

# A HISTORY OF BHUTAN

## A Supplementary Text for Class XII



Department of School Education  
Ministry of Education and Skills Development  
Royal Government of Bhutan  
Thimphu

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## ***Forward***

The vision of the Bhutanese education system is to produce ‘globally competent and nationally rooted’ graduates. Therefore, it is imperative to have the school curricula that are current and relevant to the times. It is through well-thought-out actions and concerted efforts that the national education aspiration can be achieved. The national vision must be embedded in the curricular documents and activities for natural and automatic infusion in the learners. Therefore, the curricular documents are planned and prepared to capture the essence and strategies so that they are current and relevant to the state of affairs around the globe in the 21st century.

Cognizant of the global trends and national aspirations, the history curriculum intends to involve learners in the process of gathering and synthesising information from various sources besides providing an avenue to study the ideals and values of our society. The contents and activities in history intend to preserve and promote our country’s unique identities, age-old cultural and traditional values, democratic values, local wisdom, community vitality, civic values, and a sense of duty, among others. This will help promote holistic development of the learners.

The history curriculum encourages both learners and teachers to use open-source and experiential learning besides traditional textbook-based learning. This will provide opportunities to both the learners and teachers to explore the historical processes and craft new perspectives through historiography. This is aimed at fostering analytical skills, creativity, exploration of information and synthesise of ideas apart from creating narratives based on information and data gathered, thus contributing to the field of historical knowledge.

Through the learning activities, the learners are expected to understand the evolution of people, places, events and realise the importance of living harmoniously. Furthermore, they should be able to embrace the attributes of a good human being, imbibe and portray a sense of belonging, thus contributing to national pride, unity, solidarity, and protection.

The National History School Curriculum has four strands – historiography, evolving civilisation, governance and peace and identity, spirituality and culture. Each strand is consistent with a seamless flow of learning throughout the key stages which comprises competencies and learning objectives. The principles of competency-based learning take into account the realities of the immediate environment thereby forming the foundation of the history curriculum. It also covers themes and topics on Bhutanese socio-economic practices, tradition and culture, religious heritage and the story of how our great forefathers, the hereditary monarchs in particular, contributed to creating a country known in the whole world for its unique identity.

It is with great expectation that we place this course book at the hands of the teachers and learners so that it will be used extensively as reference to enrich their knowledge which will enable them to develop and strengthen their love and dedication to *tsha-wa-sum*, and become constructive and contributing citizens.

Tashi Delek!



**Tashi Namgyal**  
Director

## FOREWORD

Our education system is making all endeavours in fulfilling the directives issued by the Royal Government to make education meaningful to our students and outline the roles they are expected to play as future subjects of His Majesty the King and citizens of the Country. In the course of our students education, particularly while in the schools, our country's history plays the most significant role of inculcating in them our rich cultural heritage and traditions, developed and passed down from generation to generation. A good knowledge of our history amounts to knowing our own identity, religious leaders, rulers and important events in history. They have, in the course of time, built great monuments and institutions, developed and preserved the rich art, architecture, literature, culture and traditions and protected our sovereignty to this day. Bhutan history should then teach us and our students to be responsible citizens to our Tsawa Sum.

Therefore, our students in the lower classes were able to learn Bhutanese history, geography and social studies from the course contents and course books developed on these subjects. With the decision of the Ministry of Education to also localize the class XI and XII courses with Higher Secondary Examinations in Bhutan being conducted by the Bhutan Board of Examinations with effect from 2006, studies with Bhutanese contents are now being extended even into these classes.

In conclusion, we wish our teachers and students to learn from the book. We wish them to learn from the examples of our great historical leaders on their love, concern and dedication to their country and people so that our students of today may grow up not only to be educated and productive citizens possessing the highest Bhutanese virtues of love, loyalty and dedication toward our *Tsawa Sum* but also that they, individually and collectively, are able to contribute towards fulfilling His Majesty's visions of a strong, prosperous and sovereign independent Bhutan for all times to come.

*Trashi Delek*



**Thinley Gyamtsho**  
**MINISTER**  
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## Introduction

The History Supplementary text is divided into three units. The first unit on the **Emergence of a Nation State** has three chapters, treating the Era of Zhabdrung and the Desis, the Establishment of Hereditary Monarchy and Period of Consolidation. The second unit on the **Emergence of Modern Bhutan** has two chapters, focusing on the Reforms made by Druk Gyelpo Jigme Singye Wangchuck and Role of Bhutan in the UNO, the NAM and the SAARC. The third unit on **Gross National Happiness** has four chapters dealing with the Concept of GNH, Development of Modern Education, Health Services and Modern Agriculture.

Most of the topics covered are familiar as they had been discussed in the earlier classes. However, the difference comes from the treatment of the subject and not the topic. For instance, the chapter on the era of Zhabdrung and the Desis discusses the contributions of the Zhabdrung, the modalities of becoming a Desi and their contributions in the context of carving a Nation state. Similarly, the topic on the Establishment of Hereditary Monarchy focuses on the efforts put in by many personalities to build a new political system. The last chapter of Unit One discusses the difficulties and threats faced by the Second and the Third Kings as well as the consolidation task undertaken by them.

In Unit Two the first chapter talks mainly about the new developments that had taken place till now like the empowerment of the people, constitution, and devolution of power, etc. The next chapter treats the international organizations like UNO, NAM and SAARC and the role of Bhutan. In brief, both the chapters discuss Bhutan as a modern Nation state.

The last unit deals with Gross National Happiness. Apart from treating the concept of GNH, the topics on the development of Education, Health Services and Agriculture are also discussed in the context of GNH. The unit attempts to emphasize that one of the means of achieving GNH in Bhutan is the development of Education and Health facilities besides introducing new methods of agriculture.

As far as the student activities are concerned, it is going to be challenging since the stress is on learning through fieldwork, interviews, observations, enquiry and discussions. Further more, the activities also provide opportunities for the students to present their work to the class and participate in making comments and asking questions as well as responding to the queries. Thus, it is hoped that the content of the supplementary text is used as a guide for exploring the unexplored and the undocumented aspects of the History of Bhutan.

*Trashi Delek*

**Dr Jagar Dorji**  
**Chairperson**  
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## UNIT ONE Emergence of a Nation State

### Chapter 1 The Era of Zhabdrung and the Desis

#### Introduction

In classes VII and IX we studied about Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal and his life, besides the contributions. A brief sketch of the first four Desis, had also been discussed. In this chapter, we will elaborate and discuss some of the important elements of the the era of Zhabdrung and the Desis, besides revisiting the major issues presented in the lower classes. The chapter will deal mainly with the contributions made by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal and the Desis to the political, economic and religious development of Bhutan. The period from the time of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal till the establishment of the Hereditary Monarchy in 1907 is important since the seeds for Bhutan to emerge as a Nation State were sown even when the country was plagued with factional strife as well as war with Tibet in the North and the British India in the South.

#### Contributions of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal

After Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal's arrival in Bhutan in 1616, he encountered many external as well as internal challenges. However, he successfully overcame the obstacles and gradually united western Bhutan by 1651 under the Drukpa rule. His contributions can be witnessed even today. The laws, festivals, administrative system, monastic system, culture and tradition that portray Bhutan as a nation are the legacies left behind by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. Thus, we will discuss some of the major contributions of this great personality, who led the emergence of Bhutan as a Nation State.

- *Unification of Bhutan*

The path to the unification of Bhutan was obstructed by external as well as internal oppositions. The Tibetans on the North and the *Lam Khag Nga* (ལམ་ཁག་ངམ་) (Group of Five Lams), who were also attempting to establish their influence in Bhutan, from within Bhutan invested all their efforts to stop Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal from gaining popularity in Bhutan. The main supporters of the Zhabdrung were the descendants of Phajo Drugom Zhigpo, Drukpa Kuenley and Drubthob Ter Khungpa. These families were influential in Paro, Thimphu, Punakha and Wangdue Phodrang in the west and Chapcha in the south as well as the Hobtsho family in the north. He also

travelled extensively in other western parts of Bhutan giving initiations and teaching. This led to the growth of his popularity.

Before unifying Bhutan, the Zhabdrung faced five Tibetan invasions and those of the *Lam Khag Nga* before entering into a permanent retreat in the Punakha Dzong. The first one was in 1617, a year after his arrival in Bhutan. This invasion sent by Tsang Desi Phuntsho Namgyal was aimed at destroying the Zhabdrung. However, the Bhutanese militia or the *Paṣaabs* ( རྩམས་པུ་ཤེན་པོ་ ) led by Tenzin Drugda and Zarchen Chhoeje Dorji Gyalpo defeated the Tibetans at Chang Nangkhatse, Paro. This was succeeded by the military attack on Semtokha by *Lam Khag Nga* led by Lama Pelden of Langmalung, Wang in 1629 and the subsequent second Tibetan invasion of 1634. The Tibetans were dragged into conflict in 1634 by the *Lam Khag Nga* after they had been vanquished by the forces of Zhabdrung earlier. The attacks were targeted at six different fronts, of which two were in Paro, one in Goen, one in Cheri, one in Nyingla and one in Bumthang. The Tibetan invasion was repelled and the *Lam Khag Nga* greatly weakened.



Fig. 1.1. Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal

The third Tibetan invasion was again initiated by the *Lam Kha Nga* in 1639 who were unhappy with the growing power and influence of the Zhabdrung. The combined Tibetan and the *Lam Khag Nga* army seized the Punakha Dzong but proved

unsuccessful. The defeat of the Tibetans and *Lam Kbag Nga* led to the signing of an agreement between the Zhabdrung and Tsang Desi Karma Tenchong Wangpo, which recognized the former as the supreme authority of Bhutan. Even the states like Cooch Behar, Nepal and Ladakh sent goodwill messages to the Zhabdrung. This was an important progress towards the unification of Bhutan since it elevated the prestige and popularity of the Zhabdrung and helped him in the establishment of his supremacy in Bhutan.

A combined Tibetan and Mongol army launched the fourth invasion in 1644 from Lhodrak towards Bumthang but were defeated and they even lost many weapons and arms to the Bhutanese. The last and the fifth invasion before the retreat of the Zhabdrung occurred in 1648 and 1649 by the combined Mongolian and Tibetan forces at many fronts and advanced till Paro, Thimphu and Punakha. However, the Tibetans were defeated. To commemorate the victory and show his gratitude to the protective deities, Punakha Dromchoe was instituted.

The Dzongs that he built in each region further symbolized the seat of Drukpa supremacy and its authority in Bhutan. It was through these fortresses that each region was controlled and others brought under the Drukpa jurisdiction. Even today, the Dzongs are seats for administration of religious ( ཚོས ) and political ( སྲིད ) affairs.

At the time of his retreat, Bhutan was not completely unified. It was only in 1655 that the whole of eastern Bhutan was fully brought under the Drukpa rule. However, the Zhabdrung had already initiated the process of complete unification by instituting the post of Choetse Poenlop and investing him with the responsibility of completing the unification of *Sharchhog Khorlo Tsibgye* under the Drukpa rule. The urgency and importance of creating a Nation state was also injected in his supporters by the Zhabdrung. Thus, it is probable to mention that *Lho Mon Kha Zhi*, which stretched from Dalingkha in the west to Dungsamkha in the east and Tagtserkha in the North to Pasamkha in the south was unified as a Nation under the union known as *Pelden Drukpa*.

- *Establishment of Choesid Nyiden* ( ཚོས་སྲིད་གཉིས་ལྗོན )

Before entering into retreat in 1651, the Zhabdrung established a political set up known as *Choesi Nyiden*, the Dual System of Government to suit the need of the time and the Bhutanese. This system had two persons, second to him, and who were responsible for temporal and spiritual affairs. The bifurcation of the administration led to an effective control of the country even in his absence. Thus, this system continued till the establishment of the Hereditary Monarchy in 1907. There were some chaotic moments during the reign of some Desis but in general, for about 256

years, the country's sovereignty was well guarded against external threats as well as internal revolts.

The political paradigm set up by the Zhabdrung had the Je Khenpo to look after the spiritual affairs of the monastic system while the Desi managed the temporal matters.

As far as the political administration was concerned, the Desi was assisted by many officials whose power and authority varied. The country was divided into three large provinces, *viz.* Paro to look after the western and south-western Bhutan, Dagara to look after the south-central Bhutan and Trongsa to look after eastern Bhutan. The head of the provinces were known as *Chog gi Chila Namsum* (ཕྱོགས་གྲི་སྤྱི་བུ་རྒྱ་ནག་གསུམ་) or the Three Regional Monastic Superintendents but popularly known as Poenlop (དཔོན་སློབ་) (Governor). The first *Chilas* were Mijur Tenpa as Choetse Poenlop, Tenpa Thinley as Daga Poenlop and Tenzin Drugda as Paro Poenlop. The other regional heads who had equal status with the *Chila Namsum* were the Dzungpoens (ཚོང་དཔོན་) (Chief of Dzongs) of Thimphu, Punakha and Wangdue Phodrang. These three regions were known as *Densa Zhung Sum* (གདན་ས་གཞུང་གསུམ་) or the Three Central Seats. Again, Punakha and Thimphu were particularly referred to as *Densa Phan-tshun* (གདན་ས་ཕན་ཚུན་) or Alternative Monastic Seats. The first three central Dzungpoens were Namkha Rinchen as Wangdue Phodrang Dzungpoen, Au Tshering as Thimphu Dzungpoen and Pekar Rabgye as Punakha Dzungpoen. However, the other Dzungpoens were under the control of the *Chila Namsum*. For instance, the Dzungpons of *Sharchbhog Kborlo Tsibgye* were under the direct control of Choetse Poenlop.

The other posts instituted to help in the administration of the country and which had the same status with the three *Chilas* and three central Dzungpoens were the *Droenyer* (མཚོན་གཉེན་) (Chief of Protocol) and *Kalyoen* (བཀའ་བློན་) (Executive Minister). The *Droenyer* also served as the Chief Justice while the *Kalyoen* passed the orders of the Zhabdrung to other officers. The three *Chilas*, the three central Dzungpoens along with *Kalyoen* and *Droenyer* formed the Lhengye Tshog (ལྷན་ཚོགས་) or the Council of Ministers. The issues of National importance were discussed in this council.

The other posts were those of Dzungpoens under the control of the Trongsa *Chila*. These Dzungpoens who had large areas under their jurisdiction also had Drungpas (རྩེ་པ་), the Subdivisional Administrative Officers and the Gups (གཤེན་), the Village Headman to assist them.

The other office bearers who assisted the Desi, Poenlops and the Dzungpoens were *Droenyer* (Chief of Protocol), *Zimpoen* (གཞིམ་དཔོན) or the Chief Supervisor of attendants, *Darpoen* (དར་དཔོན), Army in charge, *Nyerbhen* (གཉེན་ཆེན) Officer in charge of rations, and *Norpoen* (ནོར་དཔོན), Officer in charge of cattle etc. Though the Desi as well as each of the Poenlops and Dzungpoens had these officers to assist them, the importance and power of the office bearers differed greatly. For instance, the Droenyer of the Desi was more powerful and influential than that of the Dzungpoen.

Thus, the institution of the Dual System of Government ensured the continued progress towards Bhutan's emergence as a modern state. Though some of the posts do not exist any more, the general structure of the government at present is similar to that established by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. For instance, the existence of Lhengye Zhung Tshog, Dzungda, Drungpa, gup, etc. are derived from the time of the Zhabdrung. Above all, the idea of *Gyalthrim Sergi Nyashing, Choe thrim Dargi Dudphoe* (རྒྱལ་ཁྲིམས་གསེར་གྱི་དཀར་ཤིང་ཚོས་ཁྲིམས་དར་གྱི་མཐུན་ལོང་) meaning that the 'law of the state is a golden yoke and the law of religion is like a silken knot' is still dominant in the Bhutanese administrative system.

- *Codification of Laws*

One of the greatest achievements of the Zhabdrung was the codification of laws. The code of laws known as *Kathrim* (བཀའ་ཁྲིམས) was written down only in 1729 by Tenzin Choegyal, the tenth Je Khenpo. The *Kathrim* brought order in the system and protected people from exploitation and harassment and minimized corruption as well as social problems. These laws ensured that justice was imparted to all and peace and order prevailed in the country.

Some specific examples of the laws set by the Zhabdrung are the laws that define the responsibilities of a Desi. For instance, the duties of the Desi were, inter alia, to ensure the contentment of the public by imparting fair justice, ensure peace and security of the country and support the monastic body.

The institution of laws also established relationship between the monastic community and the people. For instance, the monks performed prayers and rituals for the community while the latter provided material support to the former. To ensure the continuity of this rapport, the system of maintaining of *sathram*, a register in the Dzongs that contained the names of the family members of each household and their land properties was introduced.

The payment of tax was also streamlined. The public had to contribute compulsory labour ( ལྷོག་ལྷོག་ ) to the state besides paying tax in kind. The *woola* was used for building bridges, monasteries, for renovation works, clearing of paths as well as transportation of government loads.

The laws codified by the Zhabdrung touched all aspects of Bhutanese life. There were laws that took care of religious, political, economic and social life of the Bhutanese. The taxation law, the law on relationship between the state and public, crime and punishment law, law on corruption and murder, inheritance law, among many others are just some examples of the laws codified by Zhabdrung. Even today, the fundamental elements of the *Thrim zhung Chenmo* ( འཇིགས་གཞུང་ཆེན་མོ་ ) is based on the *Katbrim*.

- *Creation of a Unique Identity*

The Zhabdrung realized that the biggest threat to the Bhutanese sovereignty was its lack of a National Identity. The linguistic variety of Bhutan was so large that each region spoke its own dialect. The dress code and food habits differed from one region to another. This diversity was seen as a disadvantage because Tibet could take advantage of the situation and pose threat from cultural as well as religious fronts. Thus, the Zhabdrung felt the need to introduce customs, traditions, dress, ceremonies, festivals, and language that reflected distinct Bhutanese features.

The introduction of the ceremony of *Zhugdrel Phuensum Tshogpa* ( འཇུག་དེལ་ཕུའུ་མུ་མུ་ཆོས་པ་ ) after the completion of Punakha Dzong is a feature special to Bhutan. This ceremony symbolizes the Bhutanese Nationhood and unity amongst its different valleys. Even today, this ceremony is popular for all degrees of celebration as a prelude.

The Dzongs that were built under his command represented strength, which safeguarded the Bhutanese sovereignty from external and internal threats besides being a source from where the Dharma diffused. Today, this unique architecture reflects the Bhutanese aesthetic expressions and their ways of life as well as unity.

There are many other unique features created by the Zhabdrung such as the dress code, festivals and even the rituals. Suffice it to say that this identity created by the Zhabdrung has become an element that distinguishes Bhutanese from others. Today, this unique identity has become an effective weapon of safeguarding the Bhutanese sovereignty.

## Modalities of Becoming a Desi

Bhutan was ruled by 55 Desis from 1651 to 1907. Some of them like the 13<sup>th</sup> Desi Chhoegyal Sherab Wangchuk (1744-1763) ruled as long as 19 years while others like the 38<sup>th</sup> Desi Wangchen Gyalpo (1850) stayed in power just for a few months. It is also interesting to note that there were also cases where two Desis reigned at the same time. Take for instance, Desi Dorji Norbu and Desi Tashi Dorji ruled jointly as the 36<sup>th</sup> Desi (1838-1847). In the same logical order, there were many modalities of becoming a Desi. In theory it was Zhabdrung and later the Monastic Body and the Lhengye Tshog ( ལྷན་རྒྱལ་ཚོགས་ ) or the Council of Ministers who had the authority to appoint the Desi. Appointment consequent on assassination, coup d'état and that by powerful regional lords were also common practices. Let us now look at the different modalities of becoming a Desi, with examples.

- *Appointment by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal*

In 1651, before entering into permanent retreat, Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal appointed Umze Tenzin Drugyal (1651-1656) as the first Desi to look after the temporal affairs of the Drukpa state. He was the only Desi directly appointed by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. However, there was a case where a letter that was supposedly from the Zhabdrung was used by his followers to appoint the Desi. For instance, in 1667, Chhoegyal Mijur Tenpa was appointed as the Third Desi through a letter, bearing the seal of the Zhabdrung. Most historians are of the view that Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal died in 1651 but his death was kept a secret since there was no heir. The other reason was, because the Drukpa state was still in its infancy and the announcement of the death of the Zhabdrung could have provoked rebellion and the disintegration of the new state. Thus, though the first seven Desis were appointed by the Monastic Body and the Lhengye Tshog, the general impression created was that it was the command of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in retreat. Thus, the appointment was under the seal of Zhabdrung and the candidate took oath by prostrating to the Zhabdrung in retreat in Punakha Dzong.

- *Appointment by Monastic Body*

The monastic body played a very important role in the appointment of the Desis who normally exhibited support for the cause of the monastic system and the general public. It even resorted to coup-d'état when the reigning Desi opposed the interest of the monastic body and became a source of anarchy. Thus, the monastic body also carefully observed the power struggle amongst different political factions and keenly participated in the appointment of Desis. For instance, the twentieth Desi Umze Chabchhap (1792-1799), the thirty first Desi Tenzin Drugda (1819-1823), the forty-

eighth Desi Tshenlop Tsondue Pekar (1866-1870), and the forty ninth Desi Jigme Namgyal (1870-1873), were appointed by the monastic body.

- *Appointment by powerful and influential individuals*

Tsenlop Kuenga Rinchen was the first Desi to be appointed by an influential Desi. In 1773 he was appointed the seventeenth Desi on the recommendation of Jigme Singye, the incarnation of Gyalse Jampel Dorji. The Fiftieth Desi Kitselpa Dorji Namgyal (1873-1879) was another leader appointed by an influential person. He was installed as Desi by Jigme Namgyal for the services he provided for the security of the country by participating in the quelling of revolts as well as external threats. Though Jigme Namgyal himself did not hold any political post he remained influential till he died in 1881 as he was succeeded by his cousin as the fiftieth Desi. Further more, he also had put his sons, relatives and loyal friends in key posts. Thus, he must have been involved in appointing even the Fifty-first Desi Chhoegyal Zangpo (1879-1882) since the latter assisted Jigme Namgyal during the civil war in central Bhutan. The Fifty-second Desi Lam Tshewang (1882-1884) must have also been appointed by the people of Jigme Namgyal since he served the latter faithfully. Even the fifty third Desi Gawa Zangpo (1884-1886) was appointed by the people of Jigme Namgyal with the hope of getting his support for Ugyen Wangchuck against the threat of Alu Dorji and Phuntsho Dorji. The Fifty fourth Desi Yanglob Sangay Dorji (1886-1903) and Fifty fifth Desi Chhogtruel Yeshey Ngoedub (1903-1907) were appointed by Ugyen Wangchuck since by then the latter was the most powerful political leader in the country.

- *Self-appointment through assassination and force*

Ngawang Tshering, the sixth Desi (1701-1704) was the first Desi to take the post by force. In 1701 when serving as the Dzungpon of Wangdue Phodrang he assassinated Gedun Chhoephel, the fifth Desi (1694-1701) and took hold of the post. However, as mentioned earlier he must have been appointed under the seal of the Zhabdrung by taking oath in front of the Zhabdrung in retreat.

Druk Rabgye (1707-1719) became the eighth Desi after assassinating Punakha Dzungpon Tenpa Wangchuk, Je Kuenga Gyaltsen, and all the supporters of Tenpa Wangchuk including Terton Drugda Dorji. This is a unique case because the reigning Desi was not assassinated but the potential candidate and his supporters were wiped out.

- *Appointment through coup-d'état*

Druk Rabgye (1707-1719), the eighth Desi had to face a civil war launched against him by the monastic body when he refused to recognize the installation of the

incarnation of Je Kuenga Gyeltshen as the Zhabdrung. Druk Rabgye was defeated, captured and thrown in the Pachu from Nyamey Zampa, below Paro Dzong.

The monastic body appointed Ngawang Gyamtsho as the ninth Desi (1719-1729). However, he challenged the monastic body by appointing his own candidate Lama Chhogley Namgyal in the post of the Zhabdrung. Thus, the monastic body had to launch another *coup- d'état* to defend their interest and appointed Mipham Wangpo as the tenth Desi (1729-1736).

### Contributions of Desis

After the establishment of *Chosid Nyiden*, the Dual System of Government in 1651 the Desis<sup>1</sup> supported by the Monastic body, regional leaders as well as the public contributed towards the development of the country. Their contributions were mainly in the areas of religious reforms, institution of laws, educational reforms and political security of the country. However, there were Desis who also did not contribute much. Let us look at a few Desis who had contributed to the progress of the Nation and its survival as a Nation.

- *Religious Reforms*

Religious affairs dominated the contributions of the Desis. Almost all the Desis had contributed towards the promotion of religion. La Ngoenpa Tenzin Drugda, the second Desi built eight stupas of red sandalwood inside Punakha Dzong known as *Nguelbum Choeten* ( འཇམ་ལུ་མཚོ་ལྷོ་རྟེན ). The third Desi renovated Semtokha Dzong and inscribed the images of Lord Buddha and the Bodhisattvas on black slate besides building many stupas in between villages.

Tenzin Rabgye established the Tshengyi Dratshang or the Debate Monastery and made it compulsory for each family having three sons to send one as monk. Ngawang Tshering, the sixth Desi brought *Tenjur* from Tsang in Tibet and had the *Kanjur* written in gold. He also erected a three-storeyed golden statue of Buddha Amitabha in Trashichho Dzong. The eighth Desi built the one-storeyed copper statue of Amitabha in Trashichho Dzong and built Wangduetse Goenpa.

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<sup>1</sup> The names of Desis and the sequence indicated on pages 86-88 of Class IX Bhutan History had been followed while writing this chapter.

Druk Namgyal made many printing blocks of religious books in Punakha Dzong. This helped in the production of religious books and enhanced its circulation availability. All these initiatives promoted Buddhism.

- *Institution of Laws*

The first Desi Umze Tenzin Drugyal introduced new laws in addition to the ones already codified by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. *Mitong*, the fine based on human valuation for murder along with double fine for theft, and the prohibition of illegal measuring and weighing units were instituted. He also formulated the Bhutanese code of conduct and etiquette known as *Driglam Namzha* based on sixteen human principles ( མིཚོས་གཙོ་བོ་མཉམ་སྦྲུལ་ ) and the ten divine virtues ( ལྷ་ཚོས་དགེ་བ་བཅུ་ ) as the law of the country to promote values in the society. To ensure these laws were promulgated and practised, he went on tours to remote villages. The other Desis did not add any new laws but practised it for the peace and order of the Nation.

- *Educational Reforms*

The second Desi introduced the study of medicine, art, sculpture and literature in the monastic schools. These branches of study were enhanced by the monastic body and are still studied today. The fourth Desi also categorized the art and craft into Thirteen Traditional Crafts (*Zorig Chusum*).

- *Political Security*

The Second Desi was engaged in constructing Drugyal Dzong and Paro Ta Dzong under the command of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. These structures served as fortress against the external invasions and civil strife.

The third Desi was a great warrior and as Trongsa Poenlop he was fully engaged in bringing the eight provinces of eastern Bhutan, the *Sharchhog Khorlo Tsibgye* ( ཤར་ཅོག་མོ་ལོ་ལྷོ་བཅུ་བྱུང་ ) under the Drukpa rule. The eight provinces were:

Mangdi Tsho zhi ( མང་ལྷོ་མཚོ་བཞི་ ),

Bumthang Dhe zhi ( བུ་མ་ཐང་ལྷོ་བཞི་ ),

Kurtoe Dho zhi ( ལུ་རྩོད་མཛོ་བཞི་ ),

Yangtse Tsho Nga ( གཡལ་ཅེ་མཚོ་ལྷོ་ ),

Khyengri Nam sum ( ཁེངས་རིགས་རྣམ་གསུམ་ ),

Zhongar Tsho duen ( གཞོང་རྒྱལ་མཚོ་བུ་ནྟ་ ),

Trashigang Tsho chu ( བཏེན་གཤིས་རྒྱལ་བཚོ་བུ་ ) and Dungsam Dho sum ( གཏུང་བསམ་མཛོ་གསུམ་ ) This contribution was important as it led to the unification of eastern Bhutan under the

Drukpa rule thereby completing the unification of the Nation. He was also involved in the construction of Trongsa Dzong, Jakar Dzong, Trashigang Dzong, Zhongar Dzong, Zhemgang Dzong and Dungsam Khar. The fourth Desi also built many dzongs such as Jangsar Dzong in Kalimpong and even extended Trongsa and Jakar Dzong.

The eighth Desi solved the Tibeto-Bhutanese border problem in eastern Bhutan by defeating the Tibetan army supported by the Mongols. This ensured the continuity of the Bhutanese sovereignty. Sonam Lhendup (Zhidar), Tsenlop Kunga Rinchen, Jigme Singye, and Jigme Namgyal are some of the Desis who encountered external threats from British India but were able to solve it in favour of the Bhutanese.

The Desis who reigned from 1774 also had to receive many political missions of the British India. The George Bogle Mission of 1774 during the reign of Desi Kuenga Rinchen and Hamilton Mission of 1776 and 1777 during the reign of Desi Kuenga Rinchen and Desi Jigme Singye are examples of missions that had great importance, as they were related to the Anglo-Bhutanese relationship and the political stability in Bhutan.

### **Conclusion**

We have seen that the era of Zhabdrung and the Desis had contributed enormously to the creation of Bhutan as a Nation. It is through the wisdom of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal and the efforts of the Desis that Bhutan stands as a unique Nation. The government and the monastic system, the laws of the Nation, the unique culture and tradition, among others are some legacies left behind by the Zhabdrung and the Desis. Facing the Tibetan invasions from the North and the British Indian invasions from the South as well as the civil wars from inside, the Zhabdrung and the Desis besides uniting Bhutan, safeguarded her sovereignty.

### **Student Activity.**

1. Divide the class into small groups and interview a civil servant on the present day administrative set up of the government. Compare your findings with that of the system of government established by the Zhabdrung. You can focus on the similarities and the differences between the two systems. Present your findings to the class.
2. Discuss the role of the Unique Bhutanese Identity in safeguarding the sovereignty of Bhutan.
3. The modalities of becoming a Desi presented in this chapter are not exhaustive. The interpretations can vary from one person to another. Thus, refer to *History of Bhutan-Land of the Peaceful Dragon* by B.J. Hasrat and comment on one modality with examples. You can come up with your own modality and comment on it.
4. Choose one contribution made by a Desi that you find the most important and tell why?

## Chapter 2 The Establishment of Hereditary Monarchy

In the earlier chapter on *The Era of Zhabdrung and the Desis*, we have studied that the Desis were not very powerful and there were constant wars, intrigues, and treacheries in between the Desis, Poenlops and Dzungpoens. This led to the lack of peace and order as the common mass had to participate in either as militia or through contributions to support their immediate leader. Thus, the internal condition was chaotic and the people were longing for peace and order. The wish of the mass was answered by the birth of Jigme Namgyal and his son Ugyen Wangchuck.

Thus, in this chapter we will discuss some of the factors that led to the emergence of Hereditary Monarchy. The efforts poured in by Jigme Namgyal and Ugyen Wangchuck as well as the contributions of Lam Jangchub Tsondrue and Gongzim Ugyen Dorji for making Bhutan a Hereditary Monarchy will also form a part of this chapter.

### Paving the Path to Hereditary Monarchy

The epoch of Jigme Namgyal after he became the Choetse Poenlop in 1853 was filled with revolts and wars. However, he proved to be a man of determination, strength and wisdom as no intrigues and conspiracies could stop him from becoming the most powerful man in Bhutan.

The Battle of Samkhar of 1857 fought with Tsondrue Gyeltshen, the Jakar Dzungpoen, was the first one that he faced to ensure that he remained Choetse Poenlop. The battle came to an end in 1858 with the mediation of the Desi Kuenga Palden, Je Yonten Gyeltshen and the Four Lopoens. The outcome of the mediation turned in favor of Jigme Namgyal as he continued to serve as the Choetse Poenlop, the post from where he paved the path to the establishment of Hereditary Monarchy.

The contributions that he made to the state coupled with the statesmanship that he displayed Jigme Namgyal was appointed the *Lamai Zimpoen* ( ལམ་མི་གཞིམ་དཔོན་ ), the Chamberlain to the minor Zhabdrung Sungtrul Yeshey Ngodrup, without having to forgo his post in Trongsa. This was a clear indication that he was an indispensable leader in whom lay the solution of making Bhutan a Nation free of civil wars and disorder. This new post gave Jigme Namgyal the power to make important decisions for the nation on behalf of the minor Zhabdrung Sungtrul. Thus, during the disastrous Ashley Eden mission in 1864, the place of Jigme Namgyal in the political

arena of Bhutan can be understood. It was he who rejected the draft treaty prepared by the British and led the troops to Dewangiri in 1865. Though the battle with the British was lost, the country that was broken up with civil wars between regional lords was united under his initiative to defend Bhutan from the British.

After signing the Treaty of Sinchula on November 11, 1865, Jigme Namgyal retired to Wangdue Chhoeing but only after appointing his elder brother Dungkar Gyeltshen as Choetse Poenlop. However, he was pulled back into the political affairs of Bhutan when Wangdue Phodrang Dzungpoen Darlung Topgyal killed Thimphu Dzungpoen Kasar Topgyal and appointed Kawang Mangkhey in the post. After successfully solving the problem, he was appointed unanimously the 49<sup>th</sup> Desi by the monastic body and the people in 1870. This also portrays the indispensability of Jigme Namgyal. Further more, this position provided him more opportunities to pave the path to the establishment of the monarchy, as he was able to place his own people in the key posts.

In his capacity as the Desi, he curbed the revolt of 1872 launched by the Paro Poenlop Tshewang Norbu. It was during this time that he also tactfully assassinated Kawang Mangkhey, the man appointed to curb the revolt, by employing Toep Chushing since the former persuaded Paro Poenlop to flee. This was made to appear like an accident, as Thimphu Dzungpoen Lam Tshewang, the loyal supporter of Jigme Namgyal was the brother of the victim. This was a farsighted move made by Jigme Namgyal as there were possibilities of Kawang Mangkhey and Tshewang Norbu forming a powerful party to fight against him.

In 1873, he retired from the post of Desi and appointed his cousin brother Kitshelp Dorji Namgyal as his successor. However, he had to return once more to assist the Desi in 1877 when Paro Poenlop Nima and Punakha Dzungpoen Nidup joined together and assassinated Zimpoen Barchungpa, the representative of Jigme Namgyal in Paro.

The revolt of 1877 originated from the combined forces of Paro Poenlop Nima, Punakha Dzungpoen Nidup and Wangdue Phodrang Dzungpoen Andruk Nim. However, Jigme Namgyal and his forces quelled the revolt. Peace was restored and the way to monarchy was cleared. He appointed his son Thrinley Topgyal as the Wangdue Phodrang Dzungpoen, his son Ugyen Wangchuck as Paro Poenlop, his adopted son Phuntsho Dorji as Zhung Droenyer and his loyal ally Lam Tshewang continued as Thimphu Dzungpoen. Later, after the death of Kitshelp Dorji Namgyal he appointed his trusted supporter and former Zhung Droenyer Chhoe gyal Zangpo as Druk Desi in 1879. The occupation of key posts in the government made it easy for his successors to carve out a peaceful monarchy.

## Contributions of Lam Jangchhub Tsondrue

In 1843 when Jigme Namgyal arrived at Trongsa, he was employed immediately as *Garpa* ( གཤམ་ ), common retainer by Trongsa Poenlop Tamshing Chhoeje Ugyen Phuntsho. The Choetse Poenlop was ready to employ Jigme Namgyal since Lam Jangchhub Tsondrue had already predicted to the Poenlop about the coming of a man from the east and the need to employ him for the future of the Nation.

Later in 1853, when Jigme Namgyal rose to the post of Choetse Poenlop, Lam Jangchhub Tsondrue advised him to construct *Dechog Lhakhang* ( བདེ་མཚོགས་ལྷ་ཁང་ ) with the Dechog statue facing western Bhutan. This initiative of Jigme Namgyal would bring peace and cooperation between the west and Trongsa.

Further more, the Lam designed the Raven Crown and offered it to Jigme Namgyal after blessing it with the special protecting powers of *Legon Jarok Dongchen* ( ལེགས་མགོན་ཐུབ་པའི་དངེས་པོ་ ), the Raven-headed Mahakala. He also advised Jigme Namgyal to dress in black clothes, black shoes and ride on a *Ta nag Ting Kar* ( ཏ་མག་ཏིང་དཀར་ ), a black horse with white hoofs, for which he is also referred to as *Deb Nagpo* ( རྟེན་མག་པོ་ ), the Black Regent. This would ward off any evil forces against Jigme Namgyal.



*Fig. 1.2. The Raven Crown*

Another advice that the Lam gave Jigme Namgyal was to employ a person from outside Bhutan who would come in search of work to Trongsa. As advised, Jigme Namgyal employed Padsha Raja who had participated in the Indian Revolt of 1857. This man turned out to be useful, as he became the advisor of Jigme Namgyal.

Jigme Namgyal followed all the advice of Lam Jangchhub Tsondrue. For instance, he constructed the Dechog Lhakhang with the statue facing west and also appeared in black on several occasions. Of all, the Raven Crown is the biggest contribution made by Lam Jangchhub Tsondrue to Jigme Namgyal and Bhutan.

### **The Last Civil War**

The greatest challenge that Ugyen Wangchuck faced was the one that came from the most unexpected corner. The plot of Aloo Dorji, Thimphu Dzongpoen and Phuntsho Dorji, Punakha Dzongpoen to kill the Trongsa Poenlop led to the last civil war of Bhutan, popularly known as the Battle of Changlimithang of 1886.

The Choetse Poenlop made attempts to solve the problem through peaceful dialogues but the two Dzongpoens refused to come for the meeting. This forced Ugyen Wangchuck to march westward with 2140 men. The two Dzongpoens tried to stop the forces of Trongsa Poenlop at Punakha but were pushed to Thimphu in favor of Ugyen Wangchuck. After losing even Semtokha Dzong to the forces of Ugyen Wangchuck, the two parties agreed to meet at Changlimithang and mediate. Dawa Penjor, the Paro Poenlop represented Ugyen Wangchuck while Phuntsho Dorji represented Aloo Dorji. The mediation turned up into a battle where the forces of Ugyen Wangchuck came out victorious.

This battle was significant for Bhutan since it was the last civil war. Further more, the potential obstacles for Ugyen Wangchuck were defeated and made it easy for him to establish the Hereditary Monarchy; the two powerful members of the Lhengye Tshog were replaced by his own loyal ally. For the people of Bhutan, it marked the end of disorder and the beginning of peace.

### **Events leading to December 17, 1907**

The Younghusband Mission of 1904 to Tibet was one of the factors that helped Ugyen Wangchuck to establish the Wangchuck Dynasty. On June 2, 1904 with 200 men he joined Colonel Francis Younghusband at Gyantse. He had a great role to play as the mediator between the British and Tibetans. The desired outcome of the

mission was to acquire trade concessions in Tibet for the British before Tibet came under the sphere of the Russian influence. The mediation was considered successful as the British gained the right to set up trade marts in Gyantse and Gartok in western Tibet besides the one that was already established at Yathung in 1893. The convention that was signed in the Potala Palace also refrained Tibet from having any relation with other foreign states.

Thus, in 1905 as a mark of gratitude, the British presented the insignia of the Knight Commander of the Indian Empire. John Claude White, the political Officer in Sikkim was deputed to present the decoration. The ceremonies were performed in Punakha Dzong by Chhogley Trulku Yeshey Ngoedrup. This gesture of the British clearly revealed their support to Ugyen Wangchuck. However, as a consequence of the Treaty of Sinchula, the British could not directly help him to hold the post of Choetse Poenlop for life as was requested by Ugyen Wangchuck. Nevertheless, the relation between the British and Bhutan became cordial both at political as well as personal fronts. For instance, he even went to Lhalung with John Claude White and also visited Calcutta in 1906 to meet the Prince of Wales and the Viceroy where he was received with pomp and ceremony.

The other factor that contributed to the establishment of the Wangchuck Dynasty was the employment of Ugyen Dorji as *Gyadrung* (ལྷོ་ལྷོ་), Officer-in-Charge of the region in India in 1900. This grandson of Pala Gyeltshen from Dungkar Chhoeje and thus cousin of Ugyen Wangchuck, spoke several Indian languages and had good contacts with important people. Thus, he proved to be an asset to Ugyen Wangchuck.

In 1906 the last Desi Chogley Truelku Yeshe Nguedrup retired to Sangngag Chhoekor monastery in Paro and a vacuum was created. There was no Zhabdrung incarnation to occupy the seat and no other capable person to officiate. This motivated Gyadrung Ugyen Dorji to petition to the Lhengye Tshog to consider electing Ugyen Wangchuck as the King of Bhutan. He argued that the Desi system had become weak and would function no more due to the change in the time. He also explained that a powerful and influential statesman was necessary to restore peace and order. He also reasoned that Hereditary Monarchy would assure a continued line of succession and enhance peace in Bhutan. Thus, the petition was unanimously accepted by the Lhengye Tshog.

### **A King is Crowned**

On December 17, 1907 corresponding to the Bhutanese 12<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month of the Earth Monkey year, Ugyen Wangchuck was crowned the First King of Bhutan at

Punakha Dzong. The seal of the founding Zhabdrung was imprinted on the binding contract that brought Ugyen Wangchuck and his heirs to rule as hereditary monarchs of Druk Yul. It was signed and sealed by the members of the Lhengye Tshog, the Central Monastic body, as well as other government officials and representatives from each province inclusive of headmen. The enthronement ceremony was attended also by a British delegation led by John Claude White.



*Fig. 1.3. The Installation Ceremony of Druk Gyelpo Ugyen Wangchuck*

This moment was historic and also important for Bhutan as the hereditary monarchy ensured peace, order, political stability and economic development of the nation.

### **Conclusion**

When Jigme Namgyal passed away in 1881, he had already laid the foundation for his son to become the most powerful man in Bhutan. But it must be remembered that Jigme Namgyal rose from the rank of a *garpa*, a common retainer to that of the most powerful man in Bhutan. He not only quelled many civil wars but also defended Bhutan's sovereignty against foreign forces. He also passed down the Raven Crown, which is the symbol of Bhutan's identity, unity, peace and sovereignty. When Bhutan extols itself as a Nation, Jigme Namgyal is also to be credited.

Ugyen Wangchuck too had struggled to put an end to civil wars in Bhutan. He played well his political role and was able to gain the support of the Bhutanese as well as that of the British. Thus, he became the founding Monarch of the Wangchuck Dynasty.

**Student Activity**

The shift from the rule by Desi to Hereditary Monarchy is very significant to Bhutan. It has restored peace and order, led to steady economic development and gave Bhutan its state of Nationhood. What do you think would be the political and economic condition of Bhutan, had the Desi system continued?

## Chapter 3 The Period of Consolidation

### Introduction

Bhutan embarked upon a new phase of its history with the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The theocratic government established in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century was replaced when the Trongsa Penlop Ugyen Wangchuck was unanimously installed as the first hereditary ruler of Bhutan on December 17, 1907. A new epoch opened for this small land, which was sandwiched between two giants - Tibet to the North and India to the South. However, this geo-political setting of Bhutan posed a threat. The events in Tibet in the post-1904 period were rather portentous and threatening to Bhutan. The Chinese troops under Chao Erh-feng occupied Lhasa in February 1910 and compelled the Thirteenth Dalai Lama to seek refuge in India.

On her southern front, Bhutan had to face the British, whose power in the world was at its greatest height and undisputed almost everywhere in South Asia. Under these circumstances, a wise diplomat and a visionary, Ugyen Wangchuck became conscious of the value of strengthening the British connection and in cultivating lasting friendship that could not only impede the Manchu expansionism in Bhutan but could help in stabilizing the country. With a view to preventing and frustrating any Chinese advance into Bhutan, John Claude White, Political Officer for Bhutan and Sikkim, who was greatly impressed by the personality of Gongsu Ugyen Wangchuck, recommended the British Government in India to take a more positive interest in Bhutan. Ugyen Wangchuck had also accompanied the British to Lhasa in 1904 and offered every assistance to the British. This resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Punakha in 1910 where the British pledged never to interfere in the internal affairs of Bhutan. But Bhutan, in view of her own situation and the threats of the Manchus agreed to abide by the advice of the British Government regarding her external affairs. This was a turning point in her history for Bhutan secured not only the friendship of the British that Ugyen Wangchuck had realized in 1907 but that this friendship was to continue even after the British had left the Indian soil.

Thus, in this chapter we will discuss the efforts put in by the Second King and the third King to consolidate Bhutan both politically and economically.

## Possible threats to the Monarchy

The reign of King Jigme Wangchuck can be described as an era of unification and consolidation of Bhutan. His reign was also a period of national integration and of extending friendly relations with the neighboring countries. The consolidation of political power and the centralization of authority were largely domestic. They were necessary to ensure that the newly acquired domain and the political system did not break down and that the country did not relapse into the chaos and turmoil of preceding centuries. Yet, his rule was not without threats.

- *Dorji Rabden factor*

The threat visualized by both Ugyen Wangchuck and the British were from his son-in-law Dorji Rabden, husband of Peldron. The King had expressed his willingness to accept his son in-law as his heir in 1900, after the death of his three sons and his wife Ashi Rinchen. However, in 1905 Jigme Wangchuck was born to Ashi Tsundrue Lhamo (Lemo). Thus, Ugyen Wangchuck felt that Dorji Rabden would challenge the direct line of succession in accordance with the promise. Added to this worry, there was also a rumor that Dorji Rabden might attempt to obtain the position for his son Tshering Penjor.

Fortunately, the expected threat did not emerge when Jigme Wangchuck was installed to the throne on March 14, 1927. Tshering Penjor, the son of Dorji Rabden presented himself in the capacity of Paro Poenlop to participate in the Coronation ceremony. Thus, one of the potential threats came to an end without any problem.

- *The Zhabdrung factor*

The other danger to the throne came in the early years of 1930s and just five years after his accession to the throne. The institution introduced by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal came to an end in 1907 but not the threat to the newly founded dynasty.

The Sixth mind incarnation of the Zhabdrung was Zhabdrung Jigme Dorji. He was born in Domkhar Melong in Tawang and in 1920s, he was invited to Bhutan and installed in Talo. Not long afterwards, the relations between the King and Zhabdrung Jigme Dorji turned sour. The Zhabdrung without the consent of the King gave certain grazing rights to members of his family in Melongkhar, Tawang. The King objected to this and suggested that the grazing should cease. The matter did not end here as Choki Gyeltshen, cousin of the Zhabdrung along with two associates sought help from Mahatma Gandhi in India. They met Gandhi on May 5, 1931 at Borsad, Gujarat and solicited Gandhi's help for the restoration of his power, which was refused. The King on his part had the support of the British. All moves from both sides ended in

November 1931 when the Zhabdrung was found dead at Talo. With the death of Zhabdrung Jigme Dorji came to an end another danger posed to the King and the dynasty.

### **Ties with India**

In view of the rapid developments taking place in Asia by early 1950's, it became impossible for Bhutan to ignore the changes even if she wanted to. The British had left the Indian soil and the Chinese had entered Tibet. Nepal too, under the rule of the Ranas, had ended their period of isolation and entered a new phase of international relations. Though a move in the direction of strengthening political relations with India had taken place during the times of the First and the Second Kings, the greatest changes were to take place during the reign of the third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. His ascendancy to the throne in 1952 was to usher in a movement to accelerate Bhutan's move towards securing a rightful place in the modern world.

The Chinese attempt to cement any relationship with Bhutan failed in 1959, when the Bhutanese withdrew her representative from Lhasa and sealed the frontier with Tibet. Another epoch-making event in the relations between the two countries was the visit of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in 1958. In his address to the Bhutanese public, Nehru ruled out any pressure on Bhutan, which might impair its independent status.

On August 28, 1959, Nehru stated in the Lok Sabha (Lower House of Parliament) that the protection of the territorial integrity and frontiers of Bhutan was the responsibility of the Government of India. Thus India committed itself towards maintaining the integrity of Bhutan.

The visit of the Indian Prime Minister was significant for, it reiterated the independent status of Bhutan and also marked the first step towards planned economic development. A decade later, in 1968, his daughter the then Prime Minister retracing her father's footsteps across the Himalayas, paid a visit to Bhutan. In the same year, Bhutan agreed on the Indian proposal to station a representative of the Indian Government in Thimphu. The step in this direction was necessitated by the growing political, economic and cultural relations between the two countries. Lyonpo Pema Wangchuk was appointed the Bhutanese Ambassador in New Delhi and Mr. B.S.Das the Ambassador to Bhutan.

## Political Reforms

We have seen that the ascendancy to the golden throne in 1952 of Jigme Dorji Wangchuck was crucial in the history of Bhutan. A visionary King, he secured for Bhutan a place in the international arena as an independent Kingdom. But his contributions were not only in the field of securing a position for Bhutan as a separate independent state, but his rule also ushered in great changes in the political arena to the benefit of the Bhutanese.

- The *Tshogdu*

A year after his ascendancy to the throne in 1953, the King initiated the institution of the Tshogdu (National Assembly) which was considered by many as a revolutionary move. This was not only to develop political consciousness amongst people but to introduce a representative government in the political system. It is a unique institution based on tradition and culture and suited to the needs of the Bhutanese people. It is not based on any western parliamentary model and therefore does not have committees other than the Agenda Committee. Tshogdu is the chief legislative organ of the country, based on representation. It includes 105 elected representatives of the people, 10 representatives of the clergy and 39 nominated representatives of the government. The members serve for a term of three years and they can be reelected or re-nominated, as the case may be.

The establishment of the Tshogdu was a revolutionary move and there can be no two opinions about the King's objective in making the polity more participatory. Even when viewed in the context of the whole scenario of South Asian region, democracy had begun to take shape only in India and Sri Lanka. In the 31<sup>st</sup> session of the Assembly in May 1970, the King proposed radical changes. These included a vote of confidence in a king through secret ballot every three years, removal of a king by a simple majority and formation of a Regency Council consisting of four members, one each from the royal family, the monks, the officials and the people all to be elected by the Assembly. The proposals were all passed except for the King's removal, where the stand was that the removal would have to be supported by two-thirds of the members and not by a simple majority.

The Tshogdu, as the main legislative body, augurs well for the political system and democracy in Bhutan.

- The *Lodroe Tshogde* ( ལོ་ཐོ་སྐྱོང་ཚོགས་པོ )

Lodroe Tshogde or the Royal Advisory Council was set up in 1963 but formally constituted in 1965 in addition to the Tshogdu. It consists of nine members: one



- *The Judiciary*

Bhutan's legal code is based on what was laid down by Zhabdrung Nawang Namgyal. Though over the years a number of modifications have been affected, the spirit and substance of the traditional Buddhist guidelines have been preserved.

In 1968, the High Court or the *Thrimkhang Gongma* was established and separated the powers of the Judiciary from the Executive. The jury in the High Court consisted of five judges appointed by the King on the list submitted by the Chief-Justice. The judges in the High Court enjoyed equal power and authority.

At the District level, we have the Dzongkhag Courts. Each court has a judge assisted by a sub-divisional officer. At the Dungkhag level, it is headed by the Sub-Divisional Officer.

The lowest rung of the Judiciary is at the block or the gewog level and is headed by the Gup or the Village Headman. The Gup has the power and authority to take decisions in the day to day administration of the gewog and decide on legal matters.

Another feature of the Judiciary is the *Jabmi* (ཞབས་ལུ་) or attorneys. They are more like the legal counsels used by the opposing parties to argue their cases.

## **Economic Reforms**

For the last many centuries, people of Bhutan were groped in the darkness of penury and stagnation. It continued till the early 1950s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The country by and large remained isolated, undeveloped, primitive and as a feudal society. The efforts at improving agriculture, education, transport and communication had barely scratched the surface. The late King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck was convinced that progress and strength could not be achieved in isolation. Under these circumstances, a major breakthrough came with the launching of the Five Year Plans in 1961, the actual implementation which had begun with the visit of the first Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in 1958. This was the beginning of a new era in the process of economic development and since then, Bhutan has never looked back on this aspect. The work on the Phuentsholing-Paro-Thimphu highway already began in January 1960 before the Five Year Plans.

In order that Bhutan may shake off its traditional outlook and feudalistic society, the Five Year Plans evolved. The Technical Team of the Planning Commission of India

visited Paro in 1961. This initiated the process of India's deep commitment and involvement in Bhutan's development.

In the process of moving towards development and modernization, the *First Five Year Plan* was launched in 1961. India has been the largest aid-giver to Bhutan and in the First Plan with a grant amount of Rs. 100 million. The budget allocations between the sectors were as follows:

- i) Roads- Rs. 62 million
- ii) Education- Rs. 10 million
- iii) Transport- Rs. 7.5 million
- iv) Health- Rs. 3.2 million
- v) Forests- Rs. 3.2 million
- vi) Agriculture- Rs. 2 million
- vii) Power- Rs. 1.6 million
- viii) Animal Husbandry- Rs. 1.5 million
- ix) Industries –Rs. 1.1 million
- x) Others-Rs. 9.1 million

A unit of the Border Roads Organization of India was also set up in Bhutan. This unit known as DANTAK now maintains some parts of the roads in Bhutan. The achievement in this sector was the construction of 1770 kilometers of road network within Bhutan including the 208 kilometers highway that connected Phuentsholing with Thimphu and Paro. Other highways were Paro to Ha, Samdrup Jongkhar to Trashigang, Sarpang and Gelephu to Tsirang and Trongsa.

A Health Department was also set up in Thimphu under a Medical Officer. Steps were also taken to eradicate malaria. Altogether, by the end of the Plan, Bhutan had 3 hospitals and 40 dispensaries spread in different parts of the Kingdom.

An Agricultural Department was established and multiple model farms started together with research stations, seeds production units, and extension work places. Efforts were also made in increasing areas for fruit and vegetable cultivation.

To conserve forest, a Forestry Department was established and measures were taken in conserving forest and towards prudent exploitation of forest products. Hydel Directorate was also established.

Bhutan did not have a postal system prior to 1961. Contacts between various provinces and the Central Government were made through special messengers, who walked for days. To ensure a better postal facility, a Postal Department was set up in

the First Plan period and the first Bhutanese postage stamp was issued on October 10, 1962.

Though the Chinese aggression on India hampered the progress to the plan and suffered other occasional jolts, which were owing to the differences of opinion on the question of prioritizing the work on the whole, the first plan yielded impressive results and rapid progress was made in the field of transport and communication besides health and education.

The *Second Five-Year Plan* commenced in April 1966. India's grant amounted to Rs. 221.5 million. The plan aimed at further development of Agriculture, Education, Roads, Water supply and Power, Health Services, Transport and other activities. The budget allocations were:

- i) Agriculture- Rs. 35 million
- ii) Education- Rs. 25 million
- iii) Roads, water Supply and Power- Rs. 78 million
- iv) Health Services- Rs. 12.8 million
- v) Transport- 15.3 million

In agriculture, the emphasis was on increasing food production, specialization of crops, improved seeds, implements and fertilizers. Fifteen Extension Centres were established. Efforts were also taken to improve horticulture and the growth of cash crops.

In the livestock area, a Cheese Plant was set up at Gogona, a Mithun Breeding Farm at Thromong, and twenty eight Bhutanese were trained as Veterinary Assistants.

In the field of education, rapid progress was made. By the end of the plan year in 1971 Bhutan had 102 schools. The enrollment rose to 9000 children. A Teachers Training Centre was established in Samtse and about 500 Bhutanese scholars were receiving education in India.

In the Health sector, the number of hospitals increased from 4 to 6, dispensaries from 11 to 34 and had trained nurses and compounders in the system.

In the communication division, a Philatelic Wing was set up and Bhutan became a member of the Universal Postal Union in March 1969. Seven telephone stations were established, which linked important towns with the Capital and with the Indian telephone system. A large number of Bhutanese were also trained in India to manage the postal and telephone services. Bhutan began bringing out special types of stamps

and in the International Philatelic Exhibition held in Calcutta during 1969-1970, Bhutan won a gold medal.

Banks were also set up in 1968 with branches in Phuentsholing and Thimphu. *Tikchung*, a new coin was brought into circulation, which was equivalent to half a ngultrum. This gave a boost to the transaction, which thus far was based primarily on the barter system. People could now exchange surplus produce for other necessities of life and money transactions characterized the new Bhutanese economy.

The successful implementation of the Second Five-year plan led to the establishment of the Planning Commission to direct plan objectives, approve plans and the budgets and review the progress of the activities.

The *Third Five-Year Plan* was approved by the Tshogdu in its spring session of 1970 and it came into force by April 1971. The total revenue outlay for the plan was Rs. 355 million. A redeeming feature of the Third Five – Year Plan was Bhutan’s ability to contribute about Rs. 25 million from its own resources.

Priority was on the development of agriculture, irrigation, communications and education. Another objective was on providing necessary infrastructure for implementing subsequent development programmes at an accelerated pace. The budget allocations were:

- i) Cooperative Marketing Societies-Rs. 1.802 million
- ii) Power-Rs. 24.8 million
- iii) Industries and Mining-Rs. 16.335 million
- iv) Transport and Communications-Rs. 90.7 million
- v) Social Services- Rs. 108.55 million
- vi) Miscellaneous- Rs. 34.915 million

### **Conclusion**

The reign of Jigme Wangchuck and Jigme Dorji Wangchuck was a very important phase in Bhutan’s emergence as a modern nation. The Kingdom carved by Ugyen Wangchuck was still fragile and the two succeeding kings wisely overcame all the threats and hurdles. They also initiated Bhutan on its march to economic development and political stability. Thus, the era after Ugyen Wangchuck till 1972 is for Bhutan a period of consolidation as well as introduction of new systems and initiation of many socio-economic and political reforms.

**Student activity**

1. Visit your community and find out how people function on the following:
  - a) How do people choose their representative for the Royal Advisory Council.
  - b) How do people solve disputes using the authority of the Gup?
2. Choose one political threat that the Second or the Third Kind had faced and assess it.
3. Study one development project undergoing in your area. Analyze its impact on the community. Also, find out people's perception on the result and benefits of the project.

## **UNIT TWO**

### **Emergence of Modern Bhutan**

#### **Chapter 1**

#### **Druk Gyelpo Jigme Singye Wangchuck and the Reforms**

##### **Introduction**

Druk Gyalpo Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the fourth King, in the line of succession in the Wangchuck dynasty was born in Dechencholing palace, Thimphu on 11 November 1955. He received his early education at St. Joseph College, Darjeeling and then in London. In 1970, he was admitted in the Ugyen Wangchuck Academy at Paro and renewed his acquaintance with the spiritual and cultural heritage of Bhutan. As the Crown Prince, he was actively associated with the functioning of the government. In 1972, he was appointed as the Chairman of the Planning Commission and on the recommendation of the National Assembly on May 5, 1972 he was installed as the Choetse Poenlop. Two years later, on June 2, 1974, on the recommendation of the Monk body, the officials and the people of Bhutan, he was installed as the fourth King of Bhutan. He became at the age of 17 the youngest Monarch in the world. During the coronation address to the Nation, the King pledged to serve Bhutan and its people with fidelity and to the best of ability, which was already taking shape with institutional modernization.

In this chapter we will discuss the contributions of His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck in the light of the developments and the progress made after his enthronement.

##### **Reform Goals and Guiding Principles**

From the beginning His Majesty has shown a deep understanding of the social, cultural and economic needs of the country. In his capacity as the King, he redefined the entire economic development policies, plans and programmes and directed them towards the needs of the rural population. In the sphere of domestic policies, His Majesty the King stressed the realization of the following substantial objectives:

- Achieving economic self-reliance and well being of the people.
- Creation of essential infrastructure in all spheres of development.
- Developing human resources.
- Striking a balance between modernization, development, values and cultural heritage.

- Creation of an effective social integration programme and of a single harmonious society.
- Achieving development plans and goals with the active participation of the people.

The five guiding principles of Bhutan's development to meet the above objectives are the following:

- Economic self-reliance
- Environmental preservation
- Balanced development
- Decentralization and devolution
- Cultural preservation

In this regard, it is important to note that the Gross National Happiness has become the development philosophy of Bhutan, which would be discussed in detail in unit three.

### **Reforms**

The Bhutanese society was so traditional in the past that the representatives of the Bhutanese people in the highest forum – the National Assembly with their feudal outlook opposed many ideas that were to influence the Bhutanese both in the social and political fronts. Despite the numerous debates that were to follow in the National Assembly with many of the 'Old Guards' resisting change, the dynamism and the energy behind the enlightened Kings was to gain an upper hand. A pledge was made nation-wide by His Majesty the King Jigme Singye Wangchuck in 1974 "*to serve Bhutan and its people with fidelity and to the best of ability.*" The pledge was already taking shape.

- *Council of Ministers:* We have seen that the *Lhengye Zhung Tshog* or the Council of Ministers was one of the oldest institutions in the country that had its origins in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It underwent a lot of changes during the reign of the Third King but by far, one of the most sweeping changes was to come during the reign of the fourth King.

A revolutionary change that was to transform the system of Government came in 1998 when the King issued a royal edict, *Kasho*, in 1998 on the occasion of the 76<sup>th</sup> session of the National Assembly. The royal edict empowered the National Assembly

to elect a Council of Ministers responsible for the functioning of the State. The Royal edict stated:

*“ It has been my endeavour to encourage and prepare our people to participate actively and fully in the decision making process of our country. The time has now come to further promote the people’s participation in the decision making process. Our country must have a system of government, which enjoys the mandate of the people, provides clean and efficient governance and has an in-built mechanism of checks and balances to safeguard our national interests and security. As an important step towards achieving this goal, the Lhengye Zhung Tshog, should now be restructured into an elected Council of Ministers that is vested with full executive powers to provide efficient and effective governance of our country.”*



*Fig. 2.1. The National Assembly*

By this edict, the King surrendered part of his sovereignty in favor of the Tshogdu. Accordingly, a six member Cabinet was voted to power by the Tshogdu for a term of five years who will now be guided by the *Chathrim* (འཚམ་བཞིན་མཉམས་པོ) endorsed by the National Assembly. The six members of the new Cabinet comprised:

- i. Lyonpo Jigmi Y. Thinley
- ii. Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk
- iii. Lyonpo Kinzang Dorji

- iv. Lyonpo Sangay Ngedup
- v. Lyonpo Thinley Gyamtsho
- vi. Lyonpo Yeshey Zimba

With the establishment of the Council of Ministers, the King became the Head of the State. The Head of the Government was rotated amongst the Ministers for a term of one year each in accordance with the votes secured by them. Lyonpo Jigmi Y. Thinley was the first Head of the Government.

In 2003, during the session of the National Assembly the Council of Ministers was expanded with the election of additional of four new ministers.

- *Constitution:* The Third King, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck with the establishment of the National Assembly in 1953, already took the first move towards establishing a constitutional monarchy in Bhutan. Even before the idea of a constitutional government, His Majesty had already started with the transformation of the political process. In 1998, he had handed over most of his powers to the Council of Ministers even authorizing the National assembly to effect an abdication if a motion was backed by 75 percent of the members. Another momentous move into the future came with a royal decree issued by His Majesty the King in September 2001 that commanded the drafting of a constitution. His Majesty stated “The basic purpose of the Constitution is to ensure sovereignty and security of the nation and the well-being of the Bhutanese people for all times to come. The Political system of the country must evolve so that the people would continue to enjoy peace, prosperity, justice, and the fundamental rights which have always been enshrined in the Bhutanese system.”

Accordingly, under the Royal command a drafting committee was formed, composing representatives from the monk body, people, judiciary and the Royal Government.

On March 26, 2005 the first draft of the constitution was released. The draft constitution opens with a Preamble where the people of the Kingdom solemnly pledges to “strengthen sovereignty, secure liberty, ensure justice and tranquility and enhance the unity, happiness and well being of the people for all time”. It includes thirty-four articles and insists on two-party system rather than a multi-party system, which will be conducive to the political stability and success of democracy in Bhutan.

It is hoped that the constitution will uphold justice, liberty and equality of the citizens.

- *Royal Civil Service Commission:* Till 1982, Bhutan did not have a Public Commission to recruit civil servants to take up the various jobs in the country. The King realized

that the recruitment of civil servants was becoming more complicated and therefore appointed the Royal Civil Service Commission. It recruits personnel for various civil service posts and is headed by a Secretary, appointed by the King. The Commission also conducts the Civil Service Examinations for Graduates and accordingly places graduates found qualified for various posts. The practice of selecting Engineers through Examinations is also included.

- *Decentralization and People's Participation:* Decentralization has been the driving force of major reforms during the reign of His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck. The idea of decentralization is linked with people's participation in the developmental process. It gained priority especially in the beginning of the Fifth Five-Year Plan in 1981. Till 1980, everything was centralized, including planning, implementing and monitoring of development programmes. The King felt that with a centralized administration the dependency of the people on the government for the provision of plans, activities and every other sector for rural development was too high. The King also felt that the development plans should be based on the district development ideologies that are relied on independence and self-reliance. Some features of decentralization were as follows:

- i. Self-reliant district development plans
- ii. Fostering effective programmes by the respective Dzongkhags
- iii. Reduction of bureaucracy and limitation of cost
- iv. Increasing mobilization and optimum utilization of internal resources
- v. Greater people's participation in formulating plans, taking decisions and implementing programmes.

This resulted in the establishment of the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogdue and the Geog Yargye Tshogchung. With the establishment of Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogdue and Gewog Yargye Tshogchung, the concept of decentralization broadened from a centralized planning process to a cooperative partnership between the government and the people.

- i. The Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogdue(DYT): Administratively, the country is divided into 20 Dzongkhags composed of 202 Gewogs. At the Dzongkhag, gewog and village levels, there are established mechanisms that ensure people's participation in the decision-making process. The Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogdue or the District Development Committee was a result of the vision of His Majesty to promote independence and self-reliance within the twenty Dzongkhags in the country. It was established in 1981. The Dzongda, the Sector heads and the Gups of the various gewogs in the Dzongkhag represent the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogdue and the members are guided by the Chathrim. The establishment of the Dzongkhag Yargye

Tshogdue brought in a greater role and participation in the drawing up and implementation of plans and activities within the Dzongkhag. Till 2003 it was headed by the Dzongda. But in 2003 the chairperson of the DYT was also elected from amongst the members who now guide the decision of the DYT in place of the Dzongda. The members of the DYT propose the agenda for discussion, which are in most cases discussed with the King during plan meetings with the people. After deliberating on the issues, decisions are taken based on consensus or on two-third majority. The outcomes of the DYT are ultimately placed before the Tshogdu for approval and become an integral part of the national development plan.

One benefit accrued from DYT is that it has resulted in the formation of a planning process centered round an over-all rural development. Further, since the implementation of the plans is done at the DYT or the Dzongkhag level the imposition of policies from the centre is removed. Most importantly, the vision of the King in enhancing development through greater participation by the people is envisaged in the process of decision-making process. With greater participation of the people in formulating the plans, the people identify themselves with the plan and take greater responsibility. Lastly, the administrative machinery has been assigned a new role of welfare and development administration. Above all it ensures successful implementation of the plans, enhancing rural livelihood, prosperity and bringing about uniformity in the socio-economic development.

ii. Gewog Yargye Tshogchung(GYT): The establishment of the Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogchung provided the framework for the establishment of Gewog Yargye Tshogchung. The King has sensed that the Gewog Yargye Tshogchung will not only bring about a greater participation by the people but will also revive the community based self-help culture that is slowly dying out.

The Gewog Yargye Tshogchung was established in 1991 on the direct command of His Majesty the King. His Majesty envisaged the gewog as the centres where all future plans would emanate. The gewogs would themselves be responsible for the implementation and realization of the activities.

The Gewog Yargye Tshogchung is guided by the chathrim which spells out the responsibility of the members, criteria for eligibility of members, meeting procedures, administrative and financial powers. It is headed by the Gup or the village Headman and assisted by the members Mangap, Tshogpas, and Chipons. Every household sends a representative at the meeting. The minimum age for participation is 18 years, with no gender discrimination. The Office bearers are themselves elected by the villagers through a secret ballot. The candidates win through simple majority. Every

gewog has a centre for daily administrative purposes and for convening public meetings.

The Gup as the head of the Gewog Yargye Tshogchung has been accorded with financial powers to realize the decentralization objectives. They are empowered to collect taxes, which include house tax, land tax, cattle and grazing tax. The government also pays the village representatives' salary.

In the process of economic development and bringing about a social transformation in the country, people's participation has taken a forefront. They not only have the power to elect the representatives of the National Assembly but at the gewog level they are given the authority of identifying and prioritizing their needs and also taking ownership of the plans. This has not only brought about much responsibility from the people but also an administrative structure has been established which brings about an overall efficient and a balanced development in the Kingdom. The strengthening of the local and national institutions and devolution of power from the centre and empowering people to make decisions and play a greater role in the decision making processes has undoubtedly been one of the greatest achievements of His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck. It has led to active participation by the people.

### **Conclusion**

Bhutan has achieved so much in so short a time. The system of governance is in many respects unique in the world, providing people with a direct access to the monarch and a larger share on the decision of matters of national importance. While far-reaching initiatives were undertaken by successive monarchs to strengthen the Kingdom's political and legal institutions and establish an effective democratic framework, His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, fourth in the Wangchuck Dynasty, initiated the most significant political changes.

### **Student Activity**

1. Attend a Gewog Yargay Tshogchung as an observer. Divide the class in groups and take one topic each from the list given below:
  - Membership of GYT (Chairperson, Secretary, members, tenure of office)
  - Political discussions
  - Economic discussions
  - Religious discussions.Add any other topics. Observe the GYT in progress and make a report on your topic to the class.
2. Interview four to five persons at random from your locality on the the constitution. Present your findings to the class.

## **Chapter 2**

### **The International Organizations and Bhutan**

#### **Introduction**

In the era of globalization, it is important to understand Bhutan's place in the international arena. In the lower classes, we had briefly touched on some of the international organizations. In this chapter, we will study about three important organizations, *viz.* the United Nations Organization (UNO), Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The chapter will detail out some of the important points that are necessary to understand the significance of these organizations. The role of Bhutan will also be discussed to project the importance of these organizations to Bhutan.

#### **United Nations Organization**

In the midst of the Second World War, which was proving disastrous for most of the countries, inflicting heavy losses of human life, the leading nations of the world came forward to discuss the establishment of an organization which could avoid such tolls on human life henceforth. It was with these aims in mind that the United Nations Organization came into being with the signing of the Charter on June 26, 1945, replacing the League of Nations that had failed in its aims as the promoter of peace and stability in the world.

It was first envisaged by Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States of America and was first used in the "Declaration by United Nations" of 1<sup>st</sup> January 1942, when the Second World War was still raging on. Representatives of 26 nations pledged their Governments to continue fighting together against the Axis powers made up of Italy, Germany and Japan.

The Charter of the United Nations was drawn up by the representatives of 50 countries at the United Nations Conference on International Organization, which met at San Francisco from 25<sup>th</sup> April to 26<sup>th</sup> June 1945 and was formally signed on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1945 by the representatives of the 50 countries. Poland, which was not represented at the Conference signed the charter later and became one of the original 51 Member States.

The United Nations Organization officially came into existence on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1945, after the Charter had been ratified by China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States and by a majority of other signatories. The day of its

existence is therefore celebrated throughout the world as the United Nations Day on October 24 each year. The day is also marked by the Bhutanese throughout the Kingdom in recognition of Bhutan being a member of the United Nations Organization.

### **United Nations Charter**

The main instrument of the United Nations Organization is the Charter. The rights and obligations of the Member States and the organs and the procedures of the organization are all set out in the Charter. The Charter codifies at the international level the major principles of international relations, ranging from the sovereign equality of States to the prohibition of the use of force to the protection of basic human rights to which all women and men are entitled.

The Charter opens with a preamble, and includes sections on United Nations Purposes and Principles, Membership, Organs, Peaceful Settlement of Disputes, Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression, International Economic Cooperation, and Non-Self-Governing Territories.

### **Preamble to the Charter**

The Preamble to the Charter expresses the ideals and common aims of all the peoples, whose Governments joined together to form the United Nations:

“We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.”

### **Purposes and Principles**

The purposes of the United Nations, as set forth in the Charter, are:

- to maintain international peace and security;

- to develop friendly relations among nations, based on respect for the principle of equal right and self-determination of peoples;
- to cooperate in solving international economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems and in promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in attaining these common ends.

The United Nations acts in accordance with the following principles:

- it is based on the sovereign equality of all its members;
- all members are to fulfill in good faith their Charter obligations;
- they are to settle their international disputes by peaceful means and without endangering international peace and security, and justice;
- they are to refrain from the threat or use of force against any other State;
- they are to give the United Nations every assistance in any action it takes in accordance with the Charter and shall not assist States against which the United Nations is taking preventive or enforcement action;
- the United Nations shall ensure that States which are not Members act in accordance with these principles in so far as it is necessary for the maintenance of international peace and security;
- nothing in the Charter is to authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State.

### **Membership to the UNO**

Membership of the United Nations is open to all peace-loving nations, which accept the obligations of the Charter and, in the judgement of the Organization, are willing and able to carry out these obligations.

New Member States are admitted by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. The Charter also provides for the suspension or expulsion of a Member for violation of the principles of the Charter, but no such action has ever been taken.

## Official Languages of the UNO

The official languages of the United Nations as laid down in the Charter are Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Arabic has been added as an official language of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

## Organization of the UNO

As laid down in the Charter, United Nations has six principle organs which are:

- i. General Assembly
- ii. Security Council
- iii. Economic and Social Council
- iv. Trusteeship Council
- v. International Court of Justice
- vi. Secretariat

### *i. General Assembly*

The main deliberative organ of the United Nations is the General Assembly. It is composed of representatives of all Member States, each of which has one vote. Decisions on important matters such as peace and security require a two-third majority while decisions on other issues are reached with a simple majority.

The functions and powers of the General Assembly include the following:

- to consider and make recommendations on the principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments;
- to discuss any question regarding international peace and security and to make recommendation to the Security Council;
- to discuss any question affecting the powers and functions of any organ of the United Nations;
- to make recommendations to promote international political cooperation, the development and codification of international law, the realization of human rights and fundamental freedom for all, and international collaboration in economic, social, cultural, educational and health fields;
- to consider reports from the Security Council and other United Nations organs;
- to consider and approve the United Nations budget;
- to elect the non-permanent members of the Security Council, the members of the Economic and Social Council, to elect jointly with the Security Council the

judges of the International Court of Justice and on the recommendation of the Security Council to appoint the Secretary-General.

*ii. Security Council*

The Security Council is composed of 15 members, which includes five permanent members and 10 members that are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. The five permanent members are China, France, the Russian federation, the United Kingdom and the United States. Each Council member has one vote and decisions are made by an affirmative vote of at least nine of the 15 members. Decisions on substantive matters require nine votes including the concurring votes of all five permanent members. If a permanent member does not agree it can cast a negative vote, and this act has the power of veto. However, on the other hand, if a permanent member does not support a decision but does not wish to block it through a veto, then it can abstain.

The functions and powers of the Security Council as laid down in the Charter are:

- to maintain international peace and security;
- to investigate disputes which might lead to international friction;
- to recommend ways of resolving disputes or terms of settlement;
- to devise systems to regulate armaments;
- to determine threats or aggression and to recommend actions including calling on the Members to apply economic sanctions;
- to take military action against an aggressor;
- to recommend admissions of new Members;
- to recommend to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary General and with the Assembly elect the judges of the International Court.

*iii. Economic and Social Council*

The Economic and the Social Council was established as the principle organ to coordinate the economic and social work of the United Nations. The Council has 54 members who serve for a three-years term. Each member in the Council has one vote and voting is by a simple majority.

The functions and powers of the Council are:

- to serve as the main forum to discuss economic and social issues and the formulation of policy recommendations on those issues addressed to the Member states and to the United Nations system;
- to promote respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

- to call international conferences and prepare draft conventions for submission to the General Assembly on matters falling within its competence;
- to coordinate activities of the specialized agencies through consultations;
- to perform services for Members of the United Nations and for the specialized agencies;
- to consult with non-governmental organizations concerned with matters which the Council deals.

*iv. Trusteeship Council*

The Trusteeship Council is one of the main organs of the United Nations and it has been assigned the task of supervising the administration of Trust Territories placed under the Trusteeship System. Major goals were to promote the advancement of the inhabitants of the 11 original Trust Territories and for their progressive development towards self-government or independence. It is made up of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

The aims of the Council has been fulfilled and all the Trust Territories have attained self-government or independence, either as separate States or by joining neighboring independent countries. The Trusteeship Council now meets as and when required.

Under the Charter, the Trusteeship Council is authorized to:

- examine and discuss reports from the Administering Authority on the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the peoples of Trust Territories;
- In consultation with the Administering Authority, to examine petitions from and undertake periodic and other special missions of the Trust Territories.

*v. International Court of Justice*

The International Court of Justice is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It has its seat at the Hague, the Netherlands. The members include all Members of the United Nations. A State which is not a member of the United Nations may become a party on conditions determined in each case by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. Two non-member countries which are party to the Statute of the International Court of Justice are Switzerland and Nauru. All countries which are parties to the Statute of the Court can be parties to cases before it. Both the General Assembly and the Security Council can ask the court for an advisory opinion on any legal question.

Jurisdiction: The jurisdiction of the Court covers all matters referred to it by the States and all other matters provided for in the United Nations Charter or in treaties or conventions in force. In accordance with Article 38 of its Statute, the Court in deciding disputes submitted to it applies:

- International conventions, establishing rules recognized by the contesting States;
- International custom as evidence of a general practice accepted as law;
- The general principles of law recognized by nations; and
- Judicial decisions and the teachings of the most highly qualified publicists of the various nations, as a subsidiary means for determining the rules of the law.

Membership: The Court consists of 15 Judges elected by the General Assembly and the Security Council. The election is voted independently. The Judges are chosen on the basis of their qualification and not on the basis of their nationality but no two judges can be nationals of the same state. It is also ensured that the principal legal systems of the world are represented in the Court. The term of office of the judges is for a nine-year term and may be re-elected. But during the term of their office, the Judges cannot engage themselves in any other occupation.

*vi. Secretariat*

The Secretariat carries out the various day-to-day work of the Organization. It serves the other principal organs of the United Nations and administers the programs and policies laid down by them. The Secretariat is headed by the Secretary-General, who is appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. The term of Office for the Secretary-General is five years, which can be renewed.

The functions of the Secretariat are varied, ranging from administering peace-keeping operations to mediating international disputes. The Secretariat also carries out surveys on economic and social trends and problems and prepares studies on issues like human rights and sustainable development. It also organizes international conferences on issues that have worldwide concern. The Secretariat also monitors the extent to which the decisions of United Nations bodies are being carried out. Translating documents into the official languages of the United Nations and interpreting speeches are other functions of the Secretariat.

The staff strength of the Secretariat consists of more than 14, 000 men and women from about 170 countries. The members also take an oath not to seek or receive instructions from any Government or outside authority.

Secretary-General: The chief administrative officer of the Organization is the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General stands before the world community as the very symbol of the United Nations. It is the Secretary-General who transforms into reality the ideals expressed in the Charter.

The Charter empowers the Secretary-General to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which, in his opinion, threatens international peace and security. He also performs functions as are entrusted to him by the Security Council, the General Assembly and by the other main organs of the United Nations. His work also entails consultations with the world leaders and other individuals, attendance at sessions of various United Nations bodies and worldwide travel to improve international affairs. The present Secretary-General is Mr. Kofi Anan. His predecessor was Mr. Boutros-Ghali.

### **Budget of the United Nations**

The regular budget of the United Nations is approved by the General Assembly biennially. The budget is reviewed by a 16-member expert committee-the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The main source of funds for the regular budget is the contributions of Member States.

But the overall financial situation of the United Nations has been precarious for several years because of the continuing failure of many Member States to pay their assessed contributions to the regular budget

### **Bhutan's entry into United Nations Organization**

Bhutan's entry to the United Nations Organization in September 1971 was a great achievement for a small nation that had just a few years back entered the international scene. It was the geo-political setting of the country situated between two giant nations in Asia - China and India that forced her embark on new foreign policies to retain her sovereignty and independence and further her cause in the international arena. But her entry to the UNO was not an easy task. It was first looked upon with distrust by the traditional members of the National Assembly - the 'Old Guards'. But the unwavering determination of the late King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck and the support of Paro Penlop Prince Namgyal Wangchuck were able to convince and garner the support of the educated and the younger elements. The late Majesty was convinced that Bhutan's entry into the United Nations Organization could only come with the support of India with which she had developed close links. After the visit of

the Indian President Mr. V.V. Giri to Bhutan in 1970, late Majesty in a press conference announced of asking India's help in sponsoring Bhutan for her membership in the United Nations Organization.

With the strong support of the Indian government, Bhutan sent her first delegation to the UN General Assembly in 1970 as part of the Indian delegation. In 1971 the Security Council of the UN unanimously voted for Bhutan's admission to the UN. A few months later in the same year in September 1971 Bhutan became an international entity.

### **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation**

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established when its Charter was formally adopted on December 8, 1985 by the Heads of States or Governments of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The Association provides a platform for the peoples of South Asia to work together in a spirit of friendship, trust and understanding. It aims to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life through accelerated economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the SAARC are:

- to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life;
- to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realize their full potential;
- to promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia;
- to contribute to mutual trust, understand and appreciate of one another's problem;
- to promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields;
- to strengthen cooperation with other developing countries;

- to strengthen cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interest; and
- to cooperate with international and regional organisations with similar aims and purposes.

### **Secretariat**

The SAARC Secretariat is based in Kathmandu. It coordinates and monitors the implementation of activities, prepares for and services meetings, and serves as a channel of communication between the Association and its Member States as well as other regional organisations.

The Secretariat is headed by the Secretary General, who is appointed by the Council of Ministers from Member Countries in alphabetical order for a three-year term.

### **Linkages with other International Bodies**

SAARC member countries have also signed various Memoranda of Understanding with other International bodies to promote collaboration. The Memoranda signed are with UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), UNICEF (United Nations Children’s Fund), UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), UNESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific), UNDCP (United Nations Drug Control Program), ITU (International Telecommunications Union), APT (Asia Pacific Telecommunications), WHO (World Health organization), UNIFEM (United Nations Fund for Women), WB (World Bank), and ADB (Asian Development Bank).

Regular dialogues are also held with other Regional Organizations with a view to promoting cooperation among sub-regional organizations.

### **Important Dates**

The important years and decades of the SAARC are reflected below:

- *Designated SAARC years*  
 1989: SAARC year of Combating Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking  
 1990: SAARC Year of Girl Child

1991: SAARC Year of Shelter  
1992: SAARC Year of Environment  
1993: SAARC Year of Disabled Persons  
1994: SAARC Year of the Youth  
1995: SAARC Year of Poverty Eradication  
1996: SAARC Year of Literacy  
1997: SAARC Year of Participatory Governance  
1999: SAARC Year of Biodiversity  
2000-2003: SAARC Year of Contribution of Youth to Environment  
2004: SAARC Awareness Year for TB and HIV/ Aids  
2005: SAARC Asian Tourism Year

- *SAARC Decades*

1991-2000: SAARC Decade of the Girl Child

2001-2010: SAARC Decade of the Rights of the Child

### **SAARC and Bhutan**

Bhutan as the founding member state of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation has been playing a significant role towards meeting the objectives and the principles for which the Association had been formed. Ever since its existence, Bhutan has participated at all levels and has contributed significantly. In the first historic SAARC Summit held in December 1985 at Dhaka, Bhutan was represented by His Majesty, the King. In his address at the summit, His Majesty said that *“In the geo-political relations of our regions, it would be unrealistic to ignore the primacy of the political factor, as in the final analysis it will be the political environment of the region which will determine the shape and scope of regional cooperation in South Asia.”* The important outcome of the summit was the decision of the Heads of State and Government to meet annually.

In the same year Bhutan also hosted the third meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the SAARC countries, which was graced by the King.

In the second SAARC summit held in Bangalore in India in 1986, the Bhutanese delegation was led by His Majesty the King. The important item for the Bangalore summit was the declaration of the SAARC Secretariat. It was also resolved between the leaders to rotate the Secretary-General of the SAARC for a two-year term from the seven member countries in the alphabetical order.

His Majesty called for a genuine and sincere support of the SAARC leaders to nurture the development of the Association. He further stressed on the need to improve the quality of life of the South Asian people in the current international economic situation. He also called for a concerted effort to reverse the ominous trend of the increasing possibility of the development of nuclear weapons in the region. The summit also declared for the Heads of the State and the Government their desire to promote peace, stability and progress in the region.

The 4<sup>th</sup> SAARC summit was also attended by His Majesty, the King in Islamabad. Also within the SAARC programme, Her Royal Highness Ashi Pema Choden Wangchuck led a delegation to a meeting held on Women in Development in Shillong. It was held to identify areas of activities and plan action programmes to ensure active participation of women in development.

In October 1989, Bhutan hosted the SAARC Technical Committee on Rural Development in Thimphu. The meeting recommended for all rural development programme in the region to be implemented through local institutions. It also identified various workshops, trainings and research studies on rural development. The Technical Committee meeting was also hosted in Bhutan in 1997 to review sports, culture and education. They also discussed possibilities for fellowship and scholarship schemes for SAARC students, the establishment of a database for archaeology, musicology and historical studies and cooperation in the fields of Education, Sports and Culture.

The fifth SAARC summit was in Male held in the year 1990 followed by the sixth in Colombo, the seventh in Dhaka, and the eighth in Male.

In the 9<sup>th</sup> SAARC summit held in Maldives, the leaders established several time-bound priority programmes, agreeing on the need for an appraisal of the Association's programme and for an action oriented approach to future SAARC activities. The declaration also included a number of international issues.

The 10<sup>th</sup>, and the 11<sup>th</sup> SAARC summits were in Colombo and Kathmandu respectively.

The 12<sup>th</sup> SAARC summit was held in Islamabad, Pakistan in 2004. Bhutan was represented by then the Prime Minister Lyonpo Jigme Y. Thinley. The summit signed the SAARC Social Charter, which centers on the welfare of the peoples of South Asia. The Summit also adopted the agreement on free trade between the seven member countries. The SAARC Social Charter was also signed in order to address social issues

such as population stabilization, empowerment of women, youth mobilization, human resource development, promotion of health and nutrition, and protection of children.

### **Non-Aligned Movement**

The aftermath of the Second World War in 1945 saw the division of the world into two major blocs led by the United States on one hand the Soviet Union on the other. This led to the so called Cold war and as a response to this development there emerged a third party in the scene-the non - aligned camp. This third party was mostly made up of countries that had gained independence from the European Empires in the post World War II. The aim of the movement was to try and stabilize and act between the two super power blocs and give its member countries a more powerful voice through unity. It also was a counter movement to the imperialistic modes of the western nations.

The origins of the movement lay in the 1955 Bandung Conference, Indonesia, at which Asian and African states met to find common ground and an agreement for future cooperation. They also proclaimed anti-colonialism and neutrality between East and West power blocs. The movement was founded by the Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Ghana's Prime minister Kwame Nkrumah, Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser, Indonesia's president Achmed Sukarno, and Yugoslavia's president Tito. The first conference was held in Belgrade, which was represented by leaders from about 25 countries.

The movement has 116 members from Asia, Africa, South America, Central America, the Caribbean, and the Middle East. Conferences are now held every three years.

### **Structure and Organisation**

The founders of the Non-Aligned Movement and their successors recognised that the Movement would probably be destroyed if they created such formal structures for the Movement as a constitution and internal secretariat. A multilateral trans-national organisation made up of states with differing ideologies and purposes could never create a rational administrative structure to implement its policies that all could accept.

- *Coordination:* The Non-Aligned Movement has a unique form of administration. It is non-hierarchical, rotational and provides all member states, regardless of their size and importance, with an opportunity to participate in global decision-making and world politics. The Summit is the occasion when the Movement formally rotates its

Chair to the Head of State of the host country of the Summit, who then holds office until the next Summit. The Chair at the same time also delegates certain responsibilities for promoting the principles and activities of the Movement.

By creating the practice of a rotating chair, Non-Aligned countries therefore place the responsibility of an administrative structure on the country assuming the Chair. When a country assumes the Chair of the Movement, it creates or designates an entire section of the Foreign Ministry to deal specifically with Non-Aligned issues. Secondly, since Non-Aligned countries meet regularly at the UN and conduct much of their work there, the Chairs' Ambassador at the United Nations essentially functions as the "Minister of Non-Aligned Affairs".

To facilitate the Chair's responsibilities, a number of structures aimed at improving the coordination and functioning of the existing Working Groups, Contact Groups, Task Forces and Committees of the NAM were created.

- *Coordinating Bureau:* The Coordinating Bureau is the focal point for coordination. The Bureau reviews and facilitates the harmonisation of the work of the NAM Working Groups, Contact Groups, Task Forces and Committees.

Its task is also to intensify its actions to further strengthen coordination and mutual cooperation among Non-Aligned countries, which includes unified action in the United Nations and other international fora on issues of common concern. The Chair has the responsibility of leading and coordinating the activities of the NAM within the United Nations and in other international fora.

In order to promote coordination and cooperation between the NAM and the Group of 77 in promoting the interests of developing countries in international forums, a Joint Coordinating Committee of the two groups was established in 1994, which meets regularly in New York.

- *Decision making by consensus:* The practice of the Movement is to make all decisions by consensus. Consensus has enhanced the solidarity and unity of the Movement. This concept presupposes the understanding of and respect for different points of view, including disagreement and implies mutual accommodation on the basis of which agreement can emerge by a sincere process of adjustment among member nations in the true spirit of Non-Alignment. On sensitive issues, the NAM tradition is to pay attention to openness and the holding of extensive consultations with the broadest possible participation.

- *Documentation:* The preparation of all documents is the responsibility of the host country. Host countries should aim at circulating the First Draft as early as possible and not later than one month before the meeting.

Documents should be concise, non-repetitive and succinct, highlighting issues of particular importance or urgency. Emphasis is also placed on practical, action-orientated measures that could be implemented.

The Cartagena Document on Methodology, which was issued in May 1996, emphasises that the documents of Summit Conferences, which are the supreme organ of the Movement, should, while remaining comprehensive, be condensed avoiding repetition.

Separate appeals or declarations and resolutions on important issues can also be issued.

- *Observers :* Within the framework of the need to promote the opening of the Movement to the contributions of other countries in the international arena, the current practice is to admit states as observers to the NAM meetings. States, which fulfil criteria for admission as members, will have to apply for observer status.

Observers may attend and, with the Bureau's permission, address the Plenary of a Summit Conference or Ministerial meeting but they shall not participate in the Committee meetings nor in the meetings of the NAM working groups, contact groups or task forces.

- *Guest countries:* Interested States, Non-governmental organisations and relevant Non-governmental organisations are invited as guests to the Summit and Ministerial Conferences. Guests are invited on an ad hoc basis to each Summit and Ministerial Meeting. The invitation is issued by the host country after due consideration by the Coordinating Bureau. Guests only attend the opening and closing ceremonies of the Conference and do not participate in the deliberations.

## **Conferences**

- *Conference of Heads of State or Government:* The Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government is the highest decision-making authority of the Movement. The existing practice is to hold the Summit Conference every three years. The Summit should be held at least one month before the regular Session of the UN General

Assembly. The Summit has two committees, one for political issues and another for economic and social issues.

- *Ministerial Conference:* The Ministerial Conference is held with the purpose of reviewing the developments and implementation of decisions of the preceding Summit, to prepare for the following Summit, and to discuss matters of urgency.

### **Bhutan and the NAM**

His Majesty attended the 9<sup>th</sup> NAM summit held in Belgrade from September 4 to 7 1981. It was attended by 172 delegates and was the largest summit in the NAM's history. Besides attending the plenary sessions of the summit His Majesty met with several other delegates and leaders to exchange views on bilateral and international issues. In his address, His Majesty reaffirmed Bhutan's deep commitment to the noble goals and principles of the Non Aligned Movement.

Bhutan was represented by Lynpo Dawa Tshering to discuss on the draft declaration prepared by the host country, Yugoslavia. The declaration prioritized the following for the movement:

- the task of establishing enduring and stable peace;
- reducing the gap between the rich and the poor countries to stabilize international economic relations;
- fight against colonialism to support the right of people's self determination and independence;
- protection of the environment; human rights;
- to support the role of the United Nations.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter we have discussed the important world organizations for Bhutan. We have also touched on the importance of these organizations for the economic development as well as the political stability of Bhutan. However, Bhutan cannot stay as a complacent recipient of ideas and of support from other members. It has a role to play and has to contribute towards the promotion of world peace, at large and the regional and the national peace and security, in particular.

**Student Activity**

1. Divide the class into six groups and organize a debate in the class. The themes of the debate are:

- The UNO has been able to maintain International Peace.
- The NAM is instrumental in supporting the UNO.
- The SAARC can accelerate economic development of the Region.

From the six groups, two groups each will take up one theme and debate for or against the motion. The groups will take turns to debate on their theme.

## UNIT THREE Gross National Happiness

### Chapter 1 Gross National Happiness: Concept and Features

#### Introduction

Gross National Happiness is a philosophy that embraces every aspect of development policies in Bhutan. It is based on the idea that for people to be happy and for a Nation to attain development in its true sense there should be a balance between spiritual and material development. The concept of Gross National Happiness was floated in the late 1960s by the Third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. The Third King emphasized that the ultimate fruit of economic development should be to make all the Bhutanese “prosperous and happy.” This unique philosophy was again expressed by him in 1971 in his address during the admission of Bhutan to the United Nations Organization.

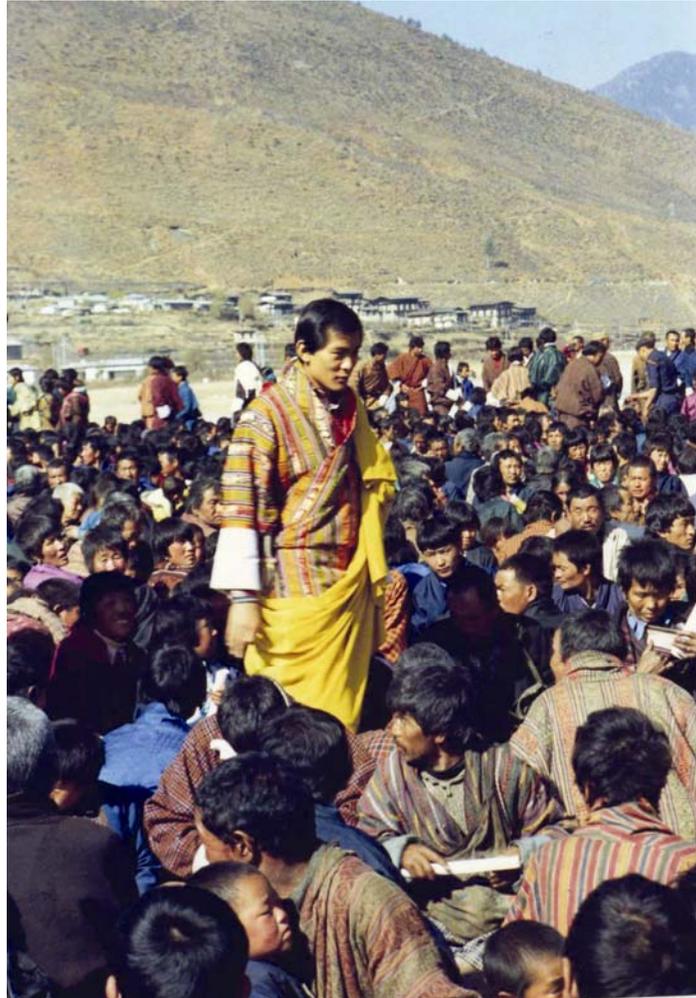
The vision of making all the Bhutanese happy was further articulated and elaborated by the Fourth King Jigme Singye Wangchuck. The philosophy of Gross National Happiness thereafter echoed in many of his speeches. Like his father, the Fourth King also stressed the necessity of enhancing both prosperity and happiness. However, the uniqueness of the philosophy emerged when he proclaimed that *Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross National Product*. In this statement can be seen the primacy of happiness over economic prosperity.

#### Gross National Happiness as a Goal of Development in Bhutan

The concept of Gross National Happiness as a development philosophy in Bhutan can be understood from the extract taken from the keynote speech delivered by Lyonpo Jigmi Y. Thinley at the UNDP Regional Millennium Meeting for Asia and the Pacific in Seoul from October 30 to November 1, 1998.

Gross National Happiness best captures our distinct perception, rooted in our philosophical and political thought, of the main purpose of development. Added to that were also the lessons from the experiences of other developing countries. We saw that the singular obsession with the pursuit of material advancement was eroding spiritual values which, we believe, lie at the very core of human civilization. Thus, the first challenge we encountered was how to preserve and, indeed, develop our spirituality as we try to build a more comfortable and secure

life. We wondered how we could ensure equilibrium between materialism and spirituality.



*Fig. 3.1. A King in the Service of His People*

There are many telling experiences of how ordinary Bhutanese themselves strive for a balance between spiritualism and materialism. When I was the regional governor of Eastern Bhutan some years ago, a prominent man was persuaded to undertake double cropping of a high yield rice variety. The man was rewarded with two bumper harvests that year. We had a perfect success story to motivate other farmers. Then, to our astonishment, our model farmer refused to grow any

crop the following year. His decision was to live leisurely and spiritually rather than allow himself to be trapped by greed.

Corruption of soul seems, sadly, to be a necessary evil to induce the sense of competition and envy to initiate especially the poor into the world of materialism. There is much to commend this approach, particularly when and where the satisfaction of basic needs and escape from the misery of poverty are the immediate objectives.

In addition to the conventional notion of development that focuses on quantifiable indicators of economic prosperity, Bhutan's vision of development stresses equally three other non-quantifiable goals. These are environmental preservation, cultural promotion and good governance. These four goals are superficially adversative, but they are fundamentally complimentary and mutually reinforcing. It would seem that the pursuit of cultural and environmental objectives impede economic development and raise project costs. But their long term benefits are unquestionable and, in addition, they serve to restrain the drive for blind economic interests. Surely, the rich character of Bhutanese society would have been impoverished if a flood of negative forces in the form of economic imperatives had been allowed to set in. There is also little doubt that the people would have experienced a diminution of happiness if we concentrated only on the generation of wealth.

Thus, the Gross National Happiness is a harmonious blend of economic and material prosperity with spiritual and emotional contentment and fulfillment.

### **The Four Pillars of Gross National Happiness**

The success and attainment of happiness for all the Bhutanese lies in the strengthening of the four core areas termed as pillars. These pillars are:

- *Sustainable and Equitable Economic Development.*

One of the main responsibilities of the government is to propel economic development in a sustainable and equitable manner. The benefits of the development should be accessible to all the citizens so that the progress of the Bhutanese socio-economic structure ensures the attainment of Gross National Happiness. Thus, to improve the wellbeing of the Bhutanese the government commits itself to the development of the basic facilities that is universally necessary.

The health, education and agriculture are the three main sectors to which is allotted the major share of the five year plan budget. The development of these three sectors can enhance the quality of life of the people from literacy, health as well as economic viewpoints. Though, there are still challenges facing the government mainly in terms of the shortage of skilled and qualified human resources, the progress in these sectors and others have been admirable.

For instance, in 2004 the primary health coverage was above 90% and the life expectancy had gone up to 60 years; the school enrollment had reached 135, 987; 587 kilometers of farm roads had been planned for the 9<sup>th</sup> FYP; the legalization of harvesting of *Cordyceps* had become another source of income for Bhutanese; 15000 households are targeted to be electrified in the 9<sup>th</sup> FYP.

Thus, the equitable and sustainable development is one pillar that the government concentrates on by providing free education and free health services besides spending immensely on the projects like roads, bridges, hydropower, industries, among many others that would ensure the improvement of the standards of life of the Bhutanese.

- *Conservation of environment.*

The conservation of the ecosystem would prevent any natural disasters that would bring sufferings to the people but also ensure our very existence. Though there are no direct visible economic benefits, its conservation is a source of tourist attraction and thus revenue earner. Further more, the conservation of the ecosystem would ensure the continued flow of rivers and thus development of hydropower.

Keeping in view the importance of the conservation of the environment, the National Environment Commission reviews the project proposals and ensures that there is no large scale environmental damage. From 2004, each Dzongkhag received Nu. 200 thousand to be used on micro projects related to environment conservation, besides instituting a clean Dzongkhag award of Nu 500 thousand, among many other initiatives.

- *Preservation and Promotion of Culture.*

One of the greatest strengths of Bhutan is its unique identity that comes from culture. For a country like Bhutan, which is small both in size and population, it is important to be different from others. It is culture that makes the Bhutanese distinct from the rest. Thus, it is necessary for Bhutan to promote and preserve its spiritual and cultural values as it is the symbol of Bhutanese identity and unity.



## Chapter 2 Development of Modern Education

### Introduction

Education is a vital factor for the growth of a society. For Bhutan, education has been an important part of religious life for centuries and continues to be so today. Today, education in Bhutan can be divided into three forms: the monastic education that is imparted mostly to the monks, nuns, and the *Gomchens*, the formal western education that is imparted to the School going children and the Non Formal Education that is imparted to the village elders and women throughout the Kingdom, including even people in the remotest villages.

Education is the core factor that would lead Bhutan to its attainment of Gross National Happiness. Thus, this chapter will mainly trace the growth of Modern Education in Bhutan and the role that education should play in the development of the Nation in line with the development ideology of Gross National Happiness.

### Monastic Education in Bhutan

Monastic education in Bhutan has been playing the central role in shaping the cultural and social life of the people. The advent of Buddhism in Bhutan in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century not only brought about a religious transformation of the people and set about a process of historical evolution but also set in motion the growth of education. The visit of Guru Padmasambhava in 747 A.D. marked the beginning of the culmination of the historical process which gained impetus in the succeeding years. Although there are no specific historical records available, some sources say that the simultaneous immigration of Buddhist saints from Tibet from 10<sup>th</sup> century onwards contributed towards the growth of Buddhist teachings. The monasteries and religious centres that they established became the hub of learning; centres for ritual and religious offerings; of gaining knowledge and learning. The teachings spread amongst the masses and became popular.

Some of the earliest saints to visit Bhutan and spread their teachings were Phajo Dugom Zhigpo (1208-1275) from the Drukpa Kagyud School, who established four meditational centres in western Bhutan. Kuenkhen Longchen Rabjampa or Drimed Woezer (1308-1363) from the school of Dzogchenpa or the 'School of Great Perfection' who established eight centres of learning in Western and central Bhutan. Drukpa Kuenley (1455-1529) regarded as the 'Divine Mad Man,' began his teachings in a relatively different manner from the other saints. Yet his eccentric behavior

reflected the very essence of Buddhism. All these saints from different schools of Buddhism took root and gained authority especially in western and central Bhutan and set about a pattern of learning, which were in most cases informal and passed down orally.

Yet, it was only in the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century that monastic education was first formalized in Bhutan. This was largely the work of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. It all began with the institution of the first monk body in Cheri monastery in 1622. The institute had thirty monks and was headed by Pekar Jungney, who was later to take the role as the first Head Abbot under the dual system of government. One of the teachers invited was Lhawang Loday, who was Zhabdrung's own teacher at Druk Ralung in Tibet. By mid 17<sup>th</sup> century the enrolment of monks had risen to about 360 monks, residing in the Punakha Dzong.

Monastic education began to grow rapidly under the aegis of the later Desis. During the reign of the second Desi, Tenzin Dugdra, education including the study of medicine was introduced in Punakha Dzong. The fourth Desi Tenzin Rabgye made it mandatory for every household having three sons to send one to the monk body. He also established a Tshenyi Dratshang or an institute where monks could perform debate with each other. Religious works carved on wood blocks were also printed so that the monks could refer to and study them. This system of sending a son from every household was further implemented by the 13<sup>th</sup> Desi Sherub Wangchuk.

Learning in the monastic institutions were mostly rote learning. The curriculum consisted of religious rituals, astrology, philosophy, logic, grammar, meditation, poetry, and painting, which was directed in gaining spiritual progress. The medium of instruction remained *Chokey* (ཆོས་སྐོར་གྱི་སྐོར་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་) - Classical Tibetan.

Today Bhutan has about 4000 monks enrolled in the Dratshangs and are fully supported by the State. The monastic colleges of Tango and Cheri also have their separate groups of monks studying the same curriculum in religion, philosophy and rituals.

### **Modern Education in Bhutan**

The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a watershed in the history of Bhutan. The Wangchuck dynasty came into existence with the enthronement of Ugyen Wangchuck as the first hereditary monarch. Years of internal strife and feuds amongst the rival factions that had plagued the country came to an end and the stage was set for a new

Bhutan. Indeed, the history of modern education begins with him and one would see that the introduction of modern education was not at the cost of abolishing monastic education.

The year 1914 is a defining moment in the history of modern Education in Bhutan. Dr. Grahams Homes, a Scottish Mission School in Kalimpong enrolled forty six boys from Bhutan. In the same year, a school was started in Ha and a year later in 1915 a school was founded at the Kings palace in Wangduecholing to groom the heir and a few other boys. The subjects taught were Hindi, English, Arithmetic and Dzongkha. The beginning that was made in the direction of modern education was because of Ugyen Dorji, who was able to communicate in English and was recently conferred with the title of 'Gongzim' by King Ugyen Wangchuck and the title of 'Raja' by the Viceroy of India.

Druk Gyalpo Jigme Wangchuck continued with the modern education system but in fact the glorious chapter of modern education began in 1952 with the ascendancy to the throne of Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. With the start of the First-Five Year Plan in 1961, Modern Education was accorded one of the highest priorities. Of the total outlay of Ngultrum 100 million, the Education sector was given 10 million. Over the decades, the student enrollment grew from a handful of students to about 1,500 and from a single school in 1914, it grew to 59 schools by 1959.



*Fig. 3.2. The Ugyen Wangchuck Academy at Paro*

In the field of education rapid progress was made so that with the initiation of planned development, the graduates could strengthen administrative and technical personnel much needed in the country. By 1962, English became the medium of instruction in the schools. The curriculum was at par with the international level and included English, History, Economics, the three Sciences, Geography, Mathematics besides Dzongkha. By the end of the second five year plan in 1971, Bhutan had 102 schools, which included 15 Middle Secondary Schools, 5 High Schools and 2 Public schools. One of the Public Schools was Sherubtse College in Eastern Bhutan. The Public School was headed by Late Father William Mackey, a Jesuit Priest from Canada. A Teacher Training Institute was established in Samtse in 1968 with 40 students. There was no gender bias or discrimination and both boys and girls were given equal opportunity.

A school for the blind children was also opened in 1973 in Khaling with the support from the Norwegian mission. In 1975 the Teacher Training Centre cum Demonstration School was established in Paro. This centre specialized in preparing teachers for primary level. A few Bhutanese also joined teaching who had graduated from the Universities and Colleges in India. In 1978 Sherubtse Public School was upgraded into a Junior College and by 1983 it grew into a full fledged College in the Kingdom, with the faculty recruited from India and abroad.

A separate Ministry of Education was created in 2003 headed by a minister of its own, deviating from the stand where it was combined with the Ministry of Health. The Ministry comprises four departments, viz: Department of School Education, Department of Adult and Higher Education, Dzongkha Development Authority and the Department of Youth Culture and Sports. Under it is also placed the National Commission of UNESCO.

### **Achievements**

The Education sector has made tremendous progress in terms of coverage as well as curriculum delivery and management. In 2004, the school enrolment has reached 135, 987 students. This clearly indicates the efforts put in by the sector to make education accessible to all. There were 202 community Primary Schools, 90 Primary Schools, 77 Lower Secondary Schools, 29 Middle Secondary Schools, 16 Higher Secondary Schools and 19 Private Schools as well as 455 Non-Formal centres in 2004.



*Fig. 3.3. Students observing a demonstration of Physics practical*

The introduction of a School for Deaf Children at Drugyal Lower Secondary School in 2003 in Paro is a milestone. The establishment of a special education resource unit at Changangkha Lower Secondary School under the personal initiative of Her Majesty the Queen Ashi Tshering Pem Wangchuck, the President of the Youth Development Fund, marked another effort of integrating disabled children in the mainstream education. Multigarde teaching is gaining importance in remote villages in the attempt of achieving Education For All (EFA).

Sports and games have also become an important component of school life. Now, sports and games competitions between schools have been instituted. The Scouts programme, Values Education programme, Career Education and Counseling programme are other areas, which have gained the attention of the educationists, to enhance the policy of imparting wholesome education.

To upgrade the teacher qualification and efficiency, many programmes have been introduced. For instance, Master's degree in Education in Management and Leadership, Bachelor's degree in Education in Dzongkha Distance Education and Diploma in Management and Leadership at the National Institute of Education, Paro; Bachelor's degree in Education at Distance Education mode at the National Institute of Education, Samtse; Postgraduate Diploma in English and Postgraduate Certificate

in Teaching Information System at Sherubtse College are some examples of award bearing programmes, besides other short workshops and programmes.

As far as the curriculum development is concerned, in 1960s the textbooks used in the schools were the ones taught in the Indian schools. However, from 1970 the development of textbooks at primary level began with the introduction of Druk English Series and Druk and Drukpa. Thereafter, the localization of textbooks for other subjects also began steadily. Today, there are 191 textbooks published by the Education Sector that are widely used by our students as textbooks, readers and references from the primary to the secondary level.

To expose the children to the era of information and communication technology, over 300 computers have been supplied and teaching of computer application course introduced in 32 Middle and Higher Secondary Schools.

Another milestone is the localization of the class XII examination. The first batch of Bhutanese students will sit for their Bhutan Higher Secondary Education Certificate in lieu of ISC in 2006. This is an important landmark as the Education Sector has developed its own syllabus. It has propelled the development of supplementary textbooks for classes XI and XII, incorporating Bhutanese flavor to biology, commerce, economics, geography and history.

### **Royal University of Bhutan**

By a Royal Decree, Bhutan moved a step ahead with the launching of her own University. The University headquarter is located at Simtokha in the campus of the Royal Institute of Management. The Chhotse Poenlop His Royal Highness Dasho Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck is the first Chancellor with Dasho Zanglay Dukpa as the Vice-Chancellor.

The Royal University comprising the federation of institutes and colleges was formally established on June 2, 2003 with Lyonpo Sangye Ngedup as the interim Vice-Chancellor. The current Colleges and Institutes of the Royal University of Bhutan are:

- Sherubtse College, Kanglung.
- Royal Bhutan Institute of Technology, Rinchending
- National Institute of Education, Samtse.
- National Institute of Education, Paro.
- Institute of Language and Cultural Studies, Simtokha.

- Natural Resources Training Institute, Lobesa.
- Royal Institute of Health Sciences, Thimphu.
- Royal Institute of Traditional Medicine, Thimphu.
- Royal Institute of Management, Thimphu.

The establishment of the Royal University of Bhutan is an important milestone in the history of education in Bhutan, as it would provide more opportunities for the Bhutanese to pursue higher studies. Furthermore, it would also propel the development of curriculum that would best cater to the Bhutanese need. There are also possibilities of introduction of more new areas of studies that would cater to the demands of the job market.

### **Conclusion**

Education is one of the means of ensuring the attainment of the development philosophy of Gross National Happiness. Thus, believing that the future destiny of the country lies in the hands of the Bhutanese, the Royal Government continues to play a bigger role in educating her youth. Since Education has almost become an inalienable right of every Bhutanese child, the government aims in achieving a universal enrolment at the earliest opportunity through the multi-grade programme, for instance in the remote villages and non-formal education for the villagers.

Through education as a tool, people would be exposed to ideas and would be able to participate in the decision making and take responsibilities that are necessary for a nation to progress and achieve Gross National Happiness.

### **Student Activity**

1. The localization of class XII examination is an important step taken by the Education sector as it has multiplier impact on the Education system. Comment.
2. Discuss in small groups the contributions that education can make to the attainment of Gross National Happiness. Present your findings to the class and allow other groups to comment on your points.

## Chapter 3 Development of Health Services

### Introduction

In class IX we studied that Bhutan was known by many names amongst which were the ones like *Menjong Norbuiling* (མོན་ལྷོ་སོར་བུ་གླིང་), the land of precious medicinal herbs and *Menjong Gyalkhab* (མོན་ལྷོ་སྐྱེད་སྐྱུ་ལྷ་མཚན་), land of medicinal plants. Bhutan was known by these names as there were many medicinal herbs in the country. Thus, before the introduction of modern medicine and health care system in Bhutan, the country solely relied on its traditional system of healing. The form of indigenous system of medicinal practice prevalent in Bhutan is known as *sowa-rigpa* (གསོ་བརྟེན་གསལ་). Although there are anecdotal stories of Bhutanese physicians trained in this system of medicine earlier than the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, the definitive introduction of this form of indigenous treatment practices were introduced by Tenzin Drugda, an esteemed physician and the Minister of Religion of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel.

Today, from a traditional agrarian society, Bhutan embarked upon the road to modernization in the early sixties with the starting of the First Five-Year Plan and with it modern health services were introduced. However, the traditional and modern health services complement one another to respond to the need of the public.

Health Services has always been on the priority of the Government as its quality would ensure Gross National Happiness. Thus, in this chapter we will discuss the introduction of traditional and modern health services and their objectives and strategies to enhance health services.

### Traditional Medicine

In this section we will study about the development of traditional medicine in Bhutan, related policies and programmes of the health sector to promote this area.

### Development of Traditional Medicine in Bhutan

The Bhutanese went to Tibet to study medicine after 16<sup>th</sup> Century. What is interesting is that there existed a principal of reciprocity between Tibet and Bhutan. Tibetan schools trained the Bhutanese doctors while the Bhutanese transported medicinal plants as far as Lhasa or Kham. However, over the centuries, the practice of *Sowa*

*Rigpa* in Bhutan developed its own peculiarities, which may not be necessarily found in the ancient Tibetan practices. The monasteries or Dzongs became the centres for most trained doctors to practise their art. The courts also privately employed one or two physicians.

The traditional medicine service was formalized in 1967 as a part of the national health care delivery system. In 1979, the dispensary was upgraded to National Indigenous Hospital and shifted to the present site in Kawang Jangsa. This was succeeded by the donation of some pharmaceutical machines in 1982 by WHO and the opening of a small-scale mechanized production unit. The indigenous medicine unit was renamed as National Institute of Traditional Medicine (NITM) in 1988. In 1997, with the help of European Commission project, a new Pharmaceutical and Research Unit was also commissioned followed by the upgradation of NITM to the Institute of Traditional Medicine Services (ITMS) in 1988 with three main units which are:

- *National Traditional Medicine Hospital:* It is responsible for the development and provision of traditional medical care.
- *National Institute of Traditional Medicine:* It is responsible for development of human resources for traditional medical services and have become a federated college of the Royal University of Bhutan.
- *Pharmaceutical and Research Unit:* It is responsible for the production of medicines and quality control and research.

### **Policy Objectives for Traditional Medicine**

The main aims and objectives of traditional medicine system are to:

- Preserve the unique culture and tradition related to medical practices.
- Promote and strengthen traditional medical system in the country.
- Provide alternative medicine as complimentary to the allopathic system.
- Produce medicines required by the traditional medicine system.
- Conduct research and quality control of drugs.
- Develop human resources for traditional medical services.

### **Traditional Medical Services**

The traditional medical service is now available in all the 20 Dzongkhags as an integral part of the national health delivery system. The Dzongkhag traditional medicine service

has one *Drungtsbo* (physician) and one *Menpa* (Clinical Assistant). To enhance mutual consultation, treatment and cross referral of patients, the traditional medicine service is also housed in the Dzongkhag hospital. The Dzongkhag traditional medicine units treat about 20-30% of the daily OPD patients of the Dzongkhag hospitals while the national hospital in Thimphu manages about 200 – 250 patients per day in summer and about 150 to 200 patients per day in winter.

Some of the diseases that are treated effectively by traditional medicine are chronic diseases such as sinusitis, arthritis, asthma, rheumatism, liver problems and others related to the digestive system and nervous system.

### **Production of Traditional Medicines**

The Pharmaceutical and Research Unit manufactures traditional medicines and conducts scientific research for quality enhancement of medicine. In contrast to modern drugs, the traditional medicine in Bhutan is purely an indigenous product as most of the raw materials as well as the processing know-how and the human resource capacity are available in the country.

The unit maintains rapport with the green sectors like National Conservation Division, National Parks, Bio-diversity programme and the RNR RCs in the Ministry of Agriculture of Bhutan as it uses medicinal plants and other natural resources. Further more, to ensure sustainable collection and harvesting of medicinal plants the unit also keeps link with the farmers and the local communities.

Though *Sowa Rigpa* prescribes the use of more than 2990 different types of raw materials the ITMS uses about 265 different types to produce 103 compounds that constitute an essential list of traditional medicines. About 85% of raw materials are available within the country and the remaining 15% are imported from India. The raw materials are classified into:

- Ngo men ( རྩོམ་མེད ) – high altitude medicinal plants
- Throg Men ( རྩོག་མེད ) – low altitude medicinal plants
- Sa men ( ས་མེད ) – Mineral origin
- Sogcha men ( རྩོག་ཚགས་མེད ) – Animal origin

Currently, most of the locally available raw materials are collected from nature but attempts are made to promote cultivation of medicinal plants by farmers to ensure sustainability.

Initially, all medicines were prepared manually. The small scale mechanized production started in 1982 with the support from WHO. In 1998 the manufacturing Unit was upgraded with EC funding. It started the mechanized production in line with the good manufacturing practice (GMP) regulations with more emphasis on quality control.



*Fig. 3.4. Preparing Traditional Medicine*

Besides the production and marketing of some medicine in the local markets, the unit also produces approximately 6-7 metric tons of traditional medicines and meets the requirement of Dzongkhag traditional medicine units and the National Traditional Medicine Hospital in Thimphu. The medicines are manufactured in the form of pills, tablets, capsules, syrups, ointment, medicated oil and powder.

Research on authentication of species, building quality parameters both for raw materials and finished products and standardization of the production processes are carried out to ensure quality and assess the efficiency and safety of traditional medicine. The Quality Control section also monitors the stability of traditional medicine on the shelf, co-ordinates product recalls and assists in the management of adverse drug reactions and oversees standard manufacturing instruction that is part of good manufacturing practice.

## **Allopathic Medicine**

In this section we will discuss the development of allopathic medicine in Bhutan and the policies and programmes to enhance health facilities and services

### **Development of Allopathic Medicine in Bhutan**

The modern allopathic system of medicine was formally introduced in Bhutan during the first Five-Year Plan with the initiative of King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, the third King of Bhutan. However, even before 1961, a number of Bhutanese were sent to India to be trained as paramedical workers. Thereafter, several Bhutanese licentiate (LMF) physicians, who were trained in India provided services in Thimphu and Paro independently, in their capacity primarily as royal physicians. For instance, after completing his course at Jalpaiguri Jackson Medical School, Dr. Tashi Tobgyel joined service as the first LMF physician at Kungarapten in 1951. Then, in 1952 he was sent for his MBBS for two years and became the first MBBS doctor of the country in 1954. He served as the personal physician of the Third King.

The planned health services delivery was started by the Third King when the Langjophakha Hospital was opened in 1956 and the Department of Health Services was formally established in 1960. The Leprosy Mission of London and the Santal Mission of Norway (supporting Riserboo), were involved in Bhutan's health care from an early stage. Though they were engaged in Leprosy related work they widened their mandate to include general health care services as there were no health facilities. For instance, the Leprosy Mission built hospitals in Lhuntse, Mongar, Gidakom, and Yebilaptsa while the Santal Mission built Riserboo and Pemagatshel hospitals. The HELVETAS, a Swiss NGO, acting for the Swiss Development Assistance also started working in Bhutan by 1975. The construction of the 40-bedded hospital of Bumthang is an example of their contribution. However, by 1996, almost all of these were integrated into the national health care system.

The paramedics (compounders) were also trained at Charteries Hospital, Kalimpong and posted at remote towns. In Samtse, Sarpang, Tsirang and Sibsoo, small dispensaries engaging expatriate compounders were started to meet the health care needs. The 20-bedded hospital at Thimphu was completed in 1956 under the command of the Third King. The hospital at Samtse with 10 beds was also built engaging Finish Missionary doctors (nuns).

Thus, there were two hospitals at Thimphu and Samtse and 11 dispensaries at Haa, Paro, Trongsa, Bumthang, Trashigang, Sibsoo, Tsirang, Samdrupjongkhar, Kalikhola

and Dagapela when the first Five Year Plan began in 1961. As there were only few Bhutanese doctors and paramedics, the hospitals and dispensaries were all staffed by expatriate doctors and nurses. With the opening of Thimphu Hospital in 1961 followed by Samtse, Trashigang, and Gelephu district hospitals as well as several dispensaries the infrastructure development began. The real expansion of infrastructure began only in the 1980s with the emphasis on the Primary Health Care approach, which was propounded at the Alma Ata declaration in 1978, to which Bhutan is a signatory.



*Fig. 3.5. Collecting sample for blood test.*

The establishment of the Royal Institute of Health Sciences in 1974 to train the Bhutanese paramedical personnel within the country marked an important step in the development of self-reliance in health manpower for the country. However, the training of medical personnel continued to rely mostly on neighboring regional medical schools.

Another landmark of the health services is the joining of the World Health Organization in 1984.

## Policy Objectives of the Health Sector for the Ninth Five Year Plan

The main objectives of the Health Sector for the Ninth Five Year Plan are:

- Enhance the quality of health services.
- Target the health services to reach the un-reached.
- Enhance self-reliance and sustainability of health services.
- Strengthen traditional medicine system and its integration with the overall health services.
- Intensify human resource development for health and establish a system of continuing education.
- Intensify reproductive health services and sustain population planning activities.
- Intensify the prevention and control of prevailing health problems and the emerging and re-emerging ones.

### Programmes to control Diseases

The most common diseases identified in Bhutan in the 1980s were caused by waterborne parasites resulting mainly from the lack of clean drinking water. The government's major medical objective by 2000 was to eliminate waterborne diseases like diarrhoea and dysentery, malaria, tuberculosis, pneumonia, and goiter. It was estimated in 1988 that only 8 persons per 1,000 had access to potable water.

Health programmes of importance were started for prevention, promotion, and control of diseases that were of public health concern. Bhutan adopted the primary health care approach in its health care delivery system as a signatory to the Alma Ata Declaration. Though a late starter in the modern health care system, Bhutan managed to cover over 90% of the population with basic health care service and is rated as one of the best organized primary health care systems in the region. Some of the programmes to prevent diseases are:

- *Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI)*
- *National STD/AIDS Prevention and Control Programme*
- *National TB Control Programme*
- *National Malaria Control Programme*
- *Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI) Control Programme*
- *National Control of Diarrhoeal Disease Programme*
- *Leprosy Control Programme*
- *Primary Eye Care Programme*

## Conclusion

After ascending the throne in 1974 at the young age of 17, the fourth monarch, His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck has skillfully steered the country through unprecedented developments. The king has guided the country to strive for “Gross National Happiness” rather than for mere gross national product. Thus, the concept of health in Bhutan must be seen in the context of the overall development strategy that defines development as the preservation of spiritual and emotional, as well as economic well being. Therefore, the health sector policy objectives reflect the national goals: equity, social justice, sustainability and efficiency, in the context of preservation of national culture. The long term objective of the health services is to facilitate the attainment of healthy living by the Bhutanese ‘to lead a socially, mentally and economically productive life.’

Today, there are 29 hospitals, 1 Indigenous hospital, 172 Basic Health Units, 440 Outreach clinics and 21 Indigenous units to attend to the public. The establishment of the Health Trust Fund is also a milestone in the history of Health Services of Bhutan as it is a move towards ensuring self-reliance and sustainability.

## Student Activity

1. Divide the class into small groups and argue against or for the following statement: *Good Health Services can provide Happiness and lead to overall development of the Nation.* Present your arguments to the class and respond to the comments that you receive from other groups.
2. Visit a nearby locality to find out if there are any traditional ways of treating diseases. Information can be gathered through interview or observation. Present your findings to the class. The work can be done in small groups.
3. Interview anyone working in the Health Sector on some of the main constraints and challenges that it faces. Based on the findings design some ways of facing the challenges indicated by your informant in small groups. Present your reflections to the class, followed by comments and questions from your classmates.

## Chapter 4 Development of Modern Agriculture

### Introduction

Agriculture in Bhutan occupies a central role as a source of employment of the Bhutanese though its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product is only about 34%. Today, over 79% of the Bhutanese population is engaged in Agriculture and will continue to remain the main employer for several decades. Thus, if Bhutan is to attain Gross National Happiness, one of the areas that need to be developed is that of Agriculture. Focusing on this area will ensure food security for Bhutan, besides employing many Bhutanese. Employment and food security are two key necessities that cannot be foregone by any individual. Thus, the Royal Government of Bhutan is placing great emphasis on the development of agriculture so that the journey to the attainment of Gross National Happiness is made easier. Against this background, in this chapter we will discuss the roles and responsibilities of the Department of Agriculture in the promotion of agricultural activities in Bhutan. The background history as well as the plans of action of this Department will also be introduced so that a holistic idea would be portrayed on this important area.

### Background History of the Department of Agriculture

The Department of Agriculture was established in 1961, coinciding the initiation of the first Five Year Plan under the Development Authority Wing. A budget of Ngultrum 2 million was allotted to the new Department. A number of model agriculture farms, seed multiplication farms, agriculture research stations and extensions works started. The focus was on the increase of fruit and vegetable cultivation. In 1967 it was transferred to the Ministry of Development and from 1995 under the Ministry of Agriculture.

In 1993, the Ministry took a major re-organisation to put into action an integrated approach. Thus, the former Departments of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Forestry were made into functional divisions *viz.*, the Research, Extension and Irrigation Division, the Crop and Livestock Services Division and the Forestry Services Division supported by the Policy and Planning Division and Administration and Finance Division. Later, these divisions were put under the Department of Research and Development Services.

Finally, in 2003 the major restructuring exercise recreated the Department of Agriculture. Today, this department has three divisions *viz.*, Agriculture, Horticulture

and Renewable Natural Resources Engineering as well as several service centres like National Plant Protection Centre (NPPC), National Mushroom Centre (NMC), National Post Harvest Centre (NPHC), Agriculture Machinery Centre (AMC) and Central Machinery Unit (CMU) besides Extension network covering all the 201 gewogs in 20 Dzongkhags.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Department is vested with the mandate of being responsible for sustainable agriculture development in the country and to plan, co-ordinate, administer, supervise and monitor the overall agriculture programmes and Renewable Natural Resources (RNR) infrastructure development in the country. To fulfill these mandates the Department undertakes the following important functions:

- Initiate and develop agriculture and horticulture production strategies, approaches and programmes.
- Support and facilitate the Dzongkhags and the gewogs in the implementation of field programmes.
- Provide support and technical services on crop production programme through farm mechanization, plant protection and post harvest processing.
- Provide engineering services on infrastructure development in the RNR sector (eg. farm road, irrigation, RNR constructions, etc.)
- Create and maintain functional database related to resources, manpower, institutions, equipment and programmes.
- Monitor and evaluate the planned programmes of the Department, including Dzongkhag programmes.

### **Policy objectives and strategies of the Ninth Five Year Plan**

The Department of Agriculture has set the following policy objectives to boost agriculture and horticultural activities in Bhutan.

- Maintenance of a broad National Food Security.
- Safeguarding household food security.
- Maintenance of 70% self-sufficiency in food grain requirement.
- Increase of production and export of horticultural commodities.
- Increase of income, living and nutritional standards of rural population.
- Providing viable employment on farms for mitigating rural-urban population.

- Promotion of sustainable land use and crop production system for conservation of environment.

To achieve the above policy objectives, the following strategies are adopted:

- Intensify food crop production in potential areas.
- Develop programmes to support food security objectives and also to address food insecurity issues targeting vulnerable groups.
- Exploit location-specific comparative advantages through diversification and intensification of horticultural production.
- Invest in irrigation infrastructure and water management technologies.
- Improve rural access through construction of farm roads.
- Pursue farm mechanization programmes to mitigate labour shortage.

### **Infrastructure and Facilities**

The effective implementation of programmes are ensured by a network of service centres and extension networks. These bodies take the programmes and services to the farmers. They are:

- Gewog Extension Centres: There are 154 (85 RNR Centres and 69 Extension Centres.) These centres cover all the 201 gewogs.
- National Plant Protection Centre (NPPC), Semtokha
- National Mushroom Centre (NMC), Semtokha.
- National Post Harvest Centre (NPHC), Paro.
- Central Machinery Unit (CMU), Bumthang.
- Agriculture Machinery Centre (AMC), Paro.
- Regional AMC at Bondey in Paro, Bajothang in Wangdue Phodrang and Khangma in Trashigang.

### **Achievements**

- *Food Production*

For centuries, the Bhutanese agricultural practices were based on the diversity and the use of natural resources. Agriculture was mostly carried out for subsistence. A farmer would cultivate varieties of everything that was favoured by climate. For instance, a farmer would grow cereals as well as vegetables and also keep domestic animals for subsistence. Everything that was produced by the family was consumed and nothing or very little was left for the market.



Fig. 3.6. Experimenting a new variety of rice at the RNR-RC at Bajothang

Today, agriculture practices are in a transitional phase from a subsistence practice to a market oriented system. This change is propelled by the support provided by the diverse agencies of the Department of Agriculture. Some of the contributions are in the production of high yielding varieties of crops. For instance, local red rice yield was only 4 tons per hectare while a modern variety known as *Bajo Maap-1*(CARD21-10-1-13-2-1) yielded 6.58 tons per hectare. Similarly, local maize that yielded only 3 tons per hectare is replaced by *Khangma Ashom-1* (*Swan-8528*) with a yield of 5 tons per hectare. Double cropping of rice has picked up in many warm and hot zones of Bhutan.

The present food grain self-sufficiency is about 65% and the balance deficit is met through export from India. However, maize production is considered adequate and has reached marketable standards. Today, surplus maize is purchased by the Food Corporation of Bhutan. Other cereals like wheat, barley, buckwheat, etc. are cultivated just for household consumption since rice is the dominant food crop, followed by maize.



*Fig. 3.7. Mechanized Farming*

The yield of oil seeds like mustard does not meet the requirement and a significant amount is imported from India. However, efforts are underway to promote the production of oilseeds also.

- *Horticulture Production*

Traditionally, fruits and vegetables were produced for home consumption only, as there was no market. However, now many new varieties of fruits and vegetables are produced by the farmers even for marketing, with support services from the Government. High yielding seeds and seedlings of vegetables like asparagus, mushroom, broccoli, carrots, etc. and fruits like chestnut, orange, mango, apricot, peach, apple, pear, plum and walnut etc. are introduced.

The increasingly dominant cash crops are mandarin, apple, potato, cardamom and ginger, adding to the income of the people.

In the Eight Five Year Plan, high yielding seeds and seedlings of new varieties and crops worth Nu. 9.9 million were produced and promoted while 350,000 seedlings were distributed to the farmers for promotion.

The export of horticulture products have increased consistently over the years. For instance, in 2000 Bhutan exported 2398 metric tons of apple worth Ngultrum 50 million, 16000 metric tons of mandarin worth Nu. 137 million, and 510 metric tons of cardamom worth Ngultrum 54.84 million besides vegetables worth Ngultrum 20 million.

### **Challenges**

Some of the hurdles that the food production sector of the Nation are:

- Limited and shrinking arable land due to encroachment and land conversion.
- Scattered, small and fragmented landholdings, making it economically challenging.
- Poor rural access and market infrastructure.
- Shortage of farm labour due to rural-urban migration.
- High production cost due to mountainous terrain that increases labour requirement.
- Wild animal depredation, pests and diseases.
- Poor storage, transport and marketing network.
- Weak database for planning and programming.
- Need for the Bhutanese to recognize Agriculture as a source of employment.

### **Conclusion**

Agriculture has been the main source of income, livelihood as well as employment for the major portion of the Bhutanese population. For decades, it will remain a main source of income and employment. Thus, the government has put in a great deal of efforts and brought agriculture from subsistence farming to this level, where surplus products are produced for the market. Support facilities as well as education of farmers are some of the initiatives, which has helped create awareness of the need to change from traditional to scientific farming.

It is also important to note that agriculture promotion is one way of achieving Gross National Happiness. If the Bhutanese farmers can produce surplus food and horticulture products, it will elevate their standard of living and life. If the standard of life of the farmers is elevated, it would attract even the school dropouts and the people from the urban areas to return to the village and work on the farms. This will definitely reduce unemployment rate and consequently solve the social problems.

### Student Activity

1. Divide the class into groups and conduct a study in a few neighboring villages on the topics given below or on any other relevant topics. Each group will take only one topic. Present your findings to the class. The presentation can be followed by discussion with the teacher as facilitator.
  - Traditional practices of farming.
  - New developments in the methods of farming.
  - New types of crops, fruit trees and vegetables introduced in the village.
  - Impact of new methods of farming on income and living and nutritional standards.
  - Problems and difficulties faced by the farmers.
  - Survey on people below 25 years engaged in full time farming with reasons for taking up farming.
  - Survey on illiterate people below 25 years, who have migrated to town to work as labourers and their reasons.
  - Support received from the government.
2. *Development of Agriculture is crucial for the achievement of Gross National Happiness.* Discuss in groups and share your views with the class, followed by questions.
3. Divide the class into groups. Each group will take a point of the challenges that the Department of Agriculture faces and reflect on ways to overcome them. Present the solution to the class and let others comment on it.

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