succeeded his father although he was formally crowned only on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1974.<sup>91</sup> He was an able statesman. In all the five year plans during his tenure, Bhutan’s development in various spheres under his leadership was unprecedented. He wished to follow the policies of his father but ultimately he surpassed the achievement of his father and ushered Bhutan into a golden age. In every sphere of social, cultural, legal, environmental, economic and political development, the achievements under his leadership has been unparalleled.<sup>92</sup>

In December 1974, the King made his first ‘state visit’ to India, accompanied by his sister, Ashi Dechen Wangmo Wangchuck. During the course of this visit, the King discussed the plans for economic development for Bhutan with various ministries in India.<sup>93</sup> This visit strengthened the existing bilateral relations between the two countries.

In 1981 the King announced his long term dream of the kingdom becoming a full-fledged democracy with the power devolving to the people to enable them to actively participate in the governance of the kingdom. The country was divided into 20 districts and 196 blocks.<sup>94</sup> The institution of District (*Dzongkhag*) Development Committee in 1981 and Block (*Geowg*) Development Committee in 1991 laid the foundation of decentralization process.<sup>95</sup> In 1982 the Royal Civil Service Commission was constituted which was responsible for appointments, transfer, promotion and discipline of civil servants of the kingdom.<sup>96</sup> His Majesty also put into motion a comprehensive set of legislations and amendments to the existing laws to cater to the changing socio economic conditions in the country.<sup>97</sup>

This advanced national policy of the fourth King had an immense impact on the development of modern education of the country. Decentralization came to national prominence in the 1990's. Due to decentralization process power and task of decision making, choice of development actions, plan and prioritization of needs increasingly fell on the shoulders of the people, even on students had a say in educational policies. The local leaders could plan and decide on the nature and the number of schools they liked in their locality. Educational leaders of different levels found space to discuss issues of common concerns.<sup>98</sup>

The first National Education Policy was completed and approved in 1976, which was very brief. The revised education policy, a much more detailed document was approved by the Cabinet towards the end of 1985. It was the King who commanded that the Education Policy needed to be revised to meet the needs of changing times.

Throughout the reign of the 4<sup>th</sup> King, the social sector received great attention from the government, particularly the education sector. In order to establish a firm base in the spheres of education emphasis was added in the Third Five Year Plan. But still at the culmination of the Third Five Year Plan in 1976, the literacy rate was low not because the government did not set up adequate number of schools but because the illiterate parents, who faced labour shortage at homes, were unwilling to send their children to study. The King directed *Dzongkhag* officials to travel into rural areas and encourage the villagers to send their children to schools: "Our people are illiterate and they will not know the importance of providing education for their children. It is the

sacred responsibility of the government officials to go to them and explain the benefits of education”.<sup>99</sup>

In fact some of the communities were located far away from the schools, making it difficult for many parents to provide the logistic needs for their children. The government responded by providing them free boarding facilities and inviting the international organizations like WFP and UNICEF to provide mid day meals and to support water and sanitation schemes.<sup>100</sup>

Thus during the time of the 4<sup>th</sup> King the education system was strengthened with greater emphasis on quality rather than quantity. In fact, the heavy investments made on education sector repaid the country well. From what was a bleak situation in the 1970's, the education status became well advanced during the nineties. The period between 1980's and 1990's can be counted as a stage of evolvement of the Bhutanese Education system. The results are evident in the students returning after higher studies taking important decisions regarding education policies, plans and programs. During the nineties the enrolment rate went to up high and parents began to realize the value of education. They no longer bribed the educationists to spare their children from going to schools like those of the period of 60's and 70's. It had been recorded that “In 1990 there were 156 primary schools with a total enrolment of 48,051 students (29582 boys and 18469 girls). In addition, there were 46 community schools known as extended classrooms (ECRs) with an enrolment of 3,978 students (2460 boys and 1518 girls). In 1990, there were 21 junior schools and 10 high schools with enrolment of 11517 and 4467 students respectively”.<sup>101</sup> The qualifying level was Indian Certificate of Secondary Education(ICSE) for class X and Indian School Certificate(ISC) for class XII. Higher education was imparted in the Sherubtse College, which had an enrolment of 345 students in 1990; the college was affiliated to Delhi university.<sup>102</sup> Establishment of a university was in the planning stage. The National Institute of Education at Samchi catered for higher education like Post Graduate Certificate in Education and had an enrolment of 174 students.<sup>103</sup> There was a Teacher Training College at Paro and in 1990 with an enrolment of 59 students.<sup>104</sup> Most of the students in schools and college lived in hostel for obvious reasons. They were provided with free boarding and lodging at government expense. The medium of learning was English while teaching of *Dzongkha*, the national language was actively promoted. Every year a number of students were sent abroad for higher education for

which bulk of the expenses were met by the government. Since there was a scarcity of educated and trained manpower in every field, unemployment amongst the educated lot was unheard of. During the ruling period of Jigme Singye Wangchuck, as an outcome of modern education system, the pattern of occupational employment underwent a corresponding change. There were some institutions for technical and vocational training where students trained for diploma courses. Thus due to the initiative of the King the secular education was spread on modern lines and gradually Bhutan became self reliant.

The King had special concerns for the teachers and students. He used to visit schools and talk to them. For example, when meeting with the students of Zhemgang Central School in 1977, he enquired about their problems and told them that the government was trying hard to provide them a free education without allowing the financial constraints to come as hurdle to meeting the education sector's goals.<sup>105</sup> In the year 1987 he faced with the staff and trainees of the National Institute of Education, Samtse. He told them that "the quality and standard of teaching is of permanent importance as these factors will determine the quality and standard of students. It is teachers who will play a key role in moulding our younger generations into disciplined, dedicated and loyal Bhutanese citizens".<sup>106</sup> The King met with a group of 15 heads of educational institutions on February 29, 1988, and expressed that it had become imperative to utilize country's educational institutions to develop loyal and dedicated Bhutanese citizens to serve the country faithfully and ensure its future well being. He also conveyed his gratitude to the committed and able non-nationals who had served as heads of the schools and institutions. In view of the great importance attached to the teaching cadre, he said, "The Royal Government has decided to enhance the prestige and status of teachers and to increase their benefits and facilities. While the previous starting grade for a teacher was grade 17, the new starting grade will be grade 11. Where it was previously possible for a teacher to rise up to grade 5, teachers will now be able to rise up to grade 2."<sup>107</sup> In the meeting he also pointed out the significance of the role of women in Bhutan's development process. He said the eight lady teachers of the group that he had special expectations from them because their success as heads of institutions would provide an inspiring example to Bhutanese women not only in teaching profession but also in all other walks of life. He said, "In order to fulfill our national aspirations and successfully

implement our developmental objectives it is of paramount importance to harness the active participation of women who comprise 49 percent of country's population.”<sup>108</sup>

In 1989 the King made a tour of seven Dzongkhags- Tongsa, Bumthung, Lhuntshi, Mongar, Pemagatshal, Tashigang and Samdrupjongkhar. He met with the teachers and students of various schools and talked with them about the objective of sixth five year plan. Regarding the problems faced by the education system in Bhutan, the King told that the country suffered “from the shortage of qualified teachers and instructors and the need to better management and administration”.<sup>109</sup> During his meeting with the students and lecturers of the Sherubtse college, he expressed that the Royal Government was giving a very high priority for developing Sherubtse into an institution that would be equal of the finest colleges in the world. His Majesty expressed the view that “Sherubtse College should not merely be a place for students to obtain certificates and degrees. It must become an institution that will also give the final touches to the building of dedicated citizens. To this end the courses in the college should have direct relevance to our national goals and objectives”.<sup>110</sup> The king also visited the Khaling Blind school, he inspected all the classrooms and spoke to the students, encouraging them to work hard and to fully utilize the opportunities provided by the school to make them more self reliant and independent. He also visited the Royal Bhutan Polytechnic in Deothang and declared to spend Nu 40 million to re-equip the institution with proper training facilities. The king said “The technical cadre has a very important role to play in nation building for they will be the backbone of the country's modernization process”.<sup>111</sup>

In all his meetings in schools and institutions, he repeatedly pointed out to the students that “the future of the nation lies in the hands of our younger generations. It is therefore crucial that they live up to our high expectations and ensure the continued wellbeing and security of our nation. To this end it is our education system that has vital role of moulding our younger generations into loyal and dedicated citizens.”<sup>112</sup> He stressed that even the best possible education was insufficient devoid of appreciation and understanding of the Bhutanese values. He stressed that students “...must become fully aware of our national goals and aspirations and take keen interest in the policies and programs of the Royal government”.<sup>113</sup> Again during his tour in Tongsa in May, 1991, the King expressed his deep concern over the relatively poor educational facilities there and pointed out that the *dzonkhag* had the third lowest

enrolment rates in the whole country. People representatives in the district reported him that Tongsa urgently needed a full-fledged high school to augment the existing junior school. The King assured that in the seventh five year plan Royal Government had plans to improve educational establishments of the whole country.<sup>114</sup> During the royal tour to Paro Dzongkhag in July 1991 the King visited Paro High School, Shaba Junior High School, Teacher Training College and Wochu Primary School and said that education sector has given more importance in the seventh five year plan with the expectation that “every educated Bhutanese will serve the nation and contribute towards its development. While it was not difficult to recruit trained people and professionals from outside, it was far more important for Bhutanese citizens themselves to strive to achieve a high standard of education and professionalism to serve their country”.<sup>115</sup> In April 1992 he and the Queens visited schools and institutions in Trashigang Dzongkhag such as Sherubtse College, Trashigang Junior High School, Jigme Sherubling High school, the primary school, the Blind School in Khaling and Wamrong High School, Shaba Junior High School and spoke to the students and the staff and enquired about their problems.<sup>116</sup>

The King met with the students of Simtokha Rigshung, the centre of traditional learning in November, 1993 and expressed his satisfaction with the overall interest which the Simtokha students had shown in the well being and future of the kingdom. He announced that Simtokha Rigshung would be upgraded to a junior college in 1994. He also instructed the Education Department to take up the construction of a new dormitory, a new playground and sports facilities for the school. He said to the students that it was most important for every one of them to build his or her own capability by taking advantage of the facilities and opportunities which were given to them and that they must serve the country with loyalty and dedication and contribute towards strengthening its rich cultural and national heritage.<sup>117</sup> In the first week of December 1993 the King and the queens met with the students of Yangchenphug High School and Motithang High School in Thimphu and announced that the education budget in the Seventh Plan had been increased by about 123 percent from the Sixth Plan.<sup>118</sup> The King said that Bhutan’s youth must work hard and strive to achieve the academic excellence. For admission into class XI and XII, the King explained the Education Department’s limitations and the shortage of seats, with Sherubtse College and Yangchenphug High School being the only institutes admitting

students into class XI and XII, but the problem would be alleviated with the opening of four more junior colleges by July, 1994. He also explained that the Royal Government had always encouraged the establishment of private schools. While there were only six private schools then, he said that he hoped for more private schools to be established. Besides the fact that good private schools would create a healthy competition with the government schools, they would also provide an alternative for all the students who were being sent outside the country. The King expressed that “it is more important for the students today to continue with their studies and strive to their academic and professional qualifications. Bhutan needed its citizens to serve in all sectors of growth and it is therefore important for the students today to strengthen their capability in professions and services. The Royal Government had been a parent to every Bhutanese child, providing free education and looking at their welfare and careers”.<sup>119</sup> Even during the execution of seventh five year plan the King granted a special fund of Nu 200,000 to two Sanskrit *Pathsalas* of Sarpang *dzongkhag* 1996.<sup>120</sup> He explained that the special grants should be used to improve the institutions and strengthen the teaching of Sanskrit for the benefit of the masses in the district. The King also commanded that a special grant of Nu. 1.00 million would be allocated to develop the *pathsalas* in southern Bhutan and to strengthen Sanskrit education.

Of the numerous factors one that pushed the growth and development of education, was the King’s visits to schools which acted as ethical support to the students and the teachers and also on the entire education sector. He always tried to mix with the students and understand their needs. In the words of Bikrama Jit Hasrat he was a ‘shrewd statesman with qualities both of head and heart---.’<sup>121</sup>

The fourth King’s vision of education is reflected by the activities done by him during his 34 years of his reign. Actually in the 1980’s he had propounded a theory of Gross National Happiness which values sustainability over materialism. Education sector under his direction also got a new light, which approaches for sustainable development ensuring balancing modernity with tradition. This was the pillar of the fourth King’s success in modernizing the country. According to him Gross National Happiness is more valuable than Gross National Product. In this theory of happiness propounds the satisfaction in non material needs and in emotional and spiritual growth. So we see that the thrust for the speedy development in education was initiated by the fourth King by offering a tribute to the existing

tradition. His policy of sustainable development made education to achieve laudable progress. So Jigme Singye Wangchuck's reign saw a golden era for education. During his reign, hundreds of schools took the light of learning to all corners of the country. Under his proper guidance, education was taken to remote villages by hundreds of teachers, who were mostly Bhutanese.

Thus the hereditary monarchs ushered a new era of modern education in Bhutan. But if we examine meticulously the ideas and actions of first four hereditary kings of modern Bhutan, we will find differences from first to second king, second to third and the last. The difference was connected with time. It was the specific time and accompanying conditions which actually shaped the outlook of the successive kings. For examples, the first King was definitely a progressive ruler from the point of view of his ruling period. He took a cautious path in ushering modern education because he felt that traditional and conservative section of the masses may not support his gesture or an overactive approach. Obviously his approach to modern education was a guarded one. Apart from this, the financial position and infrastructural condition was not such that he could accelerate the progress of modern education. Nevertheless, the first monarch had laid the beginning of modern education. Naturally, the second King got almost a prepared field to chart his plan. Despite the prepared field to launch his educational programme he had also inherited the fragile economy of his predecessor. During the last decade of his reign the wind was changing everywhere and Bhutan could not be a mere spectator to the waves of changes. Apart from this, the international situation had changed with India's independence in 1947, and with a friendly new nation the King found a golden opportunity to modernize the system of education by tapping the generosity of a friendly neighbour. The Indo-Bhutan treaty of 1949 increased India's annual subsidy to Bhutan to rupees 5 lakhs which ensured the process of progress of the country including education. The real architect of modern education was the third King. His eagerness, the contemporary situation, and his good relation with India gave him opportunity to spread modern education and much of the development must be credited to him. Similarly, the fourth King, a product of western education, fully understood the writings on the wall. He felt that Bhutan could not modernize herself unless she spread rapidly the modern system of education in every nook and corner of the country. He also felt that the regional disparity of education due to communication

and other reasons should be removed as far as possible. The chariot of modern education reached a major milestone, as far as my study period is concerned, in the 4<sup>th</sup> King's reign which is reflected in the ultimate symbol of Bhutan's achievement in education when the Royal University of Bhutan was founded in 2003.

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## Chapter 5

### Initiation of Modern Education in the First Five Year Development Plan

#### First Five Year Plan (1961-62 to 1965-66)

Time based planning of centralized and integrated national economic and development programme, or the Five Year Plans, commenced rather late in Bhutan. The Soviet Union had introduced it in the late 1920s and India in 1951. When the winds of changes sweeping the world nudged Bhutan to open its doors, initially through introduction of modern education and a bit of limited diplomacy, it realized that the national infrastructure was abysmally poor. When schools were set up hostels were lacking and when hostels were put in place the roads were wanting and when even this, there was a chronic shortage of teaching staff. Finally, local citizens were wary of sending their children to these distant schools but when the students were actually sent the government was faced with the problems of text books, libraries, laboratories, scope for further education etc. The country's economy was characterized by severe degree of isolation. It was deemed necessary to have some sort of planning process for a paced progress to come out of the severe isolation and to catch up with a modern world. Before the advent of planned development, the social amenities like education, medical and public health were meager. So a Five Year Plan was proposed base on the Indian Five Year Plans.

Till the 1950s modern education facilities were available to a small section of the country. Families living near *dzongs* and monasteries could send their sons for education<sup>1</sup> where the concentration was to learn not only reading and writing but also in poetry, ethics and morality. However, for the vast masses, monastic or modern education was either nonexistent or it was a lavishness that infringed the family survival strategies. The net result was that very few Bhutanese were literate and most of them were men.<sup>2</sup>

The First Five Year Development Plan(henceforth FYP), formulated under the initiative of Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, the third King of Bhutan, in consultation with the Planning Commission, India, came into operation 1961 with an outlay of Rs./Nu. 1747 lakhs.<sup>3</sup> It addressed to creating the country's basic infrastructural facilities like roads, power, communication system, transport, agriculture and animal husbandry.<sup>4</sup>

Social amenities like education, medical and public health, though provided with generous funding and Departments, were deemed of lesser importance. Creation of roads (Nu/R620 lakhs) far outweighed education (Nu/Rs 100 lakhs) in terms of priority. Despite, education coming second to roads, it was considered an important requisite to the Plan but since the necessary machinery for any form of development programme was missing, the Development Wing Headquarters was created with a Secretary General. Directorates for Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Health, Publicity, and Education were also formed.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, during the period of the Plan, the foundations of Bhutan's economy were firmly laid and significant progress was achieved in all directions including education. With the commencement of the First FYP the Government felt the shortage of manpower as the main constraint for country's development.<sup>6</sup> So, the emphasis was mainly given to develop the administrative workforce and technicians to meet the requirements of the advancement policies. The urgency for the provision of universal education was something to come decades later. So the early years of the Plan period was utilized in founding the Directorate and schools in the interior and also creating the model for the upcoming education system in the country. In 1961, about 140 Bhutanese students were getting education in India, 100 with scholarships and 40 at their own expenses.

Table 5.1: The staff for the Directorate of Education according to the First FYP

1	Director of Education-----1
2	Deputy Director of education-----1
3	Assistant Director of Education (Kalimpong)-----1
4	Sub- Inspectors of School-----4
5	Liaison Officers for school supplies-----3
6	Clerical staff and Hostel Superintendent (Kalimpong Hostel)-----14
7	Drivers-----4
8	Class IV Staff-----8

(Source-[www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/upload/2011/04/2nd.FYP.pdf](http://www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/upload/2011/04/2nd.FYP.pdf))

Of the three Liaison Officers one was accountable for the allocation of UNICEF milk to the schools. The Assistant Director was staffed by a small team at Kalimpong to take care of the students in schools and colleges in India and also to run a hostel for 80 students studying there. Under the instruction of the third King, a residential public school on the same pattern as in Public Schools in India and abroad was started in Thimphu on 01.03.65.<sup>7</sup> A technical school was started during the First

Plan at Kharbandi in Phuentsholing for giving technical training in tailoring, mechanics, carpentry and basic automobile engineering. A new monastic school had also been established in Thimphu namely Rigney Monastery School which was intended to preserve the cultural heritage of the country and was also to provide Bhutanese language teachers required for the schools. Construction of buildings for the Teachers' Training Institute also began during the end of the First Plan at Samtse in Eastern Bhutan. Training for Bhutanese nationals under different schemes such as wireless, postal, mechanical sections etc were also arranged. The costs on the maintenance of the schools during the period stood at Rs./Nu. 1,05,99,849.<sup>8</sup>

In the final year of the Plan period it was realized that the attendance in primary schools in the interior had been low due to lack of population density and inadequate communications. The Plan also faced the challenge of not just the shortage of suitable teachers but also students as it was discovered that in many schools, there were very few students in classes IV and above. The difficult surface communication had come in the way of student enrollment and it also prohibited sufficient supervision by the directing staff. In view of the troubles faced, stress was directed on training of suitable personnel for managing properly the existing facilities rather than on mass education.

Although one would have expected Bhutan rush forward to open up as many schools as possible the country took up a more pragmatic programme of laying the foundations to create "the necessary machinery for carrying out the development programme." The hilly terrains, scattered population, virtual non-existence of surface, wired or wireless communication and most of all the paucity of trained teaching staff posed major hurdles in bringing about concrete and sustainable results. In view of the prevailing situation one has to conclude that the First FYP was successful. It was not a major success in setting up numerous teaching facilities, roads, hospitals etc but it succeeded in paving the path in that direction, which was the main goal set by the planners. For example, before the beginning of the FYP only the primary schooling system was available in the whole country, but within the five years of the Plan period some junior high schools, one public school with boarding facilities and one technical school was established. So in spite of many hurdles it was a grand success. The King and the country were satisfied and for a continued progress towards modernization and economic development the Second FYP was started in 1966.

According to the FYP report, there were in all 83 primary and 20 Junior High Schools with about 7000 students and 375 teachers.<sup>9</sup> The figures given do not tally with the research undertaken. It was not possible to account for 83 primary schools and that could be possibly because of lost data as well as the remoteness of the institutions. Nonetheless, the junior high schools were in accessible areas and my total does not add to that sum. This anomaly is underscored by the report of the Second FYP where it states there were only 16 junior high schools in the beginning of the Plan period, so instead of adding schools 4 of them had mysteriously disappeared.

Below is a synopsis of schools in different districts. It must be noted that many places did not have names in the past and after districts (*dzongkhags*) were carved out some were bifurcated to form newer districts. Many places were transliterated and so the older names like Tashigang became Trashigang etc. I have attempted to list the schools according to the districts present today and sticking to the official names of districts, towns and villages. The names of schools are given as they were during the referred Plan periods.

### **Primary Schools**

#### *Bumthang Dzongkhag*

##### 1. Ura Primary School

This school situated in Ura Gewog in the east of Bumthung *Dzongkhag*, located on a beautiful wide valley along with a good educational facilities with boarding facilities, was founded in 1961.<sup>10</sup> The founding head teacher was Mr. Jo-Phajo from Tang village, Bumthung who began the work of its progress. He was succeeded by Lopol G. Tenzin.

##### 2. Tang Primary School

The school, situated at Tang *Gewog* was built in 1965 with a strength of 11 students and 2 teachers. Mr. Dorji, the *gup* (village administrative head) and Lyenpo Dawa Tshering, the then Director of Education, took the initiative in establishing this school.<sup>11</sup> The school has been a beneficiary of WFP facilities ever since its inception.

##### 3. Jakar high School

Jakar Primary School was situated in Choekhor *Gewog* and one of the oldest schools. It was mobile court school during the time of the first King. Later it took the

shape of a formal school. The school was inaugurated by the Foreign Minister Lyonpo Dawa Tshering, on 10 April 1960 as Bumthung Government Secondary School.<sup>12</sup> Dasho Karma Gaylek, the first head teacher was assisted by three teachers from India. There were 101 students but no hostel facilities and they camped outside the school in small huts built by their parents. The first hostel was established as a two-storied building in 1965. After Dasho Karma Gaylek, Kuenzang Tshering became the head teacher in 1961 who continued till 1962 and then M. G. Kaimal from India became the head teacher who continued up to the end of the First FYP period.

### *Chhukha Dzongkhag*

#### 1. Bongo Primary School

The school under the Bongo *Gewog*, founded by Ap Phub Dorji in the year 1952, was named Gedencholing School with 58 students and three teachers. The school-in-charge was Pemba Tshering who supervised the existing classes from Pre-Primary to Class III. When it was renamed in 1964 as Bongo Primary School, it had then strength of 78 students and 2 teachers.<sup>13</sup>

#### 2. Chapcha Primary School

The school situated at the Chapcha, was established by the third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck in 1960 under the headmastership of Mr. Babu, an Indian.<sup>14</sup> The medium of learning in the beginning was Hindi and Choekey and later English was introduced.

#### 3. Sinchula Primary School

Sinchula carries great importance as the place of signing of the famous Sinchula Treaty between the British Govt. of India and Bhutan in 1865. This is one of the oldest schools under Chhukha Dzongkhag which Jang Bir Rai, the then Gup of the village, and an elderly person Kharka Singh Rai took the initiative to establish in 1960. It commenced with 27 students and Dambar Bahadur Chhetri as the head teacher.<sup>15</sup> The school gave importance not only in academic activities but also in games and sports, quiz, literary activities etc.

#### 4. Dungna Primary School

This school situated in Dungna *Gewog*, four days walk from Phuentsholing was founded in 1965 with 40 students and 2 teachers.<sup>16</sup> In the beginning the school was under Paro *Dzongkhag* but later it was included in Chhukha *Dzongkhag*.

#### 5. Darla Lower Secondary School

This school began as Tala Primary School in 1950s is situated in the Darla valley under Phuentsholing. Such a need in the area was first felt by Mr. Karna Bahadur Chhetri, the then *gup* (village administrative head) of the Tala *Gewog* and supported by local community members. It started as community school under Mr. Laxmi Prasad Sharma. Mr. N. K. Sharma, an ex student of the school who later became a teacher of the same school remembers the days of his schooling in 1950s when there were twenty students under single teacher Mr. L. P. Sharma who taught them in a thatched hut. According to him, “There was no electricity, nor telephone. The favourable way of communication was on horse. ... Now how can I measure the changes that have taken place?”<sup>17</sup> School building was constructed during the First FYP period.

#### 6. Phuentsholing Junior High School

It is located close to Indo-Bhutan border at Jaigaon, besides the Amochu River. There was initially a big primary school in Phuentsholing started in 1960's under the headship of Mr. K. D. Tshering.<sup>18</sup> Gradually the number of students and teaching staff increased as it was located in a populated area.

### Dagana *Dzongkhag*

#### 1. Daga Primary School

This school is situated on the border between the *gewogs* of Tseza and Kana, established in 1962 at the initiative of the third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck with 100 students, four teachers and Lopen Tsheltrim as the head teacher.<sup>19</sup>

#### 2. Drujeygang Primary School

This school, located on a hilltop within Durjeygang *Gewog* was founded in 1962 as a private school headed by language teacher Tshampa Druba who ran it on a monastic system.<sup>20</sup> The school was nationalized at the end of the First FYP when western style of education was introduced.

Gasa *Dzongkhag*-It was a part of the Punakha Dzongkhag and in 1992 was created as a new district, so all the schools were under Punakha Dzongkhag.

#### 1. Gasa Primary School

This school, established in 1961, was located on the top of a hillock under Khatoe *Gewog*. It was the first school in the *dzongkhag* and the first head teacher was P. K. Bal from Kalimpong was assisted by two other teachers, Ms. Pelden and Azha Penjor and it started with 50 students.<sup>21</sup>

### Lhuntse *Dzongkhag*

#### 1. Zangkhar Primary School

The school, situated on the foothills of Yabi village under Jarey *Gewog*, is amongst the oldest schools in the *dzongkhag*. Its foundation began in 1960 and completed in 1962 but for the three years English medium was not introduced due to teacher shortage and that was remedied in 1965 when Mr. Galley Tshering from Trongsa joined.<sup>22</sup>

#### 2. Dungkhar Primary School

The school located in a beautiful valley under Kurtoe *Gewog* unfortunately has no specific record of its founding but it may be surmised to have been in the late sixties and that it was a mobile school: sometimes housed in a *lhakhang*(temple), sometimes in a private residence.<sup>23</sup>

#### 3. Tangmachu Primary School

This school in Tangmachu village was established mainly through the initiative of the village *gup* as the nearest school in Lhuntse was one day walk. The villagers constructed the school which started with lower kindergarten class in 1965 under the headship of Mr. Dendup Tshering with students from 10 adjacent villages.<sup>24</sup>

### Mongar *Dzongkhag*

#### 1. Wirlingla Primary School

In 1961 the first school for the two *gewogs*- Silambi and Gongdue was founded in midway between the two at a place called Wirlingla. Infrastructural materials for the building came from the government while construction was done by the local people. It commenced with a locally appointed teacher Mr. Norbu as the

head teacher from whom Bajay, the first departmental appointed head teacher took over the charge in 1964.<sup>25</sup>

## 2. Kengkhar Primary School

This boarding school is in a remote area of the *dzonkhag* under Kengkhar *Gewog*, a three days journey from *dzongkhag* head quarter. It was established in 1963 with 108 students, of whom 8 were girls.<sup>26</sup> Mr. Gogotal Chandra Gupta Sharma, an Indian was the first head teacher who was continuing at the end of the First FYP.

## 3. Yadi Primary School

This school is located within Chaskar *Gewog* and was started by the people of the *gewog* in 1963 with 80 students in the rolls. Mr. Dorjang was the first head teacher and also supported by two other teachers.<sup>27</sup>

## Paro *Dzongkhag*

### 1. Rinpung Primary School

This school was established in early 1960s<sup>28</sup> but no record is there of its early stage.

### 2. Dobji Primary School

This boarding school was started in 1966 catering to many children from far-flung villages as boarders.<sup>29</sup>

### 3. Bitekha Primary School

This school is situated in Chuzom *Gewog*, approximately 75 km far away from Paro. It was established in 1962 under order of the third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. In the beginning there were 20 students and one teacher, Tsip Rinchen Gyaltshen who continued till 1963 and then Jai Singh, an Indian became the head teacher who continued till 1966.<sup>30</sup>

## Pemagatshel *Dzongkhag*

### 1. Yurung Lower Secondary School

This school was founded in Shumar *Gewog* by the order of the third King. Construction began in 1957 and was completed in 1959 and academic session started in that same year with 138 students and three teachers- Mr. Tshewang Norbu as the teacher-in-charge, Mr. Sherub and *Dzongkha* Language teacher Mr. Dorji Wangchuk. Students stayed in their own self constructed little sheds until five years later when a hostel was built. For the first five years Hindi and *Choekey* were the medium of

learning and were replaced by English 1964. Mr. G. M. Mukerjee, an Indian, became the head teacher in 1964 and he was continuing in 1966.<sup>31</sup>

## 2. Shumar Primary School

This was the first school in the Mongar *Dzongkhag*(Shumar *Gewog*) founded in 1960. Mr. Chubnupal Bose, an Indian lead the way in establishing the school. In 1966, he was followed by Mr. Basudev Rokha who started with two sections of infant classes consisting of 120 students.<sup>32</sup>

## Punakha Dzongkhag

### 2. Logodama Primary School

Founded in the early 1950's it was the first school in Punakha *Dzongkhag*, and was initially known as Punakha School. In the beginning there was no permanent structure of the school and classes were conducted in a temporary shed. The medium of learning was Hindi and *Dzongkha* and teaching based on Indian curriculum.<sup>33</sup> The early records of the school were untraceable.

### 2. Kabesa Lower Secondary School

It was in 1966 that this school came up as a community school with 30-35 students, one head teacher and one *Dzongkha* language teacher. But the school infrastructure was very poor.<sup>34</sup>

## Samdrupjongkhar Dzongkhag

### 1. Neoli Primary School

This is the oldest primary school in the *dzongkhag* and was established in 1957. It was started at a place called Nainital by Mr. J.B Pradhan whose son, Om Pradhan, was to later become Minister for Trade. As the head teacher was commonly known as 'Neoli Babu', the school was took the name of Neoli Primary School.<sup>35</sup> At the ending of the First FYP one teacher from Kalimpong named Mr. Lepcha joined the school

### 2. Deothang Primary School

This school is located on the Trashigang-Samdrupjongkhar highway and 18 km from the *dzongkhag* headquarters. It started in 1962 with classes from Pre-Primary to V. Ms Sonam Choden was the first head teacher from 1962 to 1963, succeeded by

Mr. Gupta who continued from 1964 to 1965 and Mr. Rigzang Wangdi was the head teacher in the year 1966.<sup>36</sup> Besides educational activities students also took active part in sports and entertainment programme.<sup>37</sup>

### 3. Dechheling Primary School

This school was established in 1964 and admitted children in Pre-Primary to class VI with Mr. Peshar, the then *gup* of Dechheling *Gewog*, having a pivotal role in its foundation. The required land for the building was donated by some Mr. Tenzin Wangchuck. Mr. Basnet, an Indian served as the head teacher from the year of establishment and continued till the end of the First FYP.<sup>38</sup>

### 4. Martshala Primary School

Founded in 1964 this school was the centre of learning of 12 villages under Martshala *Gewog*. This *gewog* was then under Trashigang *Dzongkhag*. The school was started by some Lupon Chompa. Being only educated person in that area, he took the responsibility of establishing the school.<sup>39</sup>

## Samtse *Dzongkhag*

### 1. Chargharey Primary school

The people of the Chargharey village had started a school in 1947. One Nar Bahadur Pradhan spared one room of his house to run the school. The villagers had invited Mr. C. M. Rai from Phuentsholing to teach in the school, who was known as Guru Babu to the villagers. The school was taken over by the government in 1951. Mr. K.S. Gopinathan Nair was the head teacher at the ending of the First FYP.<sup>40</sup>

### 2. Denchukha Primary School

It was founded in 1949 and was a private school in the rest house of some Mr. Gaj Raj Kazi and head teacher was Mr. Tshering Lepcha. In the year 1955 the school had to close down for five years as a consequence a heavy flooding. It was reestablished in 1960 by the government which eventually took over the management in 1965. In the same year one Indian Mr. M.M. Devesia became the head teacher while Mr. Lepcha continued teaching also. Records show Devesia was still working till the end of the First FYP.<sup>41</sup>

### 3. Bara Primary school

This was founded in 1954 as a private school. It was started with the initiative of the elderly people of the village and the donation of a paddy field, for fund raising, by Ms Nar Maya Gurung. The school started with classes from Pre-Primary to IV and Mr. K. B. Gurung appointed as the head teacher. In 1965 the government approved and took over the school.<sup>42</sup>

### 4. Dorokha Primary School

This school is a three day journey from Samtse *Dzonghag* headquarters. The school was started in 1955 with G. S. Namchu as the head teacher. In the first year there were only 12 students and two classes but later the number of students increased and classes were upgraded to V. Mr. Namchu continued as the head teacher till the culmination of the First FYP and greatly contributed to its development. The school also provided for a number of co-curricular activities.<sup>43</sup>

### 5. Nainital Primary School

This school was established by the people of Nainital in 1951 in a thatched hut. Mr. B. K. Thapa became the first teacher with only 12 children. He served for six years being replaced by Mr. Bhandari Chhetri for one year and when he left in 1958 Mr. B. Thapa became the head teacher. Till 1964 the school ran privately and parents of the children paid the teachers' salary and when government took the responsibility community benefitted a lot.<sup>44</sup>

### 6. Samtse Primary School

Third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck founded the Samtse Primary school in the year 1957. It commenced as a small structure accommodating three classes and 109 students. Mr. Sada was the first head teacher and at the end of the First FYP the school had developed into one of the finest institutes in the country.<sup>45</sup>

### 7. Chengmari Primary School

This school located within Chengmari *Gewog*, 10 km away from Samtse town, and founded in 1958 as a non-formal school under the initiative of D. D. Lama who collected 25 children for admission to the school. In 1961, with the launch of the FYP the government took the responsibility for building the structure of the school. In 1964 it was upgraded from a non-formal to a formal one with Mr. Raja Ram from India as a teacher and 300 students.<sup>46</sup>

## 8. Peljorling Primary School

It was situated within Sibsoo *Gewog*. The school was established on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1961 under a teacher Ghimiray Upadhaya. In 1963 the government gave assistance by way of timber, roofing and salary for the teacher. In 1965 the school received official recognition with the name Pinjuli Primary School and a head teacher Krishna Kanta Mishra. There were 150 students with two teachers including a Lopen or Dzongkha language teacher.<sup>47</sup>

## 9. Ghumauney Primary School

This school located about 26.5 km west of Samtse *Dzongkhag* was started in 1961 by Mr. Tika Sharma with enrollment strength of only 30. Initiative for the foundation of school was taken by Mr. N. K. Pradhan who believed that modern education was essential to open the lock of learning. After one year, Mr. B. B. Kulung replaced Mr. Tika Ram Sharma who continued till 1964. From then Mr. Kunjappan, a teacher from Kerala, ran the school till the end of the FYP period.<sup>48</sup>

## Sarpang Dzongkhag

### 1. Surye Primary School

The school had started in 1940s functioning for only one hour in the evening in a bamboo hut with thatched roof. The details are blurry but it must have continued till it was shifted below the highway in Gon-Dara village in 1962. And from then the school became a government school.<sup>49</sup> Initially the medium of learning was Nepali and later English replaced it. The school started with the teachers from India like Mr. S. B. Silwar, Gopilal John. Gradually the number of students increased to become a formal school.

### 2. Kalikhola Primary School

This school situated in a day long journey from Phuentsholing was established in 1957 by the people of the village and they took all the responsibilities and invited and Indian Mr. Nirola to run the school. In 1961 the government took all the responsibilities and a new building was constructed.<sup>50</sup>

### 3. Sarpang Primary School

This school was founded in the early sixties to fulfill the aim of the third King to take education to the remotest parts. In the early years it was headed by Indian head

teachers.<sup>51</sup> As the school was situated close to the *dzongkhag* headquarters it is certain that it contributed a lot in the spread of modern education in the *dzongkhag*.

#### 4. Leopani Primary School

This school was located beside the Gelephu-Sarpang highway. It was established in 1963 under the headship of Mr. Subba.<sup>52</sup> Due to the scarcity of earlier records the number of students and teachers of the earlier periods can't be traced.

### Thimphu *Dzongkhag*

#### 1. Thimphu Primary School

It is the first school in the capital city which was founded in 1950s. The first head teacher in was R. Singh, an Indian. As the school was located in the capital it always enjoyed all the government facilities. Along with the academic activities, various co-curricular activities were also practiced by the students..<sup>53</sup>

#### 2. Khasadrapchu Primary school

This school situated in Mewang *Gewog*, 18 km from the Thimphu was started in 1960 under the headship of Lopen Passang, assisted by three Indian teachers with an enrollment of 100 students. Lopen Pema Wangchuck replaced him in 1962 and after him some Indian teachers had taken the charge of the school..<sup>54</sup>

#### 3. Dechencholing Primary School

This school located about six km towards north from Thimphu was established in 1960 under the headship of a certain Mr. Dorji with only a few children but gradually the number of students' increased..<sup>55</sup>

#### 4. Thinleygang Primary School

This school was founded in 1962 by a leading personality of the village Thinleygang. One teacher Mr. Yeshe Dorji joined as the first teacher-cum head. The medium of instruction was Hindi and books were brought from Kalimpong, India. In the beginning people of the community paid the salary of the teacher and also constructed the school building. After the Prime Minister visited the area government salary was introduced for the teachers and a new teacher Mr. Kazi was appointed to assist Yeshe Dorji and medium of instruction was replaced by English..<sup>56</sup>

## 5. Thimphu Public School

Thimphu Public School was established in April 1965 as Bhutan's first public school. A total of 91 students including 20 girls were enrolled, all as boarders, in classes from Pre-Primary to IV with six teachers.<sup>57</sup> All India Radio broadcasted the commencement of the school on April 14, 1965- "Less than three miles from the new Dzong, Bhutanese workers are busy constructing Bhutan's first Public School.... The new school will be the main source for the flow of doctors, engineers...The school will also afford opportunities to the students to learn about and take pride in their country's history and culture."<sup>58</sup>

## 6. Chhoeden Primary School

At the culmination of the First FYP period in 1966 Chhoeden Primary school was established. This was situated at Lungtenphu area in Thimphu to cater the educational need of the army men as this place was the headquarters of the Royal Bhutan Army.<sup>59</sup>

## Trashigang *Dzongkhag*

### 1. Bidung Primary School

Secular education in Bidung village came in late 1950s with a mobile school. Later the school was shifted to Trashigang town and from the year 1961 the government took over the responsibilities. Mr. Thinley Dorji was the head teacher in 1961 and Mr. B. N. Gurung replaced him in 1963 with the school registering 63 students. In 1964, 15 new students were added and that was followed by 23 in 1965.<sup>60</sup>

### 2. Bartsham Primary School

This school was established in Bartsham *Gewog*, situated 29 km away from Trashigang. It was established around 1958-60 by Babu Karchung with two teachers, Babu Karpa and Asang Karma. At that time, the classes were up to V and following which the students were sent for further studies either to Darjeeling or Kalimpong.<sup>61</sup>

### 3. Sakteng Primary School

The place Sakteng was situated in the extreme north of the Trashigang *Dzongkhag*. This school was established in early 60s of the last century. Due to the indifference of the community people towards education it was closed down after some years.<sup>62</sup>

#### 4. Merak Primary School

This school was founded in the early 1960s but the school could not survive more than a year. The parents of the locality were very unenthusiastic about the education of their children as it was felt a waste of time. So, though the school was established with noble intentions there being no students it was shut down.<sup>63</sup>

#### 5. Thungkhar Primary School

This school is situated at Thrimshing *Gewog*, at the southern end of Trashigang, established in July 1961 to serve the people of Thrimshing, Kangpara and Gomdar *Gewogs*. It started with 101 students with Pema Tshering as the first head teacher. The students' roll strength gradually increased and much progress had been made at the culmination of the First FYP period.<sup>64</sup>

#### 6. Wamrong Primary School

The school is founded in 1961 with Hindi as the medium of instruction. The first head teacher was Major Pem Tshering who continued till 1963, after him Mr. Nayar and Mr. R. Krishnan continued for some period. In 1964 Mr. J. B. Rai joined as the head teacher, he was from Kalimpong and under his supervision the medium of instruction was converted to English. In 1966, at the end of the First FYP period Lopen Nado became the head teacher.<sup>65</sup>

#### 7. Khaling Primary School

Khaling Primary School situated in the Khaling *Gewog* was established by the government. The community contributed in the foundation of school building. The school started with 60 students and one single teacher from India.<sup>66</sup>

#### 8. Kangpur Primary School

This school is situated in one corner of the Trashigang *Dzongkag* and was constructed in 1961 by the people of the locality, received formal government approval in 1963. The school started with 37 children and one teacher, Lopen Kalzang Dawa, who taught *Choekey* and *Dzongkha*. Later one Indian teacher Mr. Srinivasan joined as head teacher and medium of learning was changed to English.<sup>67</sup>

#### 9. Radhi Primary School

This school located in Radhi *Gewog*, some 25 km east of Trashigang, was established in 1963 in a two storied building with an enrolment of only 19 students.

Isaac James was the first head teacher. The school had also boarding facilities for the students from distant places.<sup>68</sup>

Trashiyantse *Dzongkhag*-This *dzongkhag* was a part of Trashigang till 1992 when it carved out to create a new district. The list below includes the schools in Trashiyantse *Dzongkhag* when it was still a part of Trashigang *Dzongkhag* during the First FYP period.

#### 1. Trashiyantse Primary School

This school is situated in Yangtse *Gewog* was started in 1961 with 20 students. At that time parents were very unwilling to spare their children from farm work. The school started under the headship of Mr. Som Sundar Ram and Lopen Dechen Lhundup as the Dzongkha language teacher. The school had one academic block and a hostel cum teachers' quarters. In due course, the number of students increased and classrooms were extended to meet the growing needs.<sup>69</sup>

#### 2. Thragom Primary School

This school is situated in Yalang *Gewog*. After much pleading by the people of the gewog the school was approved by the Royal Government and finally established in 1963.<sup>70</sup> An Indian gentlemen was the first head teacher but no details of the early period is available.

### Tsirang *Dzongkhag*

#### 1. Damphu Primary School

In the year 1947, one Mr. Lingden started teaching an odd group of children in the village of Damphu under a thatched and mud hut with the classes from Pre-Primary to VI. It was recognized by the government in 1954 and English became the medium of learning in 1964 when the first batch of Indian teachers under the headship of Mr. S. K. Nair were recruited.<sup>71</sup>

#### 2. Salami Primary School

This school in Salami village was unofficially established in 1955. The villagers constructed temporary classrooms and it commenced as a '*pathsala*' maintained by a Nepali pundit, Mr. Barma Chari. In 1957, the government took over the school and Mr. Karki was appointed as a regular teacher. In 1960, Mr. Pasang Tamang from Kalimpong joined and in 1962 Mr. Chandra Ghising replaced him. Mr.

Hemanath Ghimerey took charge of the school in 1963 and was continuing till the culmination of the First FYP period. In 1964 the Department of Education built permanent structure for the school.<sup>72</sup>

Wanduephodrang Dzongkhag

### 3. Wangdue Primary School

This school located in Theso *Gewog* started in 1955 under the then head teacher Lopen Sonam Chorten. He had with him a handful of teachers and 50 to 60 students. The medium of learning was Hindi which was later changed to English. In the year 1965 the school had 365 students as it provided boarding facilities to the students.<sup>73</sup>

### 4. Gaselo Primary School

The school established in 1961 was a result of the vision and sweat of the people of the Gaselo and nearby villages. Under the headship of Mr. Gyelpo Tshering the school had classes from Pre-Primary to IV.<sup>74</sup> Due to scarcity of sources the number of students of the earlier period is not known.

### 5. Samtengang Primary School

This school was founded in 1962 in a temporary hut under the stewardship Mr. M. M. Joseph assisted by two Dzongkha lopens. New building for the school was constructed by the government in the year 1964.<sup>75</sup>

Zhemgang *Dzongkhag*

### 1. Zhemgang Primary School

In 1958, this school was established with an initial strength of a hundred students. Mr. Kinley Tshering was the head teacher and Mr. Minjur, the *Dzongkha* teacher in the beginning. Both of them were the pioneer educationists of this region.<sup>76</sup>

### 2. Bardo Primary School

The school falls under Bardo *Gewog* and was established in 1965 with 45 students in two classes under the supervision of a teacher-in-charge Dendup Tshering and a *Dzongkha* Language teacher. Gradually the student strength of the school increased and classes were upgraded from Pre-Primary to VI.<sup>77</sup>

### 3. Bjoka Primary School

This school situated on the hilltop was established in 1966 and later government undertook it.<sup>78</sup> Nothing is available about records of the earlier period.

## **Junior High Schools**

### *Haa Dzongkhag*

#### 1. Haa Junior High School

Initially the name of the school was Haa School and was established in 1914 at the initiative of Raja Ugyen Dorji, *Gongzim* of the first King Ugyen Wangchuck. The first two teachers were Ugyen Chirring and Dawa Namgya Targyen from Kalimpong, India.<sup>79</sup> The third King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, made Haa School a model for the other schools.

### *Lhuntse Dzongkhag*

#### 1. Thsompaling Junior High School

The school located in Gangzur *Gewog* was established in 1962 and was later renamed as Lhuntse Junior High School. In the beginning there was a single classroom and a small staffroom.<sup>80</sup> As is the case in many other schools records pertaining to the school's early history is not available to us.

### *Mongar Dzongkhag*

#### 1. Mongar Junior High School

This school situated about half a km from the district town on a large tract of flat highland and falling under Mongar *Gewog* and *Dzongkhag* was founded on May 21, 1959 with 200 students and 5 teachers by Babu Tashi of Pemagatshel, the then Dzongpen (Head) of Mongar *dzongkhag*.<sup>81</sup> The medium of instruction was Hindi and during the time of First FYP it was changed to English. The following teachers performed their duty as the head teachers in the early period-

Mr. Najay, a Bhutanese, in the year 1959, Mr. Shiv Dasan, an Indian as the head teacher in 1963 and Mr. P. B. Nair replaced him in 1964 who was in turn replaced by Father William Mackey, Jesuit missionary from Canada.<sup>82</sup>

## Paro *Dzongkhag*

### 1. Paro Junior High School

This school was located at Gapoy in Paro in 1962 but due to a heavy landslide in 1986 the school building was extensively damaged and it was relocated to Tsentok *Gewog* with the name of Drugyel High school.<sup>83</sup> Babu Adhi from Kalimpong was the first head teacher who continued till 1966.

## Sarpang *Dzongkhag*

### 2. Gelephu Junior High School

This school was established in 1966 i.e. at the last quarter of the First Plan period. In its earlier period, this school provided education to Gelephu and adjacent areas. It was a boarding school with classes Pre-Primary to VIII.<sup>84</sup> But no record is available about the teachers and students of the earlier period.

## Trashigang *Dzongkhag*

### 1. Trashigang Junior High School

This school was opened in 1952 where 30 students chosen by Dr. Karchung, Lopen Kharpa and Karma Dorji were initially housed in a lhakhang.<sup>85</sup> In 1950s, after the visit of the third King in the school, building was constructed in Trashigang town. In the beginning it was an elementary school and gradually rose to a junior high school. In 1961 many teachers came from Kalimpong and in the following year another batch of teachers from South India were serviced. Father Mackey joined the school in 1963 and he played a pivotal role in the all around development of the children. Dasho Sonam Tobgey, former Chief Justice of the High Court, Thimphu, and a student of the Trashigang School in the 1950s quotes from a letter written to him by one of his teachers of the Trashigang JH School dated 17<sup>th</sup> October 1966: "...the school is progressing well. It is famous throughout Bhutan."<sup>86</sup>

## Trongsa *Dzongkhag*

### 1. Trongsa Junior High School

The school situated in Nubi *Gewog* was founded in 1956 with 56 students. Mr. Lawrence Sengupta was the first head teacher. It was a day boarding school till the culmination of the First Five Year Plan period and students had to make arrangements for their food and lodging after school hours.<sup>87</sup>

## Tsirang *Dzongkhag*

### 1. Lamidara Junior High School

This boarding school was established in 1960s with classes Pre-Primary to VIII and students from the distant places joined the school. It functioned very well in both academic and co-curricular activities leading to a high enrollment. The school's name was later altered to Mendrelgang Lower secondary School.<sup>88</sup>

Although Jesuit educationist to Bhutan, Father William Mackey, mentioned about some more schools around this period in his article "How it all began" such as Sibsoo in Samchi (Samtse), Tschosa in Punakha, Gangtey Gompa in Wangdi (Wangduephodrang), Domkhar in Bumthang, Gopini in Chirang (Tsirang), Goshi in Dagana<sup>89</sup> but no records are available elaborate on their commencement, teachers serving the institutes or the number of students in the rolls. This paucity of information or records is also found in the case of the early Primary Schools as well as in the initial Junior High Schools. Documents appear to be non-existent in many cases and oral testimony almost impossible to obtain with most of the teachers either dead or relocated in far flung areas of India. It was a major surprise and disappointment to discover that some of the leading schools had very little documentation as regards the history of their institution.

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## Chapter 6

### Development of Modern Education from Second Five Year Development Plan to the Seventh Five Year Development Plan

#### Second Five Year Plan (1966-67 to 1970-71)

The main target of the Second FYP was twofold: (1) developing fundamental infrastructural services viz., agriculture, roads, transport and administrative set-up and (2) improvement in education with higher priority on quality rather than quantity, so that qualified technical personnel at all levels were available. Proposed outlay in Second FYP was Rs. /Nu. 22, 14, 00, 000 with Rs /Nu.2, 76, 00, 000 in the education sector.<sup>1</sup>

The proposed education programmes for the Second FYP was finalized after the report submitted by and Education Advisory team from India. Below are the some valuable points of that report-

- i) “Steps should be taken to ensure the regular attendance in schools of all those enrolled.
- ii) If any of the schools have insufficient students, they should be closed down and the students transferred to nearby schools. Such students may be given stipends, if necessary.
- iii) The Plan provides for the construction of one public school at Kanglung(eastern Bhutan) adding up to the Thimphu Public School already existing. Further, it is proposed, during the Plan period, to convert two of the sixteen junior high schools into higher secondary schools. There will, thus, be two public schools and 2 higher secondary schools. These four schools appear to be in excess of what is required, as there may not even 100 students from the whole of Bhutan to reach the matriculation stage in the next few years. Perhaps, one way to provide education to students in those four schools may be to withdraw Bhutanese students now studying in India, especially those studying in the lower classes, and transfer them to those schools.
- iv) It is also observed that insufficient stress has been laid on vocational education. Perhaps, agriculture may be introduced as a subject at the high school and junior high schools levels.

v) Scholarships and stipends should be given mainly on the basis of merit and means, especially for the degree and the diploma courses. Since facilities for the students in schools up to the primary level are available in Bhutan, no scholarships for students in India up to that level should be given.

vi) There are a large number of missionaries in Bhutan, working as teachers and paid out of funds given by the Government of India. This is undesirable and can be objected by the M. P.s and others. While we may allow those missionaries already in Bhutan to continue, we may not agree to any more missionaries to come to Bhutan, even as replacements. Further, missionaries should not be appointed in the Kanglung School. If the Bhutanese wants teachers, we can supply them from India. Perhaps, some of the schools could be run on the lines of the sainik schools.’<sup>2</sup>

During this Plan two of the junior high schools were upgraded to high schools and one additional public school was founded at Kanglung besides the already existing one at Thimphu. English remained as the medium of learning to facilitate higher studies in India and the board examination for finishing school was, after a lapse of time, conducted by the Council for Indian School Certificate Examinations. Dzongkha or Nepali and Hindi supplemented the compulsory subjects. In 1968 the Department of Education, under Bhutan Matriculation Examination, created history with 20 students passing out.<sup>3</sup>

### **Various schemes of the Second Five Year Plan**

#### **i) Directorate of Education**

In the Second Plan some changes had been made, there was a very mild bolstering of clerical establishment.

Table 6.1: The staff for the Directorate according to the Second FYP

1.	Director of Education	1
2.	Deputy Director of Education	1
3.	Asst. Director of Education (Kalimpong)	1
4.	Sub Inspector of Schools	4
5.	Liaison officer for supplies	2
6.	Office Assistant	1
7.	Accountant	1
8.	Upper Division Clerks	4
9.	Stenographer	1
10.	Lower Division Clerks	11

11.	Store keepers	2
12.	Steno typist	1
13.	Translator	1
14.	Drivers	4
15.	Peon	11

(Source- [www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/upload/2011/04/2nd.FYP.pdf](http://www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/upload/2011/04/2nd.FYP.pdf))

#### ii) Primary schools

No large scale expansion was made in the case of primary education except for the provision of 5 new schools. The intent was directed at giving greater attention in consolidating proper standards. At the same time if schools had less than 8 students per class in the higher classes, such a class were shut down with the affected students being sent to, with stipends of Rs./Nu. 20 per month, other junior high schools with hostel facilities were available.

It was decided that the emphasis would be laid on students' attendance and enrolment more children in the schools. The schools were run by 3 to 4 teachers on the basis of the number of classes. The weight was laid on improvement of facilities and the standard of education rather than on expansion. It was also decided that when the attendance of existing primary schools would increase the schools would be expanded to junior high schools with more teachers in subsequent Plans.

#### iii) Junior high schools and high schools

When the Second Plan was introduced there were 16 junior high schools, out which two schools of Thimphu and Tashigang of western and eastern Bhutan were expanded to high schools during the Second FYP. The existing 14 junior high schools had some extension of hostel facilities to take up students from the interior primary schools. Additional school buildings were constructed for the two high schools with provision for laboratories, hostels, and purchase of scientific equipment.

#### iv) Public Schools

In the public school at Thimphu, provision was made for admission of 120 students in the first year followed by 160, 180, 200 and 275 respectively in the second, third, fourth and fifth years.

For the benefit of children of eastern Bhutan Kanglung Public School was founded in the second year of the Plan. The Roman Catholic Padres ran the institution and the Indian Border Roads Organization prepared the designs and estimates of buildings. It had the capacity to admit 60 students in that year, rising to 100, 150, and 200 in the third, fourth and fifth year of the Plan period.

The goal behind the foundation of these two public schools was to select suitable children and expose them not just to education of better quality but also to offer a wider background so they could develop into a stronger or a better character. These were residential schools and the pupils were bestowed with food, clothing, uniforms, bedding etc.

v) Teachers' Training Institute

The construction of the institute commenced towards the ending period of the earlier Plan and completed during this Plan. It opened its portals in May 1968 with 40 students with stipends of Rs. 60 per month. After two years course the trainers became engaged in schools.

vi) Junior Technical School

A junior technical school, at Kharbandi, was founded in April 1965. The institution was aimed to train technicians in various fields. Here too a stipend of Rs. 60 per student was provided along with an annual Rs. 100 for each student for clothing etc.

vii) Rigney Monastery School

In order to continue traditional Monastic education, to conserve cultural heritage of Bhutan, and also to provide Bhutanese language teachers for the secular schools this school had started by the earlier Plan at Simtokha *Dzong*. The school strength was to be 150 students per year with a stipend of Rs. 60 per student per month.

### **Other schemes-<sup>4</sup>**

- a. Owing to absence of text books in the *Dzongkha* the Department of Education implemented a scheme for books in English, *Dzongkha* and Nepali. Before the second Plan period ended approximately a dozen text books on History, Geography, English Primer and Readers were made available for use in schools.
- b. The Department had purchased three 16 mm Projectors with Generators. The two public schools of Thimphu and Kanglung were given one each and the other one was kept for other schools.
- c. Rs. 500 per school was given for Library books for each of the 88 primary schools, Rs. 1000 each school for 14 junior schools and Rs. 2000 each school for the 2 high schools.
- d. The scheme, commenced in the First Plan, to provide scholarships for higher studies in India remained in operation. There was a provision for an annual Rs. 1000 per student for tuition and boarding fees and another annual Rs. 400 for other expenses.
- d. A hostel was maintained at Kalimpong, named as Bhutan House Hostel, for students not getting accommodation in schools in India.
- e. Students were awarded scholarships for degree course. Opportunities were also provided for technical studies. The requirements of scholarships were based on the personnel needs and the availability of candidates.

Though in the beginning period the medium of learning in the schools of Bhutan was Hindi, but during the Second Plan period it was converted to English with Hindi or Nepali as the compulsory subject. During this Plan period for the first time Bhutanese students appeared in the matriculation examination, so it was a great achievement. In order to offer systematic education by the trained personnel teacher training institute was established during this Plan period at the same time students were also send to India and other countries for higher studies and professional degrees.

### **Third Five Year Plan (1971-72 to 1975-76)**

In spite of some development after the first two Five Year Plans many students were still receiving education in India. So, in the Third Plan initiatives was

taken to strengthen the education system within the country to decrease the number of students in India except in highly specialized fields.

### **Objectives of the Plan<sup>5</sup>**

1. To emphasize on quality rather than on quantity, provisions for adequate classrooms and trained teachers.
2. i) To close primary schools of very low attendance.  
ii) To upgrade primary schools as junior high school in case of good performance.
3. To rename existing high schools by central schools and also to establish 9 such schools with hostel facilities, science education and introduction of modern teaching aids.
4. To enroll more students in the public schools at Thimphu and Kanglung through expanding the facilities.
5. To laid the foundation of a Degree College in Thimphu with highly qualified teachers and to introduce provisions for study of arts and science.
6. To match the increasing need for technicians, the Technical School at Kharbandi will be expanded; another technical school will be opened at Deothang in eastern Bhutan.
7. To further develop the Teachers Training Institute (Samchi) so as to turn out an increased number of trained teachers.
8. To include a senior writer in current staff pattern so as to facilitate the Department to convert books of various subjects in Dzongkha language.
9. To maintain the present schemes of awarding stipends and scholarships. However, the number of students travelling to India would gradually diminish with the founding of the Degree College

Total budget outlay in the Third Plan was Rs. 3,550.00 Lakhs with an amount of Rs 633.00 lakhs for general education and Rs 87.50 lakhs for technical education.<sup>6</sup>

### **Various Schemes**

#### **i). Primary schools**

After the Second FYP there were altogether 83 primary schools, according to the Government's official statistics (but in the Second FYP five more primary schools

were to be added which would have brought the figure to 88). If the statistic given be true then the five schools proposed in the earlier Plan did not come to fruition. It was found that in some of the existing schools the number of students was very poor leading to decision to shut down those schools with less than 30 students. Around 30 schools were closed down and few primary schools where there was a satisfactory progress upgraded into junior high schools.

ii). Junior high schools

During the Second FYP there were total 15 junior high schools. In this Plan some of the junior high schools were converted into Central schools. Despite the conversion there was a total 11 junior high schools in the Third FYP because some primary schools were upgraded to junior high schools.<sup>7</sup>

iii). Central schools

The Royal Government thought to select some specific places to locate Central schools in place of upgrading all junior high schools to higher secondary schools. These Central schools were reinforced by additional facilities like hostels, libraries and became the centre for good education. The establishment of Central Schools resulted in utilizing the limited resources more gainfully rather than establishing a larger number of schools. The higher secondary schools were also designated as Central schools. At the last part of the Plan Central schools were established in the following places with facilities for scientific studies-Thimphu, Paro, Samchi, Sarbhang, Mongar, Tashigang, Punakha, Tashigang, Shemgang and Lhuntshi.

iv). Public schools

The basic drive of opening the two public schools in Thimphu and Kanglung was to make students ready for Senior Cambridge or equivalent examination and were therefore operated on the same system as in Public schools in India. The classrooms and residential quarters at Kanglung Public School had been completed but at Thimphu the work was still in progress during the Third FYP. To solve the problem of admission pressure in these schools, provision for 225, 250, 275, 300 and 325

students had been made in respective years of the Plan for each school.<sup>8</sup> In both the schools students were provided with all the facilities.

v). Rigney Monastery School

During the FYP this monastery school was established to give religious education to the boys. Many of them became Dzongkha language teachers which served the need of language teachers in the secular schools. During the Second Plan 150 students in this school were given stipend but in the Third FYP the number was extended to 200 students with Rs. 100 per month per student for nine months were provided.<sup>9</sup>

vi). Technical Schools

A Technical School in Phuentsholing was established in the First FYP to provide technicians for various development activities in the country. There were only 50 students in the beginning but at the culmination of the Second FYP the number increased to 160. Carpentry, tailoring, mechanics and automobile were the various trades which were taught in this school. It was aimed to raise the number of students to 250 by the close of the Third FYP.<sup>10</sup> To cater the need of trained technical person in the eastern side initiative was taken in the Third Plan to establish another technical school at Deothang.

vii). School for Buddhist Studies

In the Third Plan a new scheme was taken to open a school for Buddhist studies at Dechenphodrang.

viii). Thimphu Degree College

Due to the growth of education and to cater the need of higher education in the country it was felt essential to establish a Degree College and in the Third Plan period a Degree college was suggested at Thimphu. It was decided to open the arts faculty in the beginning.

ix). Teachers' Training Institute

In the year 1968 a Teacher Training Institute was established at Samchi in Southern Bhutan with roll strength of 40 students staffed by seven teachers and a

Principal. The trained teachers will be posted in various schools in Bhutan. Till the Third FYP all the teachers were recruited from outside mainly from India.

x). Translation and printing of books in *Dzongkha*

With the founding of the Department of Education writing and translation in *Dzongkha* was started. During this Plan period it was aimed to continue this task and develop national language to a higher level.

xi). Degree scholarships for students in India

After launching of the Degree College, the students to India were expected to decrease and this should be confined to specialized courses only. For the first three years of the Plan, provision for 40 stipends annually was made for three years. Expectedly, there might not be new admission in the fourth and fifth year of the Plan in the colleges of India as the Degree College is assumed to be in a situation to admit students.

xii). Scholarships for studies in India

From the commencement of modern education in Bhutan, Bhutanese students were awarded scholarships, year after year, to study up to Matriculation/I.S.C. in Indian schools. Gradually the numerical strength of high schools and public schools increased and this coupled with the upgrading of some junior high schools and high schools in Bhutan decision was made in the Third Plan to terminate fresh scholarships for Matriculation/I.S.C. in India, only those who were studying there under this scheme would continue.

Main aim of this Plan was to improve quality education by providing various facilities. Along with the development of primary and secondary education the main achievement of this Plan period was the establishment of country's first junior college to provide further studies after the secondary education

#### **Fourth Five Year Plan (1976-77 to 1980-81)**

The First FYP in the 60s of the twentieth century was targeted at opening up the country through improved communications and to provide basic social amenities to the people. The Second and the Third Plan persisted in the task of setting up of

infrastructural services which were totally absent in the country such as roads, means of communication, power, irrigation, medical and educational facilities. Many development organizations were set up to promote extension activities. Gradually a general awareness had been created among the masses and their standards also improved.

The Fourth FYP was commenced from 01.04.1976, aimed to further develop the economic and living standards of the people. The major sectors contributing to Bhutan's national income were agriculture, livestock, forests and small industries and during the Fourth Plan efforts were made to make progress in these sectors. Development of mineral resources, power, communications, tourism, trade and commerce was also not ignored. Side by side basic facilities like education, health, nutrition, drinking water supply etc. were also promoted.

The gross outlay for the development of education in the Fourth Plan was fixed at 1346.01 lakhs ngultrum.<sup>11</sup> The finance for nutritive food had been expected to be borne by UNICEF and the local food to be supplied by parents as a contribution to nutrition program for primary school children in addition to allocation of the budget in the Plan. It was also declared in the Plan that active participation of the people is desired in implementation of the Plan as in the case of construction of building schools, dispensaries, rural roads etc.

### **Broad objectives for the education sector in 1980s<sup>12</sup>**

- a. To enhance the literacy level of the general population by means of expanding primary education.
- b. To provide educated manpower to face with the increasing requirements of development process.
- c. To modernize the society through the introduction of science and technology.
- d. To preserve the country's rich cultural heritage as well as to prevent the alienation of the educated people from the heritage.

The Planning Commission in Bhutan was unable to provide any information regarding the achievements of this plan period. The official web site is also deficit in elaborating the progress made during the period. I was forced to use some other means to come to some conclusion regarding the period. Consequently the reports of

the Fifth FYP was taken as a base reading and the reports of the Third FYP was subtracted to arrive at a figure which must reflect the gains of the Fourth plan. For example no specific data is provided on the number of institutions existing and the additions/subtraction made during this plan period is available. Working backwards we find that in the beginning of the Third Plan there were 83 Primary schools of which 30 were closed down due to insufficient number of students which gives us 53 primary schools. Thus we can conclude that the Fourth Plan commenced with 53 schools only. When the Fifth Plan commenced there were 119 Primary Schools and the difference of 66 new schools could have only come from the Fourth Plan period. This is a major development, a hundred per cent plus increase not supported by official documents. On the other hand, we find that during the Third Plan period various central schools was established, but in the year 1980-81 there were only 6 central schools in the country, giving rise to the question of why only 6 of them. Perhaps some schools had closed down.

Thus during the Fourth FYP period there was a gradual raise in the literacy level of the country. One of the main aims of this plan period was to involve general masses in the construction of buildings of the schools and also the supply of food to the pupils.

#### **Fifth Five Year Plan (1981-82 to 1986-87)**

Table 6.2: Budget Outlay in the Education Sector in Fifth FYP

<b>Fifth Plan Outlay (Nu. In millions)</b>				
<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Development</b>	<b>Maintenance</b>
1	Primary Education	94.19	39.72	54.47
2	Secondary Education	101.17	28.40	72.77
3	Higher Education	27.14	15.68	11.46
4	Teacher Education	28.24	20.95	7.29
5	Technical and Commercial Education	30.25	13.25	17.00

6	School of Fine Arts & Sculpture	1.58	-----	1.58
7	Buddhist & Monastic Studies & Rigney School	4.60	1.29	3.31
8	Directorate of Education	50.65	9.34	41.31
9	National Education Policy	2.18	2.18	-----
	Total	340.00	130.81	209.19

(Source-*Fifth Five Year Plan*, Main Document, 1981-1987, Planning Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, Bhutan, p.119)

A major development in this Plan period was an assessment of the education policy which was undertaken in order to meet with the economic self reliance, peoples' participation, and mobilization of the country's resources. The outcome was reflected in the National Education Policy and it also guided the development of education sector in the future.

### **Aims of the Fifth Plan**

The first four FYP aimed at the establishment and expansion of education and towards the end a country-wide infrastructure was almost in place. Therefore, the Fifth Plan focused on the reinforcement and enhancement of the quality of education in reference to the number of national teachers, extent of the physical facilities etc. There was Bhutanization and nationalization in the educational system. Higher and technical educations were given less importance.

Table 6.3: Major targets of the Fifth FYP

		<b>1980-81 level</b>	<b>Additional during Plan</b>	<b>1986-87</b>
A	Institutions			
	Primary Schools	119	21	140
	Central	6	2	8

	Schools (High)			
	Degree College	--	1	1
B	Number of teachers			
	Primary	726	320	1046
	Secondary	481	88	569
	Degree level	---	16	16

(Source-*Fifth Five Year Plan*, Main Document,1981-1987, Planning Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, Bhutan, p.119)

### Govt. Ceilings

The Fifth Plan put into place ceilings and merit system for entry into the secondary and higher educational system with the government bearing all expenses. This was with an aim to effectively utilize manpower and to avoid the menace of unemployed youth. The table below shows that the ceiling for enrollment in classes VI to VIII as 1500 students whereas the ceiling for classes IX and X drops to 600. Such a situation would result in a dropout figure of approximately 900 students per school, something that is entirely unsustainable for a country like Bhutan. Furthermore, the actual average enrollment in classes VI, VII and VIII were 950, 700, 609 respectively and the ceiling gave scope from a perceived increase of 550, 800 and 891 students in each of the classes and under the prevailing circumstances this would not have been possible to accomplish. The high ceiling seems more of an abstract figure rather than an actual projected planning.

Table 6.4: Enrolment in schools and Govt. Ceilings (1982)

Level of Education	Actual Enrolment	Govt. Ceilings
Pre-school education		
Lower Kindergarten	9,691	Unlimited

Upper Kindergarten	7,675	Unlimited
<b>Primary education</b>		
Class I	6,446	Unlimited
Class II	4,995	Unlimited
Class III	3,805	Unlimited
Class IV	2,745	Unlimited
Class V	2,047	Unlimited
Total	37,404	
<b>Secondary education</b>		
Class VI	950	1500
Class VII	700	1500
Class VIII	609	1500
Class IX	239	600
Class X	162	600
Total	2660	5700
<b>Junior college</b>		
Class XI	123	300
Class XII	103	300
Total	226	600
<b>Total Education system</b>	<b>40,290</b>	

(Source-Fifth Five Year Plan, Main Document, 1981-1987, Planning Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, Bhutan, p.44)

The student dropout figure can be extrapolated from the table and we find a steady and consistent decline in the number of students with each increasing class. From a somewhat healthy figure of 950 students in class VI there is a massive drop to 103 in class XII. The Plan fails to address this escalating problem in full measure.

### **Development of education at various levels:**

#### **i). Primary Education Programme**

In the Fifth Plan period there were numerous requests (90-100) for new primary schools from all over the country. The Plan's objective was to establish new primary schools in remote areas. Towards this 121 new classrooms in existing schools and 21 new primary schools were projected. The Plan estimated an average enrollment growth rate of 10% per annum leading to a total strength of 58,300 students at the end of the Plan.<sup>13</sup> The school buildings were to be built with voluntary labour organized by the *dzongkhag* administration and other expenses would be supplied by the Govt. The total number of primary schools at the culmination of the Plan period was 140, an increase of 21 schools as per the projected plans. To meet the needs of this expansion an additional of 320 teachers were pressed into service.

#### **ii) Secondary Education Programme**

The main stress at the secondary level education (class VI-X) was to have only the minimum necessary expansion. No new junior high school was opened but upgrading of a primary school to junior high school was proposed. Likewise, no new high school was opened, but two junior high schools were upgraded to high schools. The number of enrolment were targeted at 4370 for junior high schools and 813 for central schools. With the increasing intake there was also need of additional classrooms as well as 88 secondary school teachers.

#### **iii) Higher Education programme**

The Fifth FYP period commenced with only one junior college at Kanglung in eastern Bhutan. Therefore, many students were sent mainly to India for degree level education. With the rise in demand for qualified manpower provision was made to upgrade Sherubtse College to a three year degree level one with an annual intake of 150 students by 1986-87.<sup>14</sup> The College ran degree courses and was situated on the

same campus of junior college. 16 additional teachers were recruited for the degree level.

iv) Teachers Training

During the Fifth Plan an effort was made not only to enhance the number of native teachers and reduce the burden of foreign teachers but also to meet the additional needs of the educational system. This was done by expanding and strengthening the two existing teachers training institutes: the Teachers Training Centre (Paro) increased its intake from 30 to 50 students per year and the Teachers' Training Institute (Samchi) was upgraded to the National Institute of Education empowered to award the degree of Bachelor of Education. Enrolment was increased from 67 to 100 per annum by 1986-87.<sup>15</sup> The net result was the recruitment of 320 new teachers in the primary and 88 extra teachers in the secondary levels during the Plan period.

v) Technical Education

To meet the increasing need for technicians and craftsmen, the facilities of the Royal Bhutan Polytechnic (Deothang) and the Technical School (Kharbandi) were increased and the system of training revised along with the introduction of a number of new basic courses.

vi) Commercial Education

From 1977 a basic commercial institute, training typists and stenographers, operated in Thimphu. Manpower requirement having diversified to the areas of office management, book keeping etc, and the existing institute was upgraded as the Royal Institute of Management in 1986.

The main endeavour of the Fifth FYP was the nationalization of the education system by appointing nationals as the head in the schools and institutions to develop loyal and dedicated Bhutanese citizens to serve His Majesty the King and the country faithfully. The grand achievement of this Plan period was the up gradation of Sherubtse Junior College to a full-fledged degree college.

### **Sixth Five Year Plan (1987-88 to 1991-92)**

The Five Year Plans directed where, to what purpose, and how much finance would be invested for the national development. Throughout the years the planners gave an enhanced position to Education though other sectors were not entirely ignored.

The Sixth FYP also accorded the same priority as the Fifth Plan to education. But in the education sector we find a subtle change of approach. Whereas in the past five plans Govt. effort was to enhance the literacy rate the Sixth Plan clearly laid down stress on the advancement of vocational and higher levels of technical, administrative and managerial skills so that the need of manpower by the country can be successfully met. Much of the groundwork was started in the Fifth Plan but the thrust came with the Sixth Plan. The Plan also, in the meanwhile, prescribed quantitative expansion of the primary education and at the same time development of secondary and higher education. The main thrust of the education sector was the consolidation and improvement of existing facilities, enhancing the quality and relevance of education, teacher training and improving their remuneration and other service benefits. It was also mentioned that, “---the endeavours of our education system will be to provide our students with a wholesome education in the sense that, in addition to learning of the 3 Rs and the necessary skills( in case of technical institutions), the schools and institutions will also instill in our students a full awareness and understanding of our national policies, aspirations and the value system, love and loyalty to the King and country, and the appreciations for and the pride of being Bhutanese.----The main thrust of the development of education during the Sixth Plan shall be, however, the consolidation and improvement of the existing facilities, enhancing the quality and relevance of education, teacher training and improving their remuneration and other service benefits.”<sup>16</sup>

The National Education Policy adopted in 1984 contained four main goals-

- a). Engaging Bhutan’s human resource needs
- b). Enhance the relevance of educational content and also the processes of learning and teaching
- c). Inculcation of time-honored and religious values
- d). The advancement of adult education

The Sixth Plan has been made on the strategies of this National Policy.

Table 6.5: Education Sector Outlay in Sixth FYP (Nu. in Millions)

Sl.No	Programmes	Current	Capital	Total
1.	Primary Schools	183.316	47.439	230.755
2.	Junior High Schools	89.100	17.695	106.795
3.	High Schools	52.322	12.145	65.467
4.	College	16.768	5,000	21,768
5.	Teachers Training Institute	17.765	9.600	27.365
6.	Technical Institutes	21,920	10,000	31,920
7.	Rigney School	5.723	0.850	6.573
8.	Central Sanskrit Pathsala	0.000	1.000	1.000
9.	Blind School	1.023	2.000	3.023
	Sub Total	388,937	105,729	494,666
10	Direction and Support			
a.	Curriculum Development		8,832	8,832
b.	Inspectorate		0.650	0.650
c.	Board of Examination and Certificate		1.028	1.028
d.	Social and Cultural Development		0.500	0.500
e.	Agricultural Programme		10.850	10.850
f.	School Health Programme		0.712	0.712
g.	Technical Education Department		5.000	5.000

h.	Dzongkha Development			
i.	Printing and Publishing		7.500	7.500
J.	Teachers in service training		1.500	1.500
k.	Scholarship			
l.	Establishment of the Administrative centre for the University			
m.	Establishment	128.522	0.000	128.522
n.	Extended Classrooms		4,000	4,000
o.	World Food Programme		100.000	100.000
	Sub Total	143.522	140.572	284.094
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>532.459</b>	<b>246.301</b>	<b>778.760</b>

(Source-www.gnhc.giv.bt/wp-content/upload/2011/04/6th.FYP.pdf)

### **Programmes related to education**

The main programmes of the Sixth Plan were-

- (a) Coverage and outreach
- (b) Relevance of content
- (c) Process (teaching and learning)
- (d) Technical and Vocational education
- (e) Special education services
- (f) Non-formal education comprising adult literacy promotion
- (a) **Coverage and outreach**

Table 6.6: Number of students in schools and institutions (1987)

	Schools and Institutes	Number	Boys	Girls	Total
a.	Primary schools	148	26539	14149	40688
b.	Junior high schools	21	6884	4392	11276
c.	High schools	9	2760	1517	4277
d.	College	1	369	52	421
e.	National Institutes of Education	1	67	56	123
f.	Teachers Training Centre	1	16	8	24
g.	Royal Bhutan Polytechnic	1	172	03	175
h.	Royal Technical institute	1	313	-	313
i.	Simtokha Rigney School	1	442	-	442
j.	Blind School	1	23	07	30
k.	Sanskrit Pathsalas	5	258	89	347
	Total	192	37843	20273	58116

(Source-[www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/upload/2011/04/6th.FYP.pdf](http://www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/upload/2011/04/6th.FYP.pdf))

Table 6.7: Schools/ Institutions, Enrolment and Teachers (1990)

School/Institution	No. of Schools	Enrollment			No. of Teachers		
		Boys	Girls	Total	Nat.	Non- Nat	Total
Community Schools	46	2460	1518	3978	80	05	85
<b>Schools</b>							
Primary Schools	156	29582	18469	48051	972	700	1672

Junior Schools	21	6874	4693	11517	208	215	423
High Schools	10	2887	1580	4467	103	136	239
Sub-total	187	39343	24742	64035	1283	1051	2334
<b>Institutions</b>							
Sherubtse College	01	300	45	345	09	23	32
National Institute of Education	01	105	69	174	16	09	25
Teacher's Training Centre	01	40	19	59	11	05	16
Royal Bhutan Polytechnic	01	139	08	147	19	13	32
National Teacher's Training Institute	01	63	00	63	13	03	16
Simtokha Rigney School	01	595	81	676	24	02	26
Zangley Muenseling School	01	20	07	27	08	00	08
Sanskrit Pathsalas	05	267	191	458	16	00	16
Sub- total	12	1529	420	1949	116	55	171
Total	199	40872	25162	65984	1399	1106	2505

(Source- *Seventh Five Year Plan*, Main Plan Document, Vol.1, 1992/93- 1996/1997, Planning Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, Bhutan, p.73)

i). Primary Education

The target of the Fifth Plan was directed at a total of 140 primary schools, but it achieved more and so the Sixth Plan commenced with 148 primary schools in the country. The enrolment size in those primary schools also reflects the drive towards the goal of universal primary education. The Sixth Plan aimed to further increase enrolment rate as 6 percent annually and also to expand facilities, raises the quality and accessibility of primary education throughout the country. To fulfill the target 10 primary schools in rural areas, 2 in urban areas and 1 industrial project related

primary school was to be founded. In the middle of the plan period we find that there were altogether 156 primary schools which took the student through 1 year of pre-primary and 6 years of primary schooling. At the end of it the pupils sat for a common examination to get admission into junior high schools, mostly as boarders, throughout the country.

ii). Community Schools

What was earlier known as Extended Classrooms (ECR) became, under the Sixth Plan, community schools which were founded and look after by the community with lowest number of 30 students, within a 1 hour walking distance from the school. They were allotted with one or two teachers by the Education Department. Due to an easier reach to schools, community schools led to an extension in the number of attendance, especially of girls. In the above table listed above we find there were total 46 community schools in the country.

iii). Secondary Education

The Sixth Plan decided to discontinue the common examination in class VI in 1995 and introduced the first common examination in Class VIII. Emphasis was laid on the secondary and technical education as well as vocational training to cater the manpower needs. To promote the capacity and effectiveness of the secondary education it was decided to phase out all primary sections in all high schools while two of the junior high schools would be upgraded to high schools and one new junior high school would be added. In the year 1990 Nanglam Junior High School was opened while Mongar Junior High School was upgraded to a high school and Class XI-XII courses were introduced in Yangchenphug High School in Thimphu in 1989 and at Simtokha Rigney School.<sup>17</sup>

iv). Higher education and Teachers Training Institute

Notwithstanding the functioning Teachers' Training Centre at Paro, the country had only two institutes for higher studies in the form of Sherubtse College and the National Institute of Education (NIE). The Sixth Plan moved to expand facilities and enrolment was increased in both the College and NIE. The NIE had, in fact, started offering Post Graduate Certificate in Education, while honours courses were started in some subjects in Sherubtse College.

**(b) Relevance of Content**

Modern education system in Bhutan was totally structured on the Indian system and so in the Sixth Plan emphasis had been given to reform the structure to make it

run more in accordance with the Bhutanese environment and society. Curriculum in the schools was reoriented to-

- a. Provide to the students with academic knowledge and practical skills linked with their practical lives.
- b. Advance patriotism and ethical values among the students to become citizens committed to the King and the country.
- c. Foster among the children an understanding and appreciation of Bhutanese culture and a sense of unity in spite of linguistic and regional differences.

**(c) Process (teaching and learning)**

The most important part in the teaching and learning process is the teachers. Therefore the Sixth FYP laid great stress on developing quality and competence of the teaching faculty through the development of methodology of teaching. The New Approach to Primary Education (NAPE) project had been started to accelerate the procedure of teaching and learning. Various mechanisms such as tests, interviews, promotions and in-service course were introduced to build up an efficient teaching force and to attract quality people in this profession.

In 1987 the graduates from Paro T.T.C. was a humble 10 and this swelled to a respectable 70 in 1992 and similarly at Samchi from 36 in 1987 to 70 in 1992. Decision was taken to establish a new T.T.C. at Kanglung.<sup>18</sup>

It was decided that assessment system up to class X was localized giving flexibility to the system with the Bhutan Board of Examinations coordinating the task. The Board also functioned as the central authority for certification and maintaining standardization for the entire vocational courses in the country.

**Facilities**

Sixth FYP laid emphasis on the enhancement of physical facilities in the schools such as class rooms, hostels, staff quarters, sanitation facilities, electricity, play grounds and sports equipments etc. Adequate teaching learning resources such as library books, teaching aids and science equipments were to be supplied. A cell under the Department of Education was to monitor about the available services in the schools. Local community and parents were to be mobilized for construction and

maintenance of school buildings. Health and hygiene standards were to be implemented through the educational health support programme.

#### **(d) Technical and Vocational education**

The Sixth Plan period supported technical and vocational education in response to meet the available opportunities for craftsmen and the technicians. A diploma course in Mechanical Engineering was introduced in the Royal Bhutan Polytechnic in Deothang in the plan period while there were already diploma courses in civil and electrical engineering. The total student capacity too had been increased. It was decided that the Royal Technical Institute in Phuentsholing was to compress its 4 year to 3 so as to enable more graduates each year and the course was to be revised in the light of changing demands. Certificate courses were offered by the Royal Technical Institute in three main trades: (i) electrical, (ii) general mechanics and (iii) motor mechanics with four allied trades of fitting, carpentry, welding and sheet metal trade. During the Sixth Plan, a trade school was founded in Phuentsholing to conduct courses on carpentry, masonry, plumbing and students mainly were who have dropped out from class VI.

#### **Royal Institute of Management**

The RIM provided in-service instruction for government and private sectors employees. Its courses included personnel management, financial management and audit, report writing, decentralized rural development, policy orientation and computer training. A Library Learning and Documentation Division was commenced to link with institutions outside the country for the exchange of information.

#### **(e) Special Education Services**

There were 5 Hindu religious and linguistic schools called Sanskrit *Pathsalas* in southern part. There was only one school in the country to handle the disabled, Zangley Muenselling Blind School, and the Sixth Plan put importance on the education of the other disabled and handicapped people by providing suitable facilities. Other special educational services included the Forestry Institute in Taba, the National Agricultural Training Institute in Paro and the Natural Resources Training Institute at Lobesa.

#### **(f) Non-formal education comprising Adult Literacy programme**

Despite the several Five Year Plans, in the eighties of the last century, a vast majority of people was outside the purview of functional literacy programme. According to the Govt. policy initiatives were taken in the Sixth Plan to offer educational and literary services to these diverse groups. So non- formal education, or programme for adult literacy, was introduced for those who did not have the opportunity to avail formal education and also for school dropouts at very early stage.

#### **Govt. Scholarships**

It was decided that all Government scholarships for primary and secondary education in India, i. e., up to ICSE would be discontinued after the year 1988 academic year. The Govt. took this decision in pursuance of the national policy to make education more relevant to the national needs and aspirations and also due to the budgetary constraints as schooling in India was much more expansive than those in Bhutan. The intention of the Department of Education was to utilize the savings from the withdrawal of scholarships in Kalimpong and Darjeeling for improving the facilities of some of the schools within Bhutan.<sup>19</sup>

#### **Constraints in the development of education**

Adequate enrolment figure was not there at the beginning of Sixth FYP. There were various reasons behind this: (a) The lack of facilities in the schools was a major problem, (b) the remoteness of schools and therefore the children had to walk a lot, ranging from 30 minutes to 4 hours, particularly more problem in case of girls, (c) the remoteness also created problems for regular attendance, and (d) the education sector was stifled by inadequate trained national primary teachers. The shortage of trained teachers was the most severe problem affecting development in education sector.<sup>20</sup> Understandably, the number of primary school dropouts was very high, averaging 13% in 1990 at the end of Class VI and about 32% children did not carry on their education at the secondary stage.<sup>21</sup> It also came to notice that those students, who left school, specially from higher primary classes, were not willing to go back to village and many of those who remained in rural areas were found to be over-aged.

Concerning this important factor the Royal Government had introduced the NAPE in this Plan period where curriculum was appropriate to the standard and need of the children so that they might get interest to continue their study.

The main emphasis of the Sixth FYP was to develop technical and vocational education to supply skilled manpower needed for the rapid progress of the country. One of the major achievements of this Plan period was the initiation of non formal education programme for those who could not avail formal system.

### **Seventh Five Year Plan (1992-93 to 1996-97)**

Table 6. 8: Outlay in Education Sector in the Seventh FYP

Capital	Current	Total	% of Total Plan outlay(15590.7)
683.00	1055.00	1738.00	11.2%

(Source- *Seventh Five Year Plan*, Main Plan Document, Vol.1, 1992/93- 1996/1997, Planning Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, Bhutan, p. 42)

### **Objectives**

The broad objectives of the 7<sup>th</sup> Plan for the education sector were (a) improving people's quality of life, (b) developing human resources, (c) assist the population to take part in the development process and (d) preserving the country's culture.

The specific objectives were-

- (a). Increase the coverage of education to meet the target to universalize primary education by 2000, Upgrade the quality of education within the structure of New Approach to Primary Education.
- (b). Improve literacy through non-formal and adult literacy programme.
- (c). Increase educational opportunities for the disadvantaged and disabled people.
- (d). Strengthen technical and vocational education.

### **Strategies for Achieving Objectives**

- i). Increase the number of community schools in order to fair distribution of education facilities. Achieve wider participation of communities in the foundations and protections of community schools.

ii).Sustain progress in the curriculum to meet the requirements of the population and the economy.

iii). Improve the efficiency in the delivery of educational services.

iv).Increase the number of national teachers.

i). Increase Access to Education

In order to have universal access to primary education by 2000, the number of students in primary education system at the end of Seventh FYP was targeted to 100,280 targeting an annual growth rate of 6.85%.<sup>22</sup> More importance had been put on educationally backward areas and on girls. Due to the increase in the number of students in the existing schools there was a need to extend the facilities in those schools at the same time construction of new schools was also a necessity. To improve the quality of education in the community schools the Department of Education determined to send the best teachers to these schools. The communities were encouraged to involve themselves in the choice of school sites, foundation of buildings and maintenance of those. To increase the enrolment of girls in the higher level of education it was decided to make availability of boarding facilities with lady warden.

ii). Improving the Quality of Education

By 1997 all primary level education came under the program of New Approach to Primary Education. More stress was given on *Dzongkha* text books, elementary agricultural economics; environmental conservation along with population and health education. During the Seventh FYP text books were also written for subjects such as- English, History, Geography, Chemistry, Biology etc.

Bhutanese students sat for the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education(Class X) and Indian School Certificate (Class XII). Bhutanese Secondary Examination was introduced by 1995 under the Bhutan Board of Examination.

Curriculum was also developed for higher secondary level which not only included re-writing the existing textbooks but also to give thrust to diverse subjects like arts, crafts, computer science, agriculture, carpentry etc. A physical education

curriculum was also developed by the Department of Education which included both traditional and modern sports.

In the academic year of 1988-89 an average of 10 percent of students constituted dropouts and 25 percent were repeaters.<sup>23</sup> With the introduction of activity centered NAPE it was expected to reduce the rate of repeaters and dropouts. A system of continuous classroom assessment of students was encouraged to decrease repeaters and dropout rates.

iii). Improving the Efficiency in Delivery of Educational Services

The Government assigned high priority to the education sector through financial outlay. More importance was given to community in the building of community schools and its maintenance, bus service etc. In some cases, instead of constructing new schools, a few were relocated to improve enrolment. Boarding facilities provided to encourage increase enrolment in far flung areas.

For the first time entrepreneurs were permitted to set up private primary schools with assured incentives from the Department of Education to make this venture attractive. Improvement was brought about in the administrative powers of the Education Department and the District Education Officers.

iv). Increasing the Numbers and Skills of National Teachers

Shortage of trained national teachers was one the main hindrances behind the development of primary education. It was also recognized that in the primary stage education sector there was a high number of pupils in the lower classes resulting in crowding. Conversely, in the higher classes there were a low number of students resulting in low utilization of teacher time. To enhance the utilization of teachers time a multi-grade teaching system was introduced. The increased number of pupils paralleled an increased need in the number of teachers, particularly the national teachers, and so the Seventh plan sought to address this issue increasing the existing capacity of all teachers training courses. However, the following table shows that the output was not satisfactory.

Table 6. 9: Output of Teachers in the 7<sup>th</sup> FYP

Institute/Course	1990		1997	
	Enrollment	Output	Enrollment	Output
TIC, Paro	60	29	300	135
NIE, Samchi				
PTTC	123	44	160	72
B.ED	71	20	90	25
P.G.C.E	15	10	25	23

(Source- *Seventh Five Year Plan*, Main Plan Document, Vol. 1, 1992/93- 1996/1997, Planning Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, Bhutan, p.81)

In order to progress the quality of education there was in-service training system for the untrained national teachers. These training programmes included multi-grade teaching, school administration etc. Workshops and short courses on specific subjects and pedagogy were also organized in various levels. Distance education system was also introduced for teachers without having to travel long distances.

### **Achievement in the Plan period**

#### **i). Higher Education**

Sherubtse College, Kanglung, in Eastern Bhutan was affiliated to the University of Delhi. The Department intended to improve Sherubtse College, The Simtokha Rigney Institute, and Royal Bhutan Polytechnic through the foundation of a University. In Seventh FYP period the basic infrastructure such as laboratories, equipments, buildings and also the academic competence had increased in Sherubtse College and in order to upgrade to an autonomous body a decision was taken to transfer the B. Ed and P.G.C.E course from NIE, Samchi to Sherubtse. Simultaneously, the Class XI and Class XII courses were handed overs to 4 high schools -Jigme Sherubling , Drugyel (Paro) , Shemgang and Punakha.

Table 6.10: Enrolment at Sherubtse College (1990)

<b>Stream</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Arts, Class XI & XII	95	17	112
Science Class XI & XII	114	14	128
Commerce, XI & XII	39	15	54
<b>Sub Total Class XI &amp; XII</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>294</b>
Arts, Degree Course	85	14	99
Science, Degree Course	41	04	45
Commerce, Degree Course	55	04	59
<b>Sub Total Degree Course</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>203</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>497</b>

(Source- *Seventh Five Year Plan*, Main Plan Document, Vol. 1, 1992/93- 1996/1997, Planning Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, Bhutan, p.81)

Simtokha Rigney School, the main source of *Dzongkha* language teachers, offered courses only up to Class XII and so the Seventh Plan it was decided to develop infrastructure and curriculum of the school to enable it to provide degree level studies in *Dzongkha*.

ii). Technical and Vocational Educational

Appraisal and updated was done of technical and vocational education the existing courses so as to bring improvements in these fields. The workshop in the Royal Bhutan Polytechnic was refurbished with appropriate tools. Hostels were constructed which included a girls' hostels in order to encourage girls' enrollment in technical and vocational education. The Royal Technical Institute's infrastructure and curriculum were improved and a girls' hostel was also built. The enrolment capacity of the National Trade Training Institute had been improved from 60 to 100, and also the number of instructors and physical facilities had been improved.<sup>24</sup> In order to cope

with the necessity for the supply of technical personnel the decision was taken to establish two more trade schools, one positively in Eastern Bhutan.

#### Royal Institute of Management

Keeping in focus the need to strengthen training to the executives, supervisory and office support personnel, the Library Learning Resources and Documentation Division were extended. RIM also established links with reputed foreign institutions to get assistance in its development.

#### iii). Adult and Non-formal Education

Adult education programme met the basic educational needs of the population as far as the three Rs were concerned. An adult literacy programme was developed targeting around 3000 people and the Department of Education carried out various programmes. For the school dropouts Non-formal Education programmes was developed. The community schools were the place for adult and non-formal education programmes. The foundation of the community schools within easier reach of the community led to an increase in the number of children attending schools, specially girls.<sup>25</sup>

#### iv). Education for the Disabled and the Disadvantaged

In the whole country there was only one school for the disabled and disadvantaged groups-the Zangley Muenselling Blind School. In the Seventh FYP a survey was carried out to assess the nature of disabled persons and based on these special programmes and facilities were provided to integrate the disabled into regular schools. In spite of some initiatives in the field of education and the development of modern education it was decided that where specialization is needed scholarships would be provided to the students for further studies abroad.

The main target of the Seventh FYP was to enhance the literacy level in the primary level of education as much as possible to fulfill the goal of universalization of primary education by 2000. It was for the first time the Royal Govt. of Bhutan gave emphasis on the education of disabled and disadvantaged persons during this Plan period.

## **Evaluation of the Five Year Plans**

One has to tread with extreme caution and hesitation in accepting the information put up by the Government of Bhutan. Having gone through the official plan documents from the printed sources and documents posted in the internet one is able to get some ideas of the educational development in the First to the Seventh Five Year Plans. The words “some ideas” is deliberately used because the data and information posted in the official internet websites in a previous plan period is often contradicted by the data given in the next plan period. The difficulty in coming to a lucid and acceptable conclusion becomes even more frustrating for some of the Departments simply stifle a research under the excuse that a file quoted and footnoted in one book or document as belonging to that Department is not to be found in the given office.

Let us consider the figures regarding the total pupils in the rosters in the first three Five Plan periods. The students’ enrollment is seen to decrease over the period of 10 years whereas it is common sense that it should have actually increased. At the end of the First FYP period the figure given is 15,000<sup>26</sup> students but the report in the Second Plan shows that the total enrollment was 14,540<sup>27</sup> or a reduction of 460 students. The official figure at the end of the Third Plan revises the previous figures stating that at the end of the First Plan the number of pupils was 7,000<sup>28</sup> a reduction 8000 from the original count which is more than half the student population. It also gives figure the student population for the Second Plan as 9,000. The figures are either confusing or simply fail to make sense. Without putting any motive into the reason for the high figures given in the first two Five Year Plans I would say that the data given in the first two Five Plans were inflated and that the number given in the Third Plan regarding the First and Second Plan of 7,000 and 9000 students, appears to me more realistic and therefore more acceptable. It must be added with emphasis that there are many in Bhutan who strongly disagree and claim the enrollment was far less. To mention one strong example, Jagar Dorji, an educationist of eminence in Bhutan, has mentioned that at the beginning of the First Plan period there were only 400 students in the whole country.<sup>29</sup> So there are major differences, which should never have been there, especially in the figures concerning the budget allocation for the successive Plan periods, viz First to Seventh Plan, I am accepting the data of budget allocation for those periods with minor corrections and even the glaring discrepancy

of the figures related to education by independently attempting to arrive at figures as acceptable and real as possibility. I take the liberty to presume, with hindsight behind me, that Bhutan was just beginning to learn the importance and the need for documentary preservation, accuracy in accounting for monies related to revenues earned, grants received, loans obtained and expenditures met.

In the absence of adequate past experiences and poor data preserve, development pattern were subject to continuous reviews and changes. Thus, the total expense varied substantially from the original plans. From the data given in the Sixth FYP we get the figures of actual financing from First to Fifth Plan. The total expenditure in the First Plan was Nu 107.2 million<sup>30</sup> against a proposed outlay of Nu 174.7 million.<sup>31</sup> The Second Plan's expenditure was Nu 202.2m<sup>32</sup> against a proposed Nu 221.4m.<sup>33</sup> The trend took a dramatic turn in the following Plan periods where the underutilization changed to overspending. In the Third Plan Nu 475.2m<sup>34</sup> was spent against an allocation of Nu 355m.<sup>35</sup> In the Fourth Plan Nu 1,106.2m.<sup>36</sup> was utilized against the proposed Nu 900.9m<sup>37</sup>, and in the Fifth Plan period Nu 4711.2m<sup>38</sup> was consumed whereas the proposed outlay was Nu 4338.1 m<sup>39</sup>. Similar trend was seen in the Sixth Plan period where the expense was Nu 11036.8m<sup>40</sup> whereas the budgeted figure was Nu 9559.2m.<sup>41</sup>

Thus it is seen that the amount differs from the original and the approved outlay. From these figures it is evident that in at the early phase consumption was below expectation while later on the expenses overshoot the proposed outlay. Similarly, we find expenses going topsy-turvy in the education sector. In the First FYP, Education was allotted 5.72%<sup>42</sup> of the National budget but the expenditure was 8.77%<sup>43</sup> and in the Second Plan against a provision of 12.47%<sup>44</sup> there was an increased spending of 17.66%.<sup>45</sup> A reversal is seen in the following years whereby against an allocation of 20.3%<sup>46</sup> in the Third Plan only 18.96% was utilized<sup>47</sup> and in the Fourth Plan only 12.16%.<sup>48</sup> was spent against an allocation of 14.94%<sup>49</sup> of the National Budget. In the Fifth Plan there was a marginal increase in expenditure with 8.7%<sup>50</sup> of the National Budget being utilized against an outlay of 7.88%.<sup>51</sup> The drift towards overshooting the budget allocation was also witnessed in the Sixth Plan period where the actual expenditure was 10.9%<sup>52</sup> against a proposed provision 8.14% of the budget.<sup>53</sup>

Despite some inconsistencies in the figures I have taken the liberty to include the most probable figures in regard to the budget amount and allocations in the various Five Year Plans. With that backdrop in place I propose to compare the allocation of budget for (a) education with other sectors and also (b) the percentage of budget outlay for education out of total budget. This should reflect a relatively clear picture of the Government's intention to improve the educational position of the country.

In the First FYP (1961-62 to 1965-66) the total budget was 1747 lakh rupees. The highest priority in the First Plan was to break free from the long practiced isolation and it was natural that building communication link, mainly surface communication, grabbed the major portion of the budget. Consequently, construction of roads was viewed not just as a necessity but as an urgency and was allocated a massive amount of 35.49% of the National Budget which amounted to 620 lakh rupees.<sup>54</sup> The second priority was given to the education sector and 100 lakh rupees and was targeted at the primary infrastructural development in the field of education. So, from the very beginning Planning Commission had prioritized the country's educational development as one of the most important tool in nation building and in finding a place in the comity of nations. In the Second FYP (1966-67 to 1970-71) the highest budget allocation was made to what has been given as "BES" (a grouping of roads, water supply, electrification under one heading) with an amount of 7.54 lakh rupees which consisted 34.05% of the total budget.<sup>55</sup> Statistically the second priority was given to agriculture with an amount of 3,850 lakh rupees, consisting 17.38% of the total budget.<sup>56</sup> Education was relegated to the third position and budget allocated for this sector was Rs. 276 lakh rupees out of the total outlay of Rs. 22, 14, 00, 000 which was nearly 12.47%. The drop in the position of education to the third position must not be viewed in isolation simply because of the colossal increase in the amount of financing. In the previous Plan only 100 lakh was provided whereas the Second FYP elevated the funding to 2,76 lakh rupees. So it is patently clear that despite a major shift to other sectors education was not neglected. Planning Commission had given emphasis on accelerating the level of education for improving the quality rather than quantity and to build up national manpower. The Third FYP (1971-72 to 1975-76) period was most important in the sense that in the year 1971 Bhutan became the member of the United Nations so there was focus to modernize the country and to

ensure a measure of prosperity to the countrymen. The total amount of the Third Plan outlay was Rs 3,550.00 lakh and social service sector was given the top most priority pushing down agriculture and communication development in importance. Social service sector included education, health, water supply, sanitation and urban development and budget allocated for this sector was Rs. 1,085.50 lakh consisting 30.57% of the total budget.<sup>57</sup> This was for the first time that initiative was taken for technical education with a budget specifically allocated for that purpose. Budget allotted for general education amounted to Rs. 633 lakh and Rs.87.50 lakh for technical education, total Rs. 720.50 lakh which was nearly 20.3% of the total budget outlay. Here also we find that the amount for education more than doubling the previous Plan allocation. The fact of interest here is that the country had begun to pay some importance to technical education. In the Fourth FYP (1976-77 to 1980-81) there was an endeavour to improve the living standards and efforts were made for expansion of the basic necessity like education. The total budget outlay was Rs. 9008.86 lakh, out of which agriculture was given the top most priority with an amount of Rs. 1561.71 lakh which amounted to 17.33% of the total outlay.<sup>58</sup> Rs. 1346.01 lakh was allotted for education which was the second highest allocation or 14.94 % of the total budget outlay. The above figures clearly show that education sector was always held with respect and importance.

In one of the most ambitious plan undertaken by the Royal Govt. the total budget outlay for the Fifth FYP period (1981-82 to 1991-1992) of Nu./Rs. 43381 lakh (4338.1m) the education sector was allotted Nu./Rs. 3400 lakh (340m). This was so far and expectedly there were certain changes from the previous plans. Because emphasis was given to the revenue generating sectors, industries commanded the highest position of the outlay with 17.4%, followed by power-16.5% of the total outlay; these were followed by public works 12.4% and agriculture 11.5%.<sup>59</sup> The outlays on social sector, particularly education showed a decline to 7.88% of the total outlay. Perhaps investment in this field was lower because a greater proportion of the outlays would have to be devoted only for the maintenance of the infrastructure already established and expansion was at a minimum. In other words the emphasis was to consolidate and improve rather than extend and expand the educational system. Plan outlays had been growing at an impressive rate. In the Sixth Plan outlay the total budget was Nu/Rs. 95592.39 lakh (9559.239m) out of which education's share was

Nu./Rs. 7888 lakh (778.8m). Power and Trade & Industries had gained significant share increase comprising of 13.34%, next was the Public Works Department with 13.05 % out of the total budget.<sup>60</sup> Sixth Plan's priorities did not deviate too far from the Fifth Plan to education sector allocating nearly 8.14 % of the total plan outlay. In this Plan emphasis was given to promote nation's rich cultural heritage and Sanskrit *Pathshalas, Shedras, Dubdra, Rigney* schools etc were improved and foundation of new institutions were given great importance. Included among the other strategies in the educational system was the promotion of loyalty to the monarchy, fostering communal harmony and to realize the values of the Bhutanese system. In the Seventh FYP total budget allocation was Nu/Rs 155907 lakh (15590.7 m), out of which social service sector was given the highest priority, 22.7 % of the total outlay.<sup>61</sup> Department of education was allotted an amount of Nu/Rs 17380 lakh (1738 m) which was 11.2% of the total budget allocation. Some expansion took place in the field of education with the Government encouraging communities to establish schools by themselves. Emphasis was given on improving the quality of service.

If we observe the pattern of growth of the Plan outlays we find an increase of Nu/Rs 5,221.13 million from the Fifth to the Sixth FYP and a further increase of Nu/Rs 6030.77 million in the Seventh Plan. With this massive infusion of cash real progress took place in the Seventh FYP i.e., the year 1997 which is the ending year of my study.

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## Chapter 7

### Condition of Education from Primary to Tertiary level

Towards the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the British Indian rulers were actively pursuing their 'forward area policy' in the Himalayan regions, particularly to develop trade relations with Tibet, in which Bhutan was destined to play its role. The Trongsa *Penlop*, Ugyen Wangchuck, who was the most powerful person in the country became a dependable British ally and helped the British during their Lhasa Expedition (1903-04) in various ways. Within a few years there were tremendous political ups and downs in Bhutan and Ugyen Wangchuck being selected as the first hereditary ruler on December 17, 1907. It was really a welcome development, which was anticipated, encouraged and promptly accorded recognition by the British. With the signing of the Anglo Bhutanese Punakha Treaty on January 8, 1910 Bhutan was effectively brought within the orbit of British sphere of influence with Charles A. Bell, the then Political Officer of Sikkim, appointed to look after the affairs of Bhutan. To develop better and faster communication system efforts were made to familiarise the Bhutan Durbar with English and Hindi. Moreover the King of Bhutan realized their linguistic hardship and took steps for teaching English and Hindi in his country. The King realized the advantages of western education and recognized the merit of *Gongzim* Ugyen Dorji, who was able to communicate in foreign languages with officers from British India at that time and thus was able to make meaningful interaction with them. To fill the vacuum to some extent Ugyen Wangchuck established the first western model school in Haa as early as 1914.<sup>1</sup> He also founded a mobile court school that moved with him around the country.<sup>2</sup> The second King Jigme Wangchuck, set up 7 to 10 Hindi medium schools in Bumthang, Haa, Wangdi, Tashigang, Damphu and Paro.<sup>3</sup> This was the beginning period of modern education system but should we consider it under the broad canvas of the overall development status of Bhutan we can hardly consider its earlier system as modern, it was basically a makeshift immediate need-based effort. The real development started during the rule of third hereditary King, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck who believed that economic and educational development were essential to maintain links with other countries. The launching of Bhutan's First Five Year Development Plan in 1961 is considered as a landmark in the modern development programme because before that Bhutan was devoid of minimum infrastructural facilities such as motor roads, structured

curriculum etc. So, real modern education system, within the framework of overall national development, could be identified as commencing from 1961. Despite this late start Bhutan is one of the very few countries among the least developed countries, which provides free education to all children irrespective of their socio-economic background.

### **The purpose of Education**

The focus of education was dual: instrumental and integration, instrumental as it became necessary for the people to use new languages, get acquainted with new knowledge and acquire skills so as to be capable to take part in the country's developmental processes. Many schools were opened for the purpose of teaching the skills, languages and technology appropriate for the development of the country. It became a necessity for the people to be acquainted with modern developmental activities. Simultaneously, integration with the global community also became a necessity as Bhutan could no longer keep herself secluded in the period of globalization. The only way to improve the position was through education. In order to maintain links with the other countries and for a rapid development process English was selected as the medium of learning. The main boost to education came during the reign of the fourth King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck. Under his command, a National Education Policy committee was formed with the following members: <sup>4</sup>

1. Lyonpo Dawa Tshering, Foreign Minister, Chairman
2. Dasho Lam Penjor, Vice Chairman
3. Rev. Father William Mackey
4. Lam Nado, Dzongkha Language Advisor
5. Dasho Nado Rinchhen, Director General, Secretary to the Committee

The first National Education Policy was completed and approved in 1976. It was mentioned here that, "In the process of educational development, the primary need is to prepare the type of educated manpower required for the all around development of our country".<sup>5</sup> The second National Education Policy of 1984 stated that education should be "inculcate in students spiritual, cultural and traditional values and contribute to national and social cohesion; Meet the manpower requirements of the country and to avert, as far as possible, the incidence of educated unemployment; Base teaching methods on learning by understanding, by emphasising the relevance

and practical use of knowledge learned and by decreasing the emphasis on learning by rote.’’<sup>6</sup>

### **School Administration**

When development of education was included as a part of modern development plan, the post of Director of Education was introduced in the First Five Year Plan and it was implemented in 1960’s. The Director of Education was in charge of the academic and administrative functions of all the schools. He was responsible to the Secretary General of the Development Wing in Thimphu, although the head office remained in Paro until 1975. Father Mackey in 1995 wrote of people most directly involved in the dissemination of education which included Prime Minister Jigme Dorji, Tashi Dorji (Officiating Prime Minister) and a list of devoted capable Directors as follows: <sup>7</sup>

1. *Lyonpo* Dawa Tshering-the first official Director of Education
2. Dr. S.C. Mittal
3. Mr. R.S.James
4. Mr. A.N. Dhawan
5. *Dasho* Nado Rinchen, longest reigning Director
6. *Dasho* Jigme Thinley
7. *Dasho* Thinley Gyamtsho, renamed as Director General of Education

In 1980s decentralization policy was introduced heralding a fresh vision and practice in administration in general and the education system in particular. Jigme Singye Wangchuck, is universally credited for initiating not just the decentralization process but also to the beginning of many administrative changes in the country.

In the 1980s there were two Regional Education Officers (REO): at Trashigang and Sarpang. They were responsible for implementing “all educational policies and for proper administrative control of all teaching staff”.<sup>8</sup> Each REO was assisted by a small group of inspectors to monitor teachers’ performance in schools. In the late 1970s and early 1980’s, some inspectors in the Head Office, Thimphu, were deployed to supervise school construction, as there was no engineering department to look after the construction of school buildings.

The First Education Conference to “identify the problems in the implementation of the National Education Policy and to raise the standard of education in the country” was held in Thimphu on May 25-26, 1977.<sup>9</sup> Welcoming the delegates, Mr. Nado Rinchen, Officer on Special Duty, Department of Education, revealed that a conference of this kind was an important indication of the rapid strides education had made in the country and this was the result of wise and enlightened leadership of His Majesty the King. He said the success achieved was due also to the “most loyal and dedicated services rendered by all those deeply involved in the drafting of the national policy and its implementation”.<sup>10</sup> In his speech, the Secretary General, Ministry of Development, *Dasho* (Dr.) T. Tobgyel, pointed out that education would always remain the backbone and foundation of all development activity in the country. He expressed his happiness on the decision of the Education Department to start the third Regional Education Office at Punakha for the efficient management of educational institutions in Central and Western Bhutan. He was delighted with the success in the field of education and pointed out that “it had been possible only due to the hard and dedicated efforts put in by all the concerned staff of these institutions and also due to good management of the administrative machinery”.<sup>11</sup>

In 1987, the Department of Education closed down the regional offices and decided to divide the country into 4 administrative zones which was a step forward in the direction of decentralization of administrative functions. Each zone would contain 4 or 5 *dzongkhags* and the grouping of *dzongkhags* would be done on the basis of such common features as geographical contiguity which would facilitate easier and quicker communication within the zone. The *dzongkhags* within a zone were to work within the economic goals taking into account the special socio-economic feature of the zone with the minimum of manpower and resources and pursue such goals as laid down by the Zonal administration.

Zonal grouping was as follows-

Zone 1 or Western Zone: Samchi, Chhukha, Thimphu, Paro, Haa  
(Headquarters at Chhukha)

Zone 2 or West Central Zone: Dagana, Chirang, Wangdi and Punakha  
(Headquarters at Chirang)

Zone 3 or East Central Zone: Gaylegphug, Shemgang, Tongsa and Bumthang  
(Headquarters at Gaylegphug)

Zone 4 or Eastern Zone: SamdrupJongkhar, Pemagatshel, Trashigang, Mongar  
and Lhuntshi (Headquarters at Younphula)

### **The main objectives of establishing zonal administrations-<sup>12</sup>**

1. To strengthen the decentralization process in the Fifth Five Year Plan and work towards achieving self-reliance.
2. To be able to plan on a zonal basis so that inter linkages between the various *dzongkhags* and potentials of the zone as a whole can be developed.
3. *Dzongkhags* can concentrate on development activities as co-ordination and many other functions of dealing with Ministries and Department would be carried out by zonal administration.
4. To ensure proper and smooth implementation of all plan programmes in the regions.
5. To provide a fair and efficient administration.

### **Organization of the zonal administration**

Zonal administration was organized on functional lines. In each zonal administration there were six functional divisions: <sup>13</sup>

1. Zonal affairs-administration, personnel and finance
2. Planning and co-ordination
3. Social services and culture
4. Agriculture and industry
5. Communication
6. Engineering

### **Social services and culture**

This division consisted of three sections- education, health and culture

### **Education-**

A direct relationship was established between the zonal education sector and the Education Ministry.

### **Education Ministry's responsibilities:**<sup>14</sup>

Formulation of all education related policies, plans and programmes including those to be included in Five Year Plans.

1. Curriculum and textbooks development
2. Inspection and counselling of schools and ensuring relevance and quality of teaching and learning
3. Administration of All Bhutan Common Examinations, inter-zonal transfers and placements of outstanding candidates as boarders in high schools and junior high schools.
4. Training of teachers, headmasters, principals and *dzongkhag* and zonal education officers (pre-service and in-service).
5. Printing and supply of text books, purchase and supply of all stationeries and teaching aids.
6. Development of standard drawings and designs for educational buildings, furniture and other facilities and according technical sanctions for such constructions.
7. Administration of high schools and junior high schools located at Thimphu as well as all national institutes, such as Sherubtse College, the Simtokha Rigney School, the Teachers Training Institute, Royal Institute of Technology, etc.
8. Issuance of policy and administrative guidelines and instructions from time to time.

### **Responsibilities of the Zonal Administrators:**<sup>15</sup>

1. To represent His majesty the King and the Royal Government in the region.
2. To provide a fair justice and efficient administration to the people of the region.
3. To look after the social, cultural and economic well being of the people of the region.
4. To provide for proper law, order and security within the region.
5. To plan for socio-economic development of the region and to ensure that there is an optimum utilization of the scare resources of manpower, finance and materials to meet the developments of the region as a whole.

The expectations of the Department of Education from the zonal administrative system were enormous. Construction, renovations, repairs and maintenance and supervision of the educational establishments were expected to receive a new boost with the establishment of Zonal Administration Office. One Zonal Education Officer (ZEO) was selected for each zone from amongst the available senior educationists who was made the representative of the Zonal Administrator. ZEO's were equipped with inspectors who were to be relieved from their previous duties of supervision of construction of schools and their duties were inspecting the schools in both academic and administrative matters. Till then the inspectors of schools were in a position to visit and inspect only the high schools, junior high schools and primary school located along the motor roads. The Department of education decided in 1989 to post a team of inspectors to each Zonal Administration under the respective Zonal Education Officer so that inspection of all primary schools could be carried out regularly.<sup>16</sup> It was also expected that Zonal Education Officer would visit the schools under their respective jurisdiction at least twice a year. The main task of the Zonal Education Officers was to improve the co-ordination between the Department of Education and *dzongkhags*. They convened joint meetings with Ministry of Education and inspectors of schools and submitted the report of progress in the zone and they were also responsible for procurement and distribution of all materials supplied to the zone through educational stores at the zonal level and monitoring these activities.<sup>17</sup> In the year 1990 the Government had decided to hand over the administration and financial aspects of all high schools and junior high schools to the respective zones with the exception of those located at Thimphu. A five day conference was held at Punakha High School from 12 February 1990 to 17 February 1990 where heads of the schools and zonal administrators were informed about this.<sup>18</sup> In the middle of 1990 the Government proposed to strengthening the education sector in zones by appointing an Assistant Zonal Education Officer in each zone.<sup>19</sup>

In the late 1980s *dzongkhag* education offices were established in all districts.<sup>20</sup> Thus during the Fifth Five Year Plan decentralization of the administrative system, including the administration of the primary schools of all the *dzongkhags* had greatly improved. The posts of *Dzongkhag* Education Officers (DEOs) were created and they were given increased responsibilities as the local heads of school education under the administrative jurisdiction of the *Dzongda* (District Administrator). DEOs were

selected from amongst the trained senior teachers and headmasters rather than deputing university graduate administrators.<sup>21</sup> In the record of March 1989 we find that, in view of the shortage of people with necessary qualifications, the Department of Education was in a position to post only 11 DEOs.<sup>22</sup> But at the end of September 1989 the Department of Education has completed appointment of DEOs to all the 18 *dzongkhags*.<sup>23</sup> The DEOs were expected to visit the schools under their respective jurisdiction at least twice a year.

#### **Role and Functions of the ZEO's and DEO's-**<sup>24</sup>

1. Education Officers were the Department of Education's representatives in zones and *dzongkhags*, bridging the gap between the zones, *dzongkhags*, Ministry and the Department of Education.
2. Education Officers were expected to know the plans and policies of the Department. They were responsible for execution of Government policies and to encourage the target groups of students, teachers, parents and the community.
3. Education Officers as representatives of the Department of Education had to play an active role in mobilizing the resources for the schools under their jurisdictions.
4. Education Officers were required to demonstrate their professional efficiency in their day to day functions.
5. Guiding trained and untrained teachers.
6. Guiding experienced and inexperienced head teachers.
7. Effective implementation of the curriculum changes and
8. Acting as guardians in providing quality education to the students.

Along with administrative responsibilities of the schools the Department of Education also stressed upon the academic roles of the ZEOs and DEOs such as to provide necessary logistic support to the teachers and the students. Twenty-one Education Officers-four ZEO's and seventeen DEO's attended a two-week long seminar from 25 September to 4 October, 1989, the first of its kind, to work out and understand their roles better as those accountable for zonal and district education.<sup>25</sup> Director of Education, Dasho Thinley Gyamtsho, outlined several reasons for the seminar: the heavy enrolment problems, to make education more relevant to the national needs, the decentralization of the education system, the takeover of the

school administration by the zones and to strengthen the roles of the DEO's. The participants felt that this was a good opportunity to catch up with all the changes occurring in the education sector and also to exchange ideas on the broad experiences of all the officers. The annual one week's conference for the ZEOs and DEOs were held at Thimphu from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1990. The major emphasis of the conference was on academic rather than on administration.<sup>26</sup> To this extent, the Department had availed the services of two Swiss experts to augment the resource personnel of the Department of Education for the conference. In this context, it was possible to get some references of school inspection by ZEO's and DEO's, for example on August 10, 1991 the Zonal Education Officer of zone 1 and District Education Officer of Chhukha visited Chhukha High School, Phuentsholing Junior High School, nine primary schools and five community schools but Dungna Primary School and four other community schools could not be visited because of bad weather.<sup>27</sup> The main purpose of their visit was to know the day to day functioning of the school activities, both academic and administrative. Further references obtained was that nine DEOs from Bumthang, Tongsa, Sarbhang, Chirang, Chhukha, Samchi, Haa, Paro and Thimphu made a tour to Indonesia from 15- 23 February, 1992, which was sponsored by UNICEF to broaden their knowledge by exposing them to the education systems of that country.<sup>28</sup> The officials found that the Indonesian education system was similar to that in Bhutan and the small primary schools there could be compared with community schools in Bhutan.

### **Role of the inspectors**

School inspections had started from as early as 1961, the responsibility being born mainly by the senior teachers who had taught in the 1950's. They were very strict disciplinarians and the inspection carried out by them was more a check on the teachers' performances and giving them professional support. They visited classrooms and asked questions to the students much to the worry of the teachers. Sometimes inspectors were mere secondary school graduates with no experience in teaching or in the methodology of pedagogy and naturally they gained less respect from the teachers of schools they visited. Regarding the inspection system of the 70s of the last century H.B. Vishwa, an eminent educationist of Bhutan mentioned that, "A handful of inspectors available in the Department were bagged down with the administrative works. The inspectors of schools used to visit schools for only the administrative

matters and collection of statistics.”<sup>29</sup> Teachers generally viewed inspectors as intervening watchdogs rather than academic auditors. It is a fact that the inspectors had to travel to different parts of the country during heavy rains, hot sun, up the steep hill sides and down the slopes and across torrential rivers often without bridges. Although they may have been accepted in the schools as rare visitors from the headquarters, their sincerest desire would have been to be most useful to colleagues in the schools. Often these desires were not fulfilled as they were simply expected to write report of the place resulting in a natural loss of all the interest in their work. In 1997, the traditional concept of inspection was replaced by the introduction of Education Monitoring and Support Division (EMSD) and the incumbent were to be known as Education Monitoring Officers (EMO). Their new responsibilities among other things were:

“1. Looking at the plans and programmes of the schools against a standard framework for an effective school

2. Discussing programmes and achievements with schools.”<sup>30</sup>

They were expected to look after the relationship among the school staff, the general appearance of students, maintenance of school property and records. This system required the process to be transparent whereby the purpose of the visits, observations and reports were to be freely discussed in the visited schools so that the teachers would no longer be suspicious of the visitors’ intentions. Teachers were to get the feedback on their performances, what must continue, and what areas needed improvement.<sup>31</sup> Main purpose of the visit was to see if the schools were following the syllabus and to check the academic content of the courses to make certain a uniform standard in all schools across the country. The inspectors also looked into the problem of teacher shortage faced by schools and inspect the buildings and classrooms.

Thus, we find that there emerged a policy of decentralization in the administration of the education system. There were officers at all levels who had various responsibilities to perform. For example, inspectors had to travel different parts of the country not only to check the performances of the teachers in various schools but also to advocate educational standards and do academic auditing.

## **The head teacher and the school**

During 50's of the last century there were few modern schools in the country and their size was very small, ranging from thirty to one hundred students on roll and mostly run by a single teacher. Although these schools were state-run, absolute power was vested in the teacher and he was, therefore, the all in all in the school. These teachers, who were put in high esteem and respect, were called '*Lopon*' which supposedly means the King of learning. When a *Lopon* began to employ his assistants, he was referred to as '*Lopon Gongma*' which precisely corresponds to 'headmaster'.<sup>32</sup> Those early headmasters were very authoritarian to the extent of a strict military officer. They were given the full authority and power to run the schools in the way they wished. Disruptive children were severely punished or expelled. However, as the schools began to grow both in size and number and with the advent of large number of Indian teachers after 1962, the role of the head began to change from rigid authoritarian to benevolent authoritarian. The Indian teachers were better qualified compared to the Bhutanese at that time and had the experience of managing schools in their own country though all of them did not have a professional training. In the middle of the 80's the Government decided to nationalize the education system in the belief that young Bhutanese teachers would be placed as the heads of schools nationwide, a procedure termed as '*Nationalization of Heads*'.<sup>33</sup> The reason for this policy of the Government was that it had become imperative to utilize the schools and institutions to develop loyal and Bhutanese citizens to serve His Majesty the King and the country faithfully as well as ensure the kingdom's future well being. It was mentioned in the Country's first educational guidelines that "what the Government is looking for from our national teachers, particularly the heads of schools/institutes is--- love, loyalty, and dedication to His Majesty, the country and the people, and above all, to the causes of thousands of our students who are in their custody".<sup>34</sup>

Till June 1988, of the 192 schools and institutions across the country five schools were headed by expatriates and in March 1989 all were replaced by national heads. The first year was a period of probation, those who would be found unable the Government would replace them and for this the Department of Education decided to do regular evaluation of the performances of all the heads on the basis of following criteria-<sup>35</sup>

1. Initiative, dedication, and ability to effectively implement the Government policies and programmes
2. Good administration of their institutions
3. The ability to maintain a high degree of discipline amongst the students and teachers of the respective schools
4. The ability to install the highest standard of Bhutanese values in the students so that they develop into loyal and dedicated subjects of the king and the country.

### **The role of the head**

The role of the head was that of a leader who had the responsibility to lead and make decisions in all aspects of achieving the school's objectives and educational goals. In addition to the prime role of academic leader and role model to others, the head was also the representative of the Department of Education in the school and was, therefore, the overall administrative head of the institution. As such, the head required to demonstrate high leadership qualities.

The academic leader was responsible for effectively implementing Government policy and programmes. In working to ensure that the students obtained the best education possible, he/she should-<sup>36</sup>

1. Provide supervision to teachers to apply the new curriculum as provided at each class level.
2. Ensure that each teacher develops an overview of the syllabus material to be covered during the academic year.
3. Promote the use of Dzongkha.
4. Develop the teaching calibre of his staff by effective supervision.
5. Ensure proper supervision of all academic activities.
6. Encourage professional co-operation amongst teachers and towards the head.
7. Encourage individual teachers to show leadership quality and decision making when given responsibility.
8. Assess and evaluate all academic activities done by the staff and students e.g. examinations, promotion criteria, lesson plans, teaching-learning process etc.
9. Encourage the development and execution of a good co-curricular and extra-curricular programme.

As a role model, the head was required to exercise discipline in his/her private as well as his/her public life. This was particularly important since the head was actively working to preserve and promote the traditional customs and cultural values of the country. As the administrative head he had to ensure that school administration ran smoothly and adequately. In doing this he/she needed to:<sup>37</sup>

1. Delegate properly defined responsibilities to other staff members.
2. Supervise both teaching and non-teaching staff.
3. Plan and organise school activities i. e. daily routine, timetabling, programming etc.
4. Ensure proper usage and maintenance of the school's physical and educational facilities.
5. Plan and decide on financial matters pertaining to the school.
6. Maintain a high degree of discipline amongst the students and teachers by ensuring that the staff and students adhere to the set of rules and regulations of the school.
7. Work to promote positive community, staff and professional relations.

### **Teachings by heads of schools**

In 1989 the Department of Education had been informed that many heads of schools did not engage themselves in any classroom teaching. No doubt that good administration of their respective schools was the most important responsibility of the concerned heads of the schools and the Department felt it paramount that the heads of schools should be involved in teaching of a limited number of periods a week due to the following reasons-<sup>38</sup>

1. The education system in the kingdom was plagued by the shortage of trained national teachers. The existing heads of schools constituted the best group amongst the available trained national teachers and were accordingly elevated to the post of heads of schools. So it was not possible to exempt 195 of the best teachers from classroom teaching.
2. The concerned headmasters would be in a position to provide academic leadership only if they undertook certain amount of teaching load and keep themselves updated with the classroom scenario.

3. Certain amount of classroom teaching by heads of school was essential in order not only to gain necessary respect and co-operation from the teachers and the students, but also to keep them aware with the day to day life in the school campus.

So, the heads of schools and institutes were generally expected to teach a minimum of twelve periods a week and headmasters of smaller primary schools with less than 150 students were however expected to take almost full weekly teaching load.<sup>39</sup>

#### **Annual selection and Awards to outstanding schools and head teachers:**

On February 10, 1991, the Minister for Social Services declared the system of annual selection of outstanding schools and headmasters and suitably awarding them. The Department of Education would establish appropriate criteria and procedures for the selection as well as the form of awards to the schools. Both academic and extracurricular performances by the schools, such as results of the common examinations, sports and cultural activities, school agriculture and forestry programmes, campus maintenance and beautification, relationship with the communities and the respective head teachers initiatives in these fields as well as in staff development would be included in the criteria for the annual selection of outstanding schools and head teachers for awards.

#### **Annual Selection of Outstanding Schools for the Year 1992:**

The Department of Education announced the schools which were selected as the best schools in their respective categories for the all round performances during the year 1992as mentioned hereunder-

Table 7.1: Best schools in 1992

<b>Classification</b>	<b>School /name of the head</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Best High School	Mongar High School (Thubten Jamtsho)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ICSE results for 1991- 100%</li> <li>2. ICSE results for 1992 – 93%</li> <li>3. Class VIII 1992 common examinations – 83% which was 3<sup>rd</sup> best</li> </ol>

		<p>amongst the high schools.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Team spirit amongst teaching staff resulting from the leadership of principal commendable.</li> <li>5. Extra-curricular activities particularly the cooking club of girl students is good.</li> <li>6. Above mentioned achievements made in spite of the fact that Monger was upgraded to high school only a few years ago.</li> </ol>
Best Jr. High School	Wamrong Jr. High School (Wangpo Tenzin)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 93.75% in 1992 class VI common examinations</li> <li>2. 94.12% in 1992 class VIII common examinations which was second only to Paro high school.</li> <li>3. 2 Students, namely, Kencho Wangdi medals in painting and essay competitions respectively during the first SAARC festival.</li> <li>4. They were the only Bhutanese Gold medallists which were awarded by the President of India in New Delhi on October, 1992.</li> <li>5. One of the best schools in the Kingdom in folk songs and music.</li> <li>6. The above mentioned achievements made by the school in spite</li> </ol>

		of the fact that Wamrong JHS probably has one of the worst facilities amongst the Jr. High Schools.
Best 3 primary Schools		
1 <sup>st</sup> position	Lobesa Primary School Thimphu (Yeshi Wangdi)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 100% or 25 students passed in 1992 class VI common examinations.</li> <li>2. Community participation in school affairs very strong.</li> <li>3. Team spirit amongst teachers under headmaster's leadership good.</li> <li>4. Nature conservation and social forestry commendable.</li> </ol>
2 <sup>nd</sup> position	Phuentsholing Primary School Chhukha (Kinley Pem)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 90% or 25 out of 29 students passed 1992 class VI common examinations.</li> <li>2. Team spirit amongst teachers under headmistress's leadership very good.</li> <li>3. In spite of difficulties and being in urban area relationship between school and parents very good.</li> <li>4. Above mentioned achievements made in spite of the fact that the school was closed after repeated bombings by Ngolops(anti-socialists) and reopened only after a year.</li> </ol>
3 <sup>rd</sup> position	Deothang Primary School Samdrup Jongkhar (Jurmey Kuenga)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 90.32% of 28 out of 31 students passed in 1992 class VI</li> </ol>

		<p>common examinations.</p> <p>2. Campus maintenance very good</p> <p>3. Team spirit amongst teachers under headmaster's leadership very strong.</p>
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(Source-*Tenth Quarterly Policy Guidelines and Instructions*, Department of Education, Ministry of Social Service, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu April 1993, pp.8-9)

The Department of Education congratulated all the teachers and students of the above mentioned 5 schools for their performances and being selected as the best schools for the year 1992. All the available information, mainly the reports of the inspectors of schools as well as feedbacks by the dzongkhags authorities were used for the final assessments.

**Training Programmes for the heads of the schools:**

The Department of Education started in-service training programmes for the head teachers from the 80s to develop necessary confidence and to increase their ability. Here are some examples of training programmes of the head teachers:

1. An education workshop was organised by the Social and Cultural Division of the Department of Education in Deothang for headmasters of different schools from January 1 to 15 to provide them an opportunity to interact, exchange views, and experiences and discuss various issues with department officials including new curricula, teaching facilities etc.<sup>40</sup>
2. The headmasters of junior high schools, principals of high schools, head of institutions of higher learning and district education officers from all over the country met at Thimphu from September 23 to 25, 1986. The conference was inaugurated with a speech by the Director of Education, Dasho Jigme Thinley, who informed the participants on the structure, organization and workings of the directorate. Working sessions were held on the second and third afternoons where the participants separated into four groups discussed concerns and proposed resolutions. These groups were academic, administration, inspection,

counselling and direction. Under the chairmanship of Dasho Jigme Thinley the group reports were reviewed, revised and resolutions adopted. Participants felt the conference was an effective medium for information on the overall structure and policies of the Education Department.<sup>41</sup>

3. The Department of Education conducted an intensive 12 day training course at Samchi on school management and administration for the heads of primary schools starting from 26<sup>th</sup> December, 1988. According to the Deputy Director of Education, Zangley Dukpa, the objective of the in-service training was to improve the skill of the primary school headmasters in running a school. This was the first time that 150 heads of primary schools took part in such a programme. Future plans for the heads of schools were to have distance training using communication facilities like the radio and also to have a mobile training team which could visit schools from time to time.<sup>42</sup> The Director of Education, *Dasho* Thinley Gyamtsho, in his inaugural speech said that, “It is hoped that you the headmasters of different schools would be in a position to fulfil the national objectives by instilling in our younger generations a deep sense of pride and respect for our traditional values”.<sup>43</sup>

4. The head teachers from 3 junior high schools and 19 primary schools attended the conference in Samchi from August 25 to 28, 1989 which was coordinated by the *Dzongkhag* Education Officer. The conference was held to work out more effective ways to implement the national education policies, familiarise the headmasters with their responsibilities and the different aspects of school management.<sup>44</sup>

5. A three day workshop was held at Teachers Training College in Paro in July 1991 which was attended by head-teachers, class teachers, officials and resource persons from the education field. The workshop exposed the participants to the link between teaching experience and teaching skills, introduction to the preconference format, lesson observation and introduction to evaluation format.<sup>45</sup>

6. A two day workshop attended by more than 20 headmasters of primary schools and teachers in charge of the community schools in Mongar *Dzongkhag* was held on October 30-31, 1991. The workshop, organized by the education sector of the *dzongkhag* included discussions on administrative procedures, implementation of competitions both within the school and with other schools in

games, sports and essays, co-ordination between parents and teachers and the latest departmental policies for the promotion of a better education system in the country. According to the District Education Officer of Mongar, the main target of the workshop was to assess the headmasters and teachers in charge in terms of overall school administration and the academic contents covered so far.<sup>46</sup>

7. A conference of the heads of schools was held at Teachers training College in Paro from 4 to 16 January 1993 which was attended by 16 heads of junior high schools, 144 heads of primary schools, 95 heads of community schools, 19 *dzongkhag* education officers and 5 inspectors of schools. At the end of the conference the Director of Education, *Dasho* Thinley Gyamtsho, pointed out that, “I am proud to stand before you to declare that the nationalism of the heads of our schools and institutes has been totally successful, all except one of our 268 schools and institutes are now headed by nationals” and he listed some success achieved in schools under the stewardship of national heads, “The growing knowledge and popularity of the country’s history, geography and environment, *dzongkha* and the growing confidence and ability of self-expression in both speech and writing and above all the pride of being Bhutanese”.<sup>47</sup> The seminar aimed at reviewing the education sector’s activities during the Sixth five Year Plan, familiarising the participants with activities of the Seventh Plan, particularly in the matters of primary education. The seminar was important because it gave the educators an opportunity to share their experiences, exchange views, and discuss common issues and problems faced in their respective institutes.

8. A conference of the head teachers of primary schools, junior high schools, DEO’s and other education officers was held at the NIE, Samchi from December 29, 1994 to January 12, 1995. The 220 participating head teachers and education officers discussed on many major issues and challenges related to the education system such as multi-grade teaching, teacher deployment and utilization, supervision, guidance and counselling, examinations, evaluation and promotion; non-formal education; school management board; matters relating to decentralization, cost effectiveness and sustainability of the education system. The conference provided not only important feedbacks but also made many important recommendations in Government endeavours to make education system more relevant according to the national needs and aspirations.<sup>48</sup>

In fact the Government thought that the headmasters must assume all the responsibilities of being the focal point in their respective schools in bringing about all round improvements in the concerned schools particularly in enhancing the

qualifications and skills amongst their respective teachers through the school based in service training programmes. The head teachers must also be in position to provide necessary leadership to the teachers and students as well as to the members of the communities to fulfil the national goals and aspirations. In order to make them learn from each other, the Department of Education had arranged an all Bhutan tour for heads of the 7 tertiary institutes and 8 high schools during May, 1993. The group travelled, lived and studied together and visited all the institutes and high school in the country. Following was the purpose, schedule and name of the participants-<sup>49</sup>

**Purpose-**

1. To review and assess secondary and tertiary level education programmes.
2. To provide avenue for discussions on issues of general concerns and briefing by departmental officials.
3. To provide opportunities to the heads to observe, listen and share each other's experiences in their own unique matters.
4. Other related matters.

Table 7.2: Programme for heads in all Bhutan tour, 1993

<b>Day</b>	<b>Programme</b>
1.5.93	Inaugural session
10.5.93	Visit Yangchenphug High School in Thimphu
11.5.93	Visit Motithang High School in Thimphu
12.5.93	Visit Punakaha High School in Punakaha
13.5.93	Visit Teachers Training College in Paro
14.5.93	Visit Paro High School in Paro
15.5.93	Visit Chhukha High School in Chhukha
16.5.93	Visit NIE in Samchi
17.5.93	Visit Royal Technical Institute in Phuentsholing
18.5.93	Tour from Phuentsholing to Shemgang
19.5.93	Visit Shemgang High School in Shemgang
20.5.93	Tour from Shemgang to Deothang
21.5.93	Visit Royal Bhutan Polytechnic in Deothang
22.05.93	Tour from Deothang to Khaling
23.5.93	Visit ZangleyMuenselling School in Khaling
24.5.93	Tour from Khaling to Mongar
25.5.93	Visit Mongar High School in Mangor
26.5.93	Visit Sherubtse College in Kanglung
27.5.93	Closing ceremony at Sherubtse College

(Source-Tenth Quarterly Policy Guidelines and Instructions, Department of Education, Ministry of Social Service, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, April, 1993, Annexure I)

## Participants

1. Pema Thinley, Director, NIE, Samchi
2. Dorji Tshering, Director, TTC, Paro
3. Zangley Dukpa, Principal, Sherubtse College
4. Kezang Chhador, Principal, RBP, Deothang
5. Neten Zangmo, Principal, RTI, Phuentsholing
6. Singye Namgyel, Vice Principal, Simtokha Rigshung School
7. Gagey Lhamu, Principal, Motithang High School
8. Tshewang Tandin, Principal Yangchenphug High School
9. Namegy Wangmo, Principal, Paro High School
10. Pintsho Choden, Principal, Chhukha High School
11. Tshering Tenzin, Principal, Shemgang High School
12. Tashi Norbu, Principal, Punakha High School
13. Thubten Gyatsho, Principal, Mongar High School
14. Sangay Tenzin, Principal, Jigme Sherubling High School, Khaling
15. Nawang Namgyel, Principal, Zangley Muenselling School in Khaling.

We find one remarkable change in the 90s when the designation of head teachers was replaced by the more respectable term of ‘principal’ as in the case of the heads of colleges and teacher training institutes.

### **Selection of heads of schools**

When Government introduced the policy to appoint nationals as heads of the schools in late 80’s, many inexperienced and less matured teachers were placed in that position and by late 90’s there were experienced and matured teachers available within the country to fill the deficiency. In August 1997 the Department of Education declared that candidates who were interested and eligible for the post of head teachers might apply directly to the Education Division. The criteria required were: <sup>50</sup>

1. Applicants applying for the post of primary school/community school head teacher must have a minimum of 5 years of teaching experience.
2. Applicants applying for the post of junior high school/high school head teacher must have a minimum of bachelor degree in Education/University graduate with at least 3 years of teaching experience.
3. Applicants must be willing to serve in remote/difficult area.

### **Structure of Education system**

The modern education system had a 7+4+2+3 structure, i.e. seven years at primary school, four years in high school, a further two years in senior high school, and three years in the basic degree course at Sherubtse College. Besides these there were technical education, special education, non-formal education and adult education system.

### **Primary Education:**

In the 1960's, Bhutan introduced a 6-year primary schooling period of 'Infant to class V'. Later in 1970's, this evolved to a 7 year primary period of Infant, Kindergarten and up to class V, still later this was renamed Lower Kindergarten to class V. This system of two kindergarten grades required to admit the children in school at a younger age. In 1985 the Department of Education, aiming to reduce the twin problems of shortage of trained teachers and admission of very young children, raised the minimum admission age to six years and replaced the two-years of kindergarten by one year of Pre-Primary (class PP).<sup>51</sup> Within the seven years of primary education, the first grade was designated Pre-Primary (PP) and the remaining six classes' I-VI. Despite the name PP, the first year was very much formal schooling. However, the Department recognized that some parents were able to bear the costs of the education of their children so one of the strategy of the Seventh Five Year Plan was to encourage private entrepreneurs to establish primary schools in towns.<sup>52</sup> The 1993 Review of Primary Education commented that in most PP classes: "The aim of teachers seems to be to get (the children) onto the readers, formal arithmetic and book work as quickly as possible so that they will be ready for class 1. The Pre-Primary grade does not function as preschool (as intended) but seems to be already class 1 so that the primary education in Bhutan in fact lasts for seven years."<sup>53</sup>

The primary education system, broadly defined, incorporated three types of institutions. Most obvious were the primary schools, but it also included community schools and junior high schools. Until 1994, some high schools also had primary grades.

### **Community Schools:**

The community schools evolved from the ECR (Extended Classroom) initiative launched during the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1987-92). The concept of ECR was based on one teacher one classroom schooling system wherein multi-grade and class teacher teaching system were introduced. This system was formulated to improve the existing primary educational coverage in the kingdom in view of the resource and other limitations in establishing new primary schools and also the desire to start the early socialization process of the child at home and in the community itself. These schools provided education from classes PP to III in classrooms constructed by the community while the Department of Education took care of necessary staffing and provision of educational materials. The Department of Education concluded that the success of the concept of the Extended Classroom should depend on the availability of adequate number of national teachers with necessary trainings and pedagogical requirements as well as professional commitment to be posted in remote areas and manage the ECRs on his or her own with very little supervision though in the beginning most teachers were untrained and the postings were temporary.<sup>54</sup>

In the beginning such schools were conceived as an extension to an existing primary school, 'Parent School' and hence the term 'Extended Classroom' meant that the administration and the supervision of the staff of ECR were entrusted upon the head master of the parent school. The concept also made provision for the students from these ECRs to be enrolled into the parent school or the nearest boarding school after passing class III. In 1991 the ECRs were separated and were referred to as 'community schools' with the name of the catchment village prefixed and numbers of teachers allowed were to be more than one on the basis of availability.

Conceptual guidance regarding establishment of community schools:<sup>55</sup>

1. The establishment of any new community school had to be based on a proper demographic survey of the communities within a well defined area. The

location of the school had to ensure maximum coverage of households within easy walking distances. The minimum number of enrolment in the school was to be 30. A maximum walking distance of one hour was recommended for the beneficiaries.

2. All efforts to minimize the burden of the community were to be made in constructing the community schools by using locally available materials. The buildings were to be, however, reasonably durable and needed to meet the basic conditions required of a school building. Technical help from the concerned zone or *dzongkhag* offices were to be rendered to ensure that some of the basic norms were maintained.

3. The school needed to have basic facilities such as recreation space, drinking water supply, and toilet and also possess other scope for subsequent up-gradation to a full-fledged primary school, if necessary.

4. Squatting desks and other furniture were to be made by the local carpenters and, if necessary, a fund could be provided by the *dzongkhag* administration.

5. Necessary stationeries, books and other teaching materials were to be provided by the Central Stores of the Department of Education.

Roles and Responsibilities of the communities: <sup>56</sup>

6. The households that fell within the catchment area of the school needed to be responsible for the construction and maintenance of the school building and the campus.

7. The school was to form a management board with the senior-most teacher as the Chairman and 3 to 4 respected members of the community as well as other teachers (if any) as the Board members who would be responsible for the admission of the children and maintenance of works required for the school and they should meet twice a year.

8. The community was to also provide necessary accommodation to the teachers on payment basis. The teachers were to respond by installing amongst the community a sense of liability and contribution in educating their own children.

Administrative and Academic issues: <sup>57</sup>

1. The community schools were to form an integral part of the overall primary education delivery system. In fact these schools were to provide necessary

foundations on primary education to a majority of the children. It was, therefore, vital that utmost attention be given to the quality of education in these schools. To this extent, all concerned authorities were to ensure the followings-

- a) Appointment of only the best trained national teachers.
  - b) Provision of adequate teaching and learning facilities.
  - c) Regular visits by the DEO-at least twice a year.
  - d) Regular visits by the Inspectors of Schools-once a year.
  - e) Regular in-service/workshops for the community school teachers.
2. Admissions into the community schools were to take place at the beginning of each academic year. All children of 6 to 9 years age group were to be enrolled during the first year. Only children of 6 years were to be enrolled during the subsequent years.
3. The community schools could also be used for other community activities without disturbing the schools' routine functions.

Up-gradation: <sup>58</sup>

A community school began with one or more classes and depended on the number of children in the community. Most of these schools were expected to be upgraded class by class annually to class III level on the discretion of the concerned *dzongkhag* authorities and in consultation with school board. The powers to further upgrade from class IV to VI, that is, to a primary school level were vested with the Department of Education. The community schools that wanted to apply for primary schools status had to meet the following criteria:

1. The school had to have at least 60 students between classes PP-III.
2. The school had to be founded and existed as extended classrooms or community school for at least 2 years.
3. The building and other facilities needed to be appropriate for a full-fledged primary school.
4. The school required to exhibit high academic performance.
5. The community concerned was to have shown high sense of responsibility in the upkeep and maintenance of the school.

The qualitative judgement on the above mentioned criteria was to be made by the concerned head master, *Dzongkhag* Education Officers, and the Inspectors of schools and they were to report to the Education headquarters for necessary action.

Establishment of new community schools:

There existed great disparities from zone to zone and *dzongkhag* to *dzongkhag*, particularly between Northern and Southern *dzongkhags* in terms of schooling enrolment.

Table 7.3: Statistics for 1990 in the *dzongkhags* with 5 highest and lowest enrolments

Highest enrolments	Lowest enrolments
Chirang 99.88%	Lhuntshi 30.63%
Haa 96.12%	Mongar 36.40%
Gaylephug 95.09%	Tongsa 42.13%
Paro 91.37%	Tashigang 42.51%
Samchi 66.99%	Wangdue 43.89%

(Source-Sixth *Quarterly Policy Guidelines and Instructions*, Department of Education, Ministry of Social Services, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, March 1991, p.18)

In order to remove the above mentioned zone to zone and *dzongkhag* to *dzongkhag* disparities in enrolment, the Department of Education received necessary Government directives to improve the educational facilities in many of the *dzongkhags* with prevailing low enrolments. To this extent, following programmes were initiated on March 11, 1991.<sup>59</sup>

- A) 29 of the existing community schools which had been in existence for last two years with enrolments of at least 60 students would be up-graded to full-fledged primary schools. These new schools were provided with WFP midday meals, full-fledged head masters and full teaching strength appropriate to primary schools.
- B) As 29 out of 55 community schools were up-graded to primary schools and only 26 schools remained as community schools. In addition 65 new community schools were established and the total number rose to 91.

Table 7.4: List of community schools upgraded to primary schools in 1991

<b>Name of the ECRs Dzongkhag</b>	<b>No. Of students in 1990</b>
1. Genekha, Thimphu	66
2. Bidongkha, Punakha	172
3. Rukupji, Wangdue Phodrang	95
4. Samey, Dagana	69
5. Leleygang, Shemgang	87
6. Edi, Shemgang	63
7. Gomphu, Shemgang	66
8. Tangsibi, Shemgang	60
9. Nimshong, Shemgang	63
10. Chaskar, Mongar	84
11. Bumpazor, Mongar	85
12. Kilikhar, Mongar	114
13. Zunglen, Mongar	77
14. Mikuri, Pemagatshel	105
15. Chhimung, Pemagatshel	124

16. Bartsham, Tashigang	135
17. Bikhar, Tashigang	91
18. Chaling, Tashigang	142
19. Changmey, Tashigang	62
20. Jamkhar, Tashigang	140
21. Lumang, Tashigang	63
22. Ramjar, Tashigang	121
23. Merak, Tashigang	70
24. Sakten, Tashigang	121
25. Tshachi, Tashigang	108
26. Tshangpo, Tashigang	96
27. Tarpel, Tashigang	62
28. Pasaphu, Tashigang	60
29. Yarpfu, SamdrupJongkhar	70

(Source-Sixth Quarterly Policy Guidelines and Instructions, Department of Education, Ministry of Social Services, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, March 1991 Annexure I)

In 1992 which was the first year of the Seventh Five Year Plan, 95 community schools had come into existence and Government was planning to establish 20 more community schools with the aim to fulfil the vital role of providing the necessary foundations to basic education to a large majority of children, particularly to the far-flung communities.<sup>60</sup>

The principal distinctions between primary and community schools were that:

1. Community schools were not supposed to go beyond class III, whereas primary schools covered up to class VI.
2. In primary schools, communities were not responsible for roofing materials, wages for skilled labour and items such as cement, nails, doors and window bolts, whereas in community schools all these items were supposed to be supplied by the communities.
3. Community schools were not eligible for WFP supplies.

However, these differences were rather marginal when compared to the similarities as some community schools had proceeded to class IV but were still called community schools and some that proceeded beyond were called community primary schools. Many community schools had even received external donations of roofing materials and also WFP supplies.

Community school programme was a successful venture in Bhutan because community contributions were easier because firstly they had a broader base and secondly because many contributions were in labour and kind rather than in cash. Community school programme being rural based substantial variation existed among schools of urban and rural areas. Urban schools seem to have fewer community contributions than rural ones because there it was difficult to foster a strong feeling of community spirit, and since towns had stronger cash economies it was easier to make a case for parental fees in lieu of community contributions. The success also depended on the enthusiasm and initiative of head teachers, *gups*, school management board and other community leaders. Sometimes the communities were enthusiastic because this system of education was a new idea to them which they understood would improve their standard of living and it would in future generate avenues of employment. So, the community schools' initiative made major contributions to expansion of schooling, particularly in far-flung areas.

## **The objectives of primary education system**

Primary education covers a seven year period. Students entered at 6+ into Pre-Primary level. Successful students complete primary education after six more years (class I to VI). The main thrust of the primary education was to obtain a 'basic literacy level'. Basic literacy level in their context at 1990's was understood as hereunder-<sup>61</sup>

### **A. Academic:**

Upon graduating from primary schools the students were expected:

1. To have developed basic skills in reading and understanding in English and *Dzongkha* whereby they would be able to read and understand documents, such as *Kuensel* (national newspaper), common notices and signs, posters, simple instructions, simple manuals and pamphlets in both languages.
2. To develop basic skills in writing in English and *Dzongkha* and be able to write simple letters, applications and reports in both languages.
3. To develop skills in speaking and listening in both languages and be able to speak and understand *Dzongkha* and English fluently.
4. To develop basic ability in arithmetic so that they become able to do addition, subtraction, multiplication and division and maintain everyday accounts.
5. To provide basic knowledge in science, particularly the importance of health and hygiene, and social studies, particularly the geography and history of Bhutan.
6. To provide a base to pursue higher studies as well as a parcel of knowledge and skills to serve them in their adult lives even if they opted out after the primary stage.

### **B. Non Academic:**

1. To develop ideal Bhutanese citizens who have profound sense of pride for being Bhutanese and, as such, are loyal, dedicated and productive, contented and happy with a high standard of moral ethics and discipline along with a deep sense of respect for *Diglam Chogsum* or country's code of conduct.
2. To make the children to understand, appreciate and support the social and political harmony that exists in the country.

3. To inculcate amongst the students a greater understanding of and appreciation for the predominantly agriculture based rural lives and as such, develop in them dignity of labour as well as the traditional values.

### **Secondary Education**

Secondary education has three stages. Class VII and VIII was followed by class IX and X and then XI and XII. Junior high schools had classes VII and VIII but till 1990's nearly all of the junior high schools had to cover from Pre-Primary to class VIII. Similarly high schools had classes from VIII to X but till 1993 they had classes from Pre-Primary to X. During the Second Five Year Plan period two junior high schools of Thimphu and Tashigang of western and eastern Bhutan were upgraded to high schools. Sherubtse College was first established as a high school in 1968 and higher secondary education programme was provided there from 1976 which was known as junior college till 2001 when many high schools were upgraded to higher secondary level. Degree courses in Arts, Commerce and Science disciplines were introduced in the Sherubtse College in the year 1983 and it was upgraded to a degree college, with affiliation to the Delhi University. Honours courses in Commerce, Economic and English was introduced in 1991, followed by Geography and *Dzongkha* in 1996. It got rid of the classes XI and XII in Arts and Commerce in 1997 and Science in 2001. In Thimphu there was a Rigney school established in 1961 to provide learning in *Dzongkha* language and traditional arts. It was raised to the Institute for Language and Cultural Studies in 1997. While the initial enrolment was restricted to class VI passed students, it was upgraded to class X passed students from 1997.

### **Tertiary Education**

During the period of our study there were two colleges for teachers' education- one was Paro College of Education, established in 1975, and another one was Samchi College of Education, established in 1968. Both the institutions offered three years Bachelor of Education degree course and also two-year certificate course for the primary school teachers. The Bhutan Board of Examinations awarded the certificate. For general degree programme there was the only single college, Sherubtse College and it enrolled its first degree students in 1983. Sherubtse College offered a Bachelor

of Science (General) degree course and Bachelor of Arts (General) degree course in Arts and Commerce. The degrees were awarded by the Delhi University.

### **Technical Education**

From the sixties of the last century when Bhutan moved towards achieving socio-economic goals aimed at self-reliance, many new challenges of technological nature cropped up in the process. To overcome these problems the need of trained technical personnel was felt. So the country made a beginning towards the development of technical training facilities in 1965, when Don Bosco Technical School was founded in 1965 at Kharbandi, Phuentsholing which was later renamed as Royal Technical Institute. The school had been able to provide from time to time technical workers of lower and some middle categories. With the setting up of Royal Bhutan Polytechnic in 1972 at Dawathang in Samdrupjongkhar which was later renamed as Royal Bhutan Institute of Technology and shifted to Chhukha *Dzongkhag*, more technical personnel of middle level were available to meet the country's increased manpower requirement. In 1976, a seminar, jointly organized by the Royal Government of Bhutan and Colombo Plan Bureau, was held in Thimphu on 'National Planning of Technical Education and Vocational Training'. The seminar focussed importance on technical education and training and the need for setting up of a separate authority for overall planning, coordination and execution of various programmes in this field. As a result, a Technical Education Cell was established in the same year.<sup>62</sup> A three day work shop on technical and vocational education was held in Thimphu in May, 1987, attended by 50 delegates, where the fourth King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck said that young people need to be encouraged by every means to see that the path of technical and vocational education led to worthwhile, satisfying and rewarding careers. The King also said that he hoped officials in curriculum development for technical and vocational education would give special importance to instilling in young people a sense of discipline, dedication, pride in one's profession and a greater sense of responsibility to serve the country. *Lyonpo* Dawa Tshering, Minister for Foreign Affairs, in his address, emphasised the need for young people to be encouraged to take up technical careers.<sup>63</sup> But even in the year 1995, only 15 to 20 percent of the whole students opted for technical and vocational programmes as they did not enjoy the same status and esteem as in general education. So a workshop was held in November, 1995 in Royal Technical Institute where

discussion took place regarding the key to the relevance of technical and vocational education and job security of the trained personnel.<sup>64</sup>

### **Adult Education**

Adult education was started by the Manpower Department at the Royal Commercial Institute, Thimphu from August 10, 1981. Of the hundred and eight applicants, thirty four had been selected to attend the classes which were held every morning from 6 to 8 a.m. The teachers from Yangchenphug Central School volunteered to conduct the classes. Only English was taught. The adult education was started with a view to improve the career of those Government employees who were interested in learning English language as most of the official correspondence was carried out in English. *Lopen Nado Rinchhen*, the chief guest in the inauguration ceremony pointed out that in the past many clerks and civil servants had gone for intensive English course outside the country, but this had not proved very beneficial and also involved a lot of expenditure.<sup>65</sup> Constructed in 1980, the new school building had 12 classrooms, a library while 322 students were studying there including 200 boarders taught by eight teachers.<sup>66</sup>

In late 80's some adults had joined the formal education system by taking admission in formal primary schools. For example in 1987, 80 adult people started attending classes at Gonichawa Primary School in Paro from the surrounding villages to read and write. The instruction was arranged for the evening so as not to conflict with the daily routine of the school. The lessons were given under the guidance of the head teacher Mr. K. B. Pradhan and Lieutenant Colonel Mr. D. B. Chhetri.<sup>67</sup> In 1991 a new adult education programme was implemented by UNICEF in close collaboration with the education sector of the *dzongkhag* administration. In 1991 we found that forty women were attending the adult education programme in a *lhakhang* in Rukubji village in Wangduephodrang. The teachers who were conducting the programme were volunteers. A seven women's delegation from Wangduephodrang Women's Association in December 1991 found that the villagers could write their names, read *Kuensel* (national newspaper) and do simple calculations.<sup>68</sup>

### **Non-formal Education**

This system of education was first initiated in 1980 in Deothang and Pemagatsel by the National Women's Association of Bhutan (NWAB) for the development of

women. The concept, however gained momentum from 1992 after the Dzongkhag Development Commission (DDC) established five non-formal education centres in Dechencholing, Pemagatsel, Trashiyangtse, Rukubji and Phobjika. The centres were set up with Nu. 9,07,125 given by the UNICEF, UNESCO and the Royal Government.<sup>69</sup> Under the scheme, two hour classes were conducted for interested people, irrespective of gender and regardless of age, in the evenings after normal schools closed for the day. The timings were flexible and adjusted in accordance with the convenience of the students. The curriculum which covered six months was divided into three levels and concerning subjects were environment, child care, health and hygiene, culture and the attainment of self-sufficiency through cottage industries. Songs and pictorial illustrations were also used as part of teaching method to make the sessions more interesting and easier. Gradually the centres were also established in other villages. Thus we find that in 1993 in Merchenmo village under Bongo Gewog, Chhukha *Dzongkhag*, 39 villagers enrolled for the non-formal programme which were run by the two female instructors assigned by the Dzongkha Development Commission and in Trashigang *Dzongkhag* 30 people were enrolled in the Trashigang non formal centre and 33 joined in Khaling non formal centre.<sup>70</sup> The non-formal education scheme was a welcome opportunity for illiterate villagers. Many flocked to the non-formal classes, some out of sheer curiosity and other determined to learn to read and write. They could also acquire knowledge about relevant issues like family planning and child care. There was a growing response from the womenfolk to take part in this education system as classes were held mostly in the evenings which was convenient for them to attend and the course bridged the gap of women lagging behind men in formal education and we found that in 1994 among all the pupils engaged in non-formal education 69% were women.<sup>71</sup>

However, non-formal education was not without constraints. Qualified instructors were reluctant to work in remote areas; therefore, most of the centres were managed by school dropouts and other experience less instructors. There was problem on the part of students also. As most of them were involved in agricultural activities and they had very little cultivable land so they had to move to other places for their livelihood which disrupted six months schedule. For the women, the obstacles included family pressure and early marriage practices. Still a UNICEF report in 1994 recorded that the adult literacy rate in the country had reached 54% as compared to

the 38.4% in a 1990 UNESCO survey.<sup>72</sup> The report quoted the non-formal education scheme as one of the possible reasons.

In 1994 the non-formal education system was formally transferred to the Department of Education. Until early 1996, non-formal education centres provided only basic literacy course, after that the centre started providing post literacy course.

Table 7.5: Number of centres and enrolment, NFE, 1992-1997

<b>Year</b>	<b>Enrolment</b>	<b>No. Of centre</b>
1992	300	06
1993	1355	35
1994	1359	35
1995	944	26
1996	1271	34
1997	1462	42

(Source-General Statistics, Ministry of Education, Policy and Planning Division, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, 2003, p.31)

### **Special Education**

There were two types of institutions and schools where special education was provided during the period of my study-

#### 1. The National Institute for the Disabled

It was the sole institute in the country to cater to the special needs of the disabled and provided education to the visually handicapped only. There was no institute catering to children with other disabilities.

Table 7.6: Enrolment of students in the National institute for the Disabled, 1992-1997

Year	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Boys	20	22	24	21	19	18
Girls	07	08	09	09	08	10
Total	27	30	33	30	27	28

(Source-*General Statistics*, Ministry of Education, Policy and Planning Division, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, 2003, p.31)

## 2. Sanskrit *Pathsalas*

As Bhutan initially followed the Indian system of education there were two Sanskrit schools for young children during the period of my study. One of them was Jigmecholing (Surey) Sanskrit *Pathsala*. Another one was Dhoban Sanskrit *Pathsala*.

Table 7.7: Enrolment of students in Sanskrit *Pathsalas*, 1994-1997

Year	Jigmecholing			Dhoban			Total		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1994	14	07	21	0	0	0	14	07	21
1995	12	09	21	0	0	0	12	09	21
1996	40	20	60	0	0	0	40	20	60
1997	26	16	42	45	0	45	71	16	87

(Source-*General Statistics*, Ministry of Education, Policy and Planning Division, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, 2003, p.31)

## Curriculum at various levels

From the early 1960s the Royal Government had initiated a variety of development programmes throughout the country. Amongst these, the education sector always received the highest priority with a view to providing elementary education to the greatest possible number of children in the kingdom. But till the 1970s children were learning contents irrelevant to their everyday life, since the contents related to matters that were foreign and ancient. For example, class III students of Bhutan learned about India, England and America but hardly knew anything of the geography and history of their own country. The system also depended mostly on rote learning and memorization of facts, and mostly suited students who had developed these skills. Classrooms scenes were mostly dominated by ‘chalk and talk’ limiting children’s self-expression. As a result the application of

knowledge in the required situation was limited. A 1975 report stated “There is nothing like a syllabus, let alone a curriculum, of primary education in the strict sense of the term. The only syllabus, if one can call it a syllabus, prepared for Grade V common examination contains outlines of course of studies, distribution of marks in various units, and list of books for the Grade V common examination. For other grades, the only item available in the name of a syllabus is a list of textbooks”.<sup>73</sup> In 1980s Royal Government of Bhutan considered that this type of curriculum was not reflecting the Bhutanese social, cultural and historical values. Therefore, the Royal Government constantly supported and encouraged the Department of Education to bring about an education system that suited to the country’s needs.

Although the Department had published text books for primary classes in 1970s, most of these books had been written and developed without adequate overall syllabus/ curriculum guidelines to meet the national needs and aspirations. In fact, the textbooks were fundamentally the syllabi. As a result, degrees of difficulty, in the syllabi and textbooks varied greatly from one class to another. Only the *Dzongkha* textbooks which were mostly developed and written by the Department of Education were found more appropriate in terms of culture and values. So, the curriculum which is the core of any education system remained neglected until the early 1980s. National Education Policy in 1984 first desired to develop a suitable education policy that would enable the provision of a sound education system in line with Bhutan’s needs and values, which envisaged the necessity of developing their own curriculum for educational institutes of the country. To quote from the Policy, “ The major thrust of the objectives of the National Education Policy is on a qualitative improvement, reorientation of curricular content to make education relevant, efficient and responsive to the emerging national needs of the country; enhancing the capacity of the population to acquire knowledge, information, skills and healthy attitudes, improving the quality of teaching and administrative personnel; meeting the requirements for trained and technical personnel, and developing suitable and administrative structure for effective planning, management and monitoring of the education system”.<sup>74</sup> Policy strongly emphasized that a relevant and effective curriculum needed to be developed. The psychological method followed in the curriculum was that the children would learn more if taught from known to unknown, concrete to abstract.<sup>75</sup>

## **Establishment of Curriculum Division**

Considering the aims and objectives of the current National Education Policy, it was vital to establish a Curriculum and Textbook Development Division (henceforth CTDD) within the Department of Education to analyse both policy goals and needs of the country and then develop suitable curriculum, syllabi, textbooks and other relevant literature and teaching aids and to field test the materials produced. Consequently, the division was established in 1985-86 and given a major task which, according to the Sixth Five Year Plan, should be accomplished by 1992.

### **Main Goals**

1. "To make the content relevant to Bhutanese life, culture, tradition and the needs of the nation.
2. To develop a curriculum which will augment the children's ability to apply their knowledge in the present as well as in their later lives.
3. To enhance the academic standards through more efficient processes of teaching and learning".<sup>76</sup>

### **Functional Objectives**

1. "Develop a relevant and comprehensive curriculum for lower-primary sections (first four years of schooling) and implement it through the New Approach to Primary Education Programme (NAPE) project.
2. Write appropriate and detailed syllabuses for upper-primary and secondary levels of the school system.
3. Write the necessary textbooks for all levels of school education.
4. Develop manuals and reference books for teachers.
5. Design and develop teaching resources.
6. Field test the materials developed in the division.
7. Hold workshops for teachers to introduce new materials in collaboration with teacher-education colleges, inspectorate and other concerned divisions.
8. At all times make constant effort to monitor and review the content of education, so as to keep it in line with the aims and objectives of the education policy and international standards.

9. Initiate educational studies so that the findings can augment the curriculum work.”<sup>77</sup>

The CTDD, after establishing the goals and functional objectives, took up various educational activities in the mid 1980s. It was crucial to formulate a national curriculum and consequently the CTDD began the task immediately. The initial task was to produce a new lower primary syllabus covering languages, mathematics and the new subject of Environmental Studies (EVS). The new subject integrates history, geography, cultural education, health, agriculture, science, physical education into one so that learning takes place through and about the children’s environment and was more effective and related to their needs. The NAPE projects included relevant syllabi and manuals, better trained teachers, class and classroom size, better furniture, appropriate stationery supplies, improved monitoring and evaluation systems etc.

### **New Approach to Primary Education**

Initially in 1986 NAPE started in 13 schools which were called pilot schools. In 1989, 36 schools were named as pilot schools and were under the NAPE scheme. In 1990 a nationwide programme was initiated where NAPE covered all the classes of primary schools, extended classrooms, Primary section of Junior high school and high schools within 1997.

Table 7.8: Programmes of New Approach to Primary Education, 1990-1997

<b>Yea</b>	<b>Pilot schools(Group-a)</b>	<b>Group-b</b>	<b>Group-c</b>	<b>Total schools</b>
1190	36(PP to III)	50(PP)		86
1991	36(PP to III)	50(PP to I)	88 PP	174 or all schools
1992	36(PP to III)	50(PP to II)	88(PP to I)	Do
1993	36(PP to IV)	50(PP to III)	88(PP to II)	Do
1994	36(PP to V)	50(PP to IV)	88(PP to III)	Do
1995	36(PP to VI)	50(PP to V)	88(PP to IV)	Do
1996	Do	50(PP to VI)	88(PP to V)	Do
1997	Do	Do	88(PP to VI)	Do

(Source-Fourth *Quarterly Policy Guidelines and Instructions*, Ministry for Social Services, Department of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan, April 1990 , p.8)

In 1989 the NAPE programme was reviewed by a team of educationists headed by a consultant from UNICEF and the result they found was encouraging. All agreed

that NAPE was an appropriate curriculum for the primary education system and they mentioned the following advantages of NAPE over the traditional system-<sup>78</sup>

- i) NAPE has reduced rote learning and encouraged learning through activities and discoveries. It encouraged actual life experience of being able to solve one's problems and paved the way for developing 'thinking children'.
- ii) NAPE had encouraged learning from the local environment and the development of appreciation for local history and geography, culture and values, such as resourcefulness, dignity of labour etc.
- iii) NAPE had greatly facilitated meeting country's educational objective of providing 'a wholesome education' to the children, no matter at what level of education they left it served them well and adequately in their adult lives.
- iv) NAPE made the teaching and learning process more interesting for both teachers and students. The teachers were bound to work hard both inside and outside the classroom and thus NAPE created amongst them necessary opportunities for continuing the education process, constantly enhancing their professionalism.
- v) NAPE required development and utilization of more self made teaching aids from locally available materials and thus instilled amongst the students greater creativity as well as essential virtues of self resourcefulness and dignity of labour.
- vi) NAPE system required the Education Headquarters to annually prepare and make available to the schools teachers manuals and detailed syllabus for every class greatly facilitating the task of the headmasters and the teachers.

With the adoption of NAPE as a national primary education curriculum the Department of Education issued the following directives to be followed in all the primary schools as well as in junior high schools with primary sections as an integral part of New Approach to Primary Education-<sup>79</sup>

- i) The children in the junior classes of the primary sections were at their most tender age and at the formative stage of their values, beliefs, behaviour and the overall personality of their own. The aim of the country's education system was to mould children to become ideal

Bhutanese citizens possessing the highest degree of Bhutanese virtues. According to the view of the Government it was the trained national teachers alone who could understand their own children best and could meet the sacred responsibilities. Therefore it should be mandatory for all NAPE classes to be taught by trained Bhutanese national teachers only.

ii) Previously the normal practice in the schools was to give more importance to higher classes and less importance to junior classes. Often the untrained teachers were deployed in the lower classes and best trained teachers were reserved for the senior classes. The NAPE system had reversed this system. It was declared that dealing with the younger children required the attention and skill of the best teacher available in the school. So the best national teacher too would be responsible for the Pre-Primary class in the school. The Department of Education would give the necessary preference to the teachers involved in teaching in the lower classes in terms of selection for promotion and training within the country as well as in abroad.

iii) With the introduction of NAPE as a programme all primary classes will be switched over from the existing subject teacher system to class teacher system. Because studies carried out by the Department of Education had proved that the class teacher system was far better for meeting psychological and social needs of the children studying in the primary sections.

iv) All head teachers would go through a series of intensive training programme during the winter vacations on NAPE to develop necessary skills on academic leadership. Assistant head would be posted in bigger high schools.

### **Training programmes on NAPE**

We can cite various examples of training programmes and other programmes on NAPE continued throughout the country-

i) Monger Junior High School celebrated parent teacher conference on August, 1986 on NAPE programme. Head teacher and other teachers focussed on the history, practice, and future directions of NAPE. It was followed by discussions between parents, students and teachers on the

attitude and participation of students in class. The role of parents in developing the child at home was also stressed.<sup>80</sup>

ii) A two week NAPE training programme was commenced on February 16, 1987 at Punakha High School by the Curriculum Development Division, Department of Education. The training included developing the use of oral English and the introduction to the use of phonics in teaching and reading.<sup>81</sup>

iii) A workshop on NAPE was held at Deothang, Samdrupjongkhar on February, 1987 to enhance the teachers' conceptual understanding of NAPE and improve their teaching skills and to give them knowledge of general plan and policies of the Department of Education.<sup>82</sup>

iv) Pre-Primary teachers and head teachers under Samdrupjongkhar *Dzongkhag* attended a special workshop on NAPE programme on August, 1987 where the teachers were familiarised with the new methods of teaching English, Mathematics and Environmental Studies.<sup>83</sup>

v) About 350 teachers from 36 NAPE schools attended a workshop at Sarbhang High School from 9<sup>th</sup> February to 25<sup>th</sup> February, 1989 organized by the CTDD, Department of Education. The main aim of the workshop was to enhance the knowledge and skills of teachers, head teachers in NAPE schools. It was hoped that the workshop would enable the NAPE school head teachers to learn the role they had to play in the academic administration i.e. helping the teachers to teach in the best possible way.<sup>84</sup>

vi) The primary school teachers of Pemagatshel attended a course on the NAPE programme at Pemagatshel Junior High School on August 15, 1990. The three-day course was aimed at familiarising participants with the NAPE system of teaching in order to maintain uniformity in teaching. The course was intended to provide an opportunity to share experiences and ideas and to solve problems through discussions and co-curricular activities.<sup>85</sup>

vii) More than 200 head teachers, *dzongkhag* and zonal education officials and school inspectors all over the country took part in a seminar on the education policies and programmes of the Royal Government on February, 1991 in Thimphu. The Director General of education said that the Department of Education had appointed national heads for all schools

and institutions by 1988. Emphasis was given in the seminar to make the head teachers able to co-ordinate and monitor teachers' performance in the classroom.<sup>86</sup>

viii) Curriculum and Textbook Development Division conducted four parallel in-service programmes for the teachers of Social Studies (class IV), English (class VI), History (class VIII), Geography (class VIII) in Punakha on February 18, 1991 which was attended by 160 teachers from different schools in the country. The programme aimed at familiarising the teachers with the new manuals and teaching techniques prepared by the Department of Education.<sup>87</sup>

ix) A three week NAPE workshop began in Paro on February, 1991 which was conducted jointly by the National Institute of Education in Samtse, Teachers' Training College in Paro and the CTDD and attended by 435 teachers from around the country. Dasho Paljor Dorji, Deputy Minister for Social Services in his inauguration speech said that "The NAPE has many advantages over the previous school curricula as it encourages real life experience and the ability to solve one's problems by developing the ability to think. It also taught subjects like history, geography, environment and cultural value relevant to Bhutan".<sup>88</sup> Lyonpo T. Tobgyel, the Minister for Social Services, concluded the workshop by saying that, "It is through the NAPE we hope that our children receive a better education, a more relevant education to our national needs and aspirations, and an education which will ultimately pave the way in developing ideal Bhutanese citizens".<sup>89</sup>

x) A four day workshop on the NAPE was held in Mongar *Dzongkhag* from April 24, 1991. Forty one teachers from primary schools and extended classrooms attended the work shop. The main objective of the workshop was to provide a bilingual (*Dzongkha* and English) approach that would help to integrate *Dzongkha*, English, Maths and Environmental studies.<sup>90</sup>

xi) Sixty two teachers from Tashigang *Dzongkhag* attended a six day workshop on NAPE held in Tashigang from June 24, 1991. The main target of the workshop was to provide an understanding of NAPE and to give them ideas to facilitate the implementation of the NAPE system.<sup>91</sup>

xii) A total of 56 teachers from Samdrup Jongkhar attended a five day NAPE workshop for classes Pre-Primary to I. The workshop was aimed at familiarising the teachers with the NAPE programme.<sup>92</sup>

xiii) A four day workshop on the NAPE held at the Pemagatshel Junior High School, concluded on July 13, 1991. It was attended by 30 class I and Pre-Primary teachers from the various schools in the *Dzongkhag*. Besides training on English, Maths, Environmental Studies and Dzongkha, the training also covered on standard evaluation, daily lesson planning and identifying obstacles to the NAPE programme.<sup>93</sup>

xiv) An exhibition on the NAPE was held at Mongar Primary School on September 28, 1991 which consisted of different charts, models, scientific experiments and teaching aids. Each class, starting from Pre-Primary to VI, displayed their exhibitions in class rooms. The main aim of the exhibition was to instil in students the concept of 'learning by doing', encourage their creative talent, highlight salient features of the NAPE programme to the parents and the guests, to inculcate among the students a spirit of team work and to develop the students' self confidence.<sup>94</sup>

xv) A NAPE workshop was held from September 30 to October 3 in Mongar *Dzongkhag*, the main aim of which was to strengthen the foundation of the NAPE programme. Discussions were held on evaluation, lesson planning, classroom management and discipline and in making books in Dzongkha and English.<sup>95</sup>

xvi) A 10 day NAPE workshop was held from December 10, 1992 in Paro at Teachers' Training Centre and also in Paro High School. It was attended by 150 Dzongkha language teachers and 80 general subject teachers and the objective of the workshop was to familiarize untrained teachers with the concept of NAPE.<sup>96</sup>

xvii) Teachers of seven primary schools in Chhukha were trained on NAPE programme on October 1992. The training provided the teachers necessary knowledge and skills on planning and class management. The teachers were motivated to make their teaching creative and interesting to children.<sup>97</sup>

Thus we see that with the decision to implement the NAPE as a nationwide programme in all schools, accelerated in-service orientations for teachers and head

teachers who were Bhutanese nationals. Workshops and trainings were organised almost in all the *dzongkhags* where most of the teachers of primary level were given various in-service trainings. It might be the policy of the Government that they could not improve the quality of education in the schools without enhancing the quality of the teachers. So teacher education programmes had emphasized the most vital components of the Education Department's plans and policies. It could be the fact that In-service training programmes were used as a means to not only provide opportunities to acquire new ideas, but also to offer teachers a golden chance to discuss curriculum and get together to share and learn informally.

### **Teachers by Level and Nationality**

After the implementation of the NAPE system there was a qualitative improvement in the education system particularly the primary education. Strong efforts had been made to localise the teaching profession, especially at the lower levels as we have seen that since 1989 only the Bhutanese nationals had been posted as heads of institutions. From almost a total dependence on expatriate teachers (mostly the Indians) since the beginning of modern education, the Bhutanese education system had moved towards self sufficiency in its priority need.

Table 7.9: Proportion of national and non-national teachers from the period 1989 to 1997

Level Of Schools	1990		1991		1992		1993		1994		1995		1996		1997	
	NAT	N/ NAT														
Community Schools	80	5	135	13	195	19	190	15	205	18	218	10	222	3	247	3
Primary Schools	972	700	929	524	960	464	984	365	1037	351	1049	307	1127	247	1100	212
Junior Schools	208	215	192	146	175	123	191	134	212	135	230	112	276	104	368	105
High Schools	103	136	97	117	108	102	107	98	105	92	153	93	188	86	208	108
Private Schools									45	7	45	6	54	7	66	5
Sub Total	1363	1056	1353	800	1438	708	1472	612	1604	603	1695	528	1867	447	1989	433
<b>Institutions</b>																
Sherubtse College	9	23	12	24	13	31	13	34	13	39	13	32	13	30	15	28
National Institute Of Edn	16	9	16	9	17	5	22	5	22	5	21	4	21	3	37	9

Teachers Training College	11	5	11	4	11	1	14	2	15	1	19		20		32	2
Royal Bhutan Of Polytechnic	19	13	16	9	14	9	19	10	24	13	24	14	30	14	43	31
Royal Technical Institute	21	14	23	16	30	17	30	11	28	14	25	14	28	11	46	13
Simtokha Rigzhung Institute	24	2	24	2	27	2	27		27		24		25		23	
T/Yangtse Rigney Institute	-----THIS INSTITUTE IS BEING ESTABLISHED BY JUNE 1997-----														3	
National Institute for the Disabled	8	0	9		10		10		9		9		6		8	
Surey Sanskrit Pathshala									1		1		2		2	
Dhoban Sanskrit Pathshala															1	
Sub Total	108	66	111	64	122	65	135	62	139	72	136	64	145	58	210	83
Grand Total	1471	1122	1464	864	1560	773	1607	674	1743	675	1831	592	2012	505	2199	516

(Source-*General Statistics*, Department of Education,, Ministry of Social Services, July 1991, p.7, *General Statistics*, Education Division, Ministry of Health and Education, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, June 1997, p.9)

The table shows an impressively high increase in the proportion of Bhutanese teachers by 1997 as opposed to expatriate teachers. The existence and practical operation of the NAPE system had considerable relevance to this report. Though there were still high proportions of non-national or non-Bhutanese teachers in the junior high or high schools they were in negligible numbers in the community schools or in primary schools.

### **Syllabi**

In 1989, a team of consultants from UNICEF along with officers from Department of Education reviewed the NAPE programme and worked on the detailed contents of syllabus of all the classes. Being deeply concerned over having too many subjects in most of the classes, these were reduced.

Table 7.10: Changes in syllabus in schools, 1988 to 1989

Class in 1989	Old Syllabus up to 1988	Revised Syllabus
PP	Dzo, Eng & Maths	Dzo, Eng & Maths
I	Dzo, Eng, Maths and Science	Dzo, Eng, Maths & EVS
II	Dzo, Eng , Maths and Science	Dzo, Eng, Maths & EVS
III	Dzo, Eng I & II, Maths, Sc, Hist, Geo	Dzo, Eng, Maths, EVS
IV	Dzo, Eng I & II, Maths, Sc, Agri & Health Edn	Dzo, Eng, Maths, Sc., Social Studies
V	Do	Do
VI	Dzo, Eng I & II, Maths, Sc, Agri, Health Edn	Dzo, Eng, Sc, Maths, Hist, Geo, Health Edn

(Source-*Second Quarterly Policy Guidelines and Instructions*, Department of Education, Ministry of Social Services, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, March, 1989, pp. 12-13)

Nepali continued to be taught as an additional subject in classes PP to V in schools located in southern Bhutan. Social Studies for class IV and V included History and Geography consisting exclusively of Bhutan History and Bhutan Geography. The component of both Bhutan History and Geography in class VI increased to over 60 %. Department of Education took the steps to prepare the course books for Social Studies, History and Geography of classes IV, V and VI to deliver these to schools by 1990. Likewise Bhutan History and Bhutan Geography would consist of 60% of the both Class VII and VIII syllabus whereas the remaining 40% would continue from world History and world Geography. For this, textbooks were developed and delivered to the schools by April 1989. The syllabus of classes IX and X was affiliated to ICSE system of India, in order to introduce Bhutan Certificate of Secondary Examinations (BCSE) the Department decided to revise the courses of History, Geography, Economics and Arts with a special focus on Bhutan so that they may be introduced in class IX during the year 1990. An ambitious project on English textbooks and readers was launched in August 1989.

#### **Changes in syllabus for 1991 academic year**

Due to the ant-national activities in the southern districts of the country 76 schools in Southern Bhutan were closed down in 1990. Teaching of Nepali language

in southern schools was stopped in 1990 as it was alleged that this was impeding the national integration policy.<sup>98</sup>

The Department of Education accorded top priority on the Bhutanization of the education system and for this there were following changes in the syllabus of 1991-<sup>99</sup>

- i) Detailed Readers and Work Books were introduced for English subject in classes Pre-Primary to Dzongkha.
- ii) New Dzongkha Readers were introduced up to class VIII during the 1991 academic year.
- iii) An improved and modified version of Biology course book was introduced for class VIII.

### **Changes in syllabus for 1992 academic year**

Following changes took place in the syllabus of 1992 from that of 1991-<sup>100</sup>

- i) Course books on Bhutan History and Geography, which were introduced in classes VI and VII during the year 1990, had been revised and re-edited. The new editions of the 4 course books were despatched to the schools
- ii) Course books on Bhutan History and Geography for class VIII were introduced on trial basis only partially during the year 1991.
- iii) A separate book titled 'Druk Gyalpo Jigme Singye Wangchuck and TwentyYears of Development' formed an integral part of course book on Bhutan History for class VIII. The book was supplied to all the high schools and junior high schools as textbooks as well as to primary schools as reference books.
- iv) New course on Science and Social Studies for upper primary classes were experimented in 29 pilot primary schools during the year 1991. They were subsequently reviewed and introduced in all the primary schools and junior high schools with similar primary classes.

### **Changes in the syllabus in 1993**

The syllabus from Pre-Primary to class VIII remained mostly unchanged during the academic year 1993. The only change in these classes is the class VII Biology

textbook which had been re-edited with updated information. The Biology text in class VIII was accompanied by a revised edition of the teacher manual. The changes in the secondary level was that the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations had bifurcated the class IX and X syllabus. All the high schools were, therefore, directed to start the new syllabus with immediate effect with the class IX students of 1993. Decision was taken to introduce new textbooks on Bhutan History, Geography and Civics.<sup>101</sup>

#### **Changes in the syllabus in 1994**

It was a matter of great success that by 1994 NAPE had been introduced from Pre-Primary to class III uniformly in all the 174 schools. The syllabus from Pre-Primary to class VIII remained unchanged from the previous year. The writing and publication of textbooks for classes IX and X Geography and IX History had been completed and these were despatched to schools by the end of April, 1994. Work on writing class X History was in progress and was expected to be despatched to schools during the year 1995. But there were some problems in finalizing the Bhutan Civics textbook so decision was taken to continue Indian Civics in the schools.<sup>102</sup>

#### **Changes occurred in syllabus in 1995**

Since the beginning of modern education a major stride had been made by the Government in the promotion of the national language i. e., *Dzongkha*. Decision was taken that in addition to the existing textbooks following books would be introduced in all the schools beginning with the 1995 academic year-<sup>103</sup>

- i) 10 issues of Readers from Pre-Primary to III.
- ii) 1 book on *Dzongkha* nursery rhymes.
- iii) 30 issues of *Dzongkha* literacy booklets as Readers from classes II to VI.

The introduction of the above mentioned Readers and reference materials with colourful illustrations was expected to popularise and promote the learning of *Dzongkha*.

Under the NAPE system many earlier school subjects such as History, Geography and Social Studies from Pre-Primary to III had been merged as one subject, namely the Environmental Studies (EVS). The EVS dealt mostly with contents about Bhutan and its people, religion, history, culture and traditions, socio

economic development planning etc. It was felt that the EVS should be taught in Dzongkha. CTDD was later renamed the Curriculum and Professional Support Section (CAPSS)<sup>104</sup> and Board for the CAPSS in its meeting held on September 19, 1994 resolved to introduce EVS in *Dzongkha* on trial basis starting with the Pre-Primary class during the 1995 academic year.<sup>105</sup> 26 schools were selected as pilot schools for this purpose. It was hoped that, if the experiment proved successful, the programme would be expanded to class III in all the schools and accordingly humanity subjects such as History, Geography and Civics might be taught in *Dzongkha* gradually. It was also expected that the teaching of EVS in *Dzongkha* would end the tendency to differentiate the teachers into two broad groups-*Dzongkha* language teachers and general teachers as both these groups of teachers henceforth would teach EVS in Dzongkha.

Following were the changes introduced for the 1995 academic session-<sup>106</sup>

- i) In *Dzongkha*, a revised syllabus for classes Pre-Primary to III had been introduced. This was more detailed as compared to the earlier syllabus.
- ii) The textbook for Pre-Primary had been fully revised; a teacher's manual and two student work books also for Pre-Primary had been newly developed.
- iii) The mathematics textbooks for classes II to V had been changed. Existing mathematics textbook series had been discontinued and was replaced by Systematic Mathematics textbook series which were found to be more up to date in terms of presentation of ideas and current information.
- iv) Decision was taken to despatch History books for class X, mostly covering the syllabus of Bhutan history to all the high schools within July 1995.

### **Changes occurred in syllabus in the year 1996**

A number of changes were affected in the syllabus for the 1996 academic year<sup>107</sup>

- i) The text books for classes I-III had been revised and new teachers manuals for these classes had been written. Two student workbooks for class I had been completed. A new Reader for class III had also been completed.
- ii) A revised mathematics syllabus for classes IV to VIII was introduced with the 1996 academic session. A section on Statistics for both classes VI and VIII were included in the revised syllabus.

- iii) Syllabus of Economics for class IX and X was revised and was introduced for class IX in the year 1996.
- iv) In addition to 26 pilot schools where teaching EVS in *Dzongkha* had already been implemented, additional 27 schools were brought under this system.
- v) The syllabus was compiled for all subjects in two booklets, one consisting those for classes from IV to VI and the other from VII to VIII and were sent to schools in current academic session. Further, the work on compiling the syllabus for classes Pre-Primary to III had been started.

Thus we see that even at the end of the twentieth century education system at various levels were not in a concrete shape and changes and modifications were going on in the existing syllabus. But it has been envisaged that the CTDD was carrying out various educational activities in order to make school education more relevant to the time. It was the aim of the government to nationalize the syllabus particularly the humanities subjects which would enable the students to think not only for themselves but also for others, be self-disciplined and responsible, appreciate and practise age old cultural and traditional values, develop into mature and humane persons by developing their innate talents, to use them for the good of the society in which they lived, and be capable of applying their knowledge and skills in their everyday lives. It was also thought that appropriate science and mathematics syllabus should be made so that the educated population became more comfortable with problem solving by using technological equipment and machines. Primary course in science was nationalized by the year 1995. It was also planned to develop and complete a valid science course for the secondary schools so that it could be implemented by 1996.<sup>108</sup>

From the above findings it is apparent that Bhutan wanted to develop its own syllabus at all levels of education and underlying principle being that education should not just serve the needs of the students but also of the country. Subjects such as history geography, civics or social sciences had to concentrate more on Bhutan rather than on neighbouring countries or international topics. It can be noticed that the process was slow, errors often cropped up, but the Royal Government persisted and was able to attain a degree of success. But was still far away from the national goal of Bhutanese subjects in Bhutanese language for Bhutanese students remained an unfulfilled dream. It might be appropriate to add that over the years the notion of total

Bhutanization of education in Bhutan gradually faded. In fact, during the last years of my research period for this thesis English was the dominant medium of education.

### **Evaluation system**

There was system of examination at the end of the academic session for promotion from one class to next higher class till the beginning of the modern education system. The common examination at the national level for passing out of primary education was introduced in 1972. From 1972 to 1985, end of primary class was up to class V and from 1986 it was up to class VI. The prime object for instituting this system was to bring about uniformity among the different schools. The examination was also used as a screening process for entry into the next level of general education. The next national level examination was at the end of class VIII, introduced in 1975 to serve the purpose of screening as well as assessing and ensuring uniform standards among the schools. A fresh system of awarding special certificates known as CARTS (Certified and Recommended for Training), to students failing in one of the core subjects (English, *Dzongkha* or Mathematics) but doing comparatively well in the total marks was adopted. Between 1973 and 1976, the staff of the Department of Education managed two common examinations. In 1977 an examination cell was created, which was later upgraded to Bhutan Board of Examinations. Class X and XII examinations were conducted by the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations, New Delhi, with the help of the Bhutan Board of Examinations.

From the very beginning of modern education the system had been relying on rote learning and memorization of facts and figures for the purpose of examinations. When NAPE programme was implemented in 1985 the emphasis was given on learning through participation and active involvement rather than by the memorization and repetition of facts spoon-fed to the pupils by the teachers. The new approach had lead the teachers away from the notion that the only form of evaluation was an examination and the only purpose of examination was to pass, to allow promotion to the next higher class. The main reasons for evaluation that the teachers were given are-<sup>109</sup>

- i) To see if the teachers had been successful and whether the students had actually learnt what the teachers were trying to teach them.

- ii) To judge the success of teaching methods used by the teachers.
- iii) To get information on where the teachers need to modify or re-teach parts of the syllabus and for further planning of lessons.
- iii) To find out where the children were having special problems.
- iv) To ensure that individual students had not been neglected.
- v) To encourage students to work better and learn better.
- vi) To motivate students by giving them useful and constructive feedback on their work.
- vii) To have information on hand so as to be able to give professional advice concerning a student's performance to the head teacher, parent or another teacher who takes the class.
- viii) To decide whether a student is ready for promotion to the next higher class.
- ix) Teachers were accountable to the Department of Education which demanded that testing took place periodically.

The fundamental principle of the NAPE was to relax the control upon the learners through examinations, but enable them to master lessons through continuous assessment. The essence of continuous assessment was to mark the progress each child made in the class based on teachers' feedback. The able students would perform increasingly well while the less able students would make reasonable progress throughout the year.

But in 1989 the Department of Education had observed a lot of discrepancies amongst the schools as well as amongst the dzongkhags pertaining to the annual examinations and promotion system. So, the Department of Education declared necessary guidelines on examination and evaluation process for classes other than common examination classes-<sup>110</sup>

- i) Annual examination and promotion should not be compared to the common examinations conducted on a nation-wide basis but should be based on

continuous evaluation on the performance of individual students during the year.

ii) In schools where regular tests and review were conducted, it was suggested that 40 % be based on the mid-term reviews and 60% on the annual review.

iii) Oral examinations should be emphasized while evaluating a student's performance especially in the language subjects.

iv) Approximately 70% of the students were expected annually to pass from the respective classes and promoted to the next higher class.

The Bhutan Board of Examinations had resolved following changes on issues relating to common examinations of classes V and VIII-

i) Oral examinations with a weightage of 10% of the total marks was introduced in English and *Dzongkha* subjects in class VI and VIII common examinations from the year 1991. From the same year a uniform 3 term system in a year was introduced for all schools each ending with a term test.<sup>111</sup>

ii) In 1992 the Boards of Examinations, in order to increase the number of pass outs from both class VI and VIII common examination and to join many of them to technical and vocational education promoted the students who had secured 40 % in aggregate but less in English, *Dzongkha* or Mathematics. Those students were expected to join the technical and vocational programmes under various Governments Departments who continued to have the shortage of the required candidates.<sup>112</sup>

iii) In 1994 Bhutan Board of Examinations declared that from that year the Primary School Certificate Examination (class VI common examination) would consist of 50% internal assessment or school based and 50% external examinations to be conducted as usual by the Bhutan Board of Examinations. The system of assessment would be as follows-<sup>113</sup>

Non-language subjects:

a) External assessments to be conducted as usual by the Bhutan Board of Examinations with weighting of 50%

b) Internal assessment to be conducted by the school authorities with aggregate weighting of 50%, of which-

- i) 25% weighting from the term tests.
- ii) 25% weighting from the other forms of assessments such as class works, home assignments, project works, experiments, co-curricular activities etc.

Language subjects i. e., *Dzongkha* and English

- a) External examinations to be conducted as usual by the Bhutan Board of Examinations with weighting of 50%.
- b) Internal assessments to be conducted by school authorities with aggregate weighting of 50% of which-
  - i) 25% weighting from the term tests.
  - ii) 15% weighting from the other forms of assessments
  - iii) 10% weighting from the oral assessments.

But it was observed in the new evaluation system that internal markings by the schools were generally very high and fluctuated from school to school. It was also found that most of the internal markings were based on term tests and the end of the year exams rather than on continuous assessments. In order to overcome these shortcomings the Department of Education published ‘Guidelines for internal Assessment for classes VI and VIII’ in December 1994.<sup>114</sup> The Guidelines were expected to assist in solving the discrepancies in the internal assessment of not only class VI and VIII common examinations but provide catalytic improvements to all aspects of examinations, evaluation and promotion also to the non-common examinations.

So we can notice that the continuous assessment system as was introduced as a part of the NAPE system varies according to the individual understanding of the concept and sometimes there was confusion rather than improving the evaluation system.

The following tables show the results of the common examination of different years depending on the data available.

Table 7.11: Class V results, 1979-1984

<b>Year</b>	<b>1979</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1981</b>	<b>1984</b>
No of Students Appeared	1034	1234	1643	1698
No of Students Passed	855	721	931	1059
Pass (%)	82.6	58.5	56.6	62.25

(Sources-“Common exam results”, *Kuensel*, Vol. XV, No.5, February 3, 1980, p.1, “All Bhutan class V examination result”, *Kuensel*, Vol. XVII, No.5, February 7, 1982, p.1 and “All Bhutan class V and VIII results”, *Kuensel*, Vol. XX, No.8, February 30, 1985, p.2)

Table 7.12: Class VI results, 1987-1997

<b>Year</b>	<b>1987</b>	<b>1988</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>
No of Students Appeared	2563	2860	3129	2652	3321	3907	4234	4688	5598	6157
No of Students Passed	1229	1479	1776	1726	2464	3346	3942	4396	5360	5563
Pass %	47.95	51.71	56.75	65.08	74.19	85.64	93.10	93.77	95.74	90.35

(Sources-“Class VI common examinations at a glance”, *Kuensel*, Vol. V, No.5, February 3, 1990, p.1 and *General Statistics*, Ministry of Education, Policy and Planning Division, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, 2003, p. 18)

Table 7.13: Class VIII results, 1979-1997

<b>Year</b>	<b>1979</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1984</b>	<b>1987</b>	<b>1988</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>
No of Students Appeared	341	379	680	966	1076	1185	1164	1326	1631	1890	2746	3600	4249
No of Students Passed	239	212	374	642	723	853	771	988	1443	1789	2462	3042	3579
Pass %	70.09	55.93	55	64.4	67.2	71.9	66.25	74.5	88	95	90	85	84

(Sources-“Common exam results”, *Kuensel*, Vol. XV, No.5, February 3, 1980, p.1, “All Bhutan class VIII exam result”, *Kuensel*, Vol.XVI, No.7, 15 February, 1981,p.3, . “All Bhutan class V and VIII results”, *Kuensel*, Vol. XX, No.8, February 30, 1985, p.2, “Class VIII common examination results”, *Kuensel*, Vol. V, No.5, February 3, 1990, p.1, “ Common examination results declared”, *Kuensel*, Vol.VII, No.3, January 18, 1992, p.1 and *General Statistics*, Ministry of Education, Policy and Planning Division, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, 2003, p. 19)

From 1996 class X examination and certification was jointly carried out by the Council for Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) and Bhutan Board of Examinations while Bhutan Board set the papers for Dzongkha, Economics and Social Sciences with the remainder left in the care of CISCE.

Table 7.14: Class X results, 1979-1984

Year	Pass (%)
1979	89.7
1980	89.2
1981	85.9
1982	85
1983	85
1984	65.7

(Sources-“1979 ICSE batch”, *Kuensel*, Vol. XV, No.17, April 28, 1980, p.2 and “ICSE results”, *Kuensel*, Vol. XIX, No.28, July 8, 1984, p.4)

Table 7.15: Class X results, 1986-1997

Year	1986	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
No of Students Appeared	227	332	481	515	505	570	619	599	719	1146	1476
No of Students Passed	199	295	441	475	419	488	579	547	680	945	1285
Pass (%)	87.77	88.86	91.68	92.23	82.97	85.6	93.53	91.31	94.57	82.46	87.05

(Sources-“National ICSE results”, *Kuensel*, Vol.1, No.27, July 6, 1986, p.2, “295 students pass ICSE exams”, *Kuensel*, Vol.3, No.23, June 11, 1988, p.1, “ICSE results out”, *Kuensel*, June 17, 1989, p.3, “ICSE results: improved overall percentage”, *Kuensel*, Vol. V, No.25, June 30, 1990, p.6, “ICSE results”, *Kuensel*, Vol.VI, No.25, June 29, 1991, p.1, and *General Statistics*, Ministry of Education, Policy and Planning Division, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, 2003, p. 19)

Commensurate with the growth of the secondary education sub-sector, the total students sitting for class X examination increased from only 20 in 1968 to 75 in 1974 and thence to 1476 in 1997. The pass percentage swung between a low of 65.7% to a high of 94.57%. In this context I want to mention that for a large number of students, class X was the culmination of formal general education.

Table 7.16: Class XII results, 1992-1997

<b>Year</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>
sNo of Students Appeared	175	205	189	262	262	252
No of Students Passed	170	188	186	257	261	250
Pass %	97.14%	91.70%	98.41%	98.09%	97.38%	99.20 %

(Source-*General Statistics*, Ministry of Education, Policy and Planning Division, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, 2003, p. 20)

The first class XII examination (Indian School Certificate) was held in March 1978 and of the 34 candidates 25 (74%) passed.<sup>115</sup> The numbers had gradually increased showing the progress at the higher secondary level and the pass percentage also improved greatly. The entire set of papers for the class XII examination were set

and administered by the CISCE in the period of my study. After higher secondary level the best students were selected for either engineering or medicine studies in India or abroad.

Others either continued their studies in the Sherubtse College or got enrolled in one of the training institutes within the country.

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## 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 Lukhnow, Chandigarh, Delhi, Patna and Nalanda. During the tour in Lukhnow, 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 Bhakhra 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 study 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 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 search 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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## Chapter 9

### **Role of the Christian Missionaries and Indigenous Bhutanese in the Education of Bhutan**

This chapter has been divided in two different parts in order to present the documents in a systematic way-

(A) Role of the Christian Missionaries in the Education of Bhutan

(B) Contribution of the Indigenous Bhutanese in the Education of Bhutan

#### **(A) Role of the Christian Missionaries in the Education of Bhutan**

Coming to role of Christian missionaries in education, the role of the Jesuit priests from India cannot be over-emphasized. When traditional monastic education was the norm of the day in the 1950's, it was a Canadian priest, Rev. Father William Mackey, Society of Jesus (Jesuit), Darjeeling, India, who came to Bhutan in 1963 and nurtured the seeds sown by the Bhutan government and early Indian teachers to see the blossoming of modern education.

Way before Fr. Mackey entered Bhutan, two Portuguese Jesuits had come in 1627, and found in Paro a lama school (monastic) with about hundred students under Sabdrung Ngawang Namgyel<sup>1</sup> and despite the Jesuits interest to learn the local language they could not find a suitable teacher.<sup>2</sup> Had they stayed behind in Bhutan they probably would have cast a lasting impression as far as education was concerned but their goal was Lhasa, the Vatican of Mahayana Buddhism, and after several months they left Bhutan for their destined address.

There was a long vacuum of 181 years before Bhutan's frontiers felt the winds of Christian missionaries. In 1808 William Carey of Baptist Mission stationed at Serampore (Bengal) sent William Robinson to penetrate Bhutan but despite several attempts to do so the Bhutan authorities persistently refused him permission to cross over the border. Facing numerous odds he made several abortive trips from Serampore to the alien land and during one such a mission his wife died along the border. His last attempt was in 1811 when the mission was abandoned after he was robbed of almost everything by a band of 50-60 robbers, his servants murdered and himself wounded.<sup>3</sup> As in the case of the Jesuits we can only speculate the educational changes he would have brought to Bhutan had he been allowed to enter the country.

We find another long gap of 152 years before Christian Missionaries actually entered Bhutan. Despite the first Catholic refusing to stay in Bhutan this time around they willingly opted to stay in Bhutan and unlike the case of Robinson who was repeatedly banned from entering the country the new batch of Jesuits were actually invited into Bhutan. The first to arrive was Father William Mackey followed by Brother Quinn, Fr. J. Coffey, Fr. Cherian, Fr. Perry, Fr. Joseph Paikedey and Mother Peter Claver. After Father Mackey's arrival in Paro in 1963, the above six missionaries joined Father in Bhutan.<sup>4</sup> Later other Catholic missionaries from the Society of Salesian Brothers (Don Bosco) were to make their mark in Bhutan.

During his early years of Eastern Bhutan father Mackey's right hand man was Brother Quinn. He was a teacher of Tashigang Elementary School who taught History, Geography and English drama. We came to know about Brother Quinn that, "He was also suitably talented: he was a good teacher, handled children well, and had the aptitude and training to be great use of medical matters. He tended to be quiet and happily accepted the position of a Jesuit Brother in the partnership of a Jesuit Father. He had also a good sense of humour....When it come to entertainment, Brother Quinn's specialists were concerts and drama. The kids loved performing these".<sup>5</sup> In July of 1965, Father Jack Coffey arrived in Tashigang and joined the school.<sup>6</sup> He was a teacher of English language. The other Jesuits also came and they began their work from East Bhutan, working their way down from Tashigang, to Kanglung, where they started the first high school, which eventually became the country's first college. In Sherubtse High School at Kanglung besides normal teaching programme the Jesuits had also started a vocational section. According to Howard Solverson, "It was a modest programme initiated by Brother Quinn. He envisaged an alternative for students not involved with games, and set up practical courses like typing and tailoring."<sup>7</sup> He also solved many medical cases faced by the people in that remote area. Royal Government wanted girls to study at Kanglung and Father Mackey invited the Mother provincial of the St. Joseph of Cluny Sisters of Kalimpong to see about sending some nuns. In 1970 four Sisters of the St. Joseph of Cluny arrived at Kanglung to look after Sherubtse's first girl students, who would start school in that year.<sup>8</sup> Mother Peter Claver, Superior of the Sisters, was well known to the royal family as she had taught princess Ashi Kesang in Kalimpong. In 1978, Brother Quinn moved to Jigme Sherubling High School at Khaling from Sherubtse along with Father Mackey.

Father Jack Coffey moved to Punakha in Western Bhutan and became the founding Principal of Punakha Public School on May 13, 1973.<sup>9</sup> Father Joseph Paikeday also joined Punakha High School. Father John Perry who had taught in schools at Sherubtse, Punakha and Khaling joined as the Principal of Jigme Sherubling High School in 1983.<sup>10</sup> When Punakha Public School was started in 1973 Mother Peter moved there along with Sister Rosa and Sister Paulette. Mother Peter was a robust nun who assisted Father Coffey in establishing the school. Regarding the contribution of the Jesuits in Punakha Public School which was later upgraded to a Higher Secondary School, it has been mentioned in the Sherig (Centenary) Saga that, “For almost two decades, the Jesuits were at the helm of school affairs. They laid the foundation of what was to become a premier school in the country”.<sup>11</sup>

Table 9.1 Contribution of the Jesuits as principals of Punakha High School

Name	Period
Father Jack Coffey	1973-1975
Father Paikeday	1975-1981
Father John Perry	1981-1982
Father Kilorin	1982-1983
Father Miranda	1983-1989

(Source-*The Centenarian, 100 Years of Educating the Nation*, Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan, 2013, p.40)

Regarding the contribution made by Father Jack Coffey, the founder-Principal of the School, Mr. Chogyal Tenzin, ex-student of the school recounted that, “He was very strict when it comes to discipline, and expected high standards. Missing a period was taken with a scorn. Hair had to be kept short and the service of Wangdi (i.e. Wangdephodrang) Military’s barber was sought to ensure this.... There used to be surprise roll-calls to ensure that everybody was in place and kept on toes.”<sup>12</sup> As a mathematics and grammar teacher he frequently conducted surprise tests which kept a close tab on the students’ progress. Excellence was his standard and only a score of 70 and above was satisfactory and a lesser performance would find the student hauled to

his office. He was prepared to tear answer script in half and even expel offending students but there was also a kinder and milder facet to his character. Chogyal Tenzin adds that, "Father Coffey would make regular trips to Thimphu in his Mahendra Jeep. On his return he would come with meat and bread for the school and occasionally sweets for the whole school. All would wait for the Father like children waiting for the return of a parent laden with gifts, expectantly....The Coffey days ended at the end of 1975".<sup>13</sup>

At the end of 1980s when Bhutan Government put an end to non-Bhutanese supervision of educational institutions, most of Jesuits left the supervisory post of the head of the institution and finally left the country also.

Another group of Christian missionaries holds the honours in the establishing technical education in Bhutan. The Salesians started the Don Bosco Industrial School at Kharbandi, near Phuentsholing, in 1965. The school was started at the initiative of the third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck and Reverend Father Philip Giraldo (sic, Giraud) who was the founding Principal<sup>14</sup> and Prime Minister Jigme Dorji played the major role in bringing the Don Bosco fathers from Shillong to start the technical school. Father Philip was joined by Joseph Pakma (coadjutor), C. L. Thomas (cleric), and two from Italian Central Province: Fr Antonio Stiappacasse (in-charge of the technical school) along with Fr. Jaime. Father Stiappacasse takes pleasure in fond memories of his brief Bhutan stay (1965 to 1966) before he left for Brazil with the following words, "I remember the year-end exhibition that we put up in Phuentsholing with everything students did during the year - iron gates, windows, doors and tables."<sup>15</sup> Among the many trades taught were carpentry and tailoring etc. A few years later, another two Salesians joined the school- Fr. Dominic Curto and Bro. Gabriel Garniga. The third King and Queen used to visit the School very often and showed their appreciation to the Fathers for their valuable educational system.

The Salesians continued for some years, later the school was renamed as Royal Technical Institute, Kharbandi and the missionaries left the school. Despite being highly appreciated by the King and his ministers, particularly in the Education and Labour departments, the Salesians had to leave the kingdom in 1981 under a cloud of proselytization charges.<sup>16</sup>

The following is a detailed study on the contribution of Father Mackey and Father LeClaire, whose role to the modern education system in Bhutan was enormous.

### **Father Mackey's Role in the Growth of Modern Education in Bhutan**

Father Mackey was born in Montreal, Canada on August 19, 1915. He was christened William Mackey and was affectionately called Bill or Billy. Both his parents were immigrants from Ireland and his father was a Protestant and his mother a Catholic. Despite his father being a Protestant Billy became a Jesuit priest in his adulthood suggesting a possible strong influence from his Catholic mother. In fact his entire early education was acquired in Catholic institutions: primary education at St. Michael's and then at St. Thomas Aquinas and secondary at Loyola High School. Despite being a brilliant student and a good athlete, and many worldly opportunities at his call, he still opted to be a priest being inspired by the thoughtful character and devoutness of the priests he had come into contact during his adolescence.

By the time Billy Mackey entered his third year of schooling, he was considering joining not just the priesthood, but the Jesuits in particular. It seemed so expected of him. In 1931, the final year at school, he approached the Father of the school expressing his yearning to join the Society of Jesus. He was subsequently interviewed by four Jesuits to the satisfaction of all of them. After his graduation in 1932 he was accepted as a novice by the Society of Jesus.<sup>17</sup> After two years of spiritual exercises he completed his novitiate in 1934. He then went to Regis College at Toronto for a three year programme in philosophy which he completed in 1939. The next step, in the long process of becoming a Jesuit priest was called Regency. This was a period of teaching which normally continued for three years and Bill was posted to one of the seven Jesuit colleges in Canada. During his very successful three pedagogical years he even managed to earn a diploma in physical education. In 1942 Billy Mackey finished his Regency and entered into a programme in theology. On the 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1945, Billy Mackey was ordained by Archbishop Charbonneau in the Immaculate Conception Church in Montreal and he officially became 'Father Mackey'.<sup>18</sup> His educational/training period came to an end in 1946 with the completion of the programme in Theology. He was now Reverend Father William Mackey, S.J., with Licentiate in Theology, Licentiate in Philosophy, Bachelor of Arts and Diploma in Physical Education.<sup>19</sup>

The Jesuit Order, from its inception, has been a missionary organization and expectedly he applied for a missionary work and was accepted for the Jesuit Mission in Darjeeling, India. In January 1947 he, in a group of five members, sailed for India. Father William Mackey's first posting was at St. Paul's Parish, in the small town of Kurseong, located in the Himalayan foothills in the south of Darjeeling. Then he became the Headmaster of St. Alphonsus School. There he for the first met Bhutanese students that were boarding in the hostel having come thus far as Bhutan had no high schools. Virtually all of them went to India with Darjeeling district absorbing most of them. After about ten years he was transferred to St. Robert's High School, Darjeeling, in 1959 as the headmaster.<sup>20</sup> Bhutanese boys were in Darjeeling at the behest of the Prime Minister, Jigme Dorji, who possessed great interest and enthusiasm in the education of his fellow citizens. He often visited schools and took great interest in all aspects of student activities. At about this time Father Mackey due to some factors gradually became unpopular with the local authorities and in spite of 17 years service in the field of education he was ordered to leave India in 1963.

At the same time the third King of Bhutan, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, had began taking initiative to modernize Bhutan with special emphasis on education. Till 1963 Bhutan's secular education system consisted of only primary schools and the King undertook to establish the country's first high school in that year. In keeping with the King's vision the Prime Minister Jigme Dorji approached the Darjeeling Jesuits in March 1963 for seeking help in setting up a modern school system.<sup>21</sup> The Prime Minister had already met with Father Mackey, knew his exemplary work, and so invited him to establish the first high school.

The process of getting Father to come to Bhutan took a protracted seven months and eventually, in early October 1963, he arrived in Paro.<sup>22</sup> He was subsequently followed by five other Jesuits. Father Mackey was sent to Eastern Bhutan to take responsibility of establishing the country's first high school. He started working with the headship of the Tashigang Elementary School and whenever time permitted, while on his visits to the primary schools in Eastern Bhutan, he toured places like TashiYangtse, Lhuntse and Mongar looking for a suitable school site. He was delightfully surprised that people were never really astounded to see him and they, in fact, gave him hospitality and accepted him as a person, regardless of the fact that he was the first European many had seen.<sup>23</sup> Early in 1964, the Prime Minister

came to Tashigang to select the new school site and solicited Father Mackey's opinion. The Father expressed his preference and Kanglung was chosen as the most appropriate site. But a temporary setback that shocked him came about on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 1964, when Jigme Dorji was assassinated at a guest house in Phuentsholing.

Father William Mackey worked hard for the Tashigang School. Besides controlling the school as headmaster, he taught thirty five periods a week, did his share of study supervision, took initiative in improving his staff, gave priority in obtaining science equipments and books for the school library, made several arrangements for the comfort of the boarders, organized and coached sports and games and having done all that he still had the time and energy to stage concerts and other functions. Lyonpo Sonam Tobgye, ex-student of the Tashigang School recounted that, "During the Tashigang Tshechu in 1963, Father Mackey arranged a gymnastic demonstration.....Thereafter, the school was closed for winter holidays. During the holidays, Father decided to tutor us. During those days, Father Mackey invited Dasho Thrimpon, my father and the public for science exhibition, which was followed by a concert including singing".<sup>24</sup> In all his works in Tashigang he was ably assisted by two other Jesuits, Brother Michael Quinn and Father Coffey.

One May morning, 1964, the King visited Tashigang school and witnessed the tremendous progress made by Father Mackey.<sup>25</sup> He invited him to the royal palace at Decencholing to spend a month where he tutored the three royal siblings, Princesses Sonam and Dechen and Prince Jigme, a bit of English, French, Mathematics and Science. Before returning he assured the King that all the children were intellectually sound.

The King showed keen interest in Father Mackey's work and asked the Jesuit to establish a Bhutanese examination system. In keeping pace with the Royal command, Father Mackey started the Bhutan Matriculation System in Tashigang with his first sixth graders in 1964.<sup>26</sup> The students and System would grow together, progressing one year at a time until the students appeared in their class ten examination. In November 1968, Bhutan's first matriculation exam was held and results came out in December. Out of the twenty students who appeared, one got a first class mark, eighteen a second class and one a third. Nobody failed .<sup>27</sup> But the examination system was not affiliated to any university nor had the required

recognition in India and the students were unable to get admission into Indian colleges, so five students were sent to Australia on Colombo Plan scholarships.<sup>28</sup> The Bhutanese authorities realizing that they could not continue with the Bhutan Matriculation(class ten) sent Father Mackey to New Delhi to start the process of affiliating Bhutan's high schools with the ISC(class eleven) system in 1969. Later this system underwent a change into Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE/ class ten) and the Indian School Certificate (ISC/ class twelve).<sup>29</sup>

The school faced a major problem of choosing the medium of instruction. The most widely spoken language was Sharchokpa but it had no written form. People from the south spoke Nepali while the official language was classical Choekey. Due to the lack of a popular written language amongst the majority speakers a decision was taken to conduct primary education in Hindi. Father Mackey thought that English should be the medium since it was an international language and it was already being taught as a subject in Bhutan's schools. His view was supported by the Bhutanese leaders as the better schools they had seen in India were all English medium institutions.

During his early years in Eastern Bhutan, Father Mackey's chief partner in building the educational system was Dawa Tshering, the Director of Education and the future Foreign Minister. He and Father Mackey liked and respected one another and worked in tandem for the educational development of Eastern Bhutan. Before Father Mackey's arrival, Bhutan had little that could be described as an educational policy and during his tour of Eastern Bhutan in 1963, he was to discover that schools operated independently with no common syllabus. He discussed this with Dawa Tshering and then two of them drafted Bhutan's first educational policy. Consequently, education administrators were recruited from India, other Jesuits arrived, more government officials were recruited and the wheels of education set into motion.

The building of a new school in Kanglung was a slow process. In January, 1964, the Prime Minister had asked the Dantak, (Indian Border Roads Organization) if they would build the school. But Prime Ministers assassination that year brought everything to a halt. In the following year the King himself took up the matter with the Dantak authority but a temporary stalemate intervened because the Dantak also

wanted to build a road north from Tashigang to Tibetan border. Laying the foundation was done by Ashi Chhoek Wangmo, half sister of the King on 27 July, 1966. The King chose the name, 'Sherubtse' meaning 'Peak of knowledge', and thus was born Sherubtse Public School. Ultimately Dantak took the responsibility and new school was opened on May 26, 1968.<sup>30</sup>

Sherubtse had all the facilities that a modern school needed. It was a showcase for both Bhutanese government and the Dantak while for the Jesuits the school represented father Mackey's real work since he was continuously involved in the progress of the institution from its very inception. When he moved to Kanglung in May of 1968, he still remained Principal of the Tashigang School. It had blossomed into a high school and he visited it at least once a week while a teacher in charge ran the school on a day to day basis during his absence. Besides having administrative responsibilities, he taught class ten mathematics. The jeep was not always available for his Tashigang trips, so often he made the visit on foot. He would leave Kanglung after the second period on Friday, teach and do his other work that afternoon in Tashigang and on Saturday morning hike back to Kanglung.<sup>31</sup>

In Sherubtse Father Mackey worked tirelessly taking on multifarious responsibilities of handling day to day office work, teaching, dealing with teachers and their problems, disciplining students and making sure that the support side of the school (the kitchens, the dormitories, the school vehicle etc) were in good order.<sup>32</sup>

The King visited Eastern Bhutan about once a year. He would always spend some time with Father Mackey and discuss ways of improving the educational system. On the morning of 21<sup>st</sup> July, 1972 Father Mackey received the news that the King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck had passed away. The Father had not just lost an enthusiastic supporter but also a great friend and the kingdom a benevolent King and a visionary. The Jesuit called an Assembly and talked about the late King's interest in books, his contribution in modernizing the educational system, including the acceptance of English as the medium of learning. He also memorized the King's friendship and support.<sup>33</sup>

Throughout his tenure at Sherubtse, Father Mackey enjoyed the full support of his late Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, Fourth King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, as well as of Dawa Tshering and Ashi Dechen, the young King's sister. She had been

appointed as the King's representative in the Ministry of Development when she was just seventeen years old and the confidence and faith she had on the Father is evident from one of her letters where she wrote, "You have full permission to do whatever you think is good for the country."<sup>34</sup> While Father Mackey was at Sherubtse, Dzongkha, now official language of Bhutan, was introduced as a subject. Before 1960s Dzongkha was a spoken language of Western Bhutan.

The Department of Education began to think that Sherubtse was no longer a place for lower classes and so in May 1976, it was upgraded to Sherubtse Junior College commencing with class eleven that year and twelve in the next.<sup>35</sup> In 1977 the lower classes from Sherubtse were transferred to Khaling, a new high school in eastern Bhutan. A year later Father Mackey and Brother Quinn left Sherubtse and joined Jigme Sherubling High School at Khaling.<sup>36</sup> Father Mackey translates Sherubling as 'place of learning'. He managed Jigme Sherubling just as he had run Sherubtse by establishing a library, introducing all the programmes including sports, concerts and plays and thereby endeavored to provide entertainment while simultaneously raising interest among the children in education.

Father Mackey was happy as Principal of Jigme Sherubling. But in 1982, when he was sixty seven, the Bishop and the Jesuit Superior at Darjeeling visited Khaling and expressed the idea of handing over the high school to a younger man with Father Mackey staying on as an assistant. They discussed the matter with Nado Rinchen, the Director of Education, and with his agreement Father Perry became the principal of Jigme Sherubling in 1983 and Rev. Mackay continued to teach Mathematics besides helping to guide Father Perry in running the school. Later that year Father moved to Thimphu at the invitation of the Director of Education.<sup>37</sup> According to a report of the Kuensel, "The staff and students of Jigme Sherubling School in Tashigang on July 17 organized a special programme in honour of Fahter Mackey. ----- Besides his friends and many of his well wishers, hundreds of villagers from the nearby villages had also come to bid him farewell".<sup>38</sup> Such was his influence and acceptance in the social life of Eastern Bhutan.

At Thimphu Father Mackey became the Secretary of the Bhutan Board of Examinations and soon after the Coordinator of Textbook and Syllabus Committee. At the end of 1985, he became the Chief Inspector, Inspectorate of Schools.<sup>39</sup> This

was a demanding job which included many hours on the road, time in the classrooms, time with teachers, time with students, full use of listening skills, assessment of general academic level of schools to inspect the adequate physical facilities in the schools and where possible, problem solving. He did all these with great passion. We can cite some examples from the report of the Kuensel regarding the role played by Father Mackey as Chief Inspector of school-a) “A team of school Inspectors led by Chief Inspector Father W.J. Mackey, have been inspecting schools in Samtse district since June 10 1990. According to Father, their visit is mainly to find problems, their solutions and to see general academic level. Their role is not to find faults but to see reality for the information of the Department”.<sup>40</sup> b) According to a news dated 14 July 1990, “All the schools and other Educational Institutes in Chhukha have made steady progress and improvements in terms of their organizational skills, facilities and the most important buildings of the teams of dedicated and capable teachers, said Father W. J. Mackey, Chief Inspector of schools. He also said, facilities do not make up for good teachers, good teachers produce fantastic results despite lack of facilities. He added that at junior and high school levels, the science and mathematical contents must be strengthened as Bhutan moves into the twenty-first century”.<sup>41</sup> c) According to a news dated 10 August 1991, “A team of school Inspectors, working in four groups, led by the Chief Inspector, Father W. J. Mackey, completed the inspections of schools under Thimphu *Dzongkhag*. The main purpose of the inspection was to see if the NAPE (New Approach to Primary Education) system was being followed in the primary schools and how far it benefitted the school children. Further, the general academic level of the schools were also assessed”.<sup>42</sup> Country’s first Mathematic teachers meet was held at Jigme Sherubling School under the Chairmanship of Reverend Father William Mackey in the year 1991 where the matters were discussed relating to text books, the curriculum, syllabus, exam etc, attended by the math teachers from all high schools and junior high schools.<sup>43</sup> In 1992, His Majesty the King elevated Father Mackey as an Education Advisor to the Department of Education, to be retained in government service for life in appreciation of his commendable service to the country.

Besides many awards and recognitions which he received in all the places he worked, Father Mackey was awarded the prestigious medal, ‘*Druk Thuksye*’ (Heart son of Bhutan), by the fourth King Jigme Singye Wangchuck in 1973. In 1985 he was

granted Bhutanese citizenship and Father said that Bhutan had helped him to grow, “culturally, intellectually and spiritually”.<sup>44</sup> On August 19<sup>th</sup>, 1989 Father Mackey turned seventy five years old. More than 250 former students, well wishers and friends organized a grand celebration in Thimphu to celebrate his birthday on 19 August 1989 as a token of affection and gratitude for his precious contribution to the nation.<sup>45</sup> We can cite an example of a birthday message to Father by a group of students from Jigme Sherubling school in Khaling, “Our grief lies in the feebleness of our attempts to express our devotion and gratitude to you, who have taken us at the high tide of our lives and opened for us the realm of knowledge and learning, and have let the sun of hope rise on the horizons of our young lives”.<sup>46</sup> Having been conferred the highest recognition as well as the citizenship by Bhutan it was now the turn of the country of his birth to acknowledge the Jesuits contribution. On 25 May 1994 the University of Brunswick in Canada conferred upon Father Mackey the degree of Doctor of Letters for his distinguished and lasting contribution towards the development of education.<sup>47</sup>

At the age of eighty one, following a brief illness, he passed away peacefully in October 1995. The then Deputy Minister for Health and Education, Dasho T.J. Rixin, described Father Mackey as one of the pioneers of modern education in Bhutan, under the guidance of King Jigme Dorji Wanchuck. He described Father Mackey as a person who “endeared himself to the people of Bhutan by his simplicity, sense of humour and exemplary dedication to his work as an educator.” He further elaborated, “His sensitivity to and appreciation of the ancient Buddhist culture and traditions of Bhutan was one of his remarkable qualities.”<sup>48</sup> Actually, Father Mackey was never an ordinary missionary and in his 32 years in Bhutan he never converted a single Bhutanese to Catholicism and even admitted that he had been influenced by Buddhism. As a priest, he often said that, “God is at work in all religions, He loves every man and woman born into this world and is at work in every one of our lives”.<sup>49</sup> As a teacher, he asked his students to “grow and develop to be able to play a mature role as citizens of the country, to become solid individuals, ready to take up your responsibilities in family and government”.<sup>50</sup> For Father, children have been one of the delights of his many years in Bhutan. He said, “The kids are so self reliant, they’re out in the jungle much of the time. If parents in other countries saw a kid sitting on the edge of a 3,000 ft cliff looking over they would die

but with the kids here it is no problem. They are more down to reality than kid in developed countries”.<sup>51</sup> Because of his universal spirituality and social versatility, Father was a lovable man to all. His fellow priests described Father Mackey as a man ahead of the times and an example to his colleagues.

In summary one can safely surmise that Father Mackey played a stellar role in the development of secular education and in its dramatic expansion. During three decades after his arrival in Bhutan he crisscrossed numerous high mountains and deep valleys on foot, on horseback, in a jeep when available, and on a motorcycle for the sake of education in Bhutan. In his pioneering endeavor of building a sound secular education system in Bhutan he was never found wanting in enthusiasm and energy. It was well known that he loved every one of his long tough treks across the kingdom and every association with his close friends who included members of the royal family, shopkeepers, drivers, government officials, students, soldiers, little toddlers etc. In all his years in Bhutan, a country he came to love and adopt as his own, he showed equal care, compassion and concentration to his students whether rich or poor, royal or menial. His reflection of the years in Bhutan, in 1992, clearly manifests his profound love for the country and the people: “I feel honoured that I spend the last days of my life in a country I respect and among people whom I appreciate and love, and with whom I have spent 29 years of my life.”<sup>52</sup>

The Bhutanese response is equally affectionate and appreciative and one native essayist writes of the pioneer as a man “opening the eyes of Bhutanese children” ... “compelling love and affection of a caring father” ... “the inspiring wisdom of a true educationist, and the warmth of a children’s true patron.”<sup>53</sup>

### **Contribution of Father LeClaire in the development of modern education in Bhutan**

Like pioneering Jesuit educationist Father Mackey, another Jesuit from Canada who played a major task in the growth of modern education in Bhutan was Father Gerald. E. LeClaire, S.J. He was also from Montreal, Quebec. After attending four years in D’Arcy Mc Gee High School he entered the Society of Jesus at Guelph on September 7, 1947. After Philosophy in Toronto, he studied History at the University of Toronto for three years. Father LeClaire always had a urge “to teach and to preach” and to go on missions. When the Jesuit order included him in the mission

which was being sent to Darjeeling, his wish was fulfilled. He arrived by ship in Bombay in 1957 and was surprised by the large population and the extensive use of English in the country. His knowledge of India was limited to his history classes and the thesis he had done on India's independence movement. He was, to quote himself "struck by the friendliness and helpfulness of the people"<sup>54</sup>

There he was assigned to the school department at St. Joseph's school for a short while during which he looked after the students of the upper division i. e. from class seven to ten. There were no Bhutanese boys at that time but the school did have a sizeable number of Thai and Burmese students, enhancing the international character of the school.

After attending a four years theology course in St. Mary's in Kurseong, father LeClaire was finally ordained a priest on march 22, 1961.<sup>55</sup> His priestly ministry began in Gayaganga in Darjeeling district as co-pastor and in 1965 he moved to Darjeeling. In 1966, he was made the Rector and Principal of St. Joseph's College in Darjeeling. It was during this time that he first came in contact with Bhutanese students. One of his Bhutanese students in the college remembered that Father LeClaire was such a man who "took great trouble and risks to solve the students problems".<sup>56</sup> Father's teaching centred on History and Theology.

When the third King of Bhutan, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, passed away in 1972 Father LeClaire visited Bhutan for the first time. He had come with a group of Jesuit priests to pay their last respects to the late King. When the Royal Government decided to set up a junior college in Kanglung in the 70's, Father LeClaire was requested to become the Principal. He, in 1978, accepted a posting to Bhutan and took over as Principal of Sherubtse College when Father Mackey who was in charge of the high school at Kanglung moved down to Khaling to set up Jigme Sherubling Higher Secondary School. Father LeClaire accepted the post in view of his relationship with the Bhutanese students in Darjeeling and in later period he said that, "I loved the Bhutanese students and that's why I eventually came to Bhutan".<sup>57</sup>

Father LeClaire came to Kanglung in 1978 with the responsibility of phasing out the high school and transforming it into a junior college by consolidation and expansion and to introduce degree classes. In 1983, Sherubtse College was granted affiliation to Delhi University and became the first degree college in the country.

Although Sherubtse College had many drawbacks, such as remoteness of location, lack of good transport and communication facilities, and getting competent staff to stay on, furthermore as there was no other college in the country the students could not enjoy inter-collegiate contact. Yet under the supervision of Father LeClaire the college developed well with a beautiful and extensive campus, adequate academic facilities and the absence of distractions. But the most serious academic limitation of the college was in having only pass course in arts and commerce. In this regard Father LeClaire commented, “The pass arts and commerce courses is not challenging enough for the students. Several ways to improve the academic standard of the college were to redesign the course to suit Bhutanese needs and to have autonomy.”<sup>58</sup> The first convocation of Sherubtse College was held on November 18, 1986, where Father LeClaire, the Principal of the college gave a run-down on the history of the college-its growth since the site was selected by the third King and Father Mackey in 1964.<sup>59</sup> So Father had a clear vision in the educational development of the country and he was intensely involved in transforming the Sherubtse as a model institution.

With the Royal Government decision to hand over the running educational institutions to its own nationals, Father LeClaire left Sherubtse college in December 1988 and joined as the co-ordinator of higher education at the Education Department in Thimphu.<sup>60</sup> “My eleven years in Kanglung were happy and satisfactory. Building up the college was challenging and having done so was rewarding. I had full support from the headquarters and good teamwork with my colleagues”, said Father Laclaire.<sup>61</sup> For eleven years he carried the burden of Sherubtse College. He had done a lot for the progress of higher education in Bhutan, his defining achievement is reflected in the Education Director, Thinley Gyamtsho’s words: “Father LeClaire’s name will be synonymous with the Sherubtse College”.<sup>62</sup>

After serving 12 years in Bhutan, 11 years in Eastern part and 1 year in the Education Department, Father LeClaire left Bhutan in December 1989. In the last few weeks before his departure, he was treated to a round of farewell parties by colleagues, former students and government officials. Minister for Social Service and Communications, Lyonpo T. Tobgyel said that Bhutan would always remember Father LeClaire’s contribution to the country’s education system, especially by developing the Sherubtse College to the current level. Lyonpo Tobgyel told Father that he would “always be in the hearts of the Bhutanese people who would never

forget his contribution to the country”.<sup>63</sup> The Foreign Minister, Lyonpo Dawa Tshering, pointed out that Father LeClaire represented the higher standards of the Society of Jesus, the organization he represented. He also said that Bhutan was also grateful to the Society for its contribution to the world and for the quality of people they produced. “I hope that you will consider Bhutan as your second home”, he told Father LeClaire.<sup>64</sup> Dasho Paljor Dorji, Deputy Minister for Social Service, highlighted Father LeClaire’s service in Bhutan, his dedication to his work and his close relationship with the student.

After leaving Bhutan Father LeClaire returned to Darjeeling where he continued to work in the field of higher education. Father LeClaire was a selfless and dedicated educator. He was always attentive to the students’ various grievances. His classes were enthralling and lively. When he died in May 2010, in a letter of condolence to Father LeClaire’s family, Bhutan’s ambassador to Canada, Lhatu Wangchuck, said, “with the demise of Father LeClaire, the Kingdom of Bhutan lost yet another great humanitarian and selfless Canadian, who touched thousands of Bhutanese lives”.<sup>65</sup> Bhutan will always remember Father LeClaire “---as the forerunner of higher education in Bhutan and the architect of Sherubtse College.”<sup>66</sup>

Thus the Jesuits and Salesians – Fathers, Brothers, Mothers and Sisters who arrived in Bhutan in 60s and 70s of the last century, taught in remote schools and contributed in substantial amount to the growth of modern education system in the country. They had helped to initiate, administer, and improve the schools and students not only through classroom teaching but also by introducing co-curricular and disciplinary activities. Their contribution in shaping country’s modern education system is unquestionably enormous. They sacrificed a large part of their lives in imparting education, skills, and moral values to the Bhutanese lads.

## **B. Contribution of the Indigenous Bhutanese in the education of Bhutan**

Many native pioneers contributed a lot in the growth of development of education in Bhutan. Some of them are-

### **Gongzim Ugyen Dorji**

Ugyen Dorji was a Bhutanese trader from Kalimpong. His business in India at the end of the nineteenth century gave him the opportunity to create good relations with the British, who ruled India at that time. In 1897, he was appointed as the Bhutan

Agent of the British.<sup>67</sup> He also maintained a good relationship with the Tongsa *Penlop*, Ugyen Wangchuck who in 1900 appointed him as the government's agent (*kutshab*) for the whole of southern Bhutan.<sup>68</sup> The British sent a mission to Tibet in 1903 led by Colonel Younghusband, both Ugyen Dorji and Ugyen Wangchuck accompanied him and Ugyen Dorji mediated peace between the British and the Tibetan government. When Ugyen Wangchuck visited Calcutta in 1906 Ugyen Dorji accompanied him and after returning Ugyen Wangchuck conferred him the title of Haa Dungpa.<sup>69</sup> When Ugyen Wangchuck was appointed as the first hereditary King of Bhutan Ugyen Dorji played the "role of King Maker".<sup>70</sup> Due to the farsightedness of Ugyen Dorji a cordial relation was always maintained between the King and the British government. The King resolved to employ him as the *Gongzim* or 'Chamberlain of the Ruler'.<sup>71</sup> The letter in this connection was issued on 1908.<sup>72</sup> Thus Ugyen Dorji received the honour which he really deserved due to his unparalleled services to the King. The letter of appointment, bestowed this position as a hereditary one to be passed down to his children in line of descent. In 1911, the Bhutan King was invited to be present at the Delhi Durbar; Ugyen Dorji again accompanied him and acquired the title of 'Raja' from the British Viceroy in recognition of his contribution in the improvement of Anglo-Bhutanese relations.<sup>73</sup> After returning from India the King and Ugyen Dorji set about the task of bringing about greater prosperity to the people of Bhutan. Ugyen Dorji had a strong conviction in the power of education and in this case he was impressed by his lifelong and trusted friend Dr. John Graham, Principal of famous Dr. Graham School of Kalimpong. Due to the initiative of *Gongzim* Ugyen Dorji, the first school for modern education was opened at Haa in 1914, later the school was renamed as Ugyen Dorji Higher Secondary School. In the year 2013 it was again renamed as Gongzim Ugyen Dorji Higher Secondary School.<sup>74</sup> Ugyen Dorji realized the importance of English and Hindi in order to modernize Bhutan and with his support the King established a mobile court school at Bumthang in the year 1915 and Ugyen Dorji took the duty of introducing English education. Teachers were brought from Kalimpong to teach in these newly established schools. In 1914, supported by the King, Ugyen Dorji took forty-six boys from eastern Bhutan and Haa in the west and put them in Scottish University Mission Institution at Kalimpong.<sup>75</sup> The children being educated in Kalimpong were funded privately through the funds of Ugyen Dorji.<sup>76</sup> Due to the personal initiatives of Ugyen Dorji Bhutan first saw the light of modern education. C.A. Bell, Political Officer in Sikkim

in his Annual Report on the Bhutan for the year 1914-15 mentioned that, “Forty-six Bhutanese boys are being educated by teachers appointed by Church of Scotland Mission at Kalimpong. They stay with Raja Ugyen during the winter at Kalimpong and during the summer at Ha in Bhutan. The boys are making good progress. Raja Ugyen appears to have made himself responsible for the expense of the undertaking, which is likely to promote the development of Bhutan on sound lines in no inconsiderable degree.”<sup>77</sup> Again C. A. Bell in his Annual Report on Bhutan for the year 1915-16 mentioned that, “A school has been opened at Bumtang (in Bhutan), the residence of His Highness the Maharaja, where English is taught to the Bhutanese boys besides their mother language, which is Tibetan. Having only recently opened, this school is at present attended by but eighteen students, but it is probable that with the assistance of Raja Ugyen Dorji, who appears to have made himself responsible for imparting English education to Bhutanese boys, it will gradually become an important institution in Bhutan. Another school has been in existence for last two or three years at Ha in Western Bhutan and here there are 46 boys. They came down to Kalimpong with Raja Ugyen in each cold season. Raja Ugyen obtained teachers from schools from Dr. Sutherland of the Scotch Mission in Kalimpong. He experienced some opposition at first from the parents of the boys and from his co-religionists outside Bhutan, but being backed by His Highness, he was able to brush his aside, and those who opposed now appear to realize that this modest amount of Western education is good for the country.”<sup>78</sup> Though there was lack of funds in the country 12 of the original students were trained in the 1920s as “teachers, sub-assistant surgeons, trainers, forest rangers, mining engineers, and vets”<sup>79</sup>

This true patriot of Bhutan died on June 22, 1916 in his house in Kalimpong. He was a great visionary who paved the way for the true development of Bhutan by introducing the modern secular education and also maintaining Bhutan’s good relationship with British India. The first King realized the importance of secular education for the progress of his country but only with the help of his *Gongzim* that he became successful in this venture. Thus Ugyen Dorji played an important role in promoting modern education in Bhutan.

### ***Gongzim* Sonam Tobgey Dorji**

Sonam Tobgey Dorji, the eldest son of Raja Ugyen Dorji was seventeen years of age when his father passed away. He was one of the first Bhutanese to be educated

in a 'western-style school', i.e., St. Paul's School in Darjeeling. He possessed both modern education and the qualities of his father, and the King appointed him in all the hereditary posts. He helped the King in maintaining good relations with the British and also designated to become the Bhutan Agent for the British with title of 'Raja'.<sup>80</sup> Because of their fluency in the English language, it was beneficial for the Dorjis to make connections with their neighbours.<sup>81</sup> In 1918, he married the princess of Sikkim, Choying Wangmo. Sonam Tobgey Dorji wanted to modernize Bhutan and during the period of second hereditary monarchy Sonam Tobgey begun a "systematic review of social conditions, administrative practices and judicial proceedings".<sup>82</sup> When India gained independence from the British, *Gongzim* Sonam Tobgey Dorji led a delegation to discuss Bhutan's relation with independent India and in 1949 a new Indo-Bhutan treaty was signed by which Bhutan's independence was recognized but Bhutan agreed to be guided by the government of India in regard to its external relations.

Being himself educated in modern English school Sonam Tobgey Dorji had a fascination for introducing modern education in Bhutan. Due to his tireless efforts Haa School developed further and he initiated the training of 20 boys in English and Hindi. From this school candidates were later selected for engineering, medical and veterinary work continuing the aspirations of his father and that of his King.<sup>83</sup> According to the Annual Report on Bhutan for the year 1922-23 by F.M. Bailey, Political Officer in Sikkim, "The school at Bumthang is making good progress There are 17 boys on the roll. The school at Ha has been transferred to Kalimpong under the care of *Deb Zimpon* Sonam Tobgay Dorji, Agent of His Highness the Maharaja of Bhutan. There are 24 boys on the roll. Of these two have been sent for training-one in Forestry and the other in Surveying. One of them appeared at the last matriculation Examination But the result is not known yet."<sup>84</sup> Again he in the annual report on hutan for the year 1923-24 mentioned that, "There are 20 boys under the care of *Deb Zimpon* Sonam Tobgay Dorji, Agent of His Highness the Maharaja of Bhutan, at school in Kalimpong. Out of these, one has won the higher grade teacher's certificate and four appeared in the matriculation examination."<sup>85</sup> Furthermore the annual report on Bhutan for the year 1924-25 by F.M. Bailey mentioned that, "there are 15 boys under *Deb Zimpon* S. T. Dorji, Agent of His Highness the Maharaja, at school at Kalimpong. Out of these eight appeared in the last (1924) matriculation examination. Three of them have passed the examination. One of these two is being trained as

Forest Rangers at the Forest Research Institute and College, Dehra Dun. Arrangements are being made to train the other boy as a Sub-Assistant Surgeon in the Campbell Medical School, Calcutta.”<sup>86</sup>

Under the command of the second King, the momentum of education was further strengthened through *Gongzim* Sonam Tobgey Dorji and more Bhutanese were educated in Haa, Bumthang and India. The students who had received their education in Kalimpong continued to proceed to further studies in other parts of India.<sup>87</sup> Like his father Sonam Tobgey Dorji also looked after the children sent to India for receiving higher education. Sonam Tobgey Dorji was not only fluent in English but also well versed in western etiquette and many Europeans were surprised to meet such a dignified Bhutanese. With his wife Rani Chuni Wangmo he stayed mostly in Bhutan House, Kalimpong which was the social centre at that time.

### ***Lyonpo Jigme Palden Dorji***

Jigme Palden Dorji, the eldest son of Sonam Tobgey Dorji was born in 1919. He studied in North Point School in Darjeeling and in Bishop Cotton School in Simla. Annual report on Bhutan for the year 1941-42 by the Political Officer of Sikkim, B.J. Gould mentioned that, “Jigme Dorji, eldest son of Raja Dorji spent some weeks at the I.C.S. training school, Dehradun.”<sup>88</sup> When Jigme was 7-years old, second King Jigme Wangchuck awarded him with the Red Scarf and the title of Haa *Drungpa* (administrator) on his coronation day in 1927 in appreciation of the priceless services provided by the Dorji family to the kingdom of Bhutan.<sup>89</sup> In 1949, when crown prince Jigme Dorji Wangchuck went England for further study, Jigme Dorji accompanied him. Perhaps the King would have seen benefit in having him study with his son, and this reflects the trust he had on Jigme Dorji and his ancestors who served the kings with all their loyalties.<sup>90</sup> After the death of Sonam Tobgey Dorji in 1953, Jigme became Bhutan Agent in Kalimpong, first Prime Minister of Bhutan under third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. He also served as Regent from 1963 to 1964. Jigme Dorji assisted the third King in ending Bhutan’s policy of isolation and to follow the policy of economic development by Five Year development Plans. Due to his initiatives Bhutan got entry into international organizations such as Colombo Plan.

Jigme Palden Dorji had given priority in modernizing Bhutan by implementing modern education. Whenever he journeyed in Bhutan, he used to bring

some children back with him and put them in the best schools in Darjeeling and Kalimpong.<sup>91</sup> Like his grandfather and father Jigme took great interest in all aspects of the activities of Bhutanese students studying in India. Such as “While in Darjeeling, Jigmie Dorji would visit the schools and, if he found achievements to acknowledge, would host modest celebrations. If the achievements were particularly good, he would provide dinner at the restaurant in town - Glenary’s. If he were less pleased with student performance, he might take the boys for afternoon tea.”<sup>92</sup> Jigme took the responsibility for inducing the Canadian Jesuits from India to involve themselves in the school at Tashigang in eastern Bhutan.<sup>93</sup> He invited Father William Mackey, the Canadian Jesuit from Darjeeling to start country’s first high school. Together they selected the site for country’s first high school at Kanglung.<sup>94</sup> This school was later upgraded in Sherubtse College.

But Jigme Palden Dorji was assassinated at Phuentsholing in 1964 which brought an end in the life of such a dynamic person who could have contributed much more to the country. He was also the “greatest architect of present day Indo-Bhutan relations.”<sup>95</sup>

### **Dasho Nado Rinchen**

The first school in the country was established in Haa, inside the dzong, during the time of the first King, but the parents were not forthcoming to get admission of their children in this new system of education. During the time of second King in the late 1940s, some officials and attendants of *Gongzim* Sonam Tobgay Dorji had toured the villages in Haa and jotted down the names of the children whom they thought as potential students and the list was submitted to the dzong. The following year some officials and attendants came to the villages with the list and the children were taken to the Haa Dzong School for admission. In Nado Rinchen’s family the name of his elder brother was enlisted. But when the officials had come to collect the children his brother was herding cattle outside, so they did not wait and took Nado instead of his elder brother and got him admitted in Haa School. His mother came and appealed to get him out of school, but when the officials heard that she had four children they replied that one had to be admitted.<sup>96</sup> Thus Nado got acquainted with this new system of education.

Nado recollects some fond memories of his experiences at Haa School. The second King visited the school he recounts “we had a grand feast and received *soelra* from His Majesty”, he recalls again “at another time the students of Haa Dzong School were invited to the Third King’s wedding at Paro in 1952”<sup>97</sup> In 1950s there were a dozen schools in the country, the government decided to select the best students from these schools to send to India for the secondary level of education. In 1955, Nado was among the group of Bhutanese students to receive the first government of India scholarship to study in India. He memorized, “After studying for about eight years in Haa we went to India.”<sup>98</sup> Admissions into different schools were conducted on the basis of performance in tests conducted at Bhutan House, Kalimpong. Parents had requested not to send their children to warm places out of fear for malaria, so students were distributed among hill station schools of Nainital, U.P., Kalimpong and Darjeeling. Nado Rinchhen studied at the Birla Public School in Nainital, U.P., then at St. Joseph College in Darjeeling, forestry in Forestry College at Dehradun and bachelor’s in English and Political Science from a University in Kathmandu, Nepal. He was also the part of the first teacher and student delegate from Bhutan to India in 1958 and this delegate had the opportunity to receive an audience with the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.<sup>99</sup>

In memorizing his service tenure in the Department of Education he said, “From 1973 till 1986, I worked in the then Department of Education as Officer on Special Duty (OSD), Director and Director General of Education. I served the Ministry as the Head for more than thirteen years.”<sup>100</sup> Nado Rinchhen was a member of the first National Education Policy Committee when it completed the policy in 1976 during the reign of the fourth King. Being himself the product of modern secular education Dasho Nado Rinchhen has contributed a lot in developing this system of education. According to him , the modern education system in Bhutan in the beginning faced two problems- one was the preference of monastic system of education over modern education and the other one was, lack of teachers in the country so bulk of teachers were appointed from India.

In order to make much progress in this system of education Daso Nado Rinchhen’s, who is now serving as the Deputy Minister in the Royal Privy Council of Bhutan, views that, “A key role must also be played by parents. Teachers or the schools alone, through caning or no caning cannot bring about the desired

developments in children. I, therefore, urge the parents and schools to join hands in developing for our country the most productive citizens with the GNH (Gross National Happiness) values.”<sup>101</sup>

### ***Lyonpo Dawa Tshering***

Dawa Tshering’s father was in service in the Dorji household. Dawa was a bright, educated in a style almost equal to that of the Dorji children. After graduating from University with a degree in Economics, he joined the service in the government, working with the Dorjis. His responsibilities included education and he along with the Jesuit priest Father William Mackey became partners in building Bhutanese education system in the 1960s.<sup>102</sup> Throughout his tenure at Sherubtse in eastern Bhutan from the period of the establishment of country’s first high school Father Mackey got the support of Dawa Tshering in solving any problem. Dawa Tshering’s career in the Royal government covered a period during which Bhutan went through a rapid transformation from traditional country to the first stages of the development. In order to develop country’s new education system there was immediate need of teachers. Dawa Tshering went to Kerala in South India in 1962 and took the first group of teachers. Father Mackey said about Dawa Tshering that,” He collected 20 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. He says jokingly, “They couldn’t leave because they couldn’t find their way back”.<sup>103</sup> Actually Dawa Tshering gained a reputation among the teachers, in spite of so many difficulties he tried to bestow a descent salary for the Indian teachers and most of the teachers he brought became acclaimed teachers.

In 1960 Dawa Tshering became the first Director of Education of Bhutan.<sup>104</sup> In 1969, Dawa Tshering was appointed Bhutan’s first Minister of Planning and Development and in 1972 he became the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Under the command of the fourth King a National Education Policy committee was formed with Dawa Tshering as the Chairman. The first National Education Policy was completed and approved in 1976.<sup>105</sup> Dawa Tshering and Father Mackey played the major role in drafting the education policy. Mr. Prasad, an Indian teacher and inspector in Bhutan for many years while commenting on the pioneers of the progress of modern education in Bhutan said that, “The credit should also go to *Lyonpo Dawa Tshering*,

the then Secretary General in the Ministry of Development for his enlightened and active role in introducing modern education in Bhutan.”<sup>106</sup>

Thus Dawa Tshering played a major role in modernizing education in the initial years and in building modern Bhutan. As recognition of his contribution he was conferred with the *Druk Thuksey* by the third King in 1966 and the Coronation Medal by the fourth King in 1974.<sup>107</sup>

### **Lopen Kharpa**

During the time of the second King many school were opened, the school in Trashigang in eastern Bhutan was one of them. In 1952 it was started with 30 students and three teachers Dr. Karchung, Lopen Kharpa and Dasho Karma Dorji and Lopen Kharpa was the first head teacher.<sup>108</sup> Lopen Kharpa was from Khar, Pemagatshel and was educated in India as he had been chosen in 1914, by the first King to go to school in India and obtained teacher training at the University of Calcutta.<sup>109</sup> After Father William Mackey took the charge of the Trashigang School in 1964 Mr. Kharpa became the second-in-command. He was fluent in English and taught English, Hindi and Mathematics. When Father Mackey came in Trashigang School he found that, “Mr. Kharpa, who was in effect the Bhutanese head of the school, was not so bad...He was excessive in his punishments and the boys lived in terror of his wrath, which could be invoked by the slightest infraction-perhaps just a movement, a slight noise, or less than perfect work. The lightest punishment might be a swift blow to the head with a stick.”<sup>110</sup> Thus Lopen Kharpa taught very well and was a strict teacher.

*Lyonpo* Sonam Tobgey, an ex-student of the school who later became the Chief Justice of Bhutan memorized that, “Lopen Kharpa was an excellent and dedicated teacher. The Indian teachers were very nice to me but Lopen Kharpa’s teaching was superior. I owe him for certain values in my life through his teaching from 1960 to 1963. Despite his enormous contributions to education starting from Haa, Wangduephodrang, Trashigang and Sherubtse schools, he paled into oblivion. I learnt from his nephew that the last years of his life in Khar were sad and lonely.”<sup>111</sup>

### **Tamji Jagar**

Born in Bumthang, he joined to serve the second King as a teenager. In 1961, he became the first *Thrimpoen* or chief administrator of the Trashigang Dzongkhag.<sup>112</sup>

Later he became Bhutan's first minister of Home Affairs. Tamji Jagar had a good understanding of the rural people and while in Trashigang he contributed a lot in developing education of the Dzongkhag. Along with Father Mackey he planned the project of boarding facilities of the Trashigang School and completed it which provided accommodation to the students from distant areas. Tamji Jagar could speak Sharchopkha which was his first language, Hindi and he had studied *Choekey* and also probably *Dzongkha*, but no English. When there was a move from Hindi to English in schools of Bhutan though many people objected Tamji Jagar endorsed it and assisted whenever possible.<sup>113</sup> Tamji Jagar spoke Hindi and Father Mackey spoke Nepali but both of them became very close friend and understood each other's languages. In 1964 when the Trashigang School faced shortage of food and about thirty students were unable to bring ration from home due to travel difficulties it was Tamji Jagar who provided rice and corn for them from his own stores.<sup>114</sup> Such was his love for students and education.

Thus Tamji Jagar was a true custodian of the people's well being. He cared for the country's future. He was a patron of Bhutan's culture and tradition and at the same time wanted to modernize the country through modern education

### **Babu Tashi**

Tashi Tshering, popularly known as Babu Tashi was from Dungmain village in Pemagatshel in south-east Bhutan. People used the term 'Babu' to denote respect. He was selected by the first King to go to school in India. He acquired teacher training at the University of Calcutta, so he and Lopen Kharpa were the first two trained Bhutanese educators and some of the Bhutan's first schools also started by him.<sup>115</sup> He was the teacher of the Bumthang School along with Babu Phento and Babu Karchung and they taught subject ranging from Hindi to Geometry.<sup>116</sup> He had also instructed the third King in English and Hindi in his childhood.<sup>117</sup> He could speak Sharchopkha which was his first language, Dzongkha, Hindi and English.

Zangley Dukpa one of the established educators of Bhutan memorized that, "It was Babu Trashi who opened the junior secondary schools in Yurung, Mongar and Trashigang in 1959...Babu Trashi was settled in Nangkor although he was from Dungmain. Therefore our parents took us to Nangkor (six hours journey on foot) towards the end of 1958. In the evening of our arrival in this important destination, we

were given a feast by Babu Trashi - red rice with red, big and long dried chillies and pork *paa*....In the morning of the next day, we stood in a circle with our respective parents behind us in the courtyard of the Nangkhor Nagtshang. There came Babu Trashi again and distributed three 'shikhis' and four/five round sweets to each of us as he came around talking to our parents individually. He said we would get more of those sweets and 'shikhis' if we went to school. When he came to my father who, along with others, begged him for Kidu on the pretext that I should succeed my father as the village Lam in Dungmain. Babu Trashi said in a philosophic tone: 'Sending your son to school is my Kidu for you. You will soon realize it'...It was the first and the last opportunity for me to see Babu Trashi, a highly trained teacher as I realized later."<sup>118</sup>

Later Babu Tashi became the first *Nyerchen* of the district of Trashigang who was in charge of all accounts and payments in addition with the collection of taxes. Father Mackey realized and recognized Babu Tashi's abilities and his work for education. He was also a strict disciplinarian and a religious person.

### ***Ashi Tashi Dorji***

*Ashi* is an honorific title for an aristocrat Bhutanese lady. Tashi Dorji was the eldest daughter of Sonam Tobgey Dorji. Born in 1923 she epitomized the women of Bhutan of her time. When Bhutan was still in the period of isolation *Ashi* Tashi Dorji was an educated lady and exposed to the outside world. She was one of the first Bhutanese women to receive a modern education. Realizing the benefits of modern education Sonam Tobgey Dorji sent her daughters- Tashi Dorji and Kesang Choden (who later became the queen of the second King) to St. Joseph Convent in Kalimpong.<sup>119</sup> Mr. B.J.Gould, Political Officer of Sikkim, in his Annual Report on the relations between the British Government and Bhutan state for the year 1939-40 mentioned that, "The eldest daughter of Raja Dorji, aged 16 passed the senior Cambridge Examination obtaining a 'credit' in every subject."<sup>120</sup> After that Tashi Dorji studied science at Loreto House in Calcutta and later studied medicine at the Lady Hardinge Medical College, New Delhi.<sup>121</sup>

*Ashi* Tashi at the age of eleven took the role of an assistant in her father's office at Bhutan House, Kalimpong, helping her father to organize files, type and draft official letters. On the command of the third King, *Ashi* Tashi served as his representative in

Trashigang for two years beginning in 1955 to administer the large western district.<sup>122</sup> She had also a great concern for developing modern education in the country particularly in eastern Bhutan. When Father Mackey arrived in Paro from Darjeeling in 1963, *Ashi* Tashi decided that Father should engaged himself to establish the new high school in eastern Bhutan. As she was aware of the condition of eastern Bhutan she told Father Mackey that much development had taken place in western part so it was the time to build country's first high school in eastern Bhutan.<sup>123</sup> With the establishment of country's first high school at Kanglung in 1968 her dream was realized.

### **Zangley Dukpa**

Born in 1950 in the village of Dungmain at Pemagatshel *Dzongkhag* (previously under the Shongar *Dzonkhag*) Zangley Dukpa was admitted in the Yurung School in 1959 along with the twenty six children of the same village when the school was opened. Most of the parents tried not to send their children to school but all their attempts were in vein. Students lived in their own hutments built around the school. Zangley Dukpa recollected about the system of education, "Rote learning was common. I memorized the whole history book of Napoleon in Hindi without understanding the meaning of the text!"<sup>124</sup> After completion of his junior secondary level he joined in the Teacher Training Institute in Samtse in 1968. He was selected as a teacher in Sarbhangshir Primary School (August 1970 to February 1973), then at Paro High School (March 1973 to June 1975). In 1975 he went to Singapore to complete a certificate course in education from the Institute of education and after returning from there he joined in Trashigang Junior High School. From 1980 to 1981 he worked as head teacher of the two high schools-Lamidara Junior High School and Haa Junior High School.<sup>125</sup> After that he went to the University of Bristol, England and completed Master's programme in Education and after returning he anticipated in drafting the education policy on advice of the Director of Education, Dasho Nado Rinchen. According to him teaching profession is very challenging and a teacher played a model role in the society. His view is that for overall improvement of the school it is necessary to give adequate degree of autonomy to all the heads of schools and there should be training and in-service courses for them.<sup>126</sup> In 1989, he took the charge of Sherubtse College, the only higher education centre of the country. He tried his best to upgrade it.<sup>127</sup>

As an honour of his contribution in the field of education he was awarded Red Scarf from the fourth King. In 1997 he was appointed as the *Dzongda* of Chhukha and later joined in politics and became the first democratically elected Minister of Health in 2007. Thus from the beginning of a career as a primary school teacher to the principal of the country's premier institution Zangley Dukpa contributed a lot in developing country's modern education.

### ***Dasho Gagey Lhamu***

Royal Government took the initiatives to admit girl children in modern schooling system in the 1950s. Gagey Lhamu was among the first ten girls of the country who took admission in the Haa School. There was a festival in the Haa *Dzong* where she went with her parent; there some officials came with *Dasho* Jigme Dorji (who became the Prime Minister of Bhutan in 1953) and they listed her name along with nine other girls all of whom were admitted in the Haa School.<sup>128</sup> In the first year she stayed in a hut near the school with her grandfather and from the second year the girls were provided with food and lodging facilities. The medium of teaching and text books all were in Hindi. She studied there till 1956, after which some boys and 7 girls were sent to India leading to her admission in St Philomena Girls' High School in Kalimpong. After that she received an Indian Government scholarship and took admission in a missionary school and later joined Dr. Graham's School where she did a secretarial course for two years. After returning Bhutan in 1965 she joined at Thimphu Public School as teacher-cum-office assistant. From 1965 she was upgraded as a regular school teacher and continued till 1993 in the same school and then joined the High Court of Bhutan.<sup>129</sup>

Due to her outstanding contribution towards the country the fourth King Jigme Singey Wangchuck awarded her with Red Scarf on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1993. *Dasho* Gagey Lhamu has made a comparison about the condition of modern education of the country in 1950s and of a later period in the following manner, "When I look at those days and compare and contrast the school facilities after the commencement of First Five Year Plan, there is a drastic improvement in the schools both physically and academically. During my time, one could easily count the number of schools and teachers on fingertips, but now due to drastic increase in the enrolment of students both in urban and rural areas, it is extremely difficult to accommodate them.....Many

new schools have been opened where good, dedicated and highly qualified teachers are available...Now if parents want to send their child to school, facilities are easily available. During my time, parents were very reluctant to send their children to school. As such, they resorted to every means in hiding their children even when they heard about the coming of officials to select the students.”<sup>130</sup> *Dasho Gagey Lhamu* can be considered to be an example of what a woman can achieve through education.

### **Chandrakala Gurung**

Chandrakala Gurung is the country's first woman graduate. After completing her school level education she passed from Darjeeling Government College in the year 1956 and became the first woman graduate in Bhutan. After that she joined as a teacher in the same college probably because of the absence of high schools in the kingdom. In 1968 she joined as a lecturer at the newly opened Teachers' Training Institute at Samtse which trained students for primary schools of Bhutan. She recalled that, “At that time not many students qualified to become teachers. The trainees had studied till class VIII, some even till class VI. But some were really good and went on to become some of the best teachers.”<sup>131</sup> Thus Chandrakala Gurung was the teacher of many teachers of newly established primary schools of Bhutan in the 70s. In 1976 she became the principal of the institute and in 1982 it was upgraded as National Institute of Education and started to train students for secondary schools and later post-graduate certificate course in education and in-service training for teachers were also introduced. When she has started many of the students in the institute were older than her but later the situation changed.

Chandrakala Gurung is one of the great educators of Bhutan. She has been the mentor of many teachers of the country. Zangley Dukpa, former Vice Chancellor, Royal University of Bhutan said that while he took admission in TTI, Samtse, it was Chandrakala Gurung who took special care of him as a teacher and played a vital role in his success in the examinations.<sup>132</sup> Thus she has left a legacy. It is really remarkable that she joined in the teaching profession in a institution at a time when there was no female trainees there. Five women joined in the institute in the second year. According to Ms Gurung the country's education has come a long way. She summarized the progress of education as: “Most of the schools and institutions were

headed by Bhutanese teachers and educationists. Even our own university was established. More and more girls were enrolled in schools.”<sup>133</sup>

### ***Dasho Pema Thinley***

Pema Thinley, first heard the word ‘es-school’ (school) when he was taken away from his home with some other children to get admission in the school at Mongar *Dzongkhag* in 1958.<sup>134</sup> There he stayed in a hut with his cousins under the care of his grandfather. They were taught in Hindi. In 1962 when the medium of learning was converted to English, many teachers came from Kerala. In 1965, 27 boys including Pema Thinley were transferred to Tashigang High School for secondary level education under Father William Mackey.<sup>135</sup> In 1968 he completed the Bhutan Matriculation and was selected for admission to St. Joseph College, Darjeeling. But as Bhutan matriculation was not recognized, he could not take admission in the college of Darjeeling. He joined as a teacher in Yangchenphug Public School. Fortunately he got the opportunity to study in Australia under the Colombo Plan Scholarship scheme and left for Australia in December 1969.<sup>136</sup>

After six years of study in Australia he returned and joined Yangchenphug Public School in 1976 and continued there for six years. Then he worked as the Principal of Paro Central School, the Director of the National Institute of Education in Samtse, the Director of the Curriculum and Professional Support Division, Principal of Sherubtse College, the Director, Director General and Secretary of the Ministry of Education and joined Vice Chancellor of the Royal University of Bhutan in the year 2012.<sup>137</sup> From the commencement of his career in a school to the post of Vice Chancellor of the country’s university he has been a part and parcel of the modern education system where in he took various responsibilities for the cause of upliftment of education. His view about Bhutan’s education is that, “I am a believer in the power of education. It has meant so much for me and I believe it can open up many opportunities for all people at any stage of their lives. ... We must never shy away from continually investing in the education of our people. This is a profound wisdom that our successive kings have used to guide Bhutan to where we are now. Opportunities to learn and better their lives have to be made available for people of all ages and abilities, at affordable costs, at any point in their lives, thus creating a truly learning society.”<sup>138</sup>

## ***Dasho Jagar Dorji***

At the age of ten Jagar Dorji first heard the word “escoori” (i.e., school) when he was admitted to Trongsa Primary School in the beginning of 1960s with ten other boys from his village Tangsibi. He recalled about his school life that, “Teaching at that time was basically, traditional, lecture-oriented. Teachers used to teach us by reading the text from the books and explained their meanings, and we learnt the text by memorizing.”<sup>139</sup> He joined in Teachers’ Training Institute in 1968 and completed the course in 1970 and joined in Tshokana Primary School at Tsirang *Dzongkhag* where under the guidance of the head teacher he passed class X examination from the W.B.B.S.E. in Kalimpong. He was approved with Government of India’s Scholarship in 1976 to study in Punjab University and got B. A. and B. Ed degree in 1980. There after he taught in the schools at Trongsa, Bhur and Kalikhola and in 1981 got a scholarship to do masters degree in the University of London Institute of Education, UK.<sup>140</sup> After returning from England he joined in the National Institute of Education (previously known as Teachers’ Training Institute) as a lecturer. In 1989 he became the head of the Curriculum and Textbook Development Division. In 1994 he returned to Samtse as the Director of the National Institute of Education. Later he also became the Director of National Institute of Education, Paro.

From a teacher in a primary school to the Director of national Institute of Education both in Samtse and Paro, Jagar Dorji played a vital role in the initial growth of the country’s education. He worked on the history and geography course books, curriculum and took initiative to develop the National Institute of Education of both Samtse and Paro. He also completed his doctoral degree from the University of New England, Australia in the year 2000. For the first time in Bhutan this educationist has wrote a book on Bhutan, ‘Quality of Education in Bhutan’, in 2003, as a result of his deep association in the field of education. In mentioning the role of teacher in education system of Bhutan his view is that, “Traditionally, Bhutanese parents have little role in educating their children. There is a saying ‘keep wealth in one’s possession, and keep children in other’s possession’. This means that if you wish children to be educated, and brought up to be productive, mature and responsible, it is not the parents who can do it. They have always trusted the teacher to do so. This tradition has not died down as yet.”<sup>141</sup>

### ***Ashi Dechen Wangmo Wangchuck***

*Ashi Dechen Wangmo Wangchuck* was the eldest daughter of the third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. When she was just seventeen years old she was appointed as the king's representative in the ministry of development and this position continued when her younger brother assumed the throne in 1972.<sup>142</sup> In December 1974, she accompanied the King to India to discuss the plans for economic development of Bhutan.<sup>143</sup> She was responsible for the development of social sectors particularly education and health and guided Bhutan's effort at expanding reach of development services to all sections of the society. In regard to the progress of education in eastern side, considering the dedicated role played by Father Mackey, *Ashi Dechen* wrote to him that he had been given full permission to do what he thought good for the country.<sup>144</sup>

### ***Lyonpo Jigmi Y. Thinley***

Lyonpo Jigmi Y. Thinley, born in 1952 began his modern education at Dr. Graham's Homes in Kalimpong and went on to Pennsylvania State University in the USA for masters in Public Administration.<sup>145</sup> His family has a history of serving the country, his father had left his parents at a young age to serve the second King and this continued during the time of the third King. He was the Director of Education in 1980s and nurtured the country's education system. As the Director of Education he opened several new divisions such as Teacher Education, Non-Formal education, School Planning and Building, Planning and International Coordination, Curriculum and Textbook Division etc.<sup>146</sup> All these were created to fulfill the increasing demand of modernizing the education system. He later became the zonal administrator and twice minister in the erstwhile Council of Ministers. He was also the first democratically elected Prime Minister of Bhutan. A passionate leader, *Lyonpo Jigmi Thinley* brought about significant developments in the education sector in Bhutan. He inspired the launch of the Educating for Gross National Happiness in the country.

### ***Thakur Singh Powdyel***

Born and brought up in the farming village of Dorokha, Bhutan, Thakur S Powdyel, began his primary education in his village school at Dorokha, then moved to Samtse Central School to complete his high school education. This was followed by college

in Shillong, India, for pre-university, undergraduate, and postgraduate studies and finally did a Postgraduate Certificate in Education at the Institute of Education, University of London. He finally capped his carrier as the first democratically elected Minister of Education in Bhutan. This distinguished educationist has taught at school, college and university levels within the country and is also the visiting professor Kyoto University in Japan and Maharishi University of Management in Iowa, USA. He made tireless efforts to achieve universal primary enrolment, gender parity and did much to restore Education to its essential, core function by initiating the Green Schools programme under the mission of GNH.

He is the recipient of the sacred *Dakyeu* from His Majesty the King (April 11, 2008) as well as several international recognitions for his contribution towards education.<sup>147</sup>

### **H. B. Vishwa**

H.B. Vishwa, though not highly qualified in so called formal education has played a meaningful role in the field of country's modern education. After completing teachers training in 1970 he joined government service as a teacher in Dorokha Primary School in Samtse and worked for two and half years in that position before becoming headmaster of different schools. He was promoted to Education Officer from 02 September 1987 to 30 September 2000 in different parts of Bhutan.

Finally he served the erstwhile National Institute of Education, Paro, as Administrative Officer looking after the administration and finance of three different divisions i. e., the main institute Curriculum and Professional Support Section (CAPSS) and the Centre for Educational Research and Training (CERD). He attended a short training programme of 25 days in the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in New Delhi in the year 1982 under the UNESCO fellowship.

He had the opportunity to undergo a special training programme on Educational Planning and Administration in the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi in 1999.<sup>148</sup>

Below is a list of native teachers given by Father William Mackey, who made an outstanding contribution to education:<sup>149</sup>

Tashigang: Babu Tashi, Lupon Karpa, Dr. Karchung, Dasho Karma Dorji

Ha: Lophon Dago (Received Thuksey Medal on National Day, 1973, for work in education)

Mongar: Lophon Phuntsho

Thimphu: Dasho Pema Wangchuck

The list of native contributors given above is by no means exhaustive or even close to a complete list. Despite repeated trips to the kingdom, and numerous interviews, I was either rewarded only by flimsy reports which were difficult to corroborate with documents or other respondents and my several pleas to the Department of Education yielded only a blank response. It goes without saying that with the level of education that is present in the country today there must have been many unsung native heroes who must have had roles, major or minor, and it is my fervent hope and prayer that the sons of the soil will fill up the huge void left in this section of my thesis.

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## **Chapter 10**

### **Impact of Modern Education on Bhutan's Society, Administration and Culture**

The dominant system of education that prevailed in Bhutan prior to the modern school system was more of a religious and classical nature. The emphasis was on religion, religious practices and related philosophies. This traditional monastic education system helped to preserve the Kingdom's literary traditions, its culture and heritage and most importantly, the eternal religion of Lord Buddha as it had come to be understood and practiced in this part of the world. The life blood of Bhutanese culture and heritage still flows within, and can best be preserved through traditional and classical studies. It is, therefore, Bhutanese traditional studies and values have their rightful place and are given due prominence in the educational system of the country. But modern education system, which is the need of the hour, was introduced in Bhutan quite late. It has been there since the dawn of the last century. Thus the system of education in Bhutan is diversified into modern school and monastic school. Students from both types of schools are treated equally in terms of qualification. Yet most of the children prefer going to modern schools and this has indirectly impacted the number of enrolments in the monastic schools. However, this should not really affect the religion and cultural development of Bhutan, since emphasis is laid on the essential Buddhist texts, which is taught in Dzongkha even in modern schools. The narrative of modern Bhutan is the chronicle of educating a nation.

With the installation of Ugyen Wangchuck, as the first hereditary monarch in December 1907, education became an important priority of the Royal Government. Starting from humble beginnings, country's first school and mobile court school, patronized by the first King there followed seven to ten schools with Hindi-medium instruction set up by the second King Jigme Wangchuck. Following the enthronement of Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, the third King commenced western style English medium schools marshalling a fresh age in the history of the country. English became the medium of learning as he realised that Bhutan being a small country needed to be effectively in touch with the outside world. During his reign, the planned economic development was started and it had accomplished the rapid growth of modern education.

In early 1960s there were just few schools in Bhutan attended by several hundred students. These students comprised of unenthusiastic rural cow herders who went into hiding when government officials came to enlist young boys into school. It was an era when parents bribed the officials into overlooking their children from admission to school and even to the extent of making the children act as if they were either deaf or dumb. The few so-called unfortunate ones who could not avoid enlistment nor had their names recorded in absentia, had to travel long distances from home, stay in makeshift bamboo sheds, took turn in cooking and wait for their parents for the supply of foods. It was from these rudimentary settings they received their education and were later able to hold the positions of top ranking government officials in their later life. The harsh conditions precluded admission of girl children and their chance to education was to come much later.

Despite the late initiation of a formal, organised education system, there existed many enthusiastic minds to bring their children to the pale of education. These countrymen, though they illiterate gave their time, effort, properties, provisions and even set up bamboo huts to be used as classrooms and accommodation for children who were from far flung villages. As a part of this attempt, they would invite learned people to the village, collect children and start the process of learning. Thus, young boys imbibed the knowledge and wisdom from learned elders who were often without formal degrees. Gradually there was an evolution in the education system from some humble community schools and primary schools to colleges and a university in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

During the reign of Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the fourth King, Bhutan witnessed exceptional progress in enhancing literacy rate, increasing enrolment in schools, number of students etc. In the year 1990 the total population was estimated at 600,000 and the main Plan document of the Seventh Five Year Plan projected a rise to between 713,211 and 768,050 by 1997.<sup>1</sup> These figures need to be seen in the light of the data given by the record of the census which states the population in 2005 stood at 634,982 (male: 333,595 and female: 301,387).<sup>2</sup> The latter data, if true, then the population instead of increasing decreased by over 100,000 which is overtly impossible. Consequently, taking the population to be anywhere within 600,000 the development in educational was very impressive.

Table 10:1 Education statistics of the country in April 1997

Sl. No.	Schools and Institutions	Number	Students	Staff		
				Teachers	Others	Total
1.	Community Schools	107	10743	250	07	257
2.	Primary Schools	150	51776	1312	240	1552
3.	Junior High Schools	25	17907	473	102	575
4.	High Schools	13	8528	316	142	458
5.	Private Schools	07	1424	071	14	85
6.	Institutions	10	1889	293	157	450
	Total	312	92267	2715	662	3377

(Source-*General Statistics*, Ministry of Health and Education, Education Division, Thimphu, Bhutan, 1997, p.1)

The government made a commitment to provide free education up to class X as well as and also to provide scholarships to meet the needs of higher and professional studies. While formal education amongst children was being encouraged, adult illiteracy rate remained high. Hence the government in 1980s introduced the adult literacy programme to enable an enhanced participation of the people in the national development. This was to promote the basic education amongst the adults. In 1992, the National Women's Association of Bhutan introduced non-formal education (NFE) programme in Bhutan with five centres in different districts. So, besides the above mentioned list in the year 1997 most of the Bhutanese had become literate either through adult education programme or non formal education programme but there has not been any data preserved on this. Now the question is how this educated population was contributing to the development of the country. With the ever expanding demand brought about by the increasing social and economic development activities the civil service became the largest employee of people with formal education. Between 1977 and 1987, the employee in the civil service became doubled.

In 1991, there were 11,228 people were with the civil service among whom there were 671 graduates and post graduates and 506 diploma holders.<sup>3</sup> This meant that the higher educated personnel only constituted 10.48% of the civil servants, a clear indicator of the lack of qualified nationals. This shortage was mainly felt in education, in scientific and technical sectors where considerably very large number of expatriates filled the vacancy while the nationals filled the posts in administrative and judicial sectors.

If anything has persistently and reliably served the advancement of the country over past one hundred years, it has been the gift of modern education that has empowered the country to harvest benefits in diverse fields and even helping the countrymen in value their own rich legacy. The schools and institutions across the country were instrumental in bringing together the youths from varying backgrounds and transforming these youngsters into potent resources in the development of the country. Education led the youths to achieve success in miscellaneous fields, enrich their understanding of themselves and sharpening of their world view. Gradually they started participating in the international community as confident, energetic and forward looking people. Since the inception, modern education has continued to be a priority among other things in Bhutan. It started designing its own system and work on building a foundation that supports the country's development philosophy. Bhutan has developed in to a forward looking nation largely shaped and supported by its education system.

The education was moulded as a means to follow the unique concept of Gross National Happiness which includes spiritual and cultural needs in the way of progress.<sup>4</sup> Earlier value education was simply a concept included in text book stories; later it was introduced as a formal subject. Traditional values sculpted Buddhist teaching of universal values like empathy, reciprocity, responsibility, selflessness etc. Though initially the main endeavour of education in Bhutan was to fight unawareness and gain spiritual knowledge, the recent trend in education is based on ensuring the inherent capacity of every child, instilling a consciousness of contemplative learning, ecological awareness and genuine care for nature, a holistic understanding of the modern world and the competence to deal with it, preparation for productive livelihood, while not ignoring the country's unique cultural heritage. According to the former Prime Minister Lyonpo Jigmi Y. Thinley the vision of the education system is

to generate “an educated and enlightened society-----, at peace with itself, at peace with the world, built and sustained by the idealism and the creative enterprise of our citizens.”<sup>5</sup> In the words of the fifth King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, “If our vision of the nation is not contained in the pages of the books that our young children hold, in the words of the teachers as they lead their classrooms, and in the education policies of our governments, then let it be said – we have no vision.”<sup>6</sup>

So, education is the key to the development of Bhutan. Today, modern education has become indispensable in achieving socio-economic development and progress in Bhutan. Followings are the effects of modern education witnessed in Bhutanese society, administration and culture-

- A) As per the Constitution of Bhutan, education has become a basic right since education is a precondition in fulfilling the wider social, cultural and economic goals.
- B) Here education system is highly scientific and based according to the needs of the time. Head Teachers are trained in school administration that helps them run their schools efficiently.
- C) Bhutan embarked various programmes to provide mass education, including adult education and specialized vocational training for their people which entertains an all round development in the society.
- D) Since Bhutan first ventured in formal education, it has embarked upon the process of mobilizing its human, physical and financial resources for a rapid growth. The process of development has brought many changes and played leading role in the society.
- E) Government formulated positive educational policies to enable the creation of knowledge based society providing equitable and quality education leading to learning opportunities to all children so as to become creative equipped to confront the challenges of the society.
- F) As a result of the educational policies the educated youth have become an asset and contributors to the harmony of the society.
- G) English education has facilitated the Bhutanese students to study in any country: graduating in fields as diverse as from accounting to medicine and visual arts. After returning home they can apply their knowledge and skills and thus contributing to the welfare of the society, administration and culture.

- H) Bhutan's administration became equipped with educationally qualified and skilled people because of modern education system. The modernization of the administrative system owes much to modern education.
- I) Till the 80s of the last century Bhutan was dependent on India's financial assistance in the educational sector. But in the late 80's and beginning of 90s there nationalization of educational took place with a gradual transfer of School Boards and education administration to the hands of the Bhutanese leading to self sufficiency and wide changes in the society.
- J) Bhutan's spectacular economic growth owes much to its effective use of its educated manpower. The establishment of schools all over the country and the educated joining the administrative machinery has led to country's overall development. A learned farmer is able to a change and move into totally new production process and this adaptability has become an indispensable bridge over which a poor Bhutanese can cross the gulf from misery to hope.
- K) The Royal Government has introduced various educational programmes to foster cultural understanding, friendship among the citizens and also with the rest of the world.
- L) The education system in Bhutan differs from the others in that Bhutan stresses promoting a sense of belonging among the students and value the culture and heritage of the country.
- M) Educated Bhutanese have adapted with the modern way of living. In Bhutan there has emerged a vibrant middle class and highly educated elite class. Since their medium of learning was English, they had good exposure to several countries in the world, maintaining their national identity at the same time. Even in the monastic system they are adapting English language for communication and also the modern techniques that have a positive impact in the teaching - learning system.
- N) The farsighted fourth King got convinced that people were ready to run democracy and there was a smooth transition of Bhutan into a constitutional democratic monarchy in 2008. It has given an opportunity to the education ministry to help in making a better foundation for democracy to sustain there. There came then a new demand in the education system to be able to support all citizens through the formal, non-formal and even informal arrangements to

acquire basic skills. This has enabled them to meaningfully participate in the administrative process and build a vibrant democracy.

- O) The march of modern education swept away the so called primitive knots of gender discrimination as it provided equal opportunity for everyone on terms of the need of the society which enshrines the females to a greater extent, enabling women to work in Bhutan administration and contribute in the task of nation building.
- P) The introduction of modern education led to the global upliftment of the Bhutanese people as their culture became much more refined and helped them doing away with the hallmark of savagery. It constitutes to be an essential part of their nation building through modernization although keeping them keen to their tradition.
- Q) The fore-fathers of this generation of Bhutan is no more doomed to the ill-fate of being uneducated rather some of them had succeeded to be the torch bearers through modern education which later contributed for the advancement of the nation.
- R) The education ministry pursues the target to make Bhutan a knowledge hub, and create an Information Technology and knowledge based society. This is the initiative to broad-base Bhutan's education system, and the introduction of Tertiary Education Policy (TEP) has opened fresh avenues for students to pursue higher education in GNH studies, environment, Buddhist studies, and traditional medicine.<sup>7</sup> After fulfilling this young generation will positively acquire skills, knowledge, and values to support of a fast globalising 21<sup>st</sup> century Bhutan.

On the contrary, according to former Education Director Thinley Gyamtsho, every Bhutanese possesses traditional qualities of self perseverance, self-reliance and self resourcefulness but these qualities are generally being eroded due to modernization and media-education. According to Gyamtsho, "He is increasingly being specialized only in a few limited skills having to rely on others for his perseverance. Working with their own hands is being viewed as being something below their dignity and the dignity of labour which was held in high esteem is being downgraded. Students immediately after their graduation from schools and colleges look for white collar jobs and on being absorbed in the government services

immediately look forward of hiring servants to carry out their various domestic chores. Such dramatic changes in the values and outlooks amongst our population are tantamount to rising expectations amongst the populace increasing the nation's dependency on others at great economic, social and political costs..... There is, therefore, the need to revitalize these traditional qualities----. They are capable of being nurtured with these essential virtues.”<sup>8</sup> In order to cultivate dignity of labour among students, various activities like social work, school farming, social forestry, and greening of school compounds were implemented in school curricula. The kind of future Bhutanese generation, Gyamtsho dreamed to see was that, “as a result of the education a person receives he is capable of, without fear or shyness, mixing or adopting himself at the highest levels with comfort while at the same time he can do the same thing with the most ignorant person.”<sup>9</sup>

## Notes and References:

1. *Seventh Five Year Plan*, Main Document, Vol-1, 1992/93-1996/1997, Planning Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, Bhutan p.7.
2. *Population & Housing Census of Bhutan 2005*, Office of the Census Commissioner, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, 2006, p.17.
3. *Seventh Five Year Plan*, op.cit, p.84.
4. Wangyal, Tashi, Ensuring Social Sustainability : Can Bhutan's Education system ensure intergenerational Transmission of Values?, *Journal of Bhutan Studies*, Centre for Bhutan Studies, Thimphu, Summer 2001, Vol. 3, No. 1, p.115.
5. *Educating the Nation: A journey through time*, Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu, 2011, p.46.
6. *Ibid*.
7. *Ibid*, p.47.
8. Gyamtsho, Thinley, "Education should emphasise traditions", *Kuensel*, Vol. XII, No.9, June 14, 1994, p.2.
9. *Ibid*, p.3.

## **Chapter 11**

### **Conclusion**

The preceding chapters have examined the growth of modern education in Bhutan illustrating the dynamics behind its development as well as the vicissitudes often as tantamount to impediments to steady progress. In this concluding section I would like to draw a brief summary of the study and like to present some of the salient findings.

The geographical position and historical tradition of Bhutan have played a major role in the growth of education in Bhutan. It is a mountainous kingdom blessed with numerous fertile valleys strewn across its landscape. These valleys, each detached from the other by series of high mountains, turbulent rivers, and hostile forests were the home of diverse ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups. Understandably, under the prevailing conditions it was very difficult to introduce a system of education suitable for entire population. At first Hindi was adopted as the medium of instruction largely because the kingdom could with ease draw from the abundant pedagogical materials and trained teachers, none of which existed in Bhutan, from neighbouring India. Later English was adopted as the medium of instruction on account of its strength as an international language of communication. In the initial stage modern education was introduced in the more densely populated and easily accessible valleys. The less populated valleys were naturally disadvantageous as there was a great distance from one school to another, and specially so if the covering distance posed hazards of wild animals, swift swollen rivers and uncharted forest routes. Thus geographical hindrances were the main hurdle to the growth of education system in Bhutan.

Historically Bhutan has been very rich in the sphere of art, architecture, painting, sports etc. Culture as an image of the linkage between the past and the present as well as among various groups of people living in different valleys has well bestowed itself with numerous forms of dance, painting, art, crafts and architecture. Likewise, in case of the dissemination of education, for centuries, Bhutan has had its own system of Buddhist religious education, known as monastic education; and historical tradition favoured this type of education. Monastic education includes the study of religious scriptures as well as other subjects, including literacy, numeracy,

philosophy, astrology, arts, painting, traditional medicines etc. So, before the initiation of the modern education, monastic education served the needs of the society. But after the introduction of modern education, monastic education has lost much of its influence in the society as the general people began to view modern education as the key to success in modern life, while monastic education retained its strong influence in the religious lives of the people.

Modern education was introduced through the initiative of the first King, Ugyen Wangchuck. After coming in contact with British India, he felt the need of formal education and established the country's first secular school at Haa in 1914. The second King, Jigme Wangchuck took on the legacy of his father and rapidly accelerated the pace of modernization by establishing schools in some parts of the country. However, the real architect of modern education system was the third King, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. He realized that the country could no longer prosper enveloped in the long-standing insular traditional system despite its valuable contribution in the past. In a push to modernize the country he took the path of establishing schools not only in accessible and well populated areas but in every possible nook and corner of the country. Despite the well-meant and well-intended quest of the third monarch the residual discrepancies missed or unattended fell on the youthful shoulders of the fourth King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck. To iron out the remaining deficiencies, he took on a mission to eliminate, as far as possible, the regional disparity in education due to spatial disadvantages and other stumbling blocks. He can be said to have oiled and greased the wheels of the chariot of modern education to reach an internationally acceptable level.

Bhutan's modern education developed in parallel with its planned economic development. The first developmental steps taken to catch up with the rest of the world was the introduction of the Five Year Plans. But the country was too poor to pursue its ambition, and the Indian government totally financed the First and Second Five Year Plans. Modern education was given due importance in the first two and subsequent Five Year Plans, sufficient funds were allocated in the budget which led to the vigorous educational development of the country. My study period ends with the end of the Seventh Five Year Plan i.e., 1997, wherein the objective was to achieve compulsory primary education along with the introduction of non-formal and adult literacy programme. Today, modern educational system in Bhutan is based on a

system of primary, secondary and higher education. Besides these there are non-formal education, adult education, technical education, special education, etc. Facilities in schools in the beginning period of modern education system being very scarce, and till the end of 80s of the last century the Education Department had to depend on external assistance and non-national teachers. Commencing with very low literacy figure, the progress of education was hampered by some major constraints which attributed the low literacy rate, such as poor school facilities, high dropout and repeater rates, shortage of teachers, dearth of proper learning materials, awareness deficiency in the guardians of the benefits of modern education etc. With the launch of the system of community schools during the Sixth Five Year Plan (1987-1992) which were within easier reach of the remote communities' education penetrated secluded areas significantly contributing to an enhance in the number of presence of children in the schools. The government's vision may have been the trigger to this enormous leap forwards but due credit must fall on the community people who voluntarily furnished land, labour and materials in the construction of community schools. In keeping with the needs of the time, there were Sanskrit schools termed as '*pathsalas*' in southern part of the country which followed the primary schooling system of the neighbouring India. The curricula in primary education were rectified to incorporate the history, values and environment of the Bhutanese concept under the New Approach to Primary Education.

Secondary education had three stages- Class VII and VIII, followed by Class IX and X and then XI and XII. At the end of Class X students sat for the examinations of Indian Certificate of Secondary Education and then for the Indian School Certificate in class XII. In 1983, there was only one degree college, Sherubtse College, affiliated to the Delhi University providing three years courses in arts, science and commerce leading to a bachelor degree. Before the beginning of this first regular college there were also other educational institutions such as National Institute of Education at Samtse( founded in 1968), Royal Bhutan Institute of Technology at Dawathang (founded in 1972) Royal Institute of Health Sciences( founded in 1974), National Institute of Education at Paro( founded in 1975), The National Institute of Traditional Medicines in Thimphu( founded in 1971), to which were later added the Institute of Language and Culture Studies at Simtokha( founded in 1997) and Natural Resources Training Institute at Lobesa(founded in 1992). All these educational

institutions played their significantly important role in nation building by offering different types of training programmes.

Christian missionaries, specifically the Jesuit Catholics, devoted themselves to the growth and development of modern education in Bhutan. In 1963, Father Mackey, a Canadian Jesuit, who had been heading St. Roberts High School in Darjeeling, was invited to the country to build Bhutan's first high school in Kanglung on the model of schools in Darjeeling. Father tried to initiate a uniform curriculum in all the schools, brought text books from India and due to his initiative English was adopted as the medium of instruction. Besides Father Mackey there were many other Jesuits who visited the country in 60s and 70s of the last century, taught in remote schools, helped in establishing schools and solemnly contributed in the educational development of the country. The Salesians, another group of Christian missionaries, have their own significant role in establishing technical education in Bhutan.

The native contribution has to be viewed with lofty esteem. Headmen and villagers of remote mountain villages and smaller settlements, people who had never seen a school, freely gave of their treasure, time, talent and terrain to establish primary schools. It is not surprising that eventually Bhutan began to produce its own brood of pioneer Bhutanese educationalists as the product of modern education. I find it fitting to cite the names of Bhutanese educationists who are the products of this system of education like Nado Rinchen, Dasho Jagar Dorji, Dasho Pema Thinley, Gagay Lhamu, Chandrakala Gurung, Thakur Singh Powdyel to name a few. Despite the various difficulties in acquiring modern education, due to hard work and tenacity, the fruits of modern education have reached to all parts of the country.

Along with the very conception of modern education in Bhutan, India has generously contributed to its development. After primary schooling Bhutanese students were sent to schools in India as Bhutan had no secondary schools till the end of 1960s. Even after the establishment of institutions of higher learning in Bhutan, the Government of India provided numerous scholarships for Bhutanese students to pursue higher education in different institutions of higher learning in India. However, because of the enormity of the financial aid and the strength of political bond, scholars invariably gauge the Indo-Bhutan relationship with the spotlight entirely on the political and economic dimensions to the exclusion of the Indian contribution to the potent educational and cultural relationship between these two countries. The

cultural relationship between the two countries finds an ancient and indelible thread in Buddhist philosophy. Even today Bhutanese monastic scholars come for higher Buddhist learning in the Tibetan centres in India. At the beginning of the 21st century, most of the Indian teachers had been replaced by Bhutanese teachers; but Indian presence was still visible in the teaching of science and technology. For the present, it still can be visualised that the necessity of Indian teachers remains intact in imparting education in sciences.

The first schools in Bhutan were run by teachers recruited from India, who had to endure the hardship of trudging over mountain passes and through dense forests to convey education to the most remote parts of the country. Postal, telegraph and telephone facilities were rudimentary or in most places non-existent, roads were to come decades later, modern medical facilities were scarce, at places, the temperature dipped to freezing point; and the Indian teachers readily underwent such hardships and troublesome conditions mainly for the purpose of the spread of modern education in Bhutan.

Different agencies of the United Nations and many other non-government organizations from different parts of the world also took various steps from 1970s to assist in the development of modern education in Bhutan. UNICEF extended educational facilities to Bhutan in the form of construction materials, teaching aids and sanitation, modernization of syllabi and training and refresher courses for teachers. Food and Agricultural Organization's World Food Programme (WFP) supplied foodstuffs to improve the nutritional standard of the school going children and thus helped to increase enrolment and attendance of students in several schools. Swiss Development Corporation through Helvetas, a non-governmental organization helped in human resource development through scholarships in undergraduate and graduate studies, workshops, seminars etc. for teachers. International Development Organization (IDA) of the World bank financed various projects to improve the educational structure. Non-governmental organizations such Save the Children Federation (USA) and Save the Children Fund (UK) provided substantial financial support to the education sector.

Bhutan has been on the way of tremendous progress in all spheres within half a century after the implementation of modern education system. Today, this education system is seen as the indispensable means to achieve socio-economic development and progress. Gradually modern education system has become the dominant mode with a well defined structure supporting a system of 1 year of pre-primary, 6 years of primary, 6 years of secondary (2 years of lower secondary, 2 years of middle secondary and 2 years of higher secondary), and 3 years under graduate programme. With the launch of the Five Year Development Plans, the Bhutanese view on education radically changed. As a part of these Plans, literacy rate has increased; girls have found the doors of schools unlocked to educate them. Gradually the number of schools increased, so also the number of girl students.

In order to keep pace with the modern world, Bhutan felt the English medium education as the means of success. Parents realized that modern education leads to job and financial security. Thus, many new schools have been built and more and more children are being enrolled into this education system. In less than fifty years, since the formal introduction of educational system, Bhutan's economy and society have improved greatly. Education in Bhutan has made a giant leap forward when we consider the time that it has taken to assume its present status and the vastness in terms of its expansion, variations, trained manpower, physical facilities and the level of education obtainable. The Royal Government is making every effort to promote education throughout the kingdom. In order to fulfil the objective, the Government is rendering free education so that the light of education reaches the common masses.

## APPENDIX-A

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31st May 1968

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### OPENING OF SHERUBTSE HIGH SCHOOL

Early in the morning of 26th May, 1968 the Lamas of Tashigang Dzong started prayers for the opening ceremony of the Sherubtse High School at Kanglung in Tashigang District. At 7-30 A.M. His Majesty the King, Home Minister Dasho Tamji Jagar, and other dignitaries including the Director General of Border Roads Major General Arjan Singh arrived in the school. The Shuday ceremony was carried out in a special tent. About 5,000 people from the neighbouring villages and Tashigang town had gathered on the occasion.

Brigadier O. P. Datta, Chief Engineer, Dantak, delivered the welcome address in which he gave a brief history of how the project was started and the progress achieved so far. He stated that the site for the school was selected by the King personally and that all the plans for the school buildings had been drawn up with the guidance of His Majesty. The work could also be carried out so expeditiously because of the assistance given by the Civil Authorities in supplying painters, carpenters and unskilled labour. He spoke of the effort which the officers and men of Dantak had made in bringing to completion phase one of the project which included the classroom and laboratory block and clock tower, two hostel blocks dining room with attached kitchen for 400 students, staff quarters for six teachers, infirmary block with six beds with attached quarters for a doctor, water supply, electricity and play-field. The second phase which would now be started would comprise of an auditorium, one hostel block, additional

staff quarters for teachers and Class IV staff. The total project was estimated to cost Rs. 44 lakhs.

Delivering the inaugural address, His Majesty the King emphasised the importance of education in the development of Bhutan. He stated that while religion alone had been adequate in the past to ensure the happiness and well being of our people, education had become essential in the modern world if our independence was to be safeguarded and if the country was to achieve prosperity. He stated that in this respect the students of the country had a vital role to play as the future of the country lay in their hands. He urged them to study as hard as possible in all fields so that they could become useful citizens of the country in future. He congratulated the Chief Engineer Brigadier O. P. Datta, Task Force Commander Lieutenant 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". His Majesty also congratulated Rev. Fr. W. MacKey, S. J., Principal, Sherubtse School, for his great contribution to education in Eastern Bhutan.

His Majesty the King performed the opening ceremony of the Sherubtse High School, by untying a ribbon and pressing a switch which exposed the marble inauguration plaque. The King then

went round the class rooms where the classes were in session. Major General Arjan Singh presented a set of carpentry, masonry and other tools for the Hobby Centre of the School. Later refreshments were served to all the students and guests at the school dining hall.

A lunch was given by His Majesty the King to the tradesmen who had been engaged in constructing the school buildings. About 26 of the outstanding tradesmen were awarded special gifts by the King. Later in the afternoon a fun-fair was organised on the school play ground. This was followed by P. T. and gymnastic demonstration by the Sherubtse students. Bhutanese classical and folk dancers from Thimphu also presented a number of colourful dances. The bands of the Royal Bhutan Army and the Tashigang School vied with each other throughout the afternoon. In the evening a dinner was given to the guests and school children by Dantak. This was followed by a camp fire gathering where the school children of Sherubtse School and seven other schools of Eastern Bhutan presented English plays, recitations, songs and dances which were greatly appreciated by all. Rev. Fr. W. MacKey moved the Vote of Thanks during which he declared that he would like His Majesty the King to judge their work not by their words but by their deeds, and that he would spare no efforts to ensure that his school would produce citizens who would be worthy of their country.

While the Sherubtse school will have an ultimate accommodation for 400 resi-

dential students, including 250 boys and 150 girls, the school is being started this year with 100 students from classes I to IV. At present the school has a staff of three Canadian Jesuit Fathers and six other Indian and Bhutanese teachers.

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### **Bank of Bhutan Opening Ceremony**

His Majesty the King arrived in Phuntsholing on the morning of 28th May, 1968 from Eastern Bhutan. At 11-30 A. M. His Majesty and party arrived at the special auditorium which had been constructed in front of the Bank building. The Finance Minister Dasho Chogyal delivered the welcome address briefly outlining the main functions of the Bank.

His Majesty the King then delivered the inaugural address. His Majesty stated that the establishment of a Bank in the country had become inevitable as a result of the opening-up of the country and the introduction of money as a medium of exchange. The Bank of Bhutan would function as a commercial bank to begin with but later become a central bank and issue notes. It would also function as the Banker of the Government. His Majesty emphasised the importance of the people developing the savings habit and depositing such savings, no matter how big or small, in the Bank as this would generate capital which could be used to encourage trade and commerce in the country. The King also gave

(Source- *Kuensel*, an official bulletin of the Government, Vol. II, No- 10, 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1968)

## APPENDIX-B

Vol. VI No-20

9/1/1972

Edu Dept

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### Education Department Public Notice

#### 1. Admission to Schools

His Majesty's Government have decided that all admissions to schools in Bhutan will be as follows:

(i) Admissions to Thimphu School and Sherubtse Public School, Kanglung, shall, in future, be only on merit of the pupils assessed on the results of intelligence and scholastic tests, followed by an interview to be conducted by those two schools.

Those who wish to seek admission for their children in the above Public Schools will kindly address their applications direct to the Principals of the schools. They will call the children for the test on Monday the 6th of March, 1972.

The admissions in both the schools will be for Class I and above according to the number of vacancies available.

#### (ii) Admission to the Central and Junior High Schools

There are at present 5 Central Schools— at Paro, Tashigang, Mongar, Sarbhang and Samchi, and 12 Junior High Schools— at Thimphu, Damphu, Ghumaooney, Sibsoo, Ha, Wangdiphodrang, Tongsa, Byakar, Shemgang, Geylegphug, Deothang and Lhunsi. All these Central Schools, except at Samchi, have hostels attached to them but only Junior High Schools at Ha, Tongsa, Byakar, Shemgang, Geylegphug and Lhunsi have hostels. The number of seats available in the above schools is limited and those in the hostels very few.

Admissions in Central and Junior High Schools will be done by the Heads of these schools according to the availability of seats. If there is a primary school in the area, a child should not seek admission in Central and Junior High Schools.

#### (iii) Admissions in the hostels in Central and Junior High Schools

As the seats in the hostels are very limited, preference will be given for

hostel accommodation in the Central and Junior High Schools for only those who come from far off areas in that region where the schools are situated, only if the education facilities in the primary Schools in that area are not available. No child below the age of 8 years will be admitted in the hostels.

#### (iv) Primary Schools

There are 69 primary schools situated all over the country. There are no hostels attached to these schools. In primary schools, no Bhutanese child will be denied admission. Students living in one area should not try to seek admission in a school in another area. They should bring with them the Bhutanese Nationality Certificate, showing residential address of the student, issued by Dasho Dzongda, Sub-Divisional Officers of the region.

(v) His Majesty's Government have also decided that from March 1972, no scholarship will be granted for studies in India as adequate facilities are being developed in the Public, Central and Junior High and Primary Schools for the education of all the children in Bhutan.

#### 2. Compulsory Government Service for Government Aided Students

His Majesty's Government of Bhutan have decided that the students educated at Government expense should serve the Government for a period of at least 5 years. At present, the Royal Government of Bhutan is spending about Rs. 7 lakhs per annum on the education of Bhutanese students in schools outside Bhutan. The Government, which spends so much on the education of these students, will not derive the full benefit of its investment, if the students do not join Government service after finishing their studies or having joined service, do not serve the Government for a reasonable period of time. In order to ensure that the student educated at Government expense serves the Government after finishing education training, the following rules will come into force with immediate effect:

1) These rules shall apply to all Bhutanese boys and girls whose education outside has been aided by Government for at least five years. They do not apply to students who receive their education in schools in Bhutan.

2) When the students complete their education, they shall be required to serve the Government for a minimum period of five years in any capacity

1) When the students do not join service at all.

2) When the student leaves Govt. service after serving:—

a) Less than one year.

b) One year and more but less than two years.

c) Two years and more but less than three years.

d) Three years and more but less than four years.

e) Four years and more but less than five years.

f) Five years or more

4) In the following cases, the Government may choose to exercise its discretion and not apply the above rules:

a) If there is no vacancy in Government service and the Government is unable to provide employment to the student who has completed his/her education, the above fine may be waived.

b) If the Government feels that the student who has completed his/her education is not fit to serve the Government on grounds of physical or mental incapacity, the fine may be waived.

Note: The "incapacity" clause shall not apply to girls who marry and have children and claim that they are unable to serve

that the Government may determine in each case.

3) If any student fails to serve the Government for a minimum period of five years, as mentioned in 2 above, he/she shall be obliged to pay to the Government a fine at the following rates, towards part repayment of the expenses incurred by the Government on his/her behalf:

If he/she received his/her education in:

English Type Public School with/without further education training.	Indian Type School with/without further education training.
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Rs. 10,000	Rs. 5,000
------------	-----------

Rs. 10,000	Rs. 5,000
------------	-----------

Rs. 8,000	Rs. 4,000
-----------	-----------

Rs. 6,000	Rs. 3,000
-----------	-----------

Rs. 4,000	Rs. 2,000
-----------	-----------

Rs. 2,000	Rs. 1,000
-----------	-----------

Nil	Nil
-----	-----

the Government as they have to look after their home and children.

#### Students Leaving Schools For Jobs

The children leaving school should be issued with a School Leaving Certificate showing the name, date of birth, parents' names and address, class, height, weight, academic record, personal characteristics of co-operation, sociability, dependability, leadership and other extra and co-curricular interests and performance in sports, games and social service etc., and any other special aptitude shown by the pupils.

No student leaving the School shall be given a job in any Government Department without the above certificate.

(Source- *Kuensel*, an official bulletin of the Royal Government of Bhutan, Vol-VI, No-20, 9<sup>th</sup> September, 1972)

## APPENDIX-C

Vol. XIV No. 16

APRIL 16—22, 1979

# KUENSEL

A WEEKLY OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE  
ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN



*Kanglung Junior College which was earlier functioning as a Public School.*

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### ADMISSION TO THE JUNIOR COLLEGE

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The year 1979 marks the 4th year since the establishment of the Sherubtse Junior College at Kanglung in Eastern Bhutan. The first batch of the 'Plus Two' programme students completed the programme in March 1978. Till 1976 no specific plans for higher studies were made nor colleges determined. Then in 1976 the government projected plans for Higher Education in the Manpower Plan Programme. In accordance with this plan the students are admitted to the Sherubtse Junior College. After completing ICSE the students are admitted to Science stream, Art stream and Commerce stream on the basis of the three factors which determine their eligibility for admission to the Junior

Ap-4-22, 79

2



*College Hostels.*

College in various courses. The factors are 1) Minimum qualifying grade 2) National Plan for Higher Education 3) Personal options and priorities.

1. To encourage competitive spirit among our students a minimum qualifying grade has been set for higher education. Qualifying grade for admission to the Junior College is set to be 35 and less. Students who score 36 and above are not considered for colleges.

2. Upon having selected students for admission to Jr. College, the number of students for each degree programme or profession are decided in proportion to the numbers specified in the National Higher Education Plan. In the future, no more students will be sent to Universities outside the country for the Plus Two Programme.

The Officer on Special Duty, Department of Manpower gives counsel and appraises the students of the plan for higher education.

Having been made aware of the higher education plan the students know of the Government's priority areas as well as the opportunities and openings in each field or profession. A little before the final examination, all the school finalists are requested to submit options in the order of priority for their higher education based on the counselling given by the OSD. During the OSD's visit to the Junior College, the first day of the meeting with the students is spent in re-defining the priorities allowing the students any change of mind. Upon having recorded the changes in a chart, the students' choices are compared with their performance in the relevant subjects. Their aggregate grade of 8 or so in Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Biology are considered the maximum limit for students eligibility for course in engineering and medicine. Students who score above ten points are selected for Agriculture and Forestry.

## APPENDIX-D

Kuensel, July 6, 1986

2

# National ICSC Results

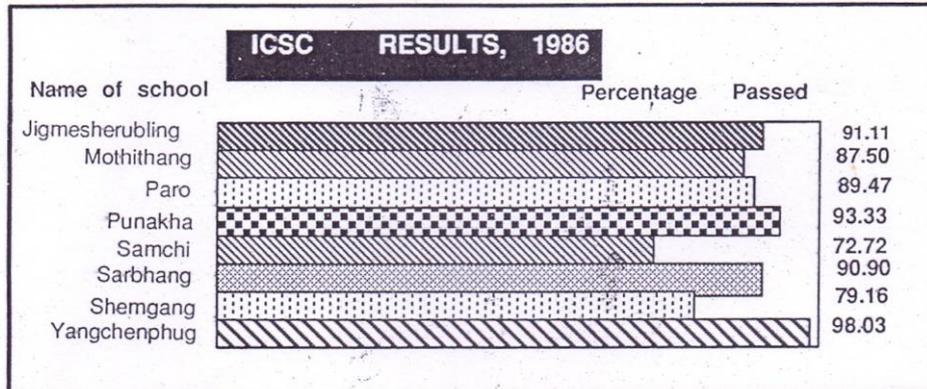


Chart no. 1

KUENSELCHART

A total of 227 students appeared the ICSE Examination this year from High Schools in Bhutan. (See Chart 1).

It has been decided that the students who have obtained 269 marks or better in 5 subjects (i.e. in one language and 4 elective subjects)

be selected for admission to Class XII in Sherubtse College, Kanglung. The rest may take up jobs or training. The number of students to be admitted in Class XI have thus come to 129-115 from Bhutan and 14 from India.

It may be mentioned that Master Kinga Tshering son of Mr. Kinley Wangdi of village Babesa who appeared in the examination from Yangchenpphug High School stood First with the very remarkable performance obtaining 8 points (90.1%) in all the 6 subjects and 6 points (91%) in the best 5 subjects.

This is the best result ever obtained by our Schools in Bhutan. In fact this boy topped in all the 3 examinations namely Class V Common Examination, VIII Common Examination, and ICSE Examination.

The other two positions were coveted by Bhisn Roka 13(78.4) of Shemgang High School and Bhim Prasad 14 (76.2) of Punakha High School.

The Director of Education presented a special scarf and cash

by the school.

Speaking on the occasion the Director of Education and the Principal congratulated all the successful students, particularly Master Kinga Tshering who had topped the list of successful ICSE candidates this year. They also advised other students to work harder for their future success.

The Director advised Kinga Tshering who had earlier topped the list of successful students at Bhutan Primary School Certificate and Bhutan Junior High School Certificate Examinations to repeat his performance at all future examinations. He finally congratulated the Principal and staff and asked them to continue to work harder.

Apart from this the brilliant success of Kinga Tshering was recognised at national level also.

In order to encourage him to work harder the Honourable Minister for Social Services presented a scarf and a cash award of Nu.1,500/- in Tashichodzong on June 25, 1986.

The Honourable Minister was pleased to advise him to work harder to keep up the honour he has achieved in school studies.

### ISC (CLASS XII)

A total number of

detailed results.

The following criteria was followed for admission to Sherubtse

College in Ist Degree Course.  
1. The students who have obtained 75% Or above are allowed to go for

honours courses in India of their choice and eligibility.

2. The students who have obtained 65% or above are allowed to go for honours courses of their choice and eligibility provided they join teaching on completion of degree programme.

3. A student should have obtained 50% and above based on one language and three electives to qualify for admission to Sherubtse College for degree programmes in arts and commerce.

4. A student should have obtained 45% and above based on one language and three electives to qualify for admission to Sherubtse College for degree programmes in science.

5. A student should have obtained 60% and above in English and three elective subjects for eligibility to admission in MBBS courses.

6. A student should have obtained 55% and above in English and three electives for qualifying in Agriculture, Engineering, Veterinary

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ISSN-2230-8490

Vol. III

Vol. IV

July-December  
2012

No. 2

No. 1

January-June 2013

# EXPLORING HISTORY



POST GRADUATE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
MALDA COLLEGE, MALDA

# **EXPLORING HISTORY**

*A JOURNAL OF INDIAN AND ASIAN HISTORY*

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## Evolution of Traditional Monastic Education in Bhutan

Ratna Paul

### **History of the Growth of Monastic Education**

One can tentatively place an isolated and sparsely populated Bhutan in its prehistoric period stretching between 500 B.C. to 600 A.C.<sup>1</sup> According to the later Bhutanese chronicle, Lhoyi Chhoejung, in these prehistoric age groups of people stayed in separate and isolated places without resorting to trade or communication and education, even in the broadest sense, was non-existent.<sup>2</sup>

“Until the advent of modern education in Bhutan, the monastic education system served the spiritual and human resource needs of the country for centuries. Although two schools were started in 1915, one each in Bumthang and Haa, modern education in a more organized fashion actually began only in the late 1950s.”<sup>3</sup> Monastic educations here refer to the teachings through the Mahayana Buddhist traditions. Consequently it becomes necessary to refer to the advent of Mahayana Buddhism in the early seventh century A.C. With Buddhism came the monasteries which became centers of education where calligraphy, music, astrology, herbal medicine, philosophy, stylized dances etc were taught. The main corpus of literature consisted of [1] chhoejung (dharma history and religious literature viz. Kangyur an Tengyur), [2] namthar (religious biographies), [3] gyalrab (historical chronicle of dynasties or other), [4] logyu (records or history of chronicles), [5] terma (treasure texts), [6] srung (epics e.g. Gesar of Ling), [7] glu (folk songs), [8] nyam gyur (religious poetry), [9] nyan ngag (ornate poetry), [10] karchang (catalogues), and [11] tshig dzod (dictionary).<sup>4</sup> Monastic education would have also included almost all of the Zorig Chusum (the thirteen traditional arts and crafts).<sup>5</sup>

Historian Bikramjit Hasrat is of the opinion that Buddhism not only brought a religious transformation of the people but it also laid down a process of historical evolution of the country.<sup>6</sup> It is popularly believed that the Tibetan king, Songtsen Gambo A.C. 627-649), built two monasteries in Bhutan, the

Kyichu Monastery in Paro and Jambay Lhakhang in Bumthang<sup>7</sup> although another authority casts doubts over this belief.<sup>8</sup> Whatever be the merits in these claims, Songtsen Gambo is totally overshadowed by the visit of the omniscient saint and teacher Padma Sambhava,<sup>9</sup> about a century later in 746 A.C.<sup>10</sup> He established several sacred religious sites and amongst them Kurjey Lhakhang in Bumthang and Taksang Monastery in Paro are important places of pilgrimage for the Buddhist world today.<sup>11</sup> It is said that he, through his teachings, in all probability made the first major influence in the social and cultural life of the Bhutanese people, particularly those living in Bumthang.<sup>12</sup> In his second visit to Bhutan he was accompanied by the great scholar and translator Denma Tsemang (750 A.C.) and on his return to Tibet he was accompanied by several Bhutanese students.<sup>13</sup> Gradually various Buddhist schools established in Bhutan which were implanted there from Tibet where they had their origins. Aim of different schools was to promulgate individual traditions. Each had its own set of ritual cycles, meditative techniques and philosophical interpretations. Among them mention can be made of Bonpo, Nyingmapa, Brugpa (Drukpa) Kagyupa, Gelukpa, Sakyapa etc. Bonpo tradition hold its sway in Bhutan in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. This school always maintained a complex substratum of pre-Buddhist beliefs and never gained popularity in Bhutan, though some of their ritual practices still hold sway on the village level.<sup>14</sup> Nyingmapa with its subsects flourished in different regions of Bhutan at different times. This sect also has a unique claim to maintain its teaching intact ever since they were introduced into the monarchical phase of the Tibetan history.<sup>15</sup> The great Padma Lingpa (1450-1521) was a saint of great eminence in the Nyingmapa school and the institutions he founded later became some of the liveliest centers of Buddhist education in Bhutan.<sup>16</sup> Another important event was the introduction of the Brugpa (Drukpa) Kagyu school into Bhutan in the early part of the 13<sup>th</sup> century by Phajo Drugon Zhingpo who belonged to the Middle Drukpa (Bar-druk). The two other Drugpa Kagyu also entered Bhutan about the same time [Lower Drukpa Ma-druk and Upper Drukpa To-druk] but were ultimately absorbed into the Middle Drukpa.<sup>17</sup> It was the descendants of Phajo Drugon Zhingpo who spread to different parts of Bhutan establishing monasteries and their rule over the lands. Bhutan historian Michael Aris is of the opinion that this wide and far spread of the clan "were to have far-reaching consequences for the creation of a unified country; it was surely due to them that Zhabs-drung Ngag-bdang rNam-rgyl.... was able to build his state after arriving as a refugee..."<sup>18</sup> Gelukpa school was founded in Tibet by Tsongkhapa (1357-1419) and this sect drew its spiritual and doctrinal inspiration from Indian teacher Atisha.<sup>19</sup> Disciples of Tsongkhapa founded many monasteries in western valleys of Bhutan. But this school did not lie so deep in the Bhutanese soil. Consequently they appear to have collapsed as an integrated force when Zhabsdrung Ngawang Namgyal unified the country under Brugpa rule in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>20</sup>

Sakyapa school was the last to arrive in Bhutan and they too built their monasteries particularly in Northern Bhutan. Each of these sets of Sakyapa monasteries is said to have had its own lineage of lamas. Memoirs of the Sakyapas are preserved in folk tales still recited in Thimphu and Punakha valleys.<sup>21</sup> Thus along with the light of Buddhist religion, literature and spirituality of various schools were introduced to different learning centers with monks as a disciples or students. Small residences, built by the students, had emerged in the area to give the appearance of a new settlement which came to be known as "Drong Sar".<sup>22</sup> This was pronounced as "Trongsa" in the local dialect, later became the name of the Dzong area. Thus the very name "Trongsa" is connected with the concept of education.<sup>23</sup>

Perhaps the most dynamic era in Bhutanese history came in the 17th century with the arrival in 1616, of Ngawang Namgyal, the great leader of the Drukpa school of Mahayana Buddhism. Starting with the Simtokha Dzong in Thimphu he constructed important Dzongs, monasteries and religious institutions and firmly established Drukpa Kagyu as the State religion.<sup>24</sup> He introduced formal monastic education by establishing the first monk body in 1622 with the Je Khenpo as the head in the monastery of Chary, Thimphu.<sup>25</sup> The central Monk Body was founded with the plan to provide formal training in Buddhist philosophy, liturgical chanting, dialectics and linguistics under the four masters.<sup>26</sup> That was followed by establishing several branches of monastic bodies of rabdeys (monastic branches) and drubdeys (meditation centers) in different districts.<sup>27</sup> In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the central Monk body and its branches saw quite a few of its monks emerge as outstanding scholars and authors.<sup>28</sup> Among them were Shakya Rinchen (1710-59), the ninth Je Khenpo, Tenzin Chogyal (1710-66), the tenth, Yonten Thaye (1724-84), the thirteenth to name a few.<sup>29</sup>

Ngawang Namgyal also created the office of the Desi the head of which came to be known as Deb. The Desis were the temporal rulers of the country who succeeded one after another from 1651-1907. Desi system came to an end with the enthronement of the first hereditary monarch in 1907. Some of the temporal head of the country were also patron of learning. The second Deb, La Ngoenpa Tenzin Drugda (1656 to 1668) introduced the study of medicine, carpentry, arts and education.<sup>30</sup> Himself an expert in medicine, arts, sculpture and literature, he established schools for the study of these subjects.<sup>31</sup> The fourth Deb, Tenzin Rabgye (1680 to 1694) exhorted families with three children to send one of their sons to a monastery.<sup>32</sup> Though this practice has now completely stopped and children are sent only voluntarily. Sonam Lhundub (1769 to 1773), the 16th Deb organized many monastic schools.<sup>33</sup> The 22<sup>nd</sup> Deb Drug Namgyal (1799 to 1803) had many wooden printing blocks made to print many religious books.<sup>34</sup>

In the year 1783 East India Company's first Governor General of India Warren Hastings sent Captain Samuel Turner to Tibet through Bhutan. In his journal "An Account of an embassy to the court of Tseshu Lama and Narrative of journey through Bhutan", Turner wrote in details about the country. He found the Bhutanese monasteries as the educational centers of the country.<sup>35</sup> Government officials were selected from those educated and trained in these educational and religious centers.<sup>36</sup>

Captain Godwin Austen who was attached to the "Mission of Ashley Eden to Bhutan" in 1863-64 has left a valuable account on western Bhutan. He saw "one good results of the monastic system viz. that reading and writing is practised and taught in the monasteries, the latter often not to be surpassed in beauty and evenness of form."<sup>37</sup>

But regarding the whole country literary activity seems to have declined between the middle of the nineteenth century and mid twentieth century, probably due to the political anarchy and transitions going on in the country.<sup>38</sup> In the later half of the twentieth century Bhutan had a renaissance in traditional learning. Bhutanese scholars in this renaissance included the late Je Khenpo Gedun Rinchen, Lopen Norbu Wangchuk, Lopen Nado, Lopen Pema Tsewang, Dash Lam Sangak, Lopen Gombo Tenzin, Dasho Tenzin Dorjee – all of whom contributed in the fields of history, language and religion.<sup>39</sup> The establishment of Semtokha Lopdra under the supervision of Tibetan master Dilgo Khyentse in 1961 was a milestone in the development of traditional education.<sup>40</sup> The last quarter of the twentieth century saw yet another chapter in the history of traditional scholarship, when hundreds of Bhutanese monks travelled to India & Nepal in pursuit of training in Buddhism in the newly established Tibetan academic centre and monasteries.<sup>41</sup>

### **Monastic educational system in the past**

Nearly every valley in Bhutan had monasteries of its own which preserve the greatness of the Bhutanese artistic and religious traditions.<sup>42</sup> But they were not only the centers of ritual and religious offerings, knowledge and learning but they also came to be the core of the material wealth. Nobility, aristocracy and commoners all alike supported these monasteries, where a large number of monks and nuns were constantly engaged in religious discourses, debates, production of sacred literature and other type of sacred performance.<sup>43</sup> Each monastery had a hall for teaching purposes.<sup>44</sup> The religious encourages the monks and the laity to devote their time to meditation and learning.<sup>45</sup>

Je Khenpo was the head of the monastic system in Bhutan and post still continues today. Gomchens or lay monks and anems or lay female monks studied under various masters in monasteries. When a child was selected for entering a monastery he had to undergo certain physical tests against deformity and defects in his limbs. After passing the tests, he entered the probation in which he was

taught the alphabets, preliminary prayer books and didactic proverbs. After the probationer had memorized the necessary preliminary texts, he was made to formally apply for admission to novitiate ship. He was supposed to pay fees. As part of the admission tests, he had to answer a number of questions satisfactorily. Then he was to recite what he had learnt as a probationer. Once he was admitted to the novitiate ship a vigorous training ensued in which even harsh corporal punishments were inflicted for negligent behavior. The instruction was mainly in ritual and dogma, but they were also trained as craftsman. The candidates had to pass many examinations. Till that time, they had to run around as errand boys to the senior monks. The candidates were to display orational and intellectual capabilities in public disputation.<sup>46</sup> It was the responsibility of the teachers to prepare the novices to master the scripts and also to develop other skills such as learning mask dances, arts and painting.<sup>47</sup>

A young monk learnt his lessons in chhoe ked or dharma language by rote and memorized line after line and verse after verse.<sup>48</sup> At a later stage the monk could choose to go to a Shedra and engage in higher studies in literature, language, philosophy and meditation.<sup>49</sup> When the learner was emotionally and intellectually matured to receive the teachings of Buddha, he was given those. Young and promising monks from different monasteries, spread throughout the country, were sent to the monasteries in Tibet for a period of 12 to 15 years rigorous study. They returned to Bhutan as scholars well versed in chhoe ked (the religious classical language of the Kangyur, Tengyur and Zungchen), astrology, health and medicine. They set up centers all over the country along with places of worship. The rich and devout Drukpas patronized shrines as a matter of religious merit. Landed estates were set apart occasionally for the up-keep of such establishments, where monks and nuns were housed and maintained invariably at cost of the state exchequer.<sup>50</sup>

Difficult living conditions in the isolated hilly terrain of Bhutan led to the growth of a distinct society and culture in that country. Inhabitants were little aware of what was going on in the outside world and lived happily in their socio-cultural life. In times of crisis they invited monks to recite the dharma scripts so that the harmful spirits would hear the Buddha's teachings and virtues.<sup>51</sup> The local Gomchens had created a small group of literati Bhutanese in many villages. This literati rural folk have naturally a tremendous influence on the common people. Well versed in chhoe ked, religious literature, Tibetan type of medicine and folk traditions, these grass root literate were called upon to guide, encourage and help the villagers in time of sickness, birth, marriage and death.<sup>52</sup>

Actually basic social service including the educational facilities was rare. Monasteries were the only form of education available and access to it was restricted for the monks and upper strata of the society. But gradually a sense of awareness grew among the masses and a lot of people sought their

learning by studying under a private master, who were themselves trained in Tibet and imported informal discourses on religion, language, poetry, etc.<sup>53</sup> Thus, the monastic system of education has sustained the Bhutanese society in its spiritual fold for many centuries.<sup>54</sup>

#### **Monastic educational system at present**

Monastic education in today are following the traditional methods of teaching and imparts lessons on Buddhist philosophy, logic, astrology, traditional medicine, literature, religious, arts such as liturgy, monastic music, dances, sculpture, painting etc. Mostly all the subjects are related to Buddhism and religion plays the dominant role. When common sciences such as epistemology, logic, language, poetry, prosody, astrology and history are taught, it is with a strong religious orientation.<sup>55</sup> Thus traditional education is almost a liberal education which is strongly embedded in Buddhist moral values. The medium of instruction in this system is either chhoe ked (classical Tibetan) or Dzongkha, the national language of Bhutan. The monk who imparted education in different monastic institutions are trained in meditation and ritual practices. In addition to gelongs or ordained monks, there are also gomchens or lay priests who follow monastic education in numerous institutions.<sup>56</sup> Traditional training follows the Buddhist monastic methods of memorization, debates, contemplation, exposition etc.<sup>57</sup> Although there are different forms of Buddhist teachings, in general, a monastic education attempts to offer an appreciation of life and simple moments of being, and of preserving a sense of self for self-knowledge and acceptance.<sup>58</sup> Inner enlightenment of one's is the ultimate goal of this system of education.

Today monastic institutions are offering traditional approach to education by reserving and promoting Bhutan's inherent culture. At present monastic institutions include the following –

**Monastic University Committee** – This national entity has been in existence for the last 20 years and is represented by the Monastic commission, the Monastic Bodies and the University Secretariat, the main functions of the committee are to review policies, plans and programs pertaining to higher learning in the monastic order and to review membership of the committee.<sup>59</sup> It has a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. The committee also takes decisions and appoints tutors in the Shedras.

**Dratshang Lhentshog (Monastic Commission)** – The highest policy making body for the monasteries is the commission which was established in 1984. The chief Abbot is the Chairperson of the commission and it includes representatives from distinguished bodies including the National Assembly.<sup>60</sup>

**Zhung Dratshang (Central Monastic Body)** – Central monastic body has its seats in Punakha in winter and Thimphu in summer. It controls the monastic educational system through out the country.

**Rabdey (Dzongkhag Monastic Body)** – Bhutan has total 18 Dzongkhags, each of which has a Rabdey with a Lam (Priest). The numbers of monks in each Dzongkhags ranges from 50 to 400.<sup>61</sup>

**Dratshang/Rabdey Yenlag (Dzongkhag Monastic Branch)** – These are the branches of Dzongkhag Monastic Body. Dratshangs do not provide much training in philosophy, language or dialectics, but emphasize monastic arts & rituals.<sup>62</sup>

**Drubdey (Meditation Centers)** – The number of meditation centers are few as they are located in isolated parts of the country. These are controlled by central or Dzongkhag monastic bodies.

**Lobdra (Schools)** – There are institutions where young novices - either monks or lay children are enrolled where elementary learning of monastic order takes place.<sup>63</sup>

**Gomdey (Lay Clergy Body)** – These are the associations of clergy who are married and have families. Their process of learning is different from the monk order. In their process of learning emphasis is given on practical & ritual performances of Buddhism.

**Aney Dratshang (Nunneries)** – These are the institutions where the learners are only women. They follow the same system like other monastic institutions.

**Shedras (Colleges)** – Monastic institutes for higher studies are called Shedras where monks of high caliber can continue tertiary level education in literature, philosophy, arts, language etc and devote themselves to long period of meditation.<sup>64</sup> This orientation differentiates Shedra from other centers where chief activity concerns the physical way of conducting ritual and ceremonies. A Shedra is structured systematically as Zhirim (Elementary), Dzingrim (Middle) and Therin (Higher). These levels equate to higher secondary school (4years), bachelors (2 years) and masters (3 years) and are identical to Buddhist higher learning institutions in India and Nepal.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, a monk enrolled in a Shedra undergoes 9 years of rigorous learning. Bhutan currently has 15 Shedras spread across the country. As far as the admission is concerned monks who would have spent at least 8 years of study in other centers (Rabdey, Lobdra, Dratshang) are eligible to admission to Shedra.<sup>66</sup> Of the 15 Shedras or colleges

in Bhutan only two of them offer Bachelors and Masters Degree courses. These are Tango Buddhist College in Thimphu and Sang Chokhor Shedra in Paro. Tango Buddhist college in Thimphu is a main Shedra in the country which was authorized by the Fourth king, His Majesty Jigmi Singye Wangchuck in 1988 and now it offers graduate and post graduate studies in Buddhism. Sang chokher Shedra in paro was established in 1765 CE by Choglay Trulku Sacha Tenzin. DASHO Ugyen Dorji, the father of the queen of Fourth King renovated and upgraded it and established as Buddhist college in 1991 with 25 students and began to offer post graduate courses in 2000.<sup>67</sup> It has adopted the student centred curricula from the Nalanda University (5th century BCE) of India and from 2005 the college was authorized to enrol non monastic students.<sup>68</sup>

### Curriculum to Monastic Higher Secondary level

Before entry in to the degree level students of the monastic order have to take up four years pre university course with a deep curriculum. This includes- Buddhist philosophy, logic, religious history, Buddhist values and monkhood, evolution of Buddhism in Bhutan and functional English language. Curriculum in particular has relevance to discussion of the depth and quality of contents of Royal University of Bhutan's admission of Dzongkha candidates into the initial teacher education and their competency in the subject.

### Curriculum Structure of Monastic Higher Education<sup>69</sup>

Sl.	Course Concentration	Degree name in Sanskrit	Degree name in English	Year
1.	Tenchoe Khenpo Year I (Master of commentarial works)	Shastri	Bachelors	XIII
2.	Tenchoe Khenpo Year II (Master of commentarial works)	Shastri	Bachelors	XIV
3.	Rigzhung Lopen Year I (Teacher of ten sciences and philosophies)	Acharya	Masters	XV
4.	Rigzhung Lopen Year II (Teacher of ten sciences and philosophies)	Acharya	Masters	XVI
5.	Rigzhung Lopen Year III (Teacher of ten sciences and philosophies)	Acharya	Masters	XVII

### Specialization leading to a Doctoral Degree

A Shedra keep a record of the performance of the students in various subjects. A student is expected to put more effort in the specialized subject. By the time a student completes Masters Degree, he is considered the master of the subject: Logic, Language and Philosophy. A student completes all the 13 philosophies which can be condensed to the four theologies of Buddhism which both the Tibetan and Bhutanese Buddhism follow. A student with Masters Degree can continue teaching his subject of specialization for two years acquiring a post of a Specialized Tutor, equivalent to an M.Phil. During this tenure, the candidate can enroll for Ph.D. in the same subject of specialization which is a rigorous three years, including writing a thesis. Allowing students to specialize in a field has been adopted from the Nalanda University model, the first ever Buddhist University of the time.<sup>70</sup>

### Monastic institutions and beneficiaries of financial support (2006)<sup>71</sup>

Institution types	Dratshang/Rabdey	Shedra	Lobdra	Drubdey	Gomdey	Gomdey Lams	Nunneries
Total	1 + 18	15	58	31	57		3
Enrolment	4892	887	1236	422	1593	169	88

### Drawbacks of the Monastic system

The chronology of events establishes that education in the monasteries served the intellectual needs of the country for centuries. Even higher education was prevalent in the monastic order prior to the secular one. Graduate and post graduate levels of studies in Buddhism were evident as early as 1988 when the establishment of a National University of secular order remained a policy document as recent as 1999.<sup>72</sup> But there are some drawbacks in the monastic system that is why today it is lacking priority over the modern system of education. The Government is on the track towards achieving the so called 'education for all' goal by 2020 or even earlier. Today, almost 97-98% of children go to schools out of which only a negligible percentage go to monastic institutions for education.<sup>73</sup> In the year 2000 there were 288 monastic institutions in the country with a role strength of 10,035 comparing with 343 modern school with 107,792 number of students.<sup>74</sup> There are various reasons behind this—

Firstly, Faith and devotion to the teacher forms the most important part in this system. This is very well, but what is wrong that a student is bound to accept the authority of the teacher & texts. Although rationality is present in this learning as logic form the major component in Buddhist philosophy, a student is seldom given chance to ask questions to fulfill his thirst. The traditional approach is characterized by passive reception and repetitive exposition, an enterprise to receive and uphold, to preserve and prolong rather than innovate and invent.<sup>75</sup> It is typical in the Shedras that a teacher gives a lesson, which at times can last

hours and again repeat in the next day, thus the student feel monotonous. Syllabi are also not well structured and lack a systemic & graduated approach.

Secondly, when the formal school education was introduced in 1960's most Bhutanese parents preferred to send their children to monasteries rather than schools because they thought it as alien system. But by 1980's modern education gained predominance and modern educated youth looked down on the traditional system as a resilient leftover from the past, rendered inefficacious by time.<sup>76</sup> According to their view point monastic learning is static and repetition of rituals. Most traditionalists have not tried to modernize themselves with country's changing times. Most of the monks are doubtlessly good artist, but they know very little about the Buddhism of philosophy & principles.<sup>77</sup> The old generation had accepted the liturgical role of the Dratshangs, but these are no longer attractive to the younger generations.

Thirdly, actually there is a linguistic and cultural gap between monastic and modern system of education. Medium and mode of communication in monastic education is either chhoe ked or Dzongkha and English is absent while in modern system medium of instruction is English though Dzonkha is the national language.

Fourthly, among the traditional institutions there is a better system in the Lobdras & Shedras. As the main custodians of traditional learning and scholarship, they not only contribute through the preservation and dissemination of moral and philosophical teachings enshrined in the Buddhist canon, but also fulfils some liturgical and pastoral roles.<sup>78</sup> They have adopted modern curricula, introduced written examinations but never tried to blend traditional learning with modern method.

Fifthly, Earlier it was the wish of every parent to send at least one of their son in monastery, now the parents dream that their children should continue modern education because today education is viewed as a means to attain a comfortable life. Scientific knowledge and knowledge of English language are most important in modern society. In contrast monastic education is aimed at one's inner enlightenment rather than worldly happiness and material comfort.

#### **Government attitude towards the Monastic education**

With the establishment of hereditary monarchy in 1907, and the initiation of planned economic development in the 1960's, the role of the state shifted from one of supporting the monastic order to that on delivering social welfare through economic development.<sup>79</sup> By the middle of the last century, the Third king His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck felt that a nation could no longer

prosper in the old traditional fashion.<sup>80</sup> The Fourth King, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wanchuck initiated the concept of 'Gross National Happiness' and Bhutan's development philosophy is based on this idea. Bhutanese monarchy has made an attempt towards political liberalization, economic development & social sustainability. 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 of development.<sup>81</sup> The Government has assured to give impetus in traditional education. Owing to the unique history there is a continued political commitment to monastic education and it appears to receive equal attention as the secular one. Religion and monastic education form the root aspects of Bhutanese culture. One of the elements to Bhutan's pride lies in its culture and existence of Buddhism in its pristine form.

But following the Five Year Plans of the Government, we notice that a little attention has given to expand country's traditional education. Budget outlay for promoting monastic learning is a very small amount. The total sum allocated to the council for Ecclesiastical Affairs, Special commission for cultural Affairs and Dzongkha Development Commission during the eight five year plan amounts to 1.78% of the total budget.<sup>82</sup> Many of the centers of traditional training in the country are privately funded and most scholars receive no state support.<sup>83</sup>

### Conclusion

But inspite of various hindrance traditional learning in Bhutan is thriving by the strength of faith in Buddhism & Buddhist institutions. With the establishment of numerous Shedras, and the emergence of a large number of Buddhist scholars from monasteries both inside & outside Bhutan, traditional education today has found renewed expression.<sup>84</sup> There has been a evolution in traditional learning through new approaches, methods & curriculums.

Value education in the traditional system has a profound influence on the lives of a majority of Bhutanese people. The relationship between the teacher and the pupil is accorded great importance according to traditional values, because it is the teacher who helps the student to overcome his ignorance & acquire knowledge & wisdom.<sup>85</sup>

In this system students are asked to view themselves as patients, the teacher as a physician, the teachings as medicine, and cure as resulting from the careful adoption of teachings.<sup>86</sup> Faith and devotion to the teacher and the teachings are important and the subject and the texts that contain it are to be treated with respect.<sup>87</sup> In this learning "education is to be viewed as a process of edification and knowledge as a tool for benefiting the world."<sup>88</sup>

Bhutan's basic dilemma today appears to be to modernize and develop the country but at the same time to preserve its traditional and cultural uniqueness.<sup>89</sup> Bhutan's challenge today is that it wants socio-economic modernization on one side, at the same time to restore its cultural identity and

traditional values on the other side. According to Michael Aris, private tutor to the Royal Family of Bhutan from 1967 to 1972 and a great historian "Bhutan was to produce scholars who combine a knowledge and appreciation of its traditional heritage with the new perspectives and methodologies of our own age".<sup>90</sup> In spite of country's changing phenomenon, respect for traditional learning is expressed in Bhutan 2020. A vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness: "Our religious and monastic institutions have played a decisive role in the evolution of our nation."<sup>91</sup>

However, Bhutan is really facing a sensitive issue because the lion's portion of tradition bound people believe in their traditional system, at the same time modern educated people still show their weakness to the traditional system. It is a dilemma. It is not any question of conflict but a question of faith on the traditional system. Perhaps geographical isolation of the country supplies impetus to this kind of psychology. This isolation is shaping their mentality. Elsewhere the western or modern education has laid the formation of conflict but in Bhutan people have adopted modern education in their own way but never discarded the traditional system of education and thinking.

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