

## 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.