

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.

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