

LOCAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT INSTITUTIONS: A CASE STUDY ON SOKSHING MANAGEMENT

*Sangay Wangchuk**

A case study has been presented on *Sokshing* Management and its contribution to sustainable livelihood of the Bhutanese people. The case study was carried out over a period of three years taking three representative regions of the country as research sites. Since other local resource management institutions also form integral part of resource management regimes in a community, these have been briefly included in the discussion.

Local Resource Management Institutions

Local resource management institutions have evolved as a result of the need to have some form of measures to control the resource use to ensure sustainability and reduce access-differential to the resources in and around the local communities. While some of the local resource management institutions have died away, others have become more relevant. This may be a reflection of the relevancy of the institutions to the present socio-economic state, and the institutionalisation of some of these local resource management institutions in the laws and by-laws of the country. Land Act 1978 and Forest and Nature Conservation Act 1995 have been responsible for the disappearance of some of the local resource management institutions as these were either over-ruled by the provisions of the acts, or just were overlooked while enacting these acts. However, some of the local resource management institutions have been incorporated into laws and by-laws, and have been adopted as effective resource management strategies.

The results of the case study carried out in Trashigang, Bumthang and Paro on the local resource management institutions are presented below.

Reesup (Village Forest Guard)

* Head, Nature Conservation Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Thimphu

Previous to the enactment of the Forest Act in 1969, the “Mang” (Community/Village) through the institution of Reesup managed most of the forests in the villages. The *Mang*, which used to comprise of one to few villages, would appoint the *Reesup* on an annual or bi-annual basis. (Oral communication with many elders in all the three research *Gewogs*). The *Mang* wherein the village elders took most of the decisions defined the function of the *Reesup*. The *Reesup* was delegated with authority to ensure that everyone had adequate firewood and construction timber which to a large extent was in contrast to the policing responsibility of ‘forest watcher’ in Nepal or ‘forest chowkidar’ in India under joint-forest management schemes. He was also empowered with the responsibility to enforce “*Reedum*” (Prohibition of forestry activities including extraction of bamboo and grazing during summer i.e. June-October) in communities wherever this was practised.

The institution of *Reesup* is a customary one and social sanctions exercised by the village community over the forests in and around their village before formal intervention by the government. Protection of forests through this institution also included the catchment areas. No formal permission from the *Dungpa* or *Dzong* was required to cut trees for firewood, construction of house and prayer flagpoles. The *Thrimshung Chenmo* 1957 (Clause NYA 1-16) prohibits the hunting of endangered wild animals such as tiger, elephant, musk deer etc., but did not impose any restrictions on felling of trees and use of forest products thereof by the local people. So this institution like many of the local resource management institutions in other parts of Asia or Africa was loosely formed based on mutual trust and reciprocity. The *Reesup* drew his legitimacy to control the use of and access to forest resources by the individual households from the mandate by the *Mang* (village/community). The customary rights and sanctions were all geared towards sustainable use and equitable distribution of benefits from the forests.

The *Reesup* ensured that every community member had equal and easy access to forest products as and when required. This was achieved through frequent informal meetings and discussions and proper guidance from the village elders. While in many locations the functioning of the institution was guided by customary norms, other communities had written documents

with thumb impression (in place of signature) agreeing to the terms and conditions set for the functioning of the *Reesup* institution. Such arrangements ensured both rewards and penalties for the members.

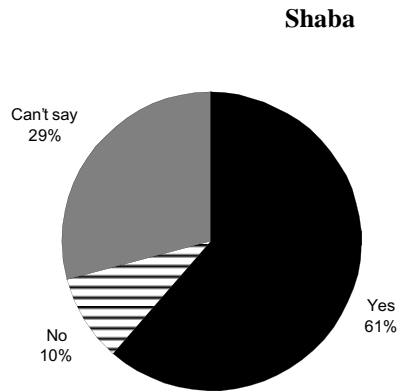
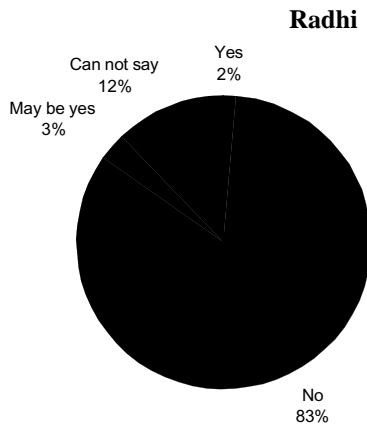
This social organisation is still observed in Shingkana in the village under Shaba *Gewog*. For instance, the *Reesup* ensures that everyone has equal and easy access to the forest products. However, he is also expected to enforce certain rules and regulations so that trees are not felled around water sources, makes sure that an adequate number of seed trees are left behind during harvest and that harvested forest areas get an adequate period of rest for rehabilitation, etc. Penalties include a fine of Nu.50 for every tree felled and Nu.150 for every load of firewood collected from the '*Drongsep Ngagtshel*' (village/community forest). Funds generated from the collection of fines are used for annual *Mang Rimdo* (performance of rituals for the welfare of the village). Therefore, economic incentives seem to be an important element concerning the willingness of the local people to be involved in forest resource management. The perception of the local people differed on the capability to manage the forest if the Government transferred some of them.

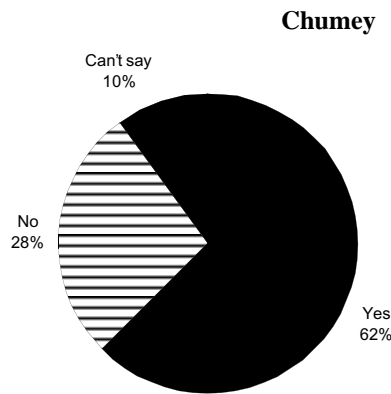
The *Reesup* was paid in kind and exempted from obligatory services to the government and the community. This was the standard practice for services rendered to the state or community just like the "*pangoleng garpa*" who went to Bumthang to cultivate agricultural crops before the 1950s (Ura, 1995, p.91.). By virtue of holding such a post, they commanded high social authority in the family and community especially in terms of property inheritance.

Minute details on the functioning of the institution of *Reesup* would differ from region to region, but there was no drastic difference in the principles, objectives and decision making process. For instance, if one looks at the institution of *Reesup* in Radhi, Chumey and Shaba *Gewogs*, the structure, responsibilities and functions of the *Reesup* were almost identical. However, in Radhi *Gewog* the *Reesup* was also entrusted to implement the practice of *Reedum*.

When the first Forest Act was passed in 1969, the institution of *Reesup* was replaced by forest officials appointed by the government. Existing government structures such as Divisional Forest Office, Range Office, Beat Office and Forest Check Posts were strengthened in various parts of the country. As no provisions were made on the legitimacy of customary rights and sanctions over forest products including the institution of *Reesup*, the Act annulled all customary rights and sanctions. However, in practice, most of the customary rights and sanctions continued since the government did not have adequate personnel to implement the provisions of the Forest Act. During the field survey, a *Dongsep Ngagtshel* in Shaba and *Gapteyna* in Paro were examined which is managed fairly well.

Figure 1: Perception of Local Forest Management Capability¹





Source: Author's Field Survey, 1996

Furthermore, with regard to the direct impact of the annulment of the institution of *Reesup*, it did not make much difference to the local community as a whole or to the individuals. The primary reason were that forest products were available in abundance and the government was not in a position, as far as field staff was concerned, to enforce penalties when offences were committed. For instance, in Chumey, 100 percent of the households said that they are self-sufficient in firewood, while 92 percent of the households in Shaba are self-sufficient in firewood. In Radhi, 46 percent of the households said that they are self-sufficient in firewood. The response to interviews and results of household survey show that people increasingly feel the thrust of the forest legislation. Field survey results also show that on an average, 35 percent of the households said that the present rules on the use of forest resources are too strict.

An institution that had evolved as a heuristic process matched by the social structure faded away due to inadvertent oversight in 1969 when the first Forest Act was passed. If the establishment of more effective institutions does not follow the dissolution of traditional local institutional arrangements, common property becomes open access².

After more than fifteen years since the dissolution of an effective local forest management institution, the Forestry Services Division realised the

importance of the institution of *Reesup* for interpreting the concept of sustainable forest management and the useful role of such institution as a link with the local people in the management of forests (Forestry Master Plan, 1991). Therefore, in 1985 the institution of *Reesup* was revived with major structural changes in its composition and functioning (Fifth Five-Year Plan). The selection of the *Reesup* was done by the communities and formal appointment made by the Forestry Services Division with a fixed salary from the government. His responsibilities included distributing the message of the government policies on the sustainable use of forests, explain rules and regulations as listed out in the Forest Act and various circulars, encourage the local people to abide by government rules and regulations on the use of forest products and assist local Forest Officials to detect forest offences. Progress reviewed by the Forestry Services Division show that this approach is effective in bringing the government administration closer to the local communities. One reason could be that the local people could now talk to some one from the village instead of someone from the government who is usually from outside the village.

***Meesup* (Forest Fire Watcher)**

The discussion of *Meesup* is mostly based on oral communication, discussion with government officials engaged in dealing with forest fires, and semi-structured interviews. Like the institution of *Reesup*, there also existed a local resource management institution known as *Meesup*. This institution evolved in the same manner as other similar local institutions as a response to risk aversion and the need to use the resources more sustainably. Whereas the *Reesup* was mandated with both executive and legislative authority over the forest resources, the *Meesup* was responsible only for the protection of the forests from fires. The terms of appointment and functioning were similar to that of *Reesup* (personal communication from elders). The *Meesup* was expected to mobilise labour from the community to fight forest fires and at the same time ensure that the culprit who set the forest on fire was detected and reported to the *Dzong*. The institution of *Meesup* also faded away with the enactment of the Forest Act in 1969. In many ways this absolved the local communities of the legal responsibility to protect the forests from fire. One would imagine that this was not the intention of the Forest Act but rather an oversight as in the case

of *Reesup*. The Forest Act of 1969 Chapter IV Section 6(b) states “ *The following acts are prohibited in Reserved Forests: setting of fire to a reserved forest or leaving any fire burning in such manner as to endanger such as forest*” and Section 19 states “*Whenever fire is caused wilfully or by gross negligence in a Reserved Forest, the offender shall be punished as per decisions in the National Assembly*”. The Act does not mention the existence of any local resource management institutions neither is it explicit in their annulment as a result of the enactment of the Forest Act. This is in contrast to the Land Act 1978 where all relevant local resource management institutions were incorporated into the law of the country. This may be a reflection of the adaptation process that the formulation of the Acts went through. For instance, the Law Committee who consisted of members from a wide cross section of the Bhutanese society formulated the Land Act. As a result of this process the responsibility of protection of forests was, therefore, transferred to the Forestry Services Division. However, in actual practice the local communities still continued to be held responsible whenever any forest fire broke out. A decision taken in the meeting between the *Dzongdas* and Forestry Services Division in 1983 put the onus of protection of forests on the local communities. This was both in terms of expending effort to put off the fire and penalty if the culprit was not detected. This process on the one hand divested the local community of the authority to organise forest fire protection schemes and on the other hand was expected to contribute labour to fight forest fires in addition to the legal liability.

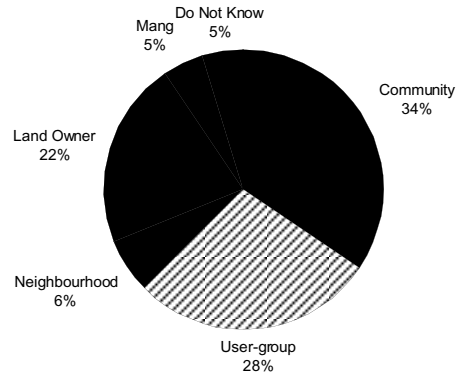
However, when the Forest and Nature Conservation Act was submitted to the National Assembly (72nd Session) for approval in 1995, one of the major issues raised by the people’s representatives was on forest fire. After debating for a long period, a major amendment was made which absolved the local communities from the legal liability of forest fires. The final version of the Act states as “*The local communities are expected to contribute labour for fighting forest fires but do not have to pay financial compensation for the loss of forests even if the culprit is not detected. Instead the local community has to plant the burnt forest area with tree seedlings provided by the Forestry Services Division free of cost*”.

Chusup (Drinking Water and Irrigation Water Watcher)

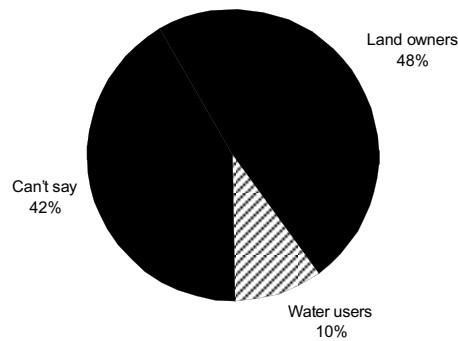
The discussion of the institution of *Chusup* is based on the provisions made in the Land Act 1978 for the use of water for irrigation, oral communication and observations made during the field visits in Radhi and Shaba. *Chusup* institution does not exist in Chumey since there is no paddy cultivation. The concept of *Chusup* evolved in a similar pattern as that of *Reesup* or *Meesup*. His responsibilities included making sure that the traditional right-of-way for drinking water was respected by the concerned households and to ensure proper distribution of water for irrigation among the landowners. He was legitimised by the local community to arbitrate minor disputes among the irrigation canal owners. Since his role was based on customary rights and sanctions, litigants were free to approach the *Gups* or court in case of disputes over the use of water. Unlike in the case of forest products, property rights over water were strictly enforced. For instance, both in Radhi and Shaba, one's inclusion in the ownership and therefore sharing of water from a particular irrigation canal depended on either one's direct contribution or contribution made by one's ancestors in kind or cash for the construction and maintenance of the water canal. The *Chusup* also made sure that the existing or newly constructed water canals did not cause damage to nearby fields. The present irrigation canal ownership pattern is based on the land ownership and is location-specific. The ownership was transferred with the land and therefore social hierarchy or kinship has played only a limited role in shaping the irrigation canal ownership status that exists today. Expansion or conversion of paddy field from other land use would require the endorsement of the existing canal members. In case of agreement by the members, the new member would have to pay an equivalent amount in terms of cash or labour expended by the old member.

Figure 2: Perception of Irrigation Management³

Radhi



Shaba



Source: Author's Field Survey, 1996

The Land Act 1978 seems to have formalised the institution of *Chusup* by including it in the Act. The Act (Chapter VI, Clauses (A) 7 -1 to 7 - 14) explicitly provides guidelines for the functioning of the institution and lays specific penalties for non-compliance. It seems that the Act has drawn substantial direction from the informal *Chusup* institution as not much has changed both in spirit and structure of the law on the use of water for irrigation in the Land Act of 1978.

Construction of new irrigation canals and maintenance of existing ones was considered an important input of the government for attaining self-sufficiency in food production. This intervention also had a direct impact on the local water management institution. Although the membership pattern is similar to the informal one, the inclusion of new members is formalised and legitimised through the axiom that inputs from the government should be available to everyone. The Department of Agriculture carried out a survey of “Farmer Managed Irrigation System Research Project” in 1990. One of the main findings was a dispute between the landowner and sharecropper. This seems to be more accentuated in some parts of Trongsa *Dzongkhag*. Anyone with land can now become a member and gain a property right over it. This is done through the creation of a `Water Users Association`, a concept introduced from outside. This concept is also applied for managing drinking water schemes mostly provided by the government.

Shingsungpa (Agricultural Crop Damage Arbitrator)

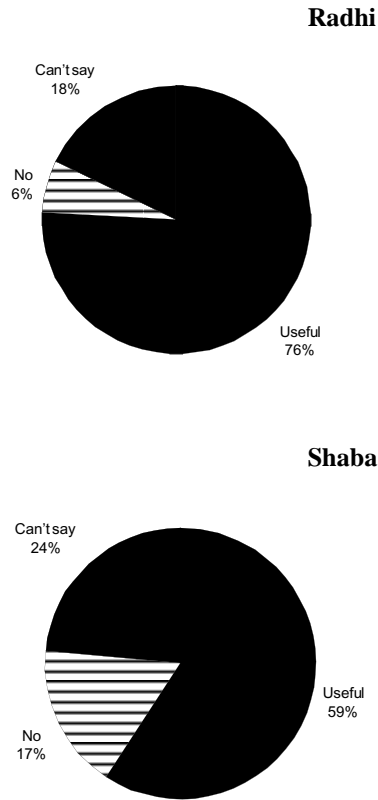
This is an effective institution still in practice in the villages. The functions of the *Shingsungpa* are broadly outlined in the Land Act 1978 under Chapter XI. Like the institution of *Chusup*, the Land Act 1978 seems to have taken into consideration the existing local resource management institution and formalised it as law of the country. This process seems to be the most crucial element for the survival of local institutions and knowledge.

In the past, the selection procedure of *Shingsungpa* used to be the same as in the case of *Reesup* or *Chusup*. However, with the establishment of *Gewog Yargye Tshogchung* (*Gewog* Development Committee) during the Fifth Five-Year Plan, the appointment has to be approved by this committee. Under the broad guidelines listed in the Land Act 1978, framing of detailed rules and regulations are left to the individual communities. The existence of different situations in the three *Gewogs* of Radhi, Chumey and Shaba is a reflection of this approach.

In Radhi, more than 95 percent of the respondents said that the institution of *Shingsungpa* is useful in protecting their crops from cattle damage. In Shaba only 50 percent attributed the lower degree of crop damage to the

Shingungpa institution. They felt that even without this institution, the rules of compensation for crop damage by cattle are built into the day-to-day functioning of the social system, whereas in Chumey, the institution of *Shingsungpa* does not exist.

Figure 3: Perception of the Usefulness of the *Shingsungpa*⁴

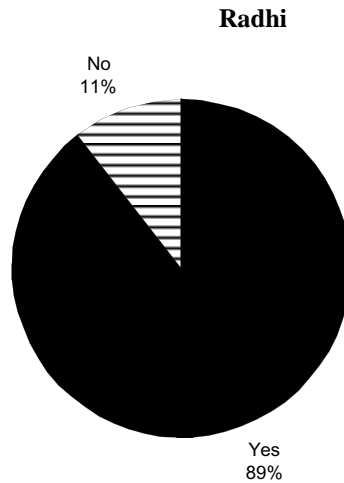


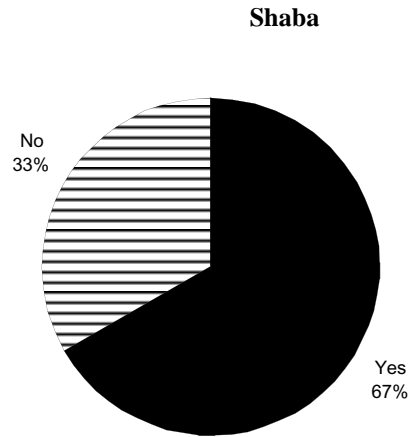
Source: Author's Field Survey, 1996

The *Shingsungpa* Institution as practised in Radhi and Shaba

Each village selects one person with a high degree of integrity as he is expected to arbitrate disputes in the process of discharge of his responsibilities, which include the declaration of the agricultural season. This is done by going from house to house, usually in March. From this day on compensation and fines for crop damage by cattle becomes effective. The modes of calculation of compensation and litigation seem to be both scientific and logical. When agricultural crop has been damaged by cattle, the landowner requests the *Shingsungpa* to inspect the field who makes his assessment of the damage in the presence of the cattle owner. The methodology to be used for the damage assessment is jointly agreed among the three individuals, i.e. land owner, cattle owner and *Shingsungpa*. For instance, in case of paddy, the number of damaged clumps is counted. During harvest time, paddy is harvested from an equal number of clumps from the adjacent field and the landowner is compensated with the same quantity.

Figure 4: Perception of the Arbitration of the *Shingsungpa*⁵





Source: Author's Field Survey, 1996

Sometimes the job of a *Shingsungpa* can become complicated. One of the acceptable proofs required charging someone for crop damage is that the cattle should be either tied at the damage site or witnessed by a third party. This becomes even more difficult where in small communities people try to avoid getting into legal tangles where their own members are involved. Ocular damage assessment is also another source of conflict. However, 89 percent in Radhi and 67 percent in Shaba of the respondents said that they usually accept the verdict given by the *Shingsungpa*.

Traditional Forms of Sanctions (*Reedum*)

The enactment of the Forest Act in 1969 saw a major change in the manner forest resources were appropriated both for commercial and domestic consumption. Prior to this period it was not considered an offence to harvest any forest resources for one's own use without formal sanction from the state except hunting endangered species. There were informal restrictions on the use of forest resources imposed by the social sanctions of the local communities, but these were derived from self-evolved and self-

imposed sanctions. Contravention of these sanctions could be resolved through amicable discussions in which the context of the act was considered a more crucial decision making factor than the actual commission of contravention of the social sanction. The implementation of such social sanctions was less complex as the forest resources were in abundance and the economic role of the forest resources was limited.

One of the customary sanctions still functional is the practice of *Reedum*. This is not reflected in any formal manner in any legislation. In Radhi the sanctions are strictly conformed to by the households. However, such a practice does not exist in Shaba or Chumey. The practice of *Reedum* is linked to the religious belief that the mountains are the abode of the local guardian deities. This practice is linked to Bon religion that is still practised in most of the eastern part of the country. For instance in Radhi, it is considered to be a serious offence if someone from the village extracts any forest product from the mountains above the village during summer when agricultural crops are still standing. During the field survey, more than 95 percent of the individuals interviewed said that the practice of *Reedum* is good for the whole community. In other words agricultural crops are protected from natural calamities such as floods, storms and insect epidemics by the deities residing in these sacred mountains. The ban on the extraction of forest products includes also bamboo and grazing. The ban extended to the cremation of dead bodies in the vicinity of the village during this period. All cremation is carried out in designated locations, which is usually by the riverbanks and away from the villages.

Even if the institution of *Reesup* in its original structure and functions has died away, the practice of *Reedum* is still enforced by the *Gups* (*Gewog* Head), *Chimis* (people's representative and member of the National Assembly) and *Mang Aps* (village head). This may be attributed on the one hand to the forbearance of the government on such issues and on the other hand on the religious belief that has been in practice for generations. This seems to be the case where religious sanctity of a particular resource is determined by natural factors such as the season of the year that has its expression in the environment. Whatever may be the exact interpretation, in actual practice it is very logical. In summer, forest operations especially harvesting, are likely to cause more environmental damage than during the dry season including grazing by cattle.

Sokshing

The term *Sokshing* is used inter-changeably as a physical resource, as a local resource management institution and a tenurial system. The differentiation of the meaning becomes evident when used in the context of the utility of *Sokshing* and in the manner used by the local communities.

Local resource management institutions such as *Sokshing* have demonstrated that forest resources can be sustainably managed if tenure is ensured and at the same time it has signalled that if proper monitoring is not carried out this may lead to their appropriation for other uses. The existence of an equivalent of *Sokshing* can not be found in other parts of the region but loosely it could be interpreted as wood lots.

Typology of *Sokshing*

Although the Land Act or Forest and Nature Conservation Act recognises only one type of *Sokshing*, there are two types of *Sokshing* which can be classified based on the species of the trees that constitute the *Sokshing*. In Radhi, most of the *Sokshing* consists of oak species interspersed with broad leaf species. In Chumey most of the *Sokshing* consists of conifer species, and rarely of oak or broad leaf species. In Shaba, conifers and broad species can be found in the *Sokshing*. The general quality and productivity of the *Sokshing* varies from region to region, but is usually better than the government reserve forests. This was very evident during the field visits where distinct difference can be observed between the *Sokshing* and government forests.

Legal Issues

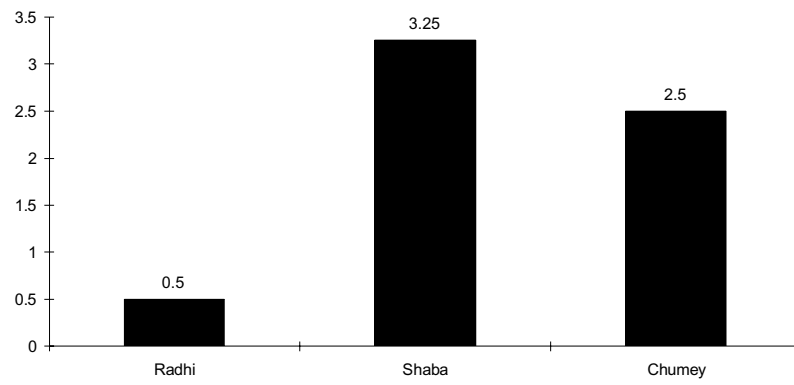
Like most of the other forest resources, prior to 1969 (the year the Forest Act was passed by the National Assembly) and later on in 1978 (when the Land Act was passed by the National Assembly) *Sokshing* ownership rested with owners who had registered it under their names. The definition as contained in the Forest Act of 1969 was not so clear on the legal ownership status as the definition of *forest* stated "...forest means ... any land and

water body, whether or not under vegetative cover, in which no person has acquired a permanent and transferable right of use and occupancy, whether such land is located inside or outside the forest boundary pillars, and includes land registered in a person's name as Tsamdo (grazing land) or Sokshing (woodlot for collection of leaf litter).' However, the definition of *Sokshing* in the Land Act made it explicit on the status of the legal ownership of *Sokshing*. The Land Act defined *Sokshing* as "*forest to be used as a source of leaf litter and fodder and the owner has no right over the standing trees and land over which Sokshing is established*".

Distribution of Sokshing

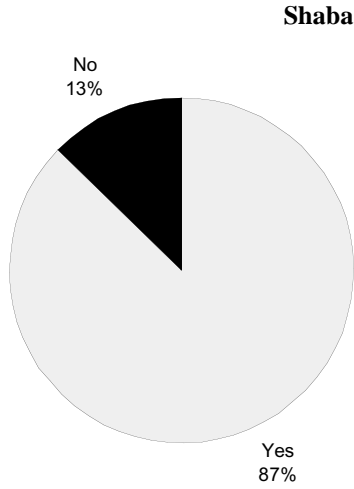
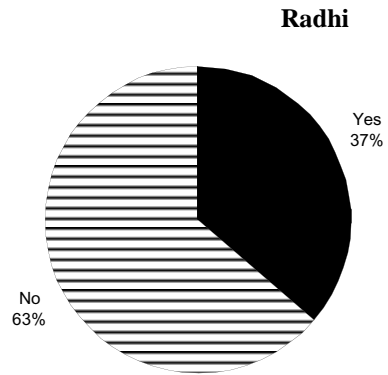
According to the field survey, 37 percent of the households in Radhi own *Sokshing* whereas in Shaba 87 percent own *Sokshing*, as compared to 69 percent in Chumey. In terms of area it works out to 40.8 ha in Radhi, 131.6 ha. in Shaba and 52.6 ha. in Chumey. *Sokshing* 'ownership' pattern is the same as that of agricultural land in the three *Gewogs*. However, their roles and extent of area differ. *In Radhi the average Sokshing holding is 0.5 acre per household while in Shaba it is 3.25 and 2.5 acres in Chumey.* However in Radhi the contribution of *Sokshing* both as a source of basic forest product needs and social interaction is very high. There is a definite pattern of *Sokshing* use in the three *Gewogs*. While 10 percent of the households get their firewood directly from *Sokshing*, 46 percent depend on *Sokshing* supplemented by nearby forests in Radhi, 58 percent of the households in Shaba collect pine needles from *Sokshing* and 70 percent said that the main function of *Sokshing* in Chumey is the provision of pines for compost. Less than 3 percent depend on *Sokshing* for firewood in Shaba and Chumey.

Figure 5: Average *Sokshing* Size per Household (in acres)

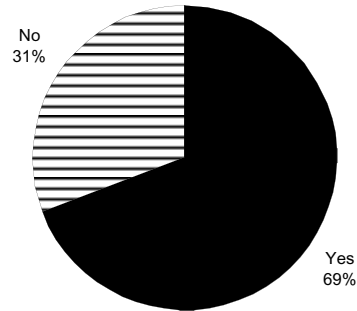


Source: Author's Field Survey, 1997

Figure 6: Perception of the Importance of Sokshing⁶



Chumey



Source: Author's Field Survey, 1996

Distribution or inheritance of *Sokshing* when a household member starts his/her own household is done in the same manner as agricultural land. This has resulted in a high degree of fragmentation of *Sokshing*. The field survey showed that 62 percent of the households own less than one acre of *Sokshing*. More than 10 percent of the households' *Sokshings* comprise of three to five trees. This illustrates that *Sokshing* is as important for the household as agricultural land.

Sokshing Management

The institution of *Sokshing* plays an important role in the social energy flow. More than 50 percent of *Sokshing* owners said that firewood from *Sokshing* can be 'given' to the neighbour only when someone dies in family. While no direct cash or material is accepted for this favour, the *Sokshing* owner assumes a certain level of legitimacy of social authority over his neighbour. This pattern of social structure was observed and analysed from interviews with both those who own and those who do not own *Sokshing*.

Care and protection accorded by the owners to *Sokshings* can be physically observed by comparing them with the adjoining government forests. While most of the *Sokshings* are protected well from outsiders from destruction, government forests are seen to be at varying stages of destruction. One of the reasons for the efficient management of such a resource can be attributed to the existence of law that respects the right to a benefit stream by others. (Bromley 1989, p.5.)

The silvicultural practice for the management and harvest of *Sokshings* is sound. It has evolved over the years and the knowledge is passed on from generation to generation. Everyone interviewed in the *Gewog* knew all the tree species grown in the *Sokshing* or nearby forests. They are also aware of the specific silvicultural requirements and different species are harvested differently to suit their ecological resiliency. More than 80 percent of the people interviewed said that trees in the *Sokshings* are never felled from the ground level. For instance, in the case of oak (*Quercus* sp.), taking advantage of its sprouting capability, it is pollarded at two meters height. This ensures that the tree is not completely lost and also reduces the effort for protecting the sprouts from the cattle. Fodder trees (mostly *Ficus* sp.) are also never felled from the ground level. The biomass is usually harvested by lopping. This ensures that the regeneration takes place successfully. Therefore, it becomes evident that the concept of sustainability is incorporated into the management of *Sokshing*. Leaf litter of oak and pine needles from the *Sokshing* are used as bedding material for the cattle. They have a multiple functional role. While the leaf litter and pine needles keep the cattle warm in winter in their sheds, the decomposed material is the most ideal manure thereby contributing to the food production⁷. Gilmour 1991, p.60; Chhetri 1993, p.117; and v. Fürer-Haimendorf 1964 in Chhetri and Pandey 1992 describe similar use of forest products made by the hill people of Nepal including the Sherpas of Khumbu.

The institution of *Sokshing* can also be a source of social conflict in the *Gewog*. Although more than 50 percent of the households interviewed said that it would be a good idea to hand-over the full ownership title of *Sokshing* to the *Sokshing* owners, more than 40 percent of the *Sokshing* owners said that theft from *Sokshing* is increasing. Few of the respondents

of the interview were very vocal on the issue of transfer of *Sokshing* ownership. While the present *Sokshing* owners said that if the full transfer of ownership is done, it will encourage them to protect and plant additional trees, the households who do not own said that it will not be equitable. They contend that with the present mode of appropriation of firewood, they are sure to get what they need through the permit issued by the government. If their access is excluded to *Sokshing* by transferring full ownership, then it would become difficult for them to get one of their basic forest product need, i.e. firewood.

Although the Forest and Nature Conservation Act of 1995 and Land Act of 1978 clearly defined the legal status of *Sokshing*, it was only recently these provisions were imposed. The *Sokshing* owners enjoyed full authority and in many places the non-*Sokshing* owners did not know about the real legal status of *Sokshing* anyway. In Radhi, most of the *Sokshing* depletion can be attributed to the recent imposition of the legal definition of *Sokshing*. This generated a double negative impact. While on the one hand the *Sokshing* owners who had protected and nurtured them for generations suddenly lost control of their very important resource and therefore felt legitimised to use the *Sokshing* as much and as early as possible before others did, on the other hand, the non-owners felt that a resource that was locked up was suddenly available to them and started making higher demands from them. Furthermore, they perceived it as a question of equity that has been ensured by the government.

The institution of *Sokshing* seems to be as old as the agricultural crop production institution in Bhutan. This is evident from the legal status accorded to *Sokshing* in the land records of the households and the existence of the *Sokshing* inheritance system. The local people have also acquired the knowledge required for the sustainable management of the *Sokshing*.

The legal status or tenure of the *Sokshing* is presently the most critical factor in the sustainability of basic forest product needs and also as a resource for social interaction of the *Gewog*. If the tenurial rights are not ensured, the *Sokshing* owners will continue to over-use them and will have no legitimacy and interest to protect them from outsiders. Since the land

does not belong to the users, there is no incentive to improve it through enrichment planting or by other any means. This situation leads eventually to a conversion of *Sokshing* into an open access resource.

The Use of *Sokshing*

General relevance: The definition of *Sokshing* as contained in the Land Act 1978 and *Thrimshung Chenmo*, 1957⁸ clearly states that *Sokshing* is a government forest, registered by an individual for collecting leaf litter, but the land and the trees belong to the government. In its entirety, it comprises a woodlot, usually located next to a village or human settlement. The main species in the *Sokshing* are oak (*Quercus* spp.) in Radhi, in Shaba and Chumey there are blue pine (*Pinus wallichiana*). In some parts of the country, it is a precious resource not only as a source of leaf litter and firewood but even as wood for cremation. In Radhi, oak is the preferred species for cremation and such species are now limited to *Sokshing*. The fact that a household owns *Sokshing*, commands some social authority within the communities. In other regions *Sokshing* is perceived as a potential source of land for appropriation for other purposes than leaf litter and firewood production. However, in other regions, it is perceived as a habitat for wild animals that is detrimental to agricultural crop production. The reasons attributed for the failure of such an approach are due to a lack of tenure entitlements to legitimise the local communities⁹.

The regional variations in the use and perception of *Sokshing* are reflected in various elements that constitute a social structure of a community and that determine the capability of a particular locality.

Radhi Gewog: In some regions, for instance in Radhi, scarcity and the important role of *Sokshing* have stimulated the emergence of appropriate local¹⁰ *Sokshing* management patterns. Firstly, *Sokshing* is considered a highly valued inheritance property and is shared among the family members just like any other property such as agricultural land and livestock¹¹. As in the case of agricultural land, a fragmentation of *Sokshing* area has taken place. This is due to the absence of the joint family system as it exists, for instance, in Chumey and to some extent in Shaba where the joint family makes productivity at the household level more viable.

Secondly, in response to the scarcity of forest products, a sustainable silvicultural practice of managing *Sokshing* has emerged. It is based on the fact that most of the oaks (*Quercus* spp.) coppice successfully¹². However, no *Sokshing* owner fells his trees from ground level but pollards. This reduces the risk of damages to the shoot by the cattle, which are legally and socially sanctioned to graze freely in the forest area. Through the application of such a silvicultural system, the *Sokshing* owner avoids extra costs of guarding the new shoots and at the same time the main trunk is saved for further growth and also acts as an “insurance tree”.

Thirdly, the under-storey of the *Sokshing* is cleaned annually just before the commencement of the collection of dead leaves. The dead leaves not only decompose and form high quality natural fertiliser but also are a comfortable bedding for cattle during the cold winter months. In the region of Radhi, while most of the *Sokshings* are managed sustainably, many degraded *Sokshings* were observed during the field visit. State ownership of property rights and tenure of *Sokshing* have discouraged the households to carry out enrichment plantations in the degraded *Sokshing* as anything grown on it will be state property. Such varied interpretation is the key to understand the state legislation and the performance of local communities in the sustainable utilisation of forest resources. It also influences the genuine participation of the local communities in the management of forests.

Shaba: Socio-economic development processes that have taken place over the years has resulted in the emergence of a new *Sokshing* management paradigm¹³. There is a distinct difference in the social performance of the state legislation and of the local communities with regard to *Sokshing* management¹⁴. The field survey shows that firewood from the *Sokshings* is only a secondary product as more than 40 percent of the households depend on LPG for cooking. State legislation and the social performance of local communities have been highly influenced by a scarcity of space for agricultural and horticultural production. With the increase in agricultural products, the population in Thimphu City, and a lucrative export market for horticultural products, every space of land has been brought under cultivation. Since the functions of the *Sokshing* could be replaced by cash income, the opportunity cost of *Sokshings* as a source of leaf manure and

firewood became too high. Such a perception has led the local communities to a conversion of the *Sokshings* to apple orchards and other economically more profitable forms of land use. The method used for converting *Sokshing* into apple orchards in Shaba is different from various other regions of the country. For instance, if the *Sokshing* owner is detected clearing *Sokshing*, the fine is paid without creating much bureaucratic problems.

The area becomes devoid of trees which takes the landscape of any agricultural field. This makes it convenient for the individual to use the land in a manner appropriate to him since it becomes difficult for the state with limited personnel to detect each and every case¹⁵. This is a reflection of a high degree of effectiveness of the local social performance since all this is happening within a limited extent of area and not like somewhere in the middle of the Amazonian forests where small clearings remain unnoticed. The sustainability of such a social performance contrary to the performance of state legislation will need to be influenced by a process of access-differential and a client-patron relationship.

The social performance of the local communities have been raised to yet another level in Shaba. For instance, while the *Sokshings*, which legally are state property, are converted to other land use forms and finally to private property, some state forests nearby the *Gewog* are declared as *Drongsep ngagtshel* (village/community forest)¹⁶. The main function of this type of forest is to provide leaf manure and protection of the drinking water source of the *Gewog*. The distribution of benefits from the *Drongsep ngagtshel* is limited to its members only and through such a process, access to non-members are restricted. This is another level of social performance based on locality factors relating to forest resources

Chumey: The social performance of the local communities of Chumey is reflective of their position on the forest resources continuum - one that is in abundance¹⁷. No household member needs to walk for more than ten minutes to be in a forest. Moreover, Chumey has one of the most versatile tree species in Bhutan - blue pine (*Pinus wallichiana*)¹⁸. The households have no interest to expend time and energy for the management of the forest. They consider it a state responsibility since the state owns all forest. On the other hand, the local communities realise that forest resources are a

source of high income as logging contractors and the state earn substantial money from the sale of forest products¹⁹. In the case of Chumey, social performance has tilted towards the state. It becomes even more complicated when one considers that between the period when private land was first recorded (1955/56) in formal land registers and the landuse survey carried out in 1995, almost 50 percent of the agricultural land has become forest²⁰.

Biophysical limitations have also shaped the life-style of the local communities of Chumey. Horticultural development is constrained by physical limitations such as altitude (2800 mamsl). Cultivation of traditional crops such as buckwheat is considered too laborious as compared to what could be achieved in other areas through off-farm activities. Potato and wheat are cultivated with heavy labour input to protect these crops from wildlife damage. Therefore, such biophysical limitations have also influenced the social performance of the local communities²¹. State legislation has constrained the use of forests for cash income generation although the growing stock is healthy²². All logging is carried out based on an approved management plan and sale of timber including export and existing rules and regulations. Although the flow of forest resources is complicated, the existing over-stretched social elasticity has engendered a stable social energy flow. It is not raised as an issue of inequitable distribution of forest resources.

A resource²³ is never a resource as such or a commodity (Seeland, 1990, p.6) till a social meaning is ascribed to it within the respective economy and society. While *Sokshing* in Radhi is considered as a precious resource, in Chumey it is perceived as a liability, especially by the households who do not own *Sokshing*. The reason for a high percentage of fallow land (nearly 50%) in Chumey is that it is difficult to protect the crops from wild animals that are usually living in the *Sokshings* which are generally close to settlements and agricultural fields and may destroy agricultural crops. The presence of *Sokshing* near the agricultural field increases the rate of invasion by blue pine species (*Pinus wallichiana*) through its sheer silvicultural characteristic of colonisation²⁴. As per state legislation, it is an offence to cut any trees including saplings irrespective of their legal status of the land over which it is growing. This has to a large extent, hampered the social performance of the local communities and been an obstacle for the self-regulation of the villagers in shaping their environment.

Comparative Findings: The pressure on *Sokshing* in Radhi will grow as the population increases over the years. This will also lead to the fragmentation of *Sokshing* as there is no practice of a joint family system in Radhi *Gewog*. Firewood will still remain the main source of energy as possibilities to seek alternative sources such as cooking gas or electrical appliances are limited. The survival of *Sokshing* may depend on the ability to evolve appropriate approaches to its management. The degraded *Sokshing* must be allowed to be replenished by enrichment plantations otherwise further degradation of *Sokshing* will continue. This may also result in the increase of thefts of *Sokshing*, which could provoke conflicts among the community members. One possible way of resolving these issues is the creation of communal *Sokshing* out of the existing government forests accompanied by the establishment of appropriate local institutions to manage such a type of property.

Table 1: Social performance relating to *Sokshing*

Indicators	Radhi (Eastern Region)	Chumey (Central Region)	Shaba (Western Region)
Pressure	Will increase proportionally to the increase in population	No visible change. May also decrease as more <i>pangzhing</i> become forests	Not as a source of firewood and leaf litter
Change in land use	May further degrade if enrichment plantation of trees is not permitted	May become high forests	More may be lost to horticultural and other land use
Role as a source of firewood and leaf litter	Will continue at the present level	No visible change	Will decrease as more households look for alternative sources

Source: Author, 1997

The socio-economic environment for appropriate and most productive use of available land may end the survival of some of the *Sokshing* in Shaba. The present trend of converting *Sokshing* into horticultural land is likely to continue as it is shown by the present trend of social performance of the households. It will lead to an informal shift in property rights from state to private, illustrating one mode of resource appropriation. This mode of appropriation could be formalised in the next cadastral survey.²⁵ Local people are aware of this provision in the law and therefore build their strategy along these lines. This is reflected in their social performance and

justify their action as a response to the perceived needs and the ability of the local land resources to meet their needs.

The *Sokshing* in Chumey will become important to the owners only to the extent they are allowed to use it for commercial purposes. Biophysical conditions of the *Gewog* impose limitations to put *Sokshing* to more productive use other than as a source of needles for compost. The *Sokshing* will not be replaced by other land use forms as more than 33 percent of *pangzhing* has been abandoned and has now become high forests. The trend is that more *pangzhing* will be lost to forest. Restrictions on the use by the law for the owners of the *Sokshing* on one hand and allowing access to outsiders through official permits on the other hand may lead to conflicts in the long run. This may initiate a process of pressure for commercial use of the *Sokshing* by the owners.

***Sokshing* and Sustainability of Livelihood**

The institution of *Sokshing* contributes to three important elements of livelihoods of the local communities. Among many communities, *Sokshing* acts a medium of social inter-action. Households who own *Sokshing* have some form of social authority over who do not own, and this authority is exercised through sanctions or denial of access to the resources in the *Sokshing*.

Sokshing also provides all the basic forest product needs, and contributes to the sustainability of agricultural production of the local communities. Firstly, it provides a steady supply of firewood for the households. The farmer can also cut the cost of firewood collection. Secondly, most of the construction timber requirements can be harvested from the *Sokshing*. Thirdly, *Sokshing* is also a source of fodder for the cattle. However, the most important function of *Sokshing* is its contribution to sustainable organic farming of the local communities. The leaf litter collected from the *Sokshing* is used as bedding material for the livestock. The manure that results is one of the best sources of organic fertiliser for agricultural production. Leaf litter of oak or pine mixes very well with the dung to form one of the most effective and safe manure. This sustains the agricultural production and thereby the livelihoods, particularly of the marginal farmers

who can not afford chemical fertiliser. Therefore, the institution of *Sokshing* can be considered as important element of low input with high level of sustainability.

The institution of *Sokshing* also contributes to environmental sustainability. Most of the basic forest product requirements are fulfilled from the *Sokshing*. This is being done through a tested and effective management practice as over-harvesting or mismanagement is avoided through customary sanctions, and self-interest of the local communities. Furthermore, *Sokshing* takes off substantial pressure from the government forests for firewood, construction timber, and fodder.

Notes:

¹ Question: Can local people manage the forest?

² See Bromley and Cernea, *The Management of Common Property Natural Resources*, (World Bank, 1989) p.7.

³ Question: How is irrigation managed?

⁴ Question: Is the *Shingsungpa* a useful person?

⁵ Question: Do you usually accept the verdict of the *Shingsungpa*?

⁶ Question: Do you own *Sokshing*?

⁷ See Gilmour 1991, p. 60, Chhetri 1993, p. 117, and v. Fürer-Haimendorf, 1964 for discussion of a similar system in Nepal.

⁸ Land Act of 1978 (Chapter III, Clause (A) 3-5 and Chapter V, Clause (A) 5-9) and Forest and Nature Conservation Act of 1995 (Chapter III, Section 12, Chapter IV, Section 16 (b)).

⁹ See Guha, R., 1989, pp. 139

¹⁰ Gilmour, D.A., 1990. p. 145 - 158. *Resource Availability and Indigenous Forest Management Systems in Nepal*. Discusses three scenarios of forest resource management in Nepal - plentiful supply; slight restriction; and severe restriction. He analyses the three different situations and the responses of the local people to each one.

¹¹ During the field visit, I was told that only at times of death would trees from *Sokshing* be given for use by a neighbour.

¹² Champion, H.G. and Seth, S.K., *General Silviculture of India* (Delhi, 1968)

¹³ Among the three research *Gewogs* Shaba has the highest per capita income. This is reflected by a higher standard of living.

¹⁴ For instance, 59 percent of the households depend on *Sokshing* for firewood, only 3 percent do so in Shaba. In Shaba, 58 percent of the *Sokshing* is used for collecting

leaf litter. In Chumey, less than 30 percent depend on *Sokshing* as source of firewood.

¹⁵ This was observed in several sites during the field visit.

¹⁶ The present care-taker said that this type of forest is useful as a source of leaf litter as agriculture in Shaba is one of the main sources of income.

¹⁷ This situation is on the scale of abundance, similar to the one described by Gilmour, D.A., 1990.

¹⁸ This species fetches the highest price in India among all conifers and regenerates well naturally if protected from forest fires at the sapling stage.

¹⁹ Their expectations are heightened by the sight of large tracts of well stocked forests next to their homes.

²⁰ LUPP, MOA, 1995.

²¹ There is an inclination for off-farm occupation as compared to Radhi and Shaba where agriculture is still the main occupation.

²² By definition of forest in the Forest and Nature Conservation Act, 1995, all trees, waterbeds, sand, stones outside owns registered land, are the property of the state. Only the state and authorised agencies or individuals can harvest or trade in forest products irrespective of where such products are located.

²³ Seeland, K. (1990), *Environment and Social Erosion in Rural Communities of South Asia*. He states that the term resource is a relative one and has different connotations in different contexts.

²⁴ Troup, R.S. (1921). *Silviculture of Indian Trees* (Oxford)

²⁵ As per Chapter VI, Clause (A) 6-4, at the time of resurvey, if the land area is more than the official records, the individual has the option to pay the additional tax and register it under his name.

Bibliography

General Reading and Basics

Barnes, R.H. et al. (eds.) (1995). *Indigenous Peoples of Asia*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.

Bromley, Daniel W (1991). *Environment and Economy: Property Rights and Public Policy*, Oxford: Blackwell.

- Bromley, Daniel W (1989). *Economic Interests and Institutions*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Bromley, Daniel W. and Cernea, Michael M (1989). "The Management of Common Property Natural Resources: Some Conceptual and Operational Fallacies", *World Bank Discussion Papers Series No. 57*, Washington D.C: The World Bank.
- Bromley, Daniel W. and Chapagain, Devendra, P (1984). "The Village Against the Centre: Resource Depletion in South Asia", *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, pp. 868-873.
- Burch, William R. and DeLuca Donald (1984). *Measuring the Social Impact of Natural Resource Policies*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Cernea, Michael M (1989). "User Groups as Producers in the Participatory Afforestation Strategies", *World Bank Discussion Papers Series No. 70*, Washington D.C: The World Bank.
- Cernea, Michael M (1987). "Farmer Organisations and Institution Building for Sustainable Development", *World Bank Reprint Series No. 414*, Washington D.C: The World Bank.
- Cernea, Michael M (ed.) (1985). *Putting People First: Sociological Variables in Rural Development*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Champion, H.G. and Seth, S.K (1968). *General Silviculture for India*, New Delhi.
- Dove, M. and Carpenter, C (eds.) (1992). *Sociology of Natural Resources in Pakistan and Adjoining Countries*, Lahore: Vanguard.
- Gray, Andrew 1995: "The Indigenous Movement in Asia", in Barnes, R.H. et al (eds.), *Indigenous Peoples of Asia*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, pp. 35-58.
- Grierson, A.J.C. and Long, D.G (1994). "Flora of Bhutan. Vols. I(i), I(ii), I(iii), II(i) and III(i)", *Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh*.

- Ives, Jack D. and Messerli, Bruno (1989). *The Himalayan Dilemma: Reconciling Development and Conservation*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Kingsbury, Benedict (1995). "Indigenous Peoples as an International Legal Concept", in Barnes, R.H. et al. (eds.), *Indigenous Peoples of Asia*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, pp. 13-34.
- Lee, R.G. / Field, D.R. / Burch William R (1990). *Community and Forestry: Continuities in the Sociology of Natural Resources*, Boulder: Westview Press.
- Lynch, Owen J. and Talbott, Kirk (1995). *Balancing Acts: Community-Based Forest Management and National Law in Asia and the Pacific*, Washington D.C: World Resources Institute.
- McNeely, Jeffrey (-). *Conserving Cultural Diversity: How the variety of human experience can help promote sustainable forms of using natural resources*, Gland: IUCN.
- Myers, N (1988). "Threatened Biotas: 'Hot Spots' in tropical forests", *The Environmentalist* 8: pp. 187-208.
- Palit, S (1996). "Indian Forest Departments in Transition" in Poffenberger, M. and McGean, B. (eds.), *Village Voices, Forest Choices*, Oxford University Press.
- Redclift, Michael and Benton, Ted (1994). *Social Theory and Global Environment*, Routledge, London/New York.
- Singh, Katar (1994). *Managing Common Pool Resources: Principles and Case Studies*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Soper, Kate (1995). *What is Nature?*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Talbott, Kirk and Lynch, Owen J (1994). *Workshop on Strategies for Effectively Promoting Community-Based Management of Tropical Forest Resources: Lessons from Asia and other Regions*. Washington D.C: World Resources Institute Centre.

Troup, R. S (1921). *The Silviculture of Indian Trees* (Vol.3) Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Wade, Robert (1988). *Village Republics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

References Concerning Forest Policy, Forest and Natural Resource Management in General and with Special Emphasis on Bhutan

Bhutanese Indigenous Knowledge Newsletter, Volume I, No.I, Agricultural Practices. March 1995 pp. 2-10.

Bhutanese Indigenous Newsletter, Second Issue, March 1995: Institutional: Community Winter Pastures of Cattle in Ura, Bumthang, pp. 27-29.

Bhutanese Indigenous Newsletter, Second Issue, March 1995: Natural Dyes: The Vegetable Dyes and Mineral Dyes. pp. 30-34.

Cernea, Michael M (1985). "Alternative Units of Social Organisations Sustaining Afforestation Strategies" in Michael M. Cernea (ed.), *Putting People First: Sociological Variables in Rural Development*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 267-293,

Montalembert, M.R. de and Schmithüsen, F (1993). *Policy, Legal Institutional Aspects of Sustainable Forest Management*, Unasylva, Vol. 44, Nr. 175, Rome: FAO, p. 3-9.

Ostrom, Elinor (1992 a). *Crafting Institutions for Self-Governing Irrigation Systems*, San Francisco: Institute of Contemporary Studies Press.

Ostrom, Elinor (1992 b). "The Rudiments of a Theory of the Origins, Survival, and Performance of Common-Property Institutions" in D. Bromley, et al. (eds.), *Making the Commons Work: Theory, Practice and Policy*, Indiana University.

Ministry of Agriculture (1995). *Forest and Nature Conservation Act 1995*, Thimphu: Ministry of Agriculture.

1978: The Land Act, Law Committee, Thimphu.

1969: The Bhutan Forest Act, Ministry of Trade, Industries and Forests, Thimphu.

1957: *Thrimshung chenmo*, Clause Chha 1-1 - Nya 1-19, Thimphu.

Schmithüsen, F (1996). "Tenure and Joint Resources Management Systems on Public Forest Lands: Issues and Trends", *Forstwissenschaftliche Beiträge der Professur Forest Policy and Forest Economics*, ETH Zurich. Nr.17. pp.35-55.

Schmithüsen, F (1995). "Evolution of Conservation Policies and their Impact on Forest Policy Development: The Example of Switzerland", *Commonwealth Forestry Review: Special Issues on Forestry and Nature Conservation*; Vol. 74 (1), 45-50.

Schmithüsen, F (1987). *The Impact of Land Tenure on Rural Forestry Development*, Forstwissenschaftliche Beiträge der Professur Forstpolitik + Forstökonomie der ETH Zürich, Nr. 4 (S. 121-140).

Seeland, Klaus (1996). "Sociological Remarks on 'Community Forestry' in Nepal, Arbeitsberichte Internationale Reihe No. 96/1", *Chair of Forest Policy and Forest Economics*, Zurich: ETH.

Seeland, Klaus (1995). "What is Indigenous Knowledge and Why does it Matter Today?", *Chair of Forest Policy and Forest Economics*, Zurich: ETH (paper presented at the International Seminar on Indigenous Knowledge on Forests, New Delhi).

Seeland, Klaus (1991). "Sanskritization and Environmental Perception Among Tibeto-Burman Speaking Groups" in Joshi, M.P./ Fanger, A.C./ Brown, C.W. (eds.), *Himalaya: Past and Present*, vol.III (1992 - 1993), p. 121- 139.

Seeland, Klaus (1990). "Environment and Social Erosion in Rural Communities of South Asia" in Werner, W.L. (ed.), *Aspects of Ecological Problems and Environmental Awareness in South Asia*, New Delhi: Manohar Pub., p.21-39.

Ura, K (1995). *The Hero With a Thousand Eyes*, Bangkok: Allied Printers.

Wade, Robert (1987). *The Management of Common Property Resources: Finding a Co-operative Solution*, Washington D.C: The World Bank.

References Concerning Forest Policy, Forest and Natural Resource Management in General and Other Parts of the World

Gilmour, D.A. and Fisher, R.J (1992). *Villagers, Forests and Foresters: The Philosophy, Process and Practice of Community Forestry in Nepal*, Nepal: Sahayogi Press.

Gilmour, D.A (1990). "Resource Availability and Indigenous Forest Management Systems in Nepal", *Society and Natural Resources*, Vol. 3, pp. 145-158.

Goldstein, Melvyn C. and Beall, Cynthia M (-). *Nomads of Western Tibet: The Survival of a Way of Life*. London: Serindia Publications.

Guha, Ramachandra (1989). *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Ingles, Andrew (1994). "The Influence of Religious Beliefs and Rituals on Forest Conservation in Nepal", *Discussion Paper : Nepal Australia Community Forestry Project*, Kathmandu.

Jodha, N.S (1986). "Common Property Resources and Rural Poor in Dry Regions of India", *Economic and Political Weekly*, pp.1169-1181.

Kaul, Minoti Chakravarty (1992). "Forest Rights and Forest Laws in the Indian Himalayas during the Second Half on the 19th Century" in Schmithüsen F. (ed.), *Forest Law and Environmental Legislation, Chair of Forest Policy and Forest Economics*, Zürich: ETH.

Poffenberger, M. and McGean, Betsy (1996). *Village Voices, Forest Choices: Joint Forest Management in India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.

ANNEXURE I

Religious Trees and Forests

Among the species that have been indicated to be of religious importance in the three *Gewogs* the following should be mentioned: *Pinus roxburghii*, *Castanopsis hystrix*, *Ficus cordata*, *Bambusa species*, *Musa species*, *Orozylon species*, *Rhus species*, *Cymbopogon species*, *Artemesia species* and *Quercus species*. These species are used according to the rituals. During the field survey it was observed that all these species are used in Radhi. In Shaba and Chumey some of them are used. These plant species are used for performing rituals, mostly of Bon origin. For instance in Radhi, for performing "Mingchang" (Of Bon origin and performed usually every year for the general welfare of the household or an individual who may be sick at the time of the performance. This ritual is carried out by a local Shaman, usually passed on hereditarily), *Pinus roxburghii*, *Orozylon species*, *Bambusa species*, *Musa species*, *Castanopsis species*, *Cymbopogon species* are required for completing the ritual.

Although these species are used for such rituals, there is no special spiritual attachment to these species. They are treated just like any other plant species while using them as firewood or for other purposes. Likewise, most of other Bon-based rituals involve the use of plant species. However, trees planted around *Lhakhangs*, *Chortens*, community centres, resting-places along trails are considered sacred and not cut or damaged. It is a taboo to cut or damage forests considered to be inhabited by local deities and evil spirits. This is also true for mountains, rocks, etc.

In the eastern part of the country, the most preferred species for cremation is oak. While it was not possible to get a plausible reason as to why only fresh oak for cremation are used, the logic seems to be that the only fresh wood that burns well was oak which was readily available in the *Sokshing*. In this context, the role of *Sokshing* goes far beyond providing just forest products. It becomes a source of social interaction between the households who have and those who do not have them, especially during such times as death and religious ceremonies where extra and specific species of firewood are required.

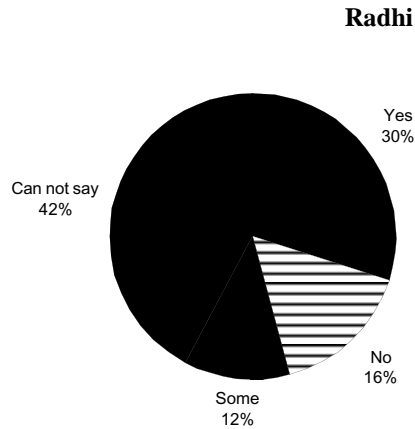
Two religious forests were observed in Radhi and Shaba *Gewogs*. 100 percent of the respondents of the interview in both the *Gewogs* said that

they would never destroy a religious forests or do anything forbidden by the local religious persons. For instance, a small patch of well stocked religious forest in Radhi has been in existence for many generations whereas the forests nearby have either been completely destroyed or being used frequently by the local people. The religious forest in Shaba has been protecting the catchment of the local temple for generations. Religious influence seems to have also restrained the people from setting forest fires deliberately for the benefit of new shoots of grass for their cattle as more than 95 percent of the people interviewed said that it is a sin to set forests on fire as millions of insects and animals are killed. Responses to my field interview in Radhi showed a hundred percent agreement that if religious forests are damaged, physical and spiritual harm will come to them.

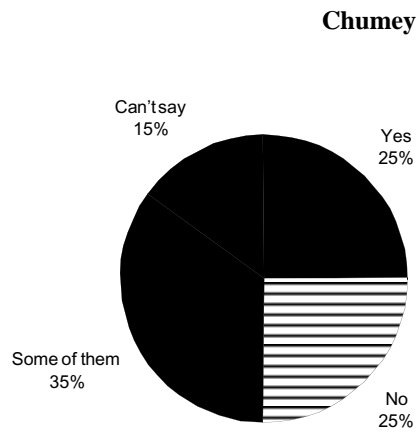
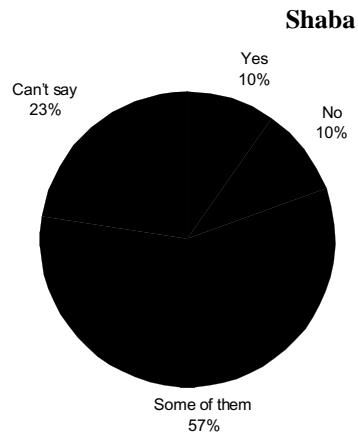
ANNEXURE II

Traditional Sanctions and Offence Cases under the Forest Law

Figure 7: Perception of Customary and Formal Sanctions*



* Question: Should social sanctions be superseded by new laws?



Source: Author's Field Survey, 1996

There is no distinct pattern of perception on whether social sanctions should be superseded by modern laws. In Radhi 30 percent said that social

sanctions should be superseded by modern laws. Only 16 percent felt otherwise. 42 percent said that they are not sure about it. In Shaba, the response was 10 percent who agreed and 10 percent who did not agree. In Chumey the ratio between who agreed and did not agree were equally split. However, there was a high percentage of who were not sure and who felt only some of the social sanctions should be superseded.

Annexure III: Glossary of *Dzongkhag* Terms Used in the Report

(S) = *Sharchogpa*. All other terms in *Dzongkha*.

Most of the terms adopted from Eighth Five Year Plan (1997-2002), Vol. I, Main Document, Planning Ministry, 1996 and Ura, K. (1995), *The Hero with Thousand Eyes*.

Aikarpo	Cloth woven from raw silk with traditional patterns (generally from the east)
Bangchung	Bamboo basket
Bongkhay (S)	Share Cropping
Chilgi dumra	Thatch garden land
Chimi	Member of the National Assembly
Choghu	Annually performed ritual
Chorten	Stupa (Skt), Buddhist monument
Chusup	In-charge of drinking and irrigation water in a village
Chuopen	Village functionary (village informant)
Chuzhing	Paddy land

Drudom	One form of labour conscription
Drongsep ngagtshel	Village/Community forest
Dungkhag	Sub-division of a district
Dungpa	Administrator of a Dungkhag
Dzong	Fortress
Dzongda	Civil administrator of a district
Dzongkha	National language
Dzongkhag	District
Dzongsel Woola	Annual maintenance of <i>Dzong</i>
Gewog	Administrative unit (block)
Gomchen	Lay priest
Gungda woola	Obligatory labour services to be rendered by households
Gup	Headman of a block
Kamzhing	Dry land where non-irrigated crops are grown
Kasho	Court circular or Royal Decree
Khimsa	House compound land
Lhakhang	Temple
Mang	Inhabitants of a village/ <i>Gewog</i>

Mang Rimdo	Village/community ritual
Mangap	Village elder (also assistant to <i>Gup</i>)
Meesup	Forest fire guard
Mencha (S)	Mithun bull/domesticated breeding bull
Mingchang	A form of ritual practiced in some parts of the east
Ngul thok dumra	Tree/cash crop garden land
Ngye (S)	Exchange of work for grains (practised mostly in the east)
Palang	Alcohol container made of bamboo
Pakshing zhing	Land under bamboo cultivation
Pangoleng garpa	Men from eastern Bhutan called to work in the buckwheat fields of the royal estates in Bumthang
Pangzhing	Barren land for shifting cultivation
Reezhing	Shifting cultivation land (Bumthang)
Reesup	Village forest guard
Rimpoche	Term of respect for a high lama
Saphang (S)	Share cropping where tenant keeps two thirds of the output
Saunam (S)	Annual offering to religious persons

Sharchogpa	Dialect spoken in eastern Bhutan
Shabdrung	Term used to refer to the Founder of Bhutan and his reincarnations
Shingsungpa	Agricultural crop damage arbitrator
Sokshing	Government forests registered in individual's name for collection of leaf litter
Thrimshung Chenmo	Supreme Laws
Thram	Land register
Thrimpon	District judge
Trelpa	Household paying tax
Trulku	Reincarnate lama
Tsadrog	Grazing land
Tsarin	Payment for using someone's pasture
Tseri	Forest land registered in an individual's name for shifting cultivation
Tshechu	Festival, which normally begins on the 10th of a lunar month - (there are mainly two types: religious activity performed in a house; celebrated where religious dances are performed during specific time of the year)
Tshesa	Vegetable garden land

Yak	High altitude domesticated animal (<i>Bos gruniens</i>)
Yathra	Colourful woollen textile of Bumthang
Zhapto lemi	A form of labour tax
Zow	Architect/carpenter

SUSTAINING CONSERVATION FINANCE: FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR THE BHUTAN TRUST FUND FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

*Tobgay S. Namgyal**

Abstract

The Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation (BT FEC) was established in 1991 as a sustainable, domestic funding source for Bhutan's environmental programmes. Almost a decade after its inception, the trust fund has spent US\$1.66 million against an accumulated capital base of US\$34.7¹ million. Grant making is guided by five-year funding objectives, focusing on conservation of biological diversity and promoting both government and non-government human capacity to manage the projects. However, there is no framework in place to strategically address new and emerging environmental issues, particularly the ecological stress factors from rapidly increasing basic human needs arising out of growing urban demographics, and the impacts of geo-politics and globalisation.

This paper discusses three scenarios for the future direction of the trust fund in Bhutan: as a financier of the government's recurrent costs of conservation; as an autonomous parastatal conservation agency; and as an independent grant maker guided by strategic five-year planning cycles. These scenarios are evaluated for their potential to fulfill the trust fund's social welfare mandate, as well as their possible contribution to gross national happiness (GNH), based on quantitative parameters established through a conceptual predictive model (Namgyal and Wangchuk, 1999) to measure the social and environmental well-being of Bhutan.

Introduction

* Director, Bhutan Trust Fund, Thimphu

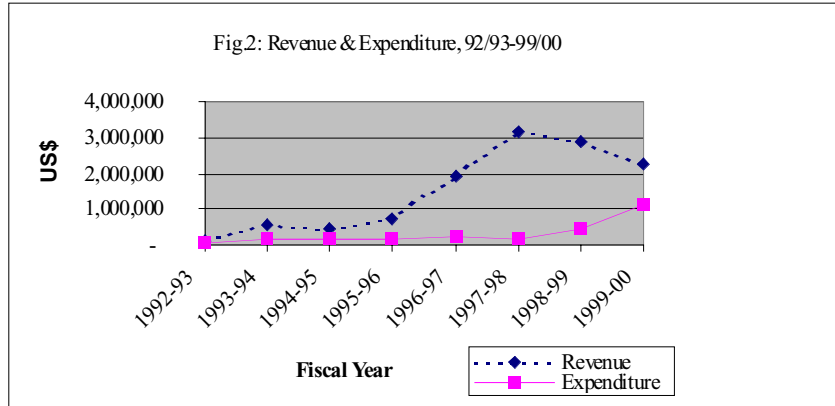
The concept of a trust fund as a common endowment is not new to Bhutan. For centuries, resident communities have owed monasteries throughout Bhutan. Their assets were actively invested in local economic systems, either through sharecropping of monastery land and livestock, financing trade expeditions, or monetary and in-kind loans whose investment returns financed community rituals, prayers and the upkeep of the monastery. Stewardship of the monastery and its assets was rotated within the community, particularly among families with monks. These early trust funds ensured a consistent economic foundation for a community, and in many ways contributed to a sense of spiritual and social well-being.

With the advent of social modernisation and economic monetisation, Bhutan began to address issues of financial sustainability in its national commitment to environmental conservation. Based on ancient principles of common resource stewardship, an innovative and sophisticated financing mechanism was conceived in the late 1980's in order to create an endowment to sustain the conservation of Bhutan's natural heritage. The Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation was established in January 1991, as the world's first environmental trust fund, with a US\$1 million donation from World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and technical assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the endowment received a \$10 million grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), its second-ever grant, and its first to an environmental trust fund. Between 1992 and 1998, the trust fund was capitalized with an additional \$10.304 million (Fig.1.0).

Fig.1: Capitalisation History of The Trust Fund

Donor	Year of contribution	Amount in US\$
World Wildlife Fund	1992	1,000,000
Royal Govt.of Bhutan	1992-94	173,818
Global Environment Facility	1992-96	10,000,000
Govt.of the Netherlands	1992-96	2,454,500
Govt.of Norway	1992-98	2,688,435
Govt.of Finland	1995-97	66,312
Govt.of Denmark	1996	2,334,418
Govt.of Switzerland	1996	2,586,207
	Total	21,303,690

In 1996, the trust fund was legally incorporated in Bhutan under Royal Charter, and its assets of \$21 million were then invested - with a view to maximizing returns - in the United States and global capital markets with a professional fund manager. As a social welfare organisation, the trust fund enjoys income tax- exempt status from the U.S government under 401(c)3 exemption. Today, the market value of the fund's assets almost total \$35 million. The rapid growth of the endowment within a period of four years can be attributed both to the remarkable growth of the U.S economy and the low spending capacity in Bhutan. However, the trust fund has focused on increasing its programme spending and for the first time in its history exceeded \$1 million in annual expenditure in the financial year 1999-2000 (Fig.2).



The Bhutan Trust Fund is widely acknowledged to be the world's first environmental trust fund. Following its success, 17 other trust funds have been established around the world to finance environmental conservation. These second and third generation environmental funds have advanced more sophisticated financing and investment mechanisms (Mikitin 1995, Tavera 1996, Norris 1997 & 2000), presenting tremendous opportunities for the original Bhutanese fund to further refine its future strategic direction and fundraising efforts (World Bank, 1999).

Even within Bhutan, the trust fund has inspired other innovative funding mechanisms for social development. A recent example is the Royal Government of Bhutan's (RGoB) Health Trust Fund, currently capitalized with \$15 million against an operational target of \$24 million. In a highly innovative strategy, Bhutan secured a concessional loan of \$10 million from the Asian Development Bank repayable over the next 40 years at one percent per annum, which it is using as one-on-one matching funds to attract bilateral donor contributions. A Youth Development Fund and Cultural Trust Fund are also being planned, to sustain financing for social development and the preservation of Bhutan's cultural heritage respectively, although neither yet enjoy the fiscal leverage and donor attraction of the health trust fund. All three funds are using the environmental trust fund as a model since its financial innovation and technical credibility have received wide international support.

Governance

The trust fund is governed by Royal Charter of 1996, and operates independently of both the government and any particular civil society group. The trust fund's highest decision-making body is its Management Board. The director of the trust fund secretariat is the board's ex-officio member secretary. The Management Board was fully Bhutanised in May 2001 by replacing its former non-government members by Bhutanese representatives from a national environmental NGO and the private sector including civil society.

The board decides on policy issues, reviews and approves project proposals and annual workplans. On financial matters, the board is advised by its Asset Management Committee chaired by a board member. The Fund's secretariat is run by five full-time staff. The trust fund director chairs a multi-sectoral, seven-member technical advisory panel, which reviews grant proposals and advises on programme matters.

Grants are implemented by various government agencies, local government units, communities, NGOs, and individual scientists. The secretariat supervises and coordinates grant implementation, and reports progress to the board twice a year. At the end of each fiscal year, a consolidated technical and financial report is published for public dissemination.

Goals

The trust fund was established for the promotion of social welfare through environmental conservation of the forests, flora, fauna, diverse ecosystems and biodiversity in Bhutan (Royal Charter, 1996). Conservation grants are focused on the following areas:

- Training professionals in ecology, natural resources management, forestry, and the environment;
- Assessment of biological resources and development of an ecological information base;
- Development and implementation of management plans for protected areas;
- Enhancement of public awareness and environmental education in schools;
- Provision of institutional support to organisations engaged in environmental conservation;
- Development and implementation of projects integrating conservation and development.

The development of the trust fund's strategic funding priorities are based on articulated needs and conservation priorities outlined in the Biodiversity Action Plan (1998(a)), the National Environmental Strategy (1998(b)) and the government's five-year socio-economic development plans. To prevent ad-hoc grant making, the trust fund widely consults Bhutanese society to formulate five-year frameworks of strategic funding priorities (Bhutan Trust Fund, 1997). The following section illustrates the three basic strategic funding objectives identified for the trust fund's first five-year strategic plan.

Strategic Funding Objectives, 1997-2002

Strategic Funding Objective	Eligible activities
<p>I. Supporting <i>in-situ</i> and <i>ex-situ</i> conservation initiatives in the entire green sector, including sustainable utilization of genetic and species resources.</p>	<p>(i) Capacity building for integrated conservation & development in protected areas with management plans. (ii) Conservation management planning & infrastructure building for parks not yet under scientific management. (iii) Enhancing central government capability to provide specialized support to protected area management. (iv) Protecting and/or restoring the biophysical environment from natural & anthropogenic threats. (v) Sustainable forest management planning & agro-biodiversity conservation.</p>
<p>II. Strengthening integrated conservation and development planning through conservation research and monitoring of biodiversity change.</p>	<p>(i) Capacity building for socioeconomic & biodiversity assessments, & development & conservation research. (ii) Promoting central government capability for organizing, storing, analyzing & providing access to conservation information. (iii) Assessing & monitoring biological change in protected areas & national forests, consistent with the Biodiversity Action Plan.</p>
<p>III. Promoting conservation education and awareness of conservation policies and issues.</p>	<p>(i) Non-formal conservation awareness programs. (ii) Integrating environmental education into the national education curriculum & strengthening capacity for conservation</p>

	education. (iii) Developing resource materials & teaching aids on Bhutan's natural heritage. (iv) Involving religious communities in promoting conservation values & ethics. (v) Building awareness of conservation legislation, public policy & regulations.
--	--

The trust fund awards grants in the spring and fall when the board convenes its semi-annual meetings. Government agencies, non-government organisations (NGO), grassroots communities, and eligible Bhutanese individuals are encouraged to access grant resources. Unless otherwise approved by the board, grants are limited to \$300,000 for a maximum period of three years. The trust fund secretariat has annual discretionary small grants of \$43,000, mainly for applied conservation research projects of less than \$8,500 each.

In 1999, the trust fund adopted an annual spending ceiling, with total annual expenditure to remain within five percent of the investment portfolio's cost value as measured at the end of the previous fiscal year. This enables trust fund staff to operate within a financial target, and permits re-investment of unspent investment income to hedge against inflation and continuously increase the endowment. Almost a decade since its inception, the trust fund has expended \$1,663,830, against an accumulated capital base of \$34,705,974 (market value as of end-September, 2000).

The broad criteria for institutional success - as measured by capitalisation, revenue meeting expenditure, strategic grant making, and growing market value - include demonstrated global benefits, credibility of grantees, donor interest to focal areas, and financial innovation. Until a monitoring and evaluation system is developed, the trust fund has been using GEF developed benchmarks. At the end of each fiscal year, the trust fund's books are audited by a board-approved auditor, and financial statements are publicly disseminated.

Investment Policy

The investment portfolio is the trust fund's most critical asset since conservation financing can not be sustained without healthy investment

revenues. Realising this, the trust fund's board contracted investment management to a professional asset manager based in the United States in mid-1996. Fund management receives the highest fiduciary attention and the trust fund's investments and performance are carefully and regularly reviewed by the board.

In order to earn maximum returns over a long term investment horizon, the entire trust fund endowment is invested in a mixed portfolio of global and U.S. equities (70 percent) and U.S. fixed income instruments (30 percent). The asset manager is issued prudent, board-approved investment guidelines, and performance is measured against board-approved market benchmarks such as the S&P500, EAFE, Lehmann Aggregate and Money market indices, for large-capitalisation U.S equities, large-cap global equities, U.S fixed income and money market portfolio categories, respectively. In order to remain competitive, the trust fund is also regularising periodic, independent evaluations of the performance of both the investment portfolio and it's fund manager.

Contractual Investment Guidelines

The primary investment objective is to attain a total return over the long-term consisting of income and capital appreciation, net of investment expenses, that is at least five percentage points greater than the rate of inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index in the United States over a five-year period.

The Investment Manager is expected to achieve these objectives within a range of portfolio risk that a prudent manager with professional skills in investment would take in similar economic, financial, and market environments. As a general rule, the Management Board of the Bhutan Trust Fund is more concerned with the consistency of the total return over an extended period of time rather than the fluctuating returns that may occur over shorter interim periods.

Equity investments are permitted to equal as much as 70% of the market value of the total assets under management.

Fixed-income investments (corporate and government bonds) shall equal

at least 30% of the total assets' market value.

Equity investments shall be concentrated in dividend-paying corporations and shall exclude corporations capitalized at less than \$250 million except when such corporations are part of a mutual fund which may include smaller holdings as long as the average holding is capitalized above \$250 million.

Quality of fixed-income investments shall be maintained at a level of at least Moody's top two ratings or the equivalent rating by another agency.

Individual holdings of equities or fixed-income investments shall not exceed 10% of the total market value of the assets except in the case of OECD Government-guaranteed bonds.

Ngultrum investments in Bhutan should be considered as long as its purchasing power can be prudently protected. The Investment Manager is not expected to advise on Ngultrum investments.

Non-marketable securities, short selling, or other similarly risky investments are prohibited.

Investments shall be made in corporations whose activities generally are in line with the conservation philosophy of the trust fund. In addition, the Management Board will review the investments from time to time for this purpose and advise the investment firm of any necessary changes. The Management Board may provide more detailed instructions to the Investment Manager regarding environmental criteria.

Mutual funds shall be avoided except in the case of mutual funds of non-U.S. market countries or smaller capitalization holdings where individual stock selection may be less advantageous.

The investment firm shall provide quarterly investment reports to the Management Board or on other occasions as reasonably requested.

Annually, the investment firm shall provide an analysis of the past year's investment performance plus recommendations for the upcoming year.

There shall be at least an annual face-to-face meeting between the investment firm and the Management Board (or its representative) to discuss investment performance and recommendations.

As a socially responsible investor, the trust fund regularly reviews its holdings to screen out any individual holdings in the portfolio that appear to represent poor environmental performers. The trust fund has deliberately not adopted an automatic negative screen as it is difficult to differentiate between good environmental performers in a "dirty" industry and poor performers in a more benign industry. Normal industry disclosure requirements (such as the U.S Securities and Exchange Commission's requirement for companies to disclose significant environment liabilities) are also not rigorous enough to yield sufficient information to judge a particular company's relative environmental performance. While indexed, socially-responsible mutual funds represent potential investment vehicles for the trust fund, it is important to note that the positive criteria of these funds substantially limits their universe of investment choices and thus implies different risk/return trade-offs.

The investment portfolio has significantly increased (Fig.2 & 3) since investing in the global capital markets. This is due equally to strong investment revenues and low programme spending. Recent indications that the U.S economy could be slowing down have not yet seriously affected the portfolio, and actually presents a good opportunity to increase equity exposure up to the board-approved 70 percent. In order to seek greater diversification, the trust fund also invests one percent of its assets in the Bhutanese equities market.

Fig.3: Growth of the Investment Portfolio in US\$ (Fiscal '92-93 to '99-00)

Fiscal Year	Investment Portfolio	Revenue	Expendit-ure	Reinvested Income
'92-93	9,654,076	119,188	71,115	48,073
'93-94	10,460,609	540,092	173,342	366,750

Sustaining Conservation Finance

'94-95	11,409,139	455,133	144,946	310,187
'95-96	15,970,346	716,482	164,370	552,112
'96-97	23,255,736	1,920,924	213,754	1,707,170
'97-98	26,250,447	3,132,153	177,462	2,954,691
'98-99	28,781,214	2,849,755	430,612	2,419,143
'99-00	29,896,698	2,251,779	1,129,499	1,122,280
	Total	11,985,506	2,505,100	9,480,406

Problem

Within a narrow, 46,000 sq.km of land sandwiched between the Indian plains and the Tibetan Plateau, Bhutan lies at the juncture of the Palearctic realm of temperate Euro-Asia and the Indo-Malayan realm of the Indian sub-continent. The kingdom has an ecological diversity hardly matched anywhere throughout Asia. Ongoing biological assessments indicate the presence of more than 5,446 species of vascular plants, 178 mammals, and 770 species of resident and migratory birds (RGoB, 1998(a)). The invertebrate and amphibious fauna have yet to be inventoried. Bhutan's environmental leadership has attracted considerable global attention due to its progressive vision of sustainability driven by a harmonized position between conservation and wise utilisation (RGoB, 1999). Unlike elsewhere in the developing world, Bhutan has taken strong actions to preserve its natural heritage for future generations, especially since much of its culture has grown out of a pristine natural environment.

Bhutan's social and political commitment to conservation is manifest through a pledge by the National Assembly in 1995, to maintain in perpetuity a national forest cover at 60 percent of the country's landmass.

Furthermore, as a criteria of the GEF grant to the trust fund, Bhutan's protected areas system was revised to make it ecologically representative, and covers 26 percent of landmass. In 1999, another nine percent of the country was demarcated as biological corridors linking all nine protected areas. Sustainable economic development policies, backed by strong environmental legislation such as the Forest and Nature Conservation Act (1995) and the Environmental Assessment Act (2000), are ensuring the enforcement of collective national commitments.

Traditional factors such as a small population of over 600,000 and subsistence landuse systems had permitted a scale of socio-economic experimentation to demonstrate Bhutan's environmental leadership. These conditions are now being challenged as a result of changing demographics, rapid urbanisation and the ensuing unbalanced development. The National Environment Commission (1998(b)) projects that if the present annual growth rate of 3.1 percent is not checked, Bhutan's total human population could cross 2.5 million by 2040. Rapid urbanisation is now a well-

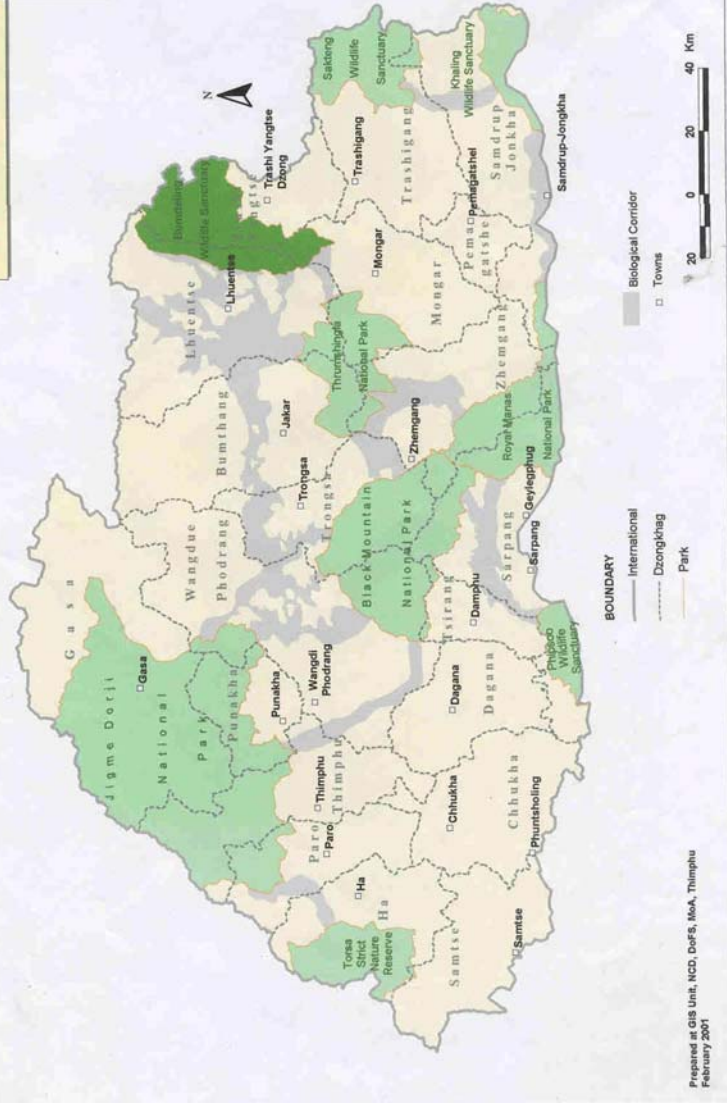
recognized trend with increasing basic human needs such as fuelwood and clean water. Rapid development is increasing economic activity and Bhutan cannot remain isolated from the pressure of globalisation, geo-politics, and consumerism with ensuing issues of global warming, waste disposal, and a possible energy crises. Furthermore, the evolving political structure in Bhutan could strengthen the lobby culture for powerful vested interests, whether for political or economic gain, thereby compromising the environmental successes achieved to date. These emerging ecological stressors from urban Bhutan collectively pose the most serious threats to the country's biodiversity. They also present significant challenges to current environmental successes and the national sustainable development strategy, of which the trust fund is a main proponent.

Threats to Bhutan's Environment (RGoB, 1998(a))

The main threats to ecological integrity of habitats and species include:

1. Land conversion causing habitat destruction and fragmentation, resulting in the loss of biomes, ecosystems and wildlife species that depend on the habitats, particularly in the tropical and subtropical zones of the south and the temperate zones of the interior;
2. In certain areas, overexploitation of land, causing habitat degradation and loss of plant and animal species;

Map 2: Bhutan
Biological Corridors and Protected areas



Prepared at GIS Unit, NCD, DoF, MoA, Thimphu
February 2011

3. Competition with/replacement of indigenous species by domestic and/or exotic species.

Direct and underlying causes of threats include:

1. Annual population growth of 3.1 percent puts ever-increasing pressure on natural resource base;
2. Overgrazing by domestic livestock in certain locations, both in range and pasture areas leads to attrition or loss of species, reduction of productivity and erosion; in forest areas it seriously impacts national regeneration and changes in vegetation composition;
3. Reliance on wood for fuel is exacerbated wherever there is human habitation;
4. Gaps in implementation of policies and legislation;
5. Unsustainable cropping practises - such as permanent dryland cultivation on steep slopes without proper soil conservation, or shifting cultivation - result in declining soil fertility and diminution of species composition;
6. Forest fires, mostly if not entirely caused by humans;
7. Overexploitation of species, especially through collection, poaching and heavy use;
8. Limited human resources;
9. Introduction of exotic species, especially associated with agriculture, forestry and fisheries;
10. Pollution, primarily of water in the vicinity of urban areas;
11. Inadequate information on biodiversity, its management and use, and inefficient use of existing information;
12. Transborder pressures including atmospheric pollution, and poaching of medicinal plants and animals.

The Trust Fund is investing considerable resources to build up the institutional and human capacity to manage the country's unique biological diversity (Fig.4). However, it could be argued that such substantive interventions cannot by themselves effectively mitigate the pressures from a rapidly urbanising society. It is the emerging urban "root causes" of increasing basic human needs that the trust fund has so far not addressed in

its grant making, that pose a far more serious threat to the natural environment than any rural pressures.

Therefore, the Trust Fund's biggest shortcomings arise from the lack of a clear focus in dealing with emerging environmental threats. While its annual grant making is guided by a strategic five year funding framework, there are no minimum impact assessment methodologies in place, and the public participation crucial to long-term sustainability is currently inadequate. Clearly, if its programmes are to make any lasting impact on environmental conservation in Bhutan, the trust fund will need to develop a more holistic approach to grant making that addresses national and localised environmental issues, and incorporate broader social parameters in its funding criteria. Against such a scenario, the next section will discuss a future role for the trust fund as articulated by stakeholders.

Future Directions

The following discussion can be separated into three possible scenarios: the trust fund as a financier of the full recurrent costs of the protected areas and relevant central government agencies; a gradual evolution of the trust fund into a parastatal conservation agency autonomous of the government and responsible for financing and managing Bhutan's protected areas and conservation programmes; or the trust fund maintaining its status quo as an independent grant maker guided by strategic funding frameworks.

Fig.4: Ongoing Support for Recurrent Costs of Incremental Staff, and HRD (1997-2002)

Incremental staffing & Recurrent costs				Human Resources Development			
Beneficiary	Inc [*]	Estab [♣]	Cost (\$)	Beneficiary	MSc	Short term	Cost (\$)
1. Nature Conservation Div.	10	96,061	272,952	1. Nature Conservation Div.	9	10	739,500
2. Royal Manas NP	29	30,150	301,232	2. General park mgmt.	-	52	60,358
3. Jigme Dorji NP	35	-	295,065	3. Thrumshingla NP	1	-	87,000
4. Black Mountains NP	11	-	114,524	4. National Environment Commission			394,948
5. Bomdelling WS	16	-	202,963	5. Royal Society for Protection of Nature	2	-	174,000
6. Thrumshingla NP	9	33,080	121,616	6. Dept. of Education	-	8	69,225
7. Phibsoo WS	4	-	42,779	7. BSc. (Env. Economics)	1	-	151,509
8. National Environment Commission	2	-	40,275	8. Sherubtse College	1	-	120,000
9. Dept. of Education	1	-	20,138	9. Dept. of Forestry Services	5	-	250,000
10. Royal Society for Protection of Nature	11	40,877	362,471	10. Levy/overhead to RCSC	1		43,600
							227,504
<i>Total incremental staff & establishment</i>	<i>128</i>	<i>200,168</i>	<i>1,774,015</i>	<i>Total:</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>2,317,644</i>
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>128</i>	<i>200,168</i>	<i>1,774,015</i>	<i>Grand Total:</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>2,317,644</i>

* Incremental costs

♣ Establishment costs

The Royal Government has been generally receptive to all three options, but administrative convenience and the relatively small capital base of the trust fund have guided the trust fund's decision to maintain its existing institutional and programming structure. However, issues of sustainability, financial viability and the need to articulate a concrete vision for the trust fund's future role in Bhutanese society continue to call for clear future directions.

The following discussion is based on the three aforementioned scenarios, each option's perceived advantages and problems, the necessary conditions for success, and key issues.

Financing the Government's Recurrent Costs of Conservation

During its initial period, when mobilising capital contributions to its endowment, the trust fund was expected to finance the recurrent costs of the government's conservation programmes, especially Bhutan's protected areas and their central coordinating agency, the Nature Conservation Division in the Department of Forests. The trust fund has moved away from this position as its resources can now be more effectively utilised to set up conservation infrastructure in the field, rather than assuming the central government's budgetary responsibilities. Furthermore, the government wished to continue funding conservation directly to demonstrate its commitment to environmental conservation.

However, various stakeholders again raised the proposal, particularly as the trust fund is partially supporting the recurrent costs of at least 117 incremental positions identified throughout the government.

Perceived Advantages

(a) A primary mandate of the trust fund to support biodiversity conservation would be fulfilled if investment revenues could support the full budgetary requirements of the parks and their central headquarters. Such support would be limited to direct recurrent costs such as salaries, benefits, field allowances and basic overhead, but it would ensure that conservation in Bhutan enjoyed a well-funded, consistent operating budget as long as the trust fund existed, and would not depend on unforeseeable government budgetary fluctuations.

(b) Using trust fund revenues to finance the recurrent costs of the government's parks division would not only free up considerable resources for spending in other crucial social service sectors, but also permit the government to step up its capital support for field conservation activities. In the latter area, Bhutan has primarily relied on external donor support to finance conservation planning and implementation, and the government's direct cost sharing could foster greater ownership of local programmes.

(c) In this scenario, the trust fund's full budgetary support would facilitate administrative convenience in financial reporting and management. It would streamline financial contributions currently being spent on identified incremental positions in six parks and headquarters, and eliminate the need for painfully extracting progress reports out of the government treasury, where such records are allegedly maintained. The general experience on progress reporting to date has been fairly complicated, since the government never had to utilise external funding for any of its recurrent costs.

Perceived Problems

(a) Unless the trust fund were to increase its annual spending ceiling, using its resources for budgetary, recurrent support to government programmes would mean fully committing its annual investment revenues to a single project. By necessity, this would close the window on other equally if not more worthwhile projects, and exclude the rest of Bhutanese society from grant making. A common reason often cited for the inadequate public participation in the trust fund, is a public perception of the trust fund as a government resource focused on government owned programmes. This

could be a serious fiduciary issue, as the trust fund's assets are a public resource and belong to every Bhutanese citizen including future generations.

(b) This approach goes against the trust fund's own mandate to promote social welfare through environmental conservation. While the government would perceive the trust fund as a donor for the green sector (i.e. for both in-situ and ex-situ conservation), only the \$10 million contributed by the GEF, or half of the trust fund's original principal, is strictly earmarked for conservation grant making in the green sector. The trust fund, therefore, has a responsibility to ensure that both the green and brown sectors are equally addressed through its grant making.

(c) As a mere recurrent cost financier of a government agency, the trust fund eventually could have little or no control over the long term impact of its spending. While human infrastructure is obviously crucial for successful conservation, non-specialised staff would be of little value except as conventional enforcers of a traditional command-and-control management regime. Tying up the trust fund's resources in salaries deprives conservation staff of the specialised training needed at all field levels. Currently, almost half the trust fund's annual revenues are directed to funding specialised training, to ensure that staff are adequately equipped with the requisite knowledge and expertise as resource managers in Bhutan's rapidly changing environment.

Necessary Conditions for Success

The single biggest determining factor, while discussing the trust fund's role as the government's recurrent cost financier, is its capital base. If the trust fund had a much larger asset base than present levels, it could possibly finance the government's full recurrent costs for conservation. However, preliminary estimates indicate that the trust fund endowment would need more than \$50 million before its revenues, based on present rates of return, could feasibly support all recurrent costs in government and also maintain a public grant making window. In the world of financial investments, present rates of return are no guarantee for future performance.

Key Issues

Clearly, the amount of funding available from the Trust Fund is a major issue. Various strategies could be realized to expeditiously increase the fund's asset base. These include soliciting further contributions from external donors and the Bhutanese themselves, seeking innovative mechanisms to generate in-country contributions including capital donations from the government, and growing the endowment internally through a combination of risky but profitable investments and further limiting annual spending.

Beginning with the Eighth Five Year Plan, external donor support has increased conspicuously for both in-situ and ex-situ conservation efforts. However, the full impact of Bhutan's donor funded conservation programmes has yet to be assessed. It is also not foreseeable how long external support will continue for national conservation efforts. If the trust fund were to take on RGoB's recurrent costs of conservation, it would mean that additional funds would not be available for any other conservation grants, as the amount required for the government's Nature Conservation Division far exceeds the trust fund's annual spending limit.

One could also argue that RGoB has a legal and moral responsibility to integrate environmental conservation into the country's socio-economic development plans and programmes. All existing RGoB legislation and policies support this development philosophy. As a priority, this should

mean that the government would directly finance at least the basic costs of conservation.

Evolution into an Autonomous Parastatal Conservation Agency

A second scenario for the future role of the trust fund could be to gradually evolve into an autonomous parastatal conservation agency. The term "parastatal" refers to an organisation that has many of the functions of a government agency, but is run by an independent board of directors, who are appointed by the government. There are many conservation agencies that operate as parastatals, with the more successful ones located in Africa (South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Madagascar, the Seychelles), and a number of other countries whose conservation agencies are now in the process of changing from government departments into parastatals (Zimbabwe, Uganda and Zambia). In late 1998, Canada launched its own Parks Canada Agency by an Act of Parliament.

In the context of Bhutan, the trust fund's evolution to parastatal status could gain broad support if it was proposed as an "autonomous" organisation, in the same manner that established several high-level government institutions such as the Royal Audit Authority and Royal Civil Service Commission. The nature of services provided by these organisations require independence from the government's daily operations, and yet they have remained accountable to their respective boards/commissions and the government. Similarly, the board of directors of an autonomous Bhutanese parastatal could be ultimately accountable to a government Minister or Council of Ministers which appoints the board members, and to the legislation that established the law creating the parastatal. The day-to-day operations of a parastatal will be managed by a chief executive officer, normally appointed by the board of directors. The core indicative costs required to set up and run a parastatal agency in Bhutan would be similar to those projected earlier.

Spergel (2000) summed up the major advantages and constraints to setting up a parastatal conservation agency in Bhutan, by raising some interesting scenarios with regard to the management and financial structure of a possible parastatal, vis-a-vis the role of the trust fund as a grant maker or recurrent cost financier.

Perceived Advantages

(a) Most importantly, a parastatal represents decentralized government functions and authority, thereby making it possible to achieve greater local participation, and to more effectively and efficiently implement grants. The business culture could enable it to substantially cut costs, by contracting with private businesses or local communities to perform specific functions. Decision-making in a parastatal would be subject to less "red tape" than a government department, and therefore could respond more quickly and flexibly to new problems and changing circumstances. As a result, a parastatal would promote easier partnerships with local communities, NGOs and private businesses, compared to a government agency.

(b) The evolution into an autonomous parastatal would put the financial resources of the trust fund at the disposal of an institution separate from the government and fully responsible for Bhutan's protected areas and biodiversity conservation programmes. This would serve the trust fund's primary mandate for biodiversity conservation and introduce critical elements of private sector innovation, efficiency and competitiveness to a service-based organisation traditionally perceived as an uninvolved government regulator.

(c) A parastatal also has more incentive to increase revenues generated from "user fees" and other sources, and to develop innovative new ways of raising revenues, because it could be permitted to keep all the revenues that it earns, rather than having to hand them over to the government treasury. This would give staff an incentive to be efficient and "service-oriented". A parastatal could also continue to receive financial support from international donors.

(d) Within the limits of its charter or by-laws, a parastatal would be free to establish its own rules and procedures, and its staff would usually be non-government employees. It is not subject to civil service salary scales and personnel rules, and can more easily hire, fire and promote staff based on their job performance, and offer higher compensation in order to attract and retain the most qualified people. Staff would have a greater sense of mission, higher morale, and greater professionalism.

Perceived Problems

(a) It is foreseeable that the parastatal's core costs could use up a significant portion, if not the entire annual investment revenue, of the trust fund's revenue projections. While the parastatal could certainly harbour other opportunities for generating additional revenues, it could be argued that Bhutan has not yet reached the economic level when parastatals can be sustained by tourism or even budgetary support from the government treasury. Internal revenue generation remains a priority for the government and it would be unrealistic, though highly desirable, to expect conservation earnings to be fully reinvested into field conservation efforts.

(b) There could be general government reluctance to devolve administrative authority over 26 percent of Bhutan to a parastatal agency. An initial way of overcoming this would be to gradually introduce the parastatal concept by using a park as an experimental pilot, which could then generate important lessons when considering a national-level parastatal.

(c) Conservation goals could become compromised if generating revenues becomes the driving motive for a parastatal - either in order to make profits, or in order to meet a government demand that the parks must be 100 percent financially self-sustaining. For instance, a parastatal might be tempted to approve the construction of a large tourist lodge in an ecologically sensitive place in order to increase the parastatal's revenues. If a parastatal becomes overly dependent on tourism revenues for financing its field operations, it could have severe problems if tourism decreases because of external events, civil unrest in a neighbouring country, an economic crisis in tourists' home countries, or due to changes in Bhutan's tourism policy.

Necessary Conditions for Success

Most importantly, the relationship between a parastatal and its former Ministry would have to be very clearly defined in the Act/Decree that establishes the parastatal. The legislation would need to define how specific functions and responsibilities relating to forests, wildlife, and law enforcement are going to be divided or shared in the future. It would need

to define what services the government will continue to provide, such as security for visitors to and from protected areas; access roads and other infrastructure; and any legal, accounting or technical services. Unless these issues are clearly defined and agreed upon at the outset, there may be endless disputes later on, and the parastatal agency may find itself without the initial support crucial for its success.

The process of establishing a parastatal must be driven from inside the country, and have very strong government support, rather than being driven by international donors. The parastatal must have enough technically competent mid-level managers (versus a few good people at the top level), who are open to new ways of thinking and doing things.

Key Issues

A basic issue would be if a single parastatal should be established to manage all of Bhutan's national parks. The alternative is to establish a pilot for a single park, such as Jigme Dorji National Park, which could then generate important lessons when setting up a national-level parastatal. If a national-level parastatal is established, should individual parks nevertheless be allowed to keep, and to decide how to spend, part of the revenues that each of them generates? And should a national-level conservation parastatal delegate some of its authority and functions to semi-autonomous boards that could be established for each park, and that could include representatives of local governments and local communities?

The governance structure of a parastatal would also require careful thought, particularly regarding board composition, tenure, and membership including local participation. Should the board's decisions be subject to veto by a government Minister or the Council of Ministers? Should the parastatal be primarily an implementing agency for policies which are set by the Ministry, or should the parastatal's board have primary responsibility for setting policies relating to parks, wildlife, and biodiversity conservation? Should the parastatal have authority over wildlife and biodiversity conservation outside of the parks (as is the case in Kenya?), or should it only have authority inside the parks?

Regarding funding, a critical issue is if income from the trust fund should pay for part or all of the recurrent costs of a new parastatal agency that would be responsible for parks and conservation in Bhutan. Spergel (2000) explored other potential sources of revenue a parastatal could have, besides the trust fund's investment revenues and possible government budget allocations. Initial proposals might include a "conservation fee" that is added onto the airport tax, hotel taxes or visa fees, individual park entry fees and other types of user fees, profits from tourism concessions and other commercial enterprises operating inside the parks, or from visitor facilities that are operated by the parastatal itself. Finally, to what extent could expanding the number and geographical distribution of foreign tourists within Bhutan be a way of generating more revenues for parks and conservation, or to what extent could this harm the pristine environment that the parastatal was set up in order to better conserve?

Grant Making Based on Strategic Planning in Five-Year Cycles

A third scenario on the future role of the trust fund could be to maintain its status quo, whereby annual grant making is guided by five-year cycles planned carefully in tandem with the government's five-year socio-economic development plans. Currently, the trust fund is implementing its first five-year strategic plan of funding objectives (1997-2002), formulated to coincide with RGoB's Eighth Five Year Plan. Presently, the annual five percent spending ceiling averages to \$1.5 million.

Strategic Funding Objectives

1. Supporting in-situ and ex-situ conservation initiatives in the entire green sector, including sustainable utilisation of genetic and species resources.
2. Strengthening integrated conservation and development planning through applied conservation research and monitoring of biodiversity change.
3. Promoting conservation education and awareness of conservation policies and issues.

Perceived Advantages

(a) The trust fund is presently well positioned to address its primary biodiversity conservation mandates, and also progress to popular participation through public grant making. While its core funding mandates have focused on the green sector, the trust fund can and does accommodate broader issues of sustainable utilisation and management of natural resources. It also promotes civil society participation in environmental programmes through long-term, core institutional support to Bhutan's only environmental NGO, the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature.

(b) Strategic planning in five-year cycles presents a cohesive well-grounded funding strategy to ensure the most effective utilisation of trust fund resources. Effective planning could ensure the adequate fulfillment of both the trust fund's primary mandate to support biodiversity conservation, and the need to respond quickly to emerging environmental issues arising from changing demographics and rapid urbanisation. In addition, the existing small management structure and a compact organisation of only five full time staff has minimized the trust fund's overhead costs, while simultaneously increasing the amount available for conservation grants.

(c) The diversification of conservation grants allows the trust fund to address multiple environmental issues, within a conservative annual budget. The fixed annual spending ceiling outlines both an operational spending target and a prudent fiduciary principle to reinvest a portion of annual revenues to hedge against inflation and continuously increase the capital base. The latter is particularly essential since the trust fund has not pursued any major fundraising since it became fully operational with \$21 million in 1996.

(d) The ongoing incorporation of critical private-sector principles of innovation and efficiency would ensure that trust fund resources are used most effectively, within a dynamic portfolio of conservation grants ranging from capacity building of key stakeholders to timely policy research initiatives. In fact, such flexibility has enabled the trust fund to identify and develop a mitigating strategy to overcome one of the biggest constraints to spending - the lack of absorptive capacity both within and outside government for environmental programmes.

Perceived Problems

(a) While the broader five-year funding cycle is an excellent indicator of efficient strategic planning, the experience to date has not fully justified the rationale. Even with the inception of strategic planning, grant making is still dependent on ad-hoc annual proposal solicitation and approval, with varying levels of response to the established strategic funding objectives. Current participation is limited to stakeholders from government and a non-government agency, and leaves out the voices of civil society.

(b) A major constraint under the ongoing funding strategy is the absence of any specific yardstick to measure the impact of the trust fund's programmes. Only in the past year has there been any concerted effort directed towards measuring significant long-term conservation successes. It is hoped that by mid 2001, a concrete impact evaluation framework will be in place for the trust fund to assess the impact of its grants, particularly those supporting government conservation efforts. Otherwise, the trust fund will have little quantitative criteria on which to base future interventions.

(c) Inadvertently, some duplication exists with external donor funding for environmental programmes. This was also one of the reasons for the trust fund's earlier low spending capacity. Several European governments, multilateral agencies and an international NGO have conservation projects in five of Bhutan's six operational protected areas. In addition, the Dutch-funded Sustainable Development Secretariat and the GEF Small Grants Programme have substantive budgets for annual conservation grant making. Against such a scenario, the trust fund has often had to step back to avoid duplicating conservation initiatives, and instead promote cost-sharing with other donors, with limited success so far.

Necessary Conditions for Success

In order for the trust fund to make a significant difference to Bhutan's environmental management, civil society's effective participation in trust fund programmes is critical. Hopefully, the degree of public involvement will increase over present levels by the end of the first five-year strategic plan. Results from an impact assessment of trust fund programmes should

reflect ground situations, and honestly assess the shortcomings and constraints of both the donor and the grantee.

Capital markets are the most unpredictable avenues of investment, and it is not certain if future revenues will match, if not exceed, previous years' earnings. Investment income has to be sustained at present levels to ensure steady revenues for future strategic plans and reinvestment into the endowment. However, the trust fund's exposure to global equities (currently permitted up to 70 percent of the portfolio) could possibly be an area of concern, notwithstanding fund management's credible risk diversification strategies.

Key Issue

The inadequate level of public participation in the trust fund's environmental grant making is a major constraint to optimum grant resource utilisation. The trust fund realized this early in its programmes, and the first, currently ongoing strategic plan addresses basic capacity issues both in government agencies and in the non-government environmental sector. Over a five-year period, the trust fund has committed more than \$4 million to develop the necessary human infrastructure, in order to eventually step up conservation stakeholders' absorptive capacity of grant resources. While investments in human infrastructure take considerable time to mature, an early hopeful sign is the recent unprecedented increase in the trust fund's annual expenditure.

In summary, the Bhutanese people will need to determine which of the above three scenarios can adequately fulfill the trust fund's social and environmental mandates and promote public participation in conservation. The above analysis demonstrates that the first scenario would tie up a considerable portion of the trust fund's investment income in a single, recurrent-cost grant to government. This does not directly help the trust fund to solicit broader participation in conservation and could instead convert the trust fund into a purely financing unit within the Royal Government. The second scenario for the trust fund to evolve into an autonomous parastatal conservation agency is an important option considering RGoB's policy on decentralisation. As a parastatal, the trust fund could mobilise optimum levels of grassroots and civil society

participation in conservation. The government's perceived concern on devolving administrative authority over 26 percent of the country could be addressed by introducing this option on a purely pilot scale in a selected protected forest area. While the final scenario to continue the trust fund's existing approach to grant making through strategic five-year planning cycles has the most potential to contribute to environmental management throughout society, the experience to date is far from satisfactory. Unless the trust fund receives an increased level of solicitation for grants from Bhutanese society by the end of 2002, or the conclusion of the first five-year strategic plan, it should explore and test the feasibility of alternative mechanisms to promote popular participation in conservation. Such mechanisms must ensure that the trust fund's resources are publicly accessible as grants for education and research, environmental advocacy, and innovative schemes to balance the consumption of natural resources with rapid development.

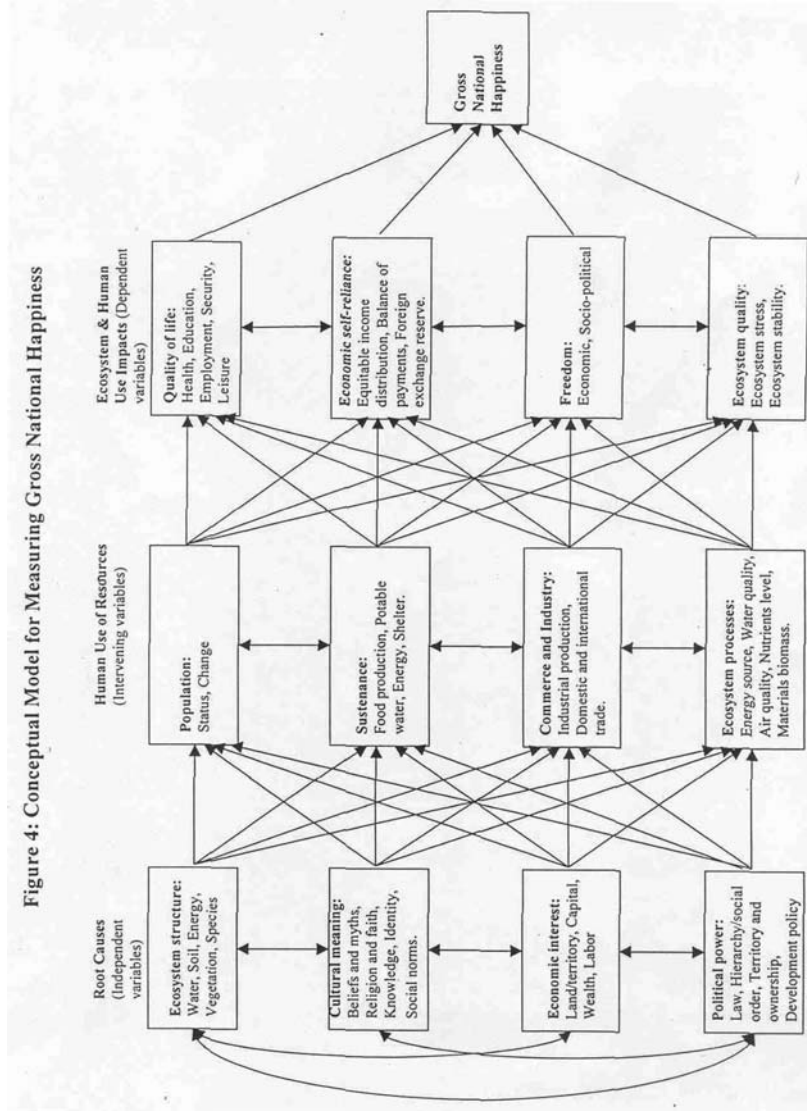
Ultimately, the trust fund's future direction will be largely determined by the need to prove, both to society and its own donors, a key role in maintaining the country's natural heritage for unborn generations and sustaining Bhutan's commitment to conservation when international donors depart. Pursued wisely, Bhutan can demonstrate again its profound environmental leadership by designing the most appropriate direction for the world's pioneer environmental trust fund.

Conclusion: A Contribution to Gross National Happiness

How can the trust fund's contribution to Gross National Happiness (GNH) be measured when contributing to environmental conservation? A useful approach could integrate quantitative parameters to measure GNH, as outlined in a predictive model (Fig.5) to quantify social and environmental well-being in Bhutan (Namgyal and Wangchuk, 1999). The model was developed as an alternative to conventional indicators such as Gross Domestic Product and the Human Development Index, and is based on culture and political economy and human ecosystem management theory. This will enable environmental and economic planners to understand and articulate the long-term effects of national development in a predictive manner, and the implications of such development on human ecosystem management.

Any effort of the trust fund to measure its contributions to Bhutan's social and environmental well-being should incorporate basic quantitative parameters such as those outlined in Namgyal and Wangchuk's conceptual framework. It should particularly incorporate root causes of GNH - ecosystem structure, cultural meaning, economic interest, and political power in order to assess the intervening variables (or human use of resources) to understand human use impacts. Based on simple yet profound analyses of cause and effect, it would be possible to statistically measure the positive or negative levels of GNH in Bhutan. Such a quantitative framework would enable the trust fund to measure its impacts on conservation, and meaningfully contribute to a rational assessment of GNH.

Figure 4: Conceptual Model for Measuring Gross National Happiness



Note

¹ Market value as of end September, 2000

Bibliography

Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation (1996). *Royal Charter for the Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation*, 6 May 1996, Tashichho Dzong, Thimphu.

Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation (1997). *Strategic Plan (1997-2002)*, Thimphu.

Mikitin, K (1995). "Issues and options in the design of GEF supported Trust Funds for biodiversity conservation", *Environment Dept. Paper No.011*, Washington, DC: The World Bank.

Namgyal, T.S and Wangchuk, T (1998). "Measuring Gross National Happiness: A Predictive Model for Quantifying Social and Environmental well-being in Bhutan" in *Sherub Doenme*, Vol.4. No.1 and 2, Kanglung: Sherubtse College.

Norris, R et al (Eds.) (1997). *Report on the first Asia-Pacific Forum on Environmental Funds*, 16-21 February 1997, Philippines: Cebu.

Norris, R (Ed.) (2000). *The IPG Handbook on Environmental Funds: A Resource Book for the Design and Operation of Environmental Funds*, NY: The Interagency Planning Group on Environmental Funds, New York.

Ministry of Agriculture (1998 (a)). *Biodiversity Action Plan for Bhutan*, Ministry of Agriculture, Thimphu.

Royal Government of Bhutan (1998 (b)). *The Middle Path: National Environment Strategy for Bhutan*, National Environment Commission, Thimphu.

Royal Government of Bhutan (1999). *Bhutan 2020: A Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness*, Planning Commission Secretariat, Thimphu.

Spergel, B (2000). *Concept Paper on the Potential Establishment of a Parastatal Conservation Agency in Bhutan* (Prepared for the Management Board of the Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation), Thimphu. Unpublished report.

Tavera, C and Vasquez, P (Eds.) (1996). *Regional Consultation on National Environmental Funds in Latin America and the Caribbean*, Columbia: Ecofondo, Santafe de Bogota.

World Bank (1999). *Aide Memoire of the 1st Biannual Review Mission for the Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation, 14-20 October 1999*. South Asia Region, Washington, DC: The World Bank.

SUSTAINABILITY OF TOURISM IN BHUTAN

Tandi Dorji*

Introduction

Bhutan's tourism industry began in 1974. It was introduced with the primary objective of generating revenue, especially foreign exchange; publicising the country's unique culture and traditions to the outside world, and to contribute to the country's socio-economic development¹. Since then the number of tourists visiting Bhutan has increased from just 287 in 1974 to over 2,850 in 1992 and over 7,000 in 1999.

By the late 1980's tourism contributed over US\$2 million in revenues to the royal government. In 1989, the royal government raised the tourist tariff. That year only 1,480 tourists visited Bhutan but the government still earned US\$1.95 million through tourism. By 1992 tourist revenues contributed as much as US\$3.3 million and accounted for as much as 15-20% of the total of Bhutan's exported goods and services.

The royal government has always been aware that an unrestricted flow of tourists can have negative impacts on Bhutan's pristine environment and its rich and unique culture. The government, therefore, adopted a policy of "high value-low volume" tourism, controlling the type and quantity of tourism right from the start. Until 1991 the Bhutan Tourism Corporation (BTC), a quasi-autonomous and self-financing body, implemented the government's tourism policy. All tourists, up to that time came as guests of BTC, which in turn operated the tour organisation, transport services and nearly all the hotels and accommodation facilities. The government privatised tourism in October 1991 to encourage increased private sector participation in the tourism sector. Today there are more than 75 licensed tour operators in the country.

*Communication officer, National Environment Commission, Thimphu

Table 1: Tourist Arrivals by Country of Residence and Tourism Revenue Receipts from 1989-1998

Region	'89	'90	'91	'92	'93	'94	'95	'96	'97	'98
Americas	479	377	544	616	751	734	1003	1039	1010	1714
Asia Pacific	335	459	755	728	791	1193	1529	1639	1712	1418
Europe	621	614	807	1229	1323	1884	2227	2391	2590	2062
Others	45	88		190	119	160	6	69	51	9
All Regions	1480	1538	2106	2763	2984	3971	4765	5138	5363	6203
Revenue Receipts (million US\$)			2.30	2.99	3.30	3.97	6.00	6.51	6.50	7.98

Source: Department of Tourism, Thimphu

After the privatisation process, a regulatory body, the Tourism Authority of Bhutan (TAB), now called the Department of Tourism (DOT), was established under the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The primary responsibilities of the Department of Tourism include ensuring compliance by travel agents with the tourism policy of the royal government, including the regulation of the number and segments of foreign tourists; fixation of rates for trekking, expeditions, and cultural tours; receiving of tourist payments and processing of tourist visas; issuing and ensuring compliance with guidelines and regulations related to tourism activities; ensuring conservation of culture, tradition, environment and protection against ravages of pollution and exposure from tourism activities; and developing new opportunities for generating growth and foreign exchange through protective tourism, and to undertake research and development in such areas.

Currently the minimum daily tariff set by the Department of Tourism for both cultural tours and treks is US\$200 for the high season and US\$165 for the low season². There is no quota or limit on the number of tourists allowed to visit Bhutan. Rather the volume of tourists coming to Bhutan has been limited by the capacity constraints of tourism infrastructure due to the pronounced seasonality of tourism in the country. March/April and October/November are the top tourist seasons as the weather is best for

trekking and cultural festivals are taking place in different parts of the country.

So far the royal government's overall objective of maximising foreign exchange earnings while minimising adverse cultural and environmental impacts of tourism seems to have paid off. The tourism industry has made significant contributions to the socio-economic development of the country, especially after the privatisation of the industry in 1991. A high level of profits is available to tour operators and an increasing number of Bhutanese entrepreneurs are investing in the tourism sector. Bhutanese have also found employment as guides, cooks, transport operators, and hotel and restaurant owners. Tourism contributes significantly to rural incomes through earnings from tourist transport and portage. Tourism has also provided the impetus for the development of the service sector, including hotels, restaurants, transportation and communication. Another visible impact of tourism has been the promotion of the indigenous cottage industry and the setting up of handicraft shops in Thimphu and other frequently visited areas.

Bhutan's main tourism attractions are its traditional culture and way of life, its religious festivals, historic monuments and its pristine environment. Bhutan has received much international acclaim for its cautious approach to development that places a high priority on conserving the nation's natural and cultural heritage. Protecting nature and culture is part of the Bhutanese value system and is an important aspect of the traditional way of life in Bhutan, and the tourism policy reflects these concerns. The policy of imposing a high tariff has succeeded in making tourism in Bhutan an exclusive and distinctive experience. However, with the increase in the number of tourists coming to Bhutan every year there is a need to monitor and evaluate the environmental and cultural impacts of tourism and offer measures to reduce any adverse impacts.

World tourism is evolving as well as growing and tourists increasingly want to engage in recreational or sporting activities, learn more about local cultures or develop special interests. Among these special interests is the natural environment resulting in what is commonly termed "eco-tourism". This offers new opportunities and challenges for Bhutan.

Bhutan is keen to develop its tourism industry in a way that is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. It should be recognized that tourism in Bhutan has been sustainable so far due to the sound environmental and cultural policies of the royal government which has considerable authority over setting policy direction. The future sustainability of tourism will, however, depend on greater participation from the tourism industry. The tourism industry must realise that our environment and culture are the basic resources on which it thrives and grows. It must recognize its responsibility for conservation and sustainable natural resource management by committing to and working within principles and guidelines to achieve sustainable tourism development.

The sustainable development of tourism will require partnership and cooperation within the tourism industry, and between the industry, government, tourists and people. Local input and involvement are also important for the long-term sustainability of tourism in Bhutan. If local residents and communities are part of tourist operations and receive benefits from tourism, then the goals of the local communities, tourism operators, and the government can be met.

Environmental and Cultural Impacts of Tourism

Although tourism in Bhutan is referred to as a model for other fragile mountain areas where there is much concern over the society's traditional heritage, there has emerged a number of pressing tourism-related environmental and cultural problems in the last few years. Among the problems currently encountered are³:

The destruction of vegetation through the cutting of slow-growing trees for firewood. This is particularly more pronounced in Bhutan's high alpine regions through which most of the trekking routes are located. The local people in these areas rely on wood for fuel and tourism adds more pressure on the forests.

Erosion of delicate vegetation is another visible problem associated with tourism in Bhutan. Although tourism activities are not solely responsible for erosion in the high mountain areas, the use of horses and yaks during treks have a significant impact. Also local residents tend to increase the size

of their domestic herds for transport contracts with the tourism industry, which in turn adds to the limited carrying capacity of fragile mountain ecosystems.

The creation of garbage trails from the indiscriminate disposal of non-biodegradable waste is another visible environmental problem associated with the tourism industry. It has been pointed out that tourism is promoting changes from sustainable farming and cropping patterns to other more profitable and less sustainable livelihoods to meet the needs of affluent tourists. Some people also argue that interactions with tourists have led to the erosion of Bhutanese culture and value systems.

Several steps have been taken by the royal government to address these problems. The Department of Tourism has banned the use of firewood on treks. Tour operators now use liquid petroleum gas or kerosene. The Department also levies a fine of Ngultrum 5,000 on operators who continue to use firewood on treks and for littering. Although the fine is not very substantial, operators might not get trekking permits for the next season if they are charged with two violations in a particular season. The Department has also constructed permanent campsites, rest houses and toilet facilities along the more popular trek routes.

The Department of Tourism has conducted several training courses for guides and has instituted a system of licensing cultural and trekking guides. All guides employed by any tour operator in Bhutan have to be licensed. This ensures that all guides have basic training in trekking and mountaineering techniques and are briefed on all aspects of tourism in Bhutan with special emphasis on the environmental and cultural issues.

Problems that Affect the Future Sustainability of Bhutan's Tourism

There are other problems associated with tourism in Bhutan that might affect the sustainability of the industry in the long run if they are not addressed now. These include:

Seasonality: Tourist arrivals in Bhutan are subject to pronounced seasonality. March/April and October/November are the top months as the weather is ideal for trekking and religious and cultural festivals are taking place all over the country. January/February and June/July are the months

with the lowest activity as the weather is too cold or rainy for trekking and there are hardly any significant cultural events taking place. The seasonal nature of tourism leads to a highly inequitable distribution of visitors throughout the year adding pressure on the limited infrastructure during the peak seasons. As a result there is a severe shortage of facilities during the peak seasons and private operators resort to makeshift arrangements that may not meet the desired quality of service.

Table 2: Number of Tourist Arrivals by Season and Month

Sl.No	Month	1997	1998	1999
1	January	108	96	148
2	February	254	154	322
3	March	1062	542	1145
4	April	662	1167	604
5	May	275	267	395
6	June	90	97	108
7	July	123	152	132
8	August	231	340	348
9	September	276	1107	1069
10	October	1488	1329	1856
11	November	640	678	841
12	December	154	274	190
Total Arrival for the year		5363	6203	7158

Source: Department of Tourism, Thimphu

Regional Imbalance: Another problem that might affect the sustainability of tourism is that it is mostly limited to a Himalayan zone for mountaineering and high altitude trekking and a central zone for cultural tours. As such tourism is mostly limited to the western valleys of Paro, Thimphu, Punakha, Wangdiphodrang, and the central valleys of Trongsa and Bumthang.

Insufficient Product Diversification: Tourism in Bhutan is so far mostly limited to cultural tourists, sightseers and trekkers. In 1999, out of a total of 7,158 tourists there were 6,328 cultural tourists and 830 trekkers. Although Bhutan has vast potential for other forms of tourism and special interests

such as sports tourism, adventure tourism and nature tourism, the process of product diversification is just beginning.

Weak Institutional Base: The Department of Tourism lacks both manpower and finance to manage and monitor the tourism industry effectively. There is a lack of qualified manpower, particularly at the management and entrepreneurial levels. There are no formal hotel and tourism training institutes in the country. Most companies have problems in attracting and keeping adequately trained employees at all levels.

Involvement of the Local Community: The government and local communities are now beginning to argue that local communities need to be more involved in the business and should receive more benefits from tourism. Local community involvement is currently limited to providing tourism transport and portage.

Lack of Substantive Tourism Research Base: Proper research, surveys, feedback, statistics, data collection and processing and research related to tourism development are needed for making sound policy decisions in the future.

Deterioration in Pricing Integrity: Although the government's policy allows a high margin of profitability to tourism operators, increasing competition has brought about undesirable results. This has led to a break down in pricing integrity. Operators are resorting to discounts and rebates to foreign operators in order to snatch business away from competitors. This practice not only has a direct impact on the royal government's policy of high value - low volume tourism but also leads to deterioration in the quality of services provided.

Sustainable Tourism in Bhutan⁴

A few countries including Bhutan have demonstrated that tourism is not ugly. Bhutan is perhaps the best example where controlled tourism has been effective in ensuring the sustainability of the industry in the long run. It has contributed significantly to foreign exchange earnings and government revenues, to income and employment generation and to regional development to a certain extent. It has created opportunities for the development of locally owned and operated private sector enterprises. Tourism has been an important mechanism for publicising the country's culture and traditions to the outside world, and interactions with tourists have contributed to a sense of national identity, making Bhutanese proud of their country's unique culture and environment. Tourism has further enhanced the need to conserve the country's natural and cultural assets.

Bhutan's tourism potential is considerable with comparative advantages in many areas to ensure economic growth and diversification. Cultural tourism, eco-tourism and adventure/sports tourism (rafting, canoeing, climbing) which are based on the country's natural beauty, biodiversity and unique and distinct culture offer numerous opportunities for further development of the industry. The tourism industry can also generate jobs at a time when unemployment is becoming a problem with limited job opportunities in the government and private sector.

Bhutan has a clearly established framework for the development of tourism. It has clear tourism policies, excellent tourism resources, a developing and expanding private sector, qualified and experienced personnel, established marketing channels and contacts. In short, the initial phase of setting up the tourism sector, of privatising the industry, and of establishing Bhutan as an exclusive, distinctive destination has been achieved. The future development of tourism should now involve a process of refinement whereby attempts are made by the industry itself to mitigate any negative environmental and cultural impacts; explore and develop the numerous niche markets, such as eco-tourism, that offer significant growth potential and are consistent with the other development objectives of the royal government; and increase the participation of local communities in tourism activities.

The future development of tourism should still be guided by the concept of high-value tourism and should include a well-defined and effective policy on sustainable tourism. Such a policy should continue to advocate caution and control instead of aggressive tourism development, and be inclusive rather than sector-based. The policy should also promote value consciousness and heritage conservation. Bhutan has considerable tourism resources today because of the cautious approach adopted by the government. This approach should be applied to policies regarding the future development of the industry to ensure that tourism development is consistent with the royal government's goals of environmental and cultural preservation. A cautious and controlled policy will also allow periodic monitoring and review to ensure that the country's tourism develops sustainably, avoiding the negative impacts of tourism. As tourism is a wide-ranging social and economic activity that is multi-sectoral by nature, such a policy should include inter-ministerial committees to facilitate coordination between different ministries, agencies, and the industry. Bhutan's traditional way of life and culture, its religion and its pristine environment have always been the main tourist attractions. A sustainable tourism policy should ensure that these values are promoted amongst visitors and that our cultural and natural heritage is preserved.

The following are a few issues that need to be addressed urgently to ensure that tourism in Bhutan remains sustainable.

Organizational Development: The future sustainability of tourism will depend largely on the effective functioning of the Department of Tourism and the industry association (Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators). To this end there is an urgent need to strengthen the capacity of the Department and establish an effective co-ordination and organization of the private sector.

Product Development: The addition of facilities and services which will improve and enrich the tourism product, lead to greater visitor satisfaction, contribute positively in terms of environmental, economic and socio-cultural impacts will further help to reduce the seasonal nature of tourism and also spread tourism activities and benefits to other regions of the country. There is also a need for the development of more niche, high-value special interest market segments - e.g. Photography, zoology, ornithology,

botany, white water rafting. Related to product development there is a need for more emphasis on a classification system for tourism facilities and specification of minimum standards.

Marketing Strategies: The collection and processing of more complete market information, and improved analysis of characteristics of market behaviour is another basic requirement for developing future policies and plans. Also the development of new products and attractions requires effective joint marketing initiatives that combine public and private resources.

Human Resource Development: The development of human resources, not only within the Department of Tourism, but also within individual private operators and other bodies is a must for the success of future programs.

With careful planning and management of the industry and the appropriate inputs, the tourism industry in Bhutan could well surpass its economic expectations without eroding the cultural and environment of the country. To this end several initiatives have already been undertaken to a) build up the resources to finance development of the industry b) involve all relevant partners in drafting future policies related to tourism; and c) form an industry association that will take steps to promote, encourage and assist in the development of tourism in Bhutan.

The Tourism Development Fund

The Tourism Development Fund was set up by the Department of Tourism in 1999 to fund tourism development in the country. The Department collects US\$10 per visitor from tour operators and it is intended that this fund will be available for the maintenance of tourism infrastructure, joint marketing programmes, and development of new tourism products (eco-tourism and adventure sports such as white-water rafting and kayaking). The fund has also been utilised to set up the office of the Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators (ABTO).

The Tourism Development Committee

Tourism is not a sector in itself but a wide-ranging social and economic activity that is multi-sectoral by nature. As such, it poses problems of coordination between a variety of different government ministries and agencies. For this reason special inter-ministerial committees or councils are necessary to provide the necessary degree of co-ordination useful to ensure that tourism development plans take into consideration the concerns and sensitivities of all the sectors involved. In Bhutan the Tourism Development Committee was established with the following functions: a) to act as the apex body to oversee all matters related to tourism development in the kingdom of Bhutan; b) to provide advice and guidance to the Department of Tourism in carrying out its functions; c) to approve all plans and programs drawn up by the Department of Tourism in consultation with the Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators (ABTO) and other relevant organizations on an annual basis; d) to approve the annual budget for the development of plans and programmes to be allocated out of the Tourism Development Fund (TDF); and e) to act as a medium between the government and the private sector and facilitate effective and expeditious resolutions of issues emerging from time to time.

The Committee consists of 12 members from government agencies as well as the private sector. It is hoped that the wide representation on the Committee will ensure that issues related to the cultural and natural integrity are addressed at this committee during the development of future plans and policies.

The Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators (ABTO)

The Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators (ABTO) was formed in December 1999 with the overall objective of bringing together all the private sector interests involved in the tourism industry. One of the objectives of ABTO is to establish a channel for closer and more effective collaboration between the tourism industry and the Department of Tourism. ABTO is also the first step that the industry has taken to create a mechanism for self-control and self-regulation.

Ecotourism

The royal government has realized that it is now time to think strategically about the need for and the impact of future development of tourism in Bhutan. There is a need to monitor and review the impacts of current policies and to develop further guidelines to ensure that the industry grows in a sustainable manner. Numerous policy documents of the royal government, including Bhutan 2020⁵ and The Middle Path- Bhutan's National Environmental Strategy⁶ have recognized the need to promote ecotourism as a way to achieve sustainable tourism development in the country. There is considerable scope for ecotourism in Bhutan as it offers significant growth potential and is consistent with the other development objectives of the royal government while enhancing the cultural integrity of local people. The country's rich biological resources that includes over 165 species of animals and more than 770 species of birds offer vast opportunities for ecotourism. Also within Bhutan's borders there are over 60% of the endemic species of the eastern Himalayan region. Bhutan's rich floral wealth also includes more than 50 species of rhododendrons and over 300 species of medicinal plants that are used in traditional herbal medicine. Such a rich natural environment coupled with the royal government's conservation policy are what make Bhutan a prime destination for ecotourism. Ecotourism is considered the fastest growing market in the tourism industry today and with Bhutan's enviable resources, it should explore ways of developing this market.

Bhutan must, however, be careful and aware that not all forms of ecotourism are well designed. As in other sectors of tourism, lack of planning and foresight even in well-meaning ecotourism projects can cause serious negative impacts. It may lead to the exploitation, and destruction of ecologically fragile areas where tourists might not have been allowed if not for ecotourism. Proper management is needed to reduce the adverse impacts on environment and culture from other forms of tourism.

Developing this niche market will require a national strategy to balance nature-oriented tourism, foreign exchange earnings, and protection of the natural resources such as protected areas. Therefore, it is imperative that the government and the industry define ecotourism in the Bhutanese context, addressing both tourism policy and the potential for specific nature-related tourism products. Such an exercise will help determine the nature of ecotourism development in Bhutan. Ecotourism must be compatible with

effective conservation and operate within the area's natural capacity, for the regeneration and future productivity of natural resources. Ecotourism must minimise ecological footprints and give proper consideration to local cultures and local people in the areas they visit, and ensure that these people have an equitable share in the economic benefits of tourism. Ecotourism must be undertaken in Bhutan very carefully so that it is a positive force for conservation and environmental protection that also provides a unique opportunity for raising awareness and enhancing support for conservation. Therefore, if Bhutan is to explore its ecotourism potential, the following investments will have to be implemented⁷.

Marketing and Marketing Survey

The first stage in developing the nation's ecotourism industry will be to conduct basic market research to determine the types of infrastructure, information, trips, and accommodations that will attract potential tourists. With proper and active marketing of the uniqueness of Bhutan as a tourist destination, it is likely that tourists might be willing to pay more than the current minimum tariff to experience Bhutan's biodiversity and culture. However, it must be recognized that the promotion of opportunities must go hand in hand with the development of more information about biodiversity, training of guides, and development of infrastructure. The royal government and the tourism industry must undertake a marketing survey to better understand the potential for this type of tourism in Bhutan and to identify specific areas where Bhutan has a comparative advantage.

Training and Capacity Building

A weakness in Bhutan's present tourism is the lack of well-trained and knowledgeable guides, especially for specialist tours like bird watching, photography and flora tourism. A formal system of training and accreditation will help the country provide the high standards expected by specialist tourists. Ecotourism requires trained guides who have knowledge of specific parks and other sites and who are able to identify the biodiversity of the region. The Biodiversity Action Plan of Bhutan points out that many local residents in Bhutan's parks have considerable expertise of the local biodiversity and that the prospects of using them as guides should be explored in order to increase employment opportunities for them.

The Biodiversity Action Plan also proposes that Bhutan encourage natural history tours with organisations that can supply their own guides with some knowledge of the region and pair those visiting guides with local people who could enhance their own knowledge. In the long-term strategies will have to be developed to build up this important human resource that is a vital component of ecotourism.

Information

Although much has been written about Bhutan's rich biodiversity and pristine environment, there is a genuine lack of interpretive materials that can be used by interested visitors to Bhutan and school children, particularly field guides and biodiversity tour guides. For ecotourism to be a success the royal government and the tourism industry needs to invest in the development of basic scientific information on the country's biodiversity.

Infrastructure

Promoting ecotourism in Bhutan will require the development of appropriate infrastructure. Although this type of tourism traditionally requires fewer infrastructures than other forms of tourism, many countries have built elaborate facilities within protected areas in the name of ecotourism. Such developments have given ecotourism a bad name with protestors calling it "eco-terrorism" instead. The development of ecotourism in Bhutan should be limited to development of trails and access routes, and basic interpretative facilities like visitor centers. It is recommended that the development of infrastructure for ecotourism in protected areas undergo an Environmental Impact Assessment to ensure the suitability of the project and to prevent costly environmental degradation.

The Role of the Government

The role of the government is important to ensure that the low-impact scale of ecotourism is not exceeded and that proper planning is undertaken before ecotourism initiatives are implemented. Strong government controls are also necessary to ensure that tourism practices by the private sector are environmentally and culturally sustainable. In most countries, ecotourism has either failed or not lived up to expectations as it has been promoted without an overall strategy, effective protected areas management plans, and without consultation or inclusion of local communities. Therefore, the government must adopt a national ecotourism strategy to improve the environmental and cultural success of ecotourism. Such a strategy should aim to co-ordinate government and private efforts to achieve positive economic, environmental, social, and cultural impacts of tourism.

Excessive or unmanaged visitation adversely affects ecotourism sites, both ecologically and culturally. Also the ecological and cultural value of the sites diminishes if visitation is not managed properly. Limitations on visitors must be imposed in order to maintain the ecological and cultural integrity of a ecotourism site. The Biodiversity Action Plan for Bhutan advocates that the most desirable approach to control visitor number is to maintain the existing fee charged by the royal government, while setting limits to the total number of tourists visiting the country and allocating tradable rights to the existing tour operators. The document argues that operators would thus have to pay the government the current \$70 per visitor per day fee, but then would be free to charge what the market would bear. Using this approach, the government would also seek to direct visitors to other parts of the country or to other seasons of the year through either regional quotas or limits in hotel construction in the more busy regions of the country.

Current Status of Ecotourism in Bhutan

Several workshops on ecotourism have been conducted by the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature (RSPN), the World Wildlife Fund, and the Nature Conservation Division (NCD) of the Ministry of Agriculture. An Ecotourism Management Plan for the Jigme Dorji National Park was drafted in 1998. Also the Integrated Community Development Programmes (ICDP) that are being implemented in several areas have made attempts to get local communities more involved in managing tourism within their own communities. Such community-based tourism is being encouraged in Laya and Soe within the Jigme Dorji National Park.

The RSPN has drafted an Ecotourism Management Plan for Phobjikha valley which has been declared a conservation area for the endangered Black-Necked Cranes. The ecotourism management plan for Phobjikha aims to integrate the conservation of the winter habitat of the Cranes and development of the Phobjikha valley by providing the local community with ecologically sustainable income opportunities to boost the local economy. The programme aims to promote the development of alternative energy, eco-tourism, conservation and education programs, Black-Necked Crane research, and monitoring and development of infrastructure for ecotourism. As such the Phobjikha programme is the first real attempt at developing ecotourism in Bhutan.

The prime objective of the RSPN is the conservation of the winter habitat of the Black-Necked Cranes. The society hopes to achieve this by promoting ecotourism in the area. The society works closely with the International Crane Foundation (ICF), based in Wisconsin, USA, which organises tours for its members to Phobjikha every winter. The International Crane Foundation pays US\$100 per person over and above the regular tourist tariff to the RSPN to support its work. The RSPN gives 50% of such earnings to the Phobjikha Area Development Committee, a local community organisation. The Bhutanese tour operator also pays RSPN 10% of its earnings from any group that comes through the ICF. The RSPN uses the money to maintain the basic infrastructure in the area. So far, the RSPN has built a photography hide from which to observe the cranes and also developed footpaths to improve access in the area. It is also building a

visitor's centre and is educating tourists and other visitors on the need for conservation in the Phobjikha valley.

Although critics are of the opinion that promotion of ecotourism in Phobjikha attracts more tourists and thereby cause more disturbances to the cranes, the RSPN program with some refinement can be a good model for ecotourism in other areas as it: a) offers a source of financing for development or maintenance of an important natural site; b) promotes local economic development; and c) provides needed foreign exchange and national benefits. This is the first such project in Bhutan that endeavours to promote partnership between an international organisation, a local tour operator, an NGO and the local community.

More active commitment and involvement of the tourism industry and the participation of local communities in tourism activities, including the sharing of financial benefits, are important ingredients for the future success of ecotourism in Bhutan. The government must continue to play the lead role in policy and programme co-ordination, which are developed in partnership with the tourism industry and local communities. One of the most quoted benefits of ecotourism is that its success rates are much higher if it is conducted as a partnership between the government, the tourism industry and local communities. Bhutan has immense potential as an ecotourism destination and it must explore ways in which this form of tourism can be implemented effectively in partnership with the private sector and local communities.

Conclusion

Bhutan is in a very fortunate position in terms of tourism. While tourism resources are being destroyed elsewhere, Bhutan's assets in the form of its natural environment and culture are well preserved. The international community has lauded the country's policy of giving the highest priority to environmental and cultural preservation. This has further increased the profile of Bhutan as a prime tourist destination. The tourism industry has created a wide range of opportunities for Bhutanese who have begun to grasp economic opportunities offered by the industry. Tourism has also been a self-financing mechanism for promoting the country's environment and facilitating an awareness and understanding of the uniqueness of this country. Tourism has resulted in some adverse impacts but the government has recognised the need to address them.

Tourism has also promoted Bhutanese culture by creating employment opportunities for traditional musicians and dancers and encouraged the resurgence of local festivals in different parts of the country. Although the government still maintains control over the industry, it has become much more diverse and complex since it was privatized in 1991. The private sector is being more involved in not only monitoring itself but also in developing future tourism policies. Tourism bodies like the Tourism Development Committee and the Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators have been established to foster partnership between relevant sectors involved in the industry and within the industry itself. Both the organisations are still in their formative stages but have crucial roles to play in determining the future sustainability of tourism in Bhutan.

Ecotourism offers a way of achieving the benefits of tourism in a way that is consistent with the country's development philosophy. Adventure sports: rafting and kayaking is another form of tourism that is being promoted in Bhutan. Bhutan has a comparative advantage in this area as it is endowed with free-flowing and challenging rivers. Opening up rivers around the country for white-water rafting and kayaking will bring tourism to parts of the country that are otherwise not visited and help distribute tourism benefits to these areas as well. Other innovative schemes⁸ such as providing meditation centres in national parks, replicating traditional and religious festivals so that the real ones are not corrupted, and sponsoring exhibitions

of traditional ethnic minority cultures with the aim of returning a fair share of tourism revenues to these communities, offer avenues for sustainable tourism.

A Tourism Master Plan is under preparation and once completed will provide a guide to the future development of the industry. However, there should be extensive consultation between various stakeholders before the document is formally approved and implemented.

So far the government's policy of "high value-low volume" tourism has been successful in regulating the growth of the industry and maintaining the number of visitors at an acceptable level. To ensure that our valuable tourism resources are developed in a cautious manner the government must continue to regulate tourism through its pricing policy. It is also time for the government to think of a well-defined and effective policy on sustainable tourism, especially ecotourism. Only the government can provide the strategic planning base for tourism and ensure that valuable and fragile habitats are identified, that baseline monitoring is carried out, and that the overall needs and implications of tourism are assessed. For major developments, environmental impact assessments should be carried out.

The tourism industry also has a fundamental role in maintaining the sustainability of tourism in Bhutan. Individual firms can take the lead role by showing how self-regulation can work in practice, by taking voluntary action to reduce pollution, by initiating and abiding by the Codes of Best Practices, and by educating clients. The tourism industry association must continue to develop and adopt such codes of conduct and good practice, and provide members with the information to implement them. The industry association must also develop mechanisms for effective self-regulation and introduce sound environmental practices.

Lastly, local involvement and input are essential for the long-term economic and environmental sustainability of tourism in Bhutan. If local communities are involved and have a stake in tourism activities, it will be in their interests to ensure that tourism is sustainable. Furthermore, partnership between the government, the private sector, and the local people can open up a wide range of opportunities that make good economic sense and benefit all the partners. Tourism will be sustainable only if

tourism planners and operators give due consideration to the carrying capacity of our natural resources, recognise that people and communities, customs and lifestyles contribute to the tourism experience and, therefore, accept that these people should also get some of the benefits from tourism.

Notes

¹Edward, Inskipp “Sustainable Tourism development in the Maldives and Bhutan,” UNEP industry and Environment, vol 15, no.3-4, July-December 1992. P.34.

² These prices include services for land transport, accommodation, food, sightseeing, guides and cultural programs.

³ National Environment Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan: *The Middle Path-National Environmental Strategy for Bhutan*. 1998. “Tourism and Its Effects on the Culture and the Environment” p. 52

⁴ Sustainable tourism in the context of this paper means that tourism continues to generate revenue, especially foreign exchange; publicize the country’s unique culture and traditions to the outside world; and play an active role in the country’s socio-economic development in a manner that is consistent with the royal government’s policies aimed at sustainable development. Sustainable tourism therefore means that the growth of the industry will place emphasis on the preservation of the country’s culture, environment and traditional lifestyle.

⁵ Planning Commission Secretariat, Royal Government of Bhutan: *Bhutan 2020: A Vision for Peace, Prosperity, Happiness*. 1999. P.36

⁶ National Environment Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan: *The Middle Path-National Environmental Strategy for Bhutan*. 1998. “Tourism and Its Effects on the Culture and the Environment” p. 53

⁷ Ministry of Agriculture, Royal Government of Bhutan: *Biodiversity Action Plan for Bhutan*. 1998. pp.134-136.

⁸ National Environment Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan: *The Middle Path-National Environmental Strategy for Bhutan*. 1998. “Tourism and Its Effects on the Culture and the Environment” p. 53

Bibliography

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (1993). "Management of Sustainable Tourism Development", *ESCAP Tourism Review* No.11.

Edward Inskipp (1992). "Sustainable Tourism Development in the Maldives and Bhutan", *UNEP Industry and Environment*, vol15, no. 3-4, July-December 1992.

Katrin Brandon (1996). *Ecotourism and Conservation: A Review of Key Issues*, The World Bank, April 1996.

Ministry of Agriculture (1998). *Biodiversity Action Plan for Bhutan*, Thimphu: Royal Government of Bhutan.

National Environment Commission (1998). "Bhutan: Ecotourism Management Plan For Jigme Dorji National Park" in *The Middle Path: National Environmental Strategy for Bhutan*, Thimphu: Royal Government of Bhutan.

Nature Conservation Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Royal Government 1998.

Planning Commission Secretariat (1999). *Bhutan 2020: A Vision for Peace, Prosperity, Happiness*, Thimphu: Royal Government of Bhutan.

Roger Doswell (-). *The Development of Tourism in Bhutan: A Discussion Paper*, World Tourism Organization and the United Nations Development Program, Thimphu

USEPA, WWF, UNEP, SEDESOL, VROM (1995). *The Netherlands: Tourism Support Package*.

ENSURING SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY: CAN BHUTAN'S EDUCATION SYSTEM ENSURE INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF VALUES? ¹

*Tashi Wangyal**

Introduction

The process of economic modernisation involves urbanisation, industrialisation, secularisation, media participation, education, and democratisation.² Other changes include the adoption of scientific technology and market economy resulting in a fundamental shift in people's values, attitudes and expectations as a response to the changing economic and social circumstances. In the case of Bhutan, the modernisation process initiated in the early 1960's had far reaching implications on the lives of the Bhutanese people in so far as it presented a distinct break from the isolated medieval past and ushered Bhutan into the modern world.

As a result of economic modernisation and the initiation of planned economic development, there has been a tremendous improvement in the living standards of the Bhutanese people.³ Bhutan has also established diplomatic and trade links with many countries and is a member of numerous international organisations including the United Nations. On the flip side, modernisation has also led to the introduction of modern values that threaten to undermine the traditional values of the Bhutanese people.

Bhutan's development philosophy based on the idea of enhancing Gross National Happiness requires that development must be both economically as well as socially sustainable. The priority accorded to social sustainability is apparent in the inclusion of "preservation and promotion of cultural and traditional values" as one of the objectives and strategies of development.⁴ Thus Bhutan faces a distinct challenge of adopting modern ideas to suit the economic needs of the country, as well as providing continuity in the spiritual, cultural and traditional lives of the Bhutanese people.

* Programme Officer, Ministry of Finance, Thimphu

Traditional values based on the Buddhist culture have a profound influence on the lives of a majority of the Bhutanese people. Traditional Bhutanese values not only address individual self-discipline and the conduct of interpersonal relationships but also delineate the responsibility of all sentient beings. The concept of *ley jumdrej* and *tha damtshig* is central to Bhutanese values. The concept of *ley jumdrej* essentially states that good begets good and vice versa. The idea of *tha damtshig* outlines the sacred commitment to others in society. This is best illustrated in the pairing of duty and obligation between: *pha da bhu gi damtshig* (parent and child), *lobey da lobtu gi damtshig* (teacher and pupil), *nyen da drok gi damtshig* (husband and wife), and *poen da yok gi damtshig* (master and servant). Such pairing of duty and obligations reinforces the need for social responsibility. In terms of individual self-discipline Bhutanese values emphasise the *domba nga* or the five lay Buddhist undertakings. They include: not killing; not taking what is not given to you rightfully; not lying; not consuming intoxicants and avoiding sexual misconduct.

Such traditional values are, however, being gradually undermined, as people become more self-centred, and materialistic. Considering that about eighty percent of the people are still dependent on traditional livelihood based on subsistent agriculture, it is important that traditional values are not undermined. Sudden changes and adoption of modern values could potentially alienate these people and create social disharmony. Thus there is a need to provide a sense of continuity amidst change. In addition, since culture and traditional values form the bedrock of Bhutanese national identity it is important for the Bhutanese to ensure that its culture and values are not undermined.

However, due to economic modernisation, the Bhutanese society is witnessing a shift in values, attitudes and expectations. External influences arising from the values accompanying economic development, the media and the modern education system, among others, challenge the continuance of the traditional values. Considering that education is a powerful medium for value transmission, this paper will consider if education in Bhutan provides adequate impetus in ensuring the intergenerational transmission of values. It is important to note that the modern secular education system, taught through the English medium, is predominant and popular compared

to traditional Buddhist education. Hence this paper will mainly look at the value education content in the modern education sector only. In particular, it will focus on the textbooks taught in the *Dzongkha* language classes as all other subjects are secular in orientation based on the western or Indian education syllabus.

To elucidate on this theme it is first necessary to consider the following: What are traditional Bhutanese values? Why is there a concern in preserving these values? Does the Bhutanese education system provide adequate impetus for imparting value education to the younger generations?

What are Traditional Bhutanese Values?

Values can be described as a set of ideas and beliefs which influence the thought(s) and action(s) of a person. Values help people to organise social relations by distinguishing between what is socially acceptable from what is not. Values can be shaped by numerous factors including religion, socialisation, education and cultural norms among others. One of the main distinctions made between traditional and modern values is the impact of science and technology in the lives of the people. Unlike traditional societies that held religious and cultural beliefs in great reverence, emphasis has now shifted to scientific proof and rationality based on market capitalism. As a detailed discussion on all the traditional values is beyond the scope of this paper, it will mainly dwell on three aspects of traditional values that address the individual's relationship with nature, with others in society and individual self-discipline.

In the case of Bhutan, traditional values have largely been shaped by the Buddhist culture. In addition to universal values like honesty, compassion, harmony, tolerance etc., the need for empathy, reciprocity, responsibility, self-development and recognition of interdependence are prominent features of the Bhutanese value system. Traditional values are comprehensive as they include the conduct of an individual's relationship to the natural environment, interpersonal relationships, and addresses issues of individual self-discipline.

Apart from the spiritual Buddhist precept, the need for respecting interdependence featured strongly in traditional societies for pragmatic

reasons also. For example, the harsh living conditions in isolated mountain valleys necessitated a cordial conduct of relationship among the inhabitants of the community as well as harmonious co-existence with the forces of nature. In the case of rural subsistence farming, unpredictability of weather, pests and diseases naturally led to interdependence within the community to overcome misfortunes. Similarly, the belief in natural spirits led people to respect nature and avoid pollution of streams and forests lest the natural deities may be disturbed. Such pragmatic considerations also reinforced the traditional perceptions of interdependence.

According to traditional values individual self-discipline is considered important for harmonious co-existence. Considering the effect of the good person on his or her surroundings, traditional Bhutanese values advocate *domba nga* or the five undertakings of the layperson to foster personal self-discipline. Observance of these five lay Buddhist undertakings is said to foster personal development and also accumulation of positive "karma" or merits.

Although, the values prescribed by *domba nga* are mainly geared towards individual self-discipline, its applicability is not limited to the individual alone. Rather these values are metaphors for greater issues. For example, the idea of not taking others life could also include habitat destruction and senseless exploitation of the environment. Similarly, the value related to "not taking what is not rightfully given to you" can be looked at from the point of view of social justice. In effect, the fact that twenty percent of the people control eighty percent of global wealth shows that there might be something wrong.

The ideas of *ley jumdrej*⁵ and *tha damtshig* are central concepts of Bhutanese traditional values. The concept of *ley jumdrej* states that the individual's present actions will determine the future outcome, metaphorically just as sowing good quality seeds brings about a good harvest, and vice versa. *Tha damtshig*, a concept that is often referred to in the schools, homes and the statements of government officials, essentially stands for honour and sacred commitment. It means that one must not deviate from certain inviolable actions that are deemed virtuous and honourable in society.

Traditional Bhutanese values delineate the sacred commitment between various pairs of relationships such as *pha da bhushi gi damtshig* (parent and child), *lobey da lobtu gi damtshig* (teacher and pupil), *nyen da drok gi damtshig* (husband and wife), *poen da yok gi damtshig* (master and servant). Such pairing of relationships is used to state the duty and obligations of one to the other. For example, in the relationship between the parent and the child, the parent is obliged to ensure proper upbringing and care for the child. The child is, in turn, expected to obey and care for the parents in their old age. In the case of the husband and wife, both are expected to be faithful and treat their marriage as an ultimate binding union. Hence faith and trust are important virtues in a marital relationship. Finally, in the master servant relationship, the master is obliged to ensure the welfare of his servant. The servant is in turn expected to serve his master with dedication. Such pairing of relationships ensure stability and predictability in the social context.

The relationship between the teacher and the pupil is accorded great importance according to traditional values, because it is the teacher who helps the student to overcome his ignorance. The teacher is expected to show compassion and love for the students by observing impartiality among his pupils and ensure that all his students acquire knowledge and wisdom. In turn the student is expected to concentrate on his studies and show life long gratitude to the teacher.

In accordance with the Buddhist culture, traditional Bhutanese values address the need to respect all sentient beings. This is reflected in the idea of interdependence which is viewed as "the fundamental law of nature where all forms of life regardless of religion, law, education survive by mutual cooperation based on their interconnectedness."⁶ This interconnectedness is captured in Buddhist iconography as with the mutually reinforcing relationship between the "*thuenpa puenshi*" or the "four friends." This is a common iconography in Bhutan and is painted on the walls in people's homes and in the monasteries, or painted in the form of thangkhas. In view of such reverence for all species, the values of environment protection, aversion to pollution of land, water and air are important aspects of traditional values.

From the above, it is apparent that traditional values are comprehensive in

so far as they outline the values on conduct of relationships across species. These values are, however, increasingly being undermined today as the process of modernisation brings about a new set of values that run contrary to traditional value and belief systems.

The Changing Context and The Emerging Challenges

One of the main challenges in preserving traditional values in modern Bhutan is the need to reconcile the fact that the social, cultural and economic context in which these values developed through the past centuries is very different from Bhutan today. The introduction of a market based economy and monetisation of economic activities as a part of the development process in itself introduced new values in a society that depended on exchange and barter of goods and services. The construction of motor roads and telephone services has made distance no longer a barrier for communications. Improved trade linkages with neighbouring countries and the world has provided access to goods and services that were unimaginable even twenty years ago. Apart from influences of foreign travel and tourism the mass media is perhaps one of the greatest sources of external influence and values. The recent introduction of television and the Internet has enabled the Bhutanese to have instant access not only to global news and information but also whetted their appetite for consumer goods.

The process of modernisation has thus had a profound impact on the social, economic and political outlook of the Bhutanese people leading to a gradual shift in their values, attitudes and expectations. It is, perhaps, necessary here to qualify that the impact of modernisation is felt most greatly in the urban centres of Bhutan, which constitute only about 20% of the population. A vast majority of the people continue to live in the rural areas practising subsistence agriculture. Although the urban population is comparatively small, as with most centre-periphery relationships there is a steady flow of ideas and information from the urban centres to the rural hinterlands. Much of this flow is uni-directional since the centres are perceived as modern, advanced, and hence desirable.

To provide a sharper focus on the impact of modernisation on traditional values, this paper will focus mainly on the changing attitudes, values and expectations of the urban population. The urban population is not only most influenced by modernisation, but also deserve attention as the decline of traditional values threatens to unleash the uglier aspects of modernisation namely alienation, self-centredness, materialism and the consequences of such extremes. The values of modernisation exhibited by the urban population in many ways run contrary to traditional Bhutanese values. The change in values can largely be attributed to pragmatic considerations of urbanisation as much as to changing values of the people.

For example, it is an accepted fact that the living costs in the urban areas are high and steadily increasing. Therefore, many migrants who come to Thimphu or Puentsholing for employment or commercial reasons leave their aging parents in the villages. Owing to the rising costs, families also prefer the nuclear family to the traditional joint family system. Such considerations gradually weaken the family bond and undermine *pha da bhu gi damtshig* and the values associated with *phama dinlen jelni*.⁷

Similarly, the pressure arising from work and the distractions in the urban areas also weaken the bond between the parent and the child. Young children are often left with their nannies when they are young and in front of the television sets at a later stage. This deprives the children of spending quality time with their parents and makes it impossible to imbue the child with social and cultural values which are so important at a young age. In this case the urban person is not able to fulfil his or her duty and obligation as a parent.

Modernisation, foreign travel and the mass media have also exposed the population to new ideas and material goods consequently heightening desires. Influenced by the images from the celluloid screen, the people become materialistic and think that material acquisition can increase happiness just as the couple in the TV advertisement seem to be filled with happiness with the purchase of a new gas stove. The insatiable appetite for material acquisition in turn diverts resources from charitable and socially beneficial activities. For example, many urban residents loathe visiting their villages, as the expectation to bear gifts to the relatives and neighbours becomes a financial burden. Thus an earlier social practice that would have

enabled the redistribution of income between the urban and rural folks is gradually fading. In its stead, the surplus income is spent on acquiring rice cookers, refrigerators and TV sets which are increasingly becoming items of necessity. Thus urbanisation also alienates the individual from his or her rural origins.

The ability to earn cash income in the urban areas instills the urban resident with the notion of being independent.⁸ Unlike the rural people who lead an uncertain life - due to their dependence on natural forces like weather patterns, pests, diseases for their livelihood as subsistence farmers - the urban person is free from such fears so long as one is able bodied and employment opportunities exist. This idea of being "independent" in turn undermines the traditional values of interdependence. Thanks to modern facilities, if one falls ill, one can receive free treatment in the hospital made possible by the government's free health care. Though one is dependent on the government, the idea of who the government is, is more abstract compared to direct interaction with the village medicine man. Thus traditional loyalties to individual and immediate community are transferred to more national and abstract entities. This feeling of independence can, if taken to the extremes, undermine traditional values since values and practice, thereof, are usually seen in the context of social interdependence.

Although development and modernisation creates numerous opportunities, many people are also marginalised in the process. Due to a general dissatisfaction with their lives and possessions, many young people resort to petty crime, substance abuse and a few even to prostitution. Yet others who are more ambitious resort to desecration of sacred *chortens* and monasteries to profit from the sale of religious artefacts and antiques. This represents human greed at its most depraved form draining away the spirituality that has helped shape traditional Bhutanese values in the people.

Reading the editorials and the letters to the editor in Kuensel, the national newspaper, and speaking to people, there is a general concern expressed over the decline of traditional values in Bhutan today. A cynic might question the need for such concern after all traditional values have themselves developed in a certain socio-economic context, at a bygone time. Similarly modern market based societies have their own values. For example, the logic of interaction in a market economy is that of competition

rather than empathy and compassion. Material gratification and consumerism may unseat the primacy of virtue accumulation and spiritual development. This could alienate the Bhutanese people from the cultural and traditional values that have enabled society to attain harmony and progress thus far.

Thus the Bhutanese have to cautiously consider benefits and costs of modernisation since autarky and isolationism are no longer options for Bhutan development and modernisation programmes have to be carried out in an inclusive manner so as not to alienate large sections of the society. Unchecked adoption of foreign ideas and ideals may alienate these people from the urban population and destroy the social and cultural networks that are important for sustainability at the community level.

In addition Bhutan's development philosophy based on the idea of Gross National Happiness also emphasises the need to include the spiritual and cultural needs of the people in the process of development. Thus the traditional values that emphasise the need for reciprocity, responsibility, and interdependence among others, are needed to ensure that the development process in Bhutan is inclusive and sustainable.

Considering the relevance of traditional values in addressing trans-individual and global issues, it is now more necessary than ever to ensure the intergenerational transmission of values. Otherwise, unbridled modernisation may destroy the very spiritual and cultural fabric that has enabled the Bhutanese society to live in harmony with each other and with the natural environment.

Education As a Vehicle for Transmission of Values

Whatever value(s) a society intends to impart education is perhaps one of the most powerful tools to propagate the intended value(s). In terms of policy too, the society or the state apparatus can determine the values that are taught. In the case of the Bhutanese education system, value education, as a separate subject was formally introduced only in the past year or two. Earlier, value education was hidden in the form of stories in the textbooks. This however, does not mean that the education system was devoid of value education since the *Dzongkha* language textbooks provide a wealth of input for value education. Although *Dzongkha* classes in the schools is perceived

as a language course only, it is heavily influenced by Buddhism and the textbooks include Buddhist ethical treatises and biographies of successful Buddhist practitioners.

In order to understand the relevance of education in value transmission it is first necessary to delve briefly into the background of Bhutanese tradition and culture and the changing focus of the education system. Bhutan is often referred to as the last bastion of Mahayana Buddhism and is officially a Buddhist state. Buddhist precepts play an important role in the lives of the Bhutanese. The unification of Bhutan in the 1600s is attributed to the rule of Shabdrung Nawang Namgyel, a Tibetan Buddhist abbot. Till the establishment of hereditary monarchy in 1907, the monastic order played an important role in the political administration of the country. Before 1907, the central administration of Bhutan was based on Buddha-cratism principles where the principal function of the state was to support the monastic community.

However, with the establishment of hereditary monarchy in 1907, and the initiation of planned economic development in the 1960's, the role of the state shifted from one of supporting the monastic order to that of delivering social welfare through economic development.⁹ This policy shift is evident in the Eighth Five Year Plan budget outlay where the *Dratshang Lhentsog* (Council for Ecclesiastical Affairs) received only 0.8 percent of the total budget compared to 18 percent for the health and education sector.¹⁰

Since the launch of modernisation programmes one of the main development priorities for the government has been the enhancement of human resources in the country. Consequently, there has been a rapid growth in the modern education sector from virtually no schools prior to the 1960s to about 343 schools today. As apparent in Table 1, enrolments in modern schools outnumber the traditional institutes of learning and this trend is expected to continue.

Table 1: Comparison Between Monastic and Modern Institutions

	Number of institutions	Number of Students
--	------------------------	--------------------

Monastic institutions	288	10,035*
Modern schools	343	107,792

Source: National Commission for Cultural Affairs, Abstract
Statistics, January 2000, Thimphu Bhutan.

* It should be noted that this figure does not include the novice monks and lay priests that are trained in the village monasteries

The emerging gap in student enrolments between the two types of institutions is also an evidence of the changing importance that parents attach towards providing modern education for their children. While it was every parents wish to send at least one son to become a monk earlier, it is the dream of every parent, today, to see that his or her children complete college education and become a "graduate". A graduate degree is seen as the passport to a "decent" job and a comfortable life.

Thus education today is viewed more as a means to an end i.e., a better job and a better salary. In the context of the modern economy, the people increasingly place importance on modern scientific education, and knowledge of the English language. This is mainly due to the need for such education to enter into the job market. This is in contrast to the traditional notion of education where education was more or less seen as an end in itself in the individual's quest to remove ignorance and attain greater knowledge for its own sake.

Monastic education today follows the traditional methods of teaching and imparts lessons in Buddhist philosophy, logic, astrology, traditional medicine and literature. The medium of instruction is either *chos kyed* (classical Tibetan) or *Dzongkha*. The monks are trained in meditation and ritual practices. Monastic education is provided in the *Dzongs*, the *Shedras* (Buddhist Colleges), *Lhakhangs* (temples) and *Dubdras* (meditation centres) that are spread all over the country. In addition to *gelongs* or ordained monks, there are also *gomchens* or lay priests who follow monastic education in the numerous *lhakhangs*.

In contrast to the traditional monastic education, modern schools teach the modern secular subjects in the English medium. This content and the medium of instruction dominates the education curriculum is described in table two.

Table 2: Education Curriculum in the Schools of Bhutan

Grades/ Subjects	Pre- Prima- ry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Dzongkha</i> (national language)											
English											
Mathematics											
Environment Science											
Science											
Physics											
Chemistry											
Biology											
Social Studies											
History											
Geography											
Economics											
Computer Science											

Note: Shaded portion represents the subjects taught at various levels in Bhutanese schools.

Source: Adapted from Education Division, Education in Bhutan, Annual Statistical Report 1999, Royal Government of Bhutan.

The heavy emphasis on the English language and modern scientific courses can be traced to pragmatic considerations to meet the needs of economic development. The English language was not only necessary for communicating with other countries but also important for Bhutanese students who went to study in India and the west for higher scientific and technical education. Furthermore, the lack of appropriate *Dzongkha* equivalents for mathematical and scientific terms also necessitated the use of English.

Hence English is the medium of instruction for all subjects, except of

course for *Dzongkha* the national language of Bhutan. The modern secular subjects are based on an education curriculum borrowed from India and the west. Thus the very introduction of modern education has brought about the introduction of modern and essentially western ideas. These modern subjects place great emphasis on scientific values and the idea of empirical proof rather than on faith and superstition. Accordingly, rationality gradually displaces traditional beliefs in supernatural forces.

Owing to its scientific and secular orientation value education as such did not feature prominently in the education of Bhutanese children. In some of the English text books published in Bhutan, the Education Department attempted to introduce value education hidden in the form of stories and folk tales. It was only in 1999 that the Education Department formally introduced value education as a separate subject to be taught in schools once a week from the pre-primary level to grade twelve. A value education booklet titled "Learning to Be"¹¹ is to be released in the year 2001. The booklet, written in the English language, dwells on various themes ranging from personal hygiene to generosity, honesty and loyalty to the country (A full list of the value education themes is attached in Appendix I). Although such initiatives are timely and appreciated, the texts seem to deal with the themes of value education in a manner that is isolated and removed from the Bhutanese context.¹²

Unlike modern secular subjects, the texts taught in the *Dzongkha* classes have a very strong value education content although it is taught as a language class. The *Dzongkha* texts in the form of biographies, ethical treatises and poetry have their origins in Buddhism and are based heavily on Buddhist ethical principles. Table three provides a sample of the *Dzongkha* texts taught in Bhutanese schools.

Table 3: List of Texts Taught in Bhutanese Schools

Text	Author	Main Theme
Sumtag	Thumi Sambota	<i>Dzongkha</i> grammar and linguistics
Dashung	Education Dept	-do-
Legshed langdor	Anonymous	Worldly Ethics
Chu-shing gi toenchoe	Gungthang Toenpai Donemay	-do-
Gyelse Laglen	Thumed Zangpo	-do-
Chonjug	Shantideva	-do-
Sheting	Nagarjuna	-do-
Tsig Nyen Nga gi melong	Anonymous	Poetry
Biography of Ashi Nagsa	Anonymous	Biography of successful Buddhist practitioners
Biography of Dowa Zangmo	Anonymous	-do-
Biography of Drimed Kuenden	Anonymous	-do-

Source: Information collected from the schools in Thimphu and Sherubtse College, Tashigang, November 2000.

The texts taught at the tertiary level can broadly be categorised as: linguistics and grammar; biographical literature of successful Buddhist practitioners; and Buddhist ethical treatises. All the texts are based on Buddhist philosophy and promote what are essentially Buddhist values emphasising virtues like altruism, compassion, reciprocity, and interdependence among others.

The three biographical texts listed above deals with the lives of successful Buddhist practitioners and convey the importance of cultivating a compassionate mind. The *ley jumdrej* or the dependence of future results/fortunes on one's present action underlies all three biographies.

Written in the form of life stories, these biographies simplify the complex Buddhist concepts of reincarnation so that lay people can comprehend such concepts clearly. The biographies are also inspiring in so far as they explain that human beings are perfectible and that Buddha-hood is attainable through successful practice.

The biography of prince Drimed Kuenden elucidates many of the central Buddhist themes clearly. Although, he was born a prince, Drimed Kuenden showed a disposition for spiritual quest from an early age. Realising the ephemeral nature of material wealth he gives the wealth of the palace including the most sacred relic away in an act of altruism. On discovering this, the King exiles him into the forest where Drimed Kuenden gives away his treasures - his children, his wife and even his own eyes to a monk. Such virtuous actions, though depicted in the extremes, shows that true selflessness and compassion are the qualities of the Buddha, for Drimed Kuenden in a later life is reincarnated as Buddha Shakya Thupa.

The other category of Buddhist works taught through the *Dzongkha* medium deals with ethical treatises of Buddhist scholars. These texts mainly focus on Buddhist ethics in the form of verses. The values promoted by these Buddhist texts apply across species rather than limiting the values to human relations alone. This is in view of the Buddhist belief that all sentient beings are interdependent. Thus the values fostering virtuous thought, actions and speech apply equally to humans as well other animate beings.

The text titled "Sheting" is the translation of the text "Letter from Nagarjuna to King Gautimiputra" by the ancient Indian Buddhist scholar Nagarjuna. The central theme in "Sheting" is the need for individuals to follow moral values in their thought, action and speech. This text states that "morality is the foundation of all virtues, just as the earth is (the supporter of both) animate and inanimate things."¹³

In order to attain positive merit one is urged to practice the ten precepts. The idea being that following the right path will bring about the right result. Thus there is a verse that urges both the monks and the lay people to remain steadfast in the ten precepts as follows:

Always practice the path of the ten virtuous deeds (performed) through, body, voice and mind; refrain from alcohol, and also delight in wholesome livelihood.

This verse urges the monks and the lay person to avoid the ten non-virtuous actions: three of the body - killing, stealing, sexual misconduct; four of speech - lying, slander, malicious speech, idle speech; three of the mind - covetousness, malevolence, erroneous views. The six lay Buddhist undertakings that are emphasised in traditional Bhutanese values discussed earlier are also covered by the ten precepts.

The text "Gyelse Laglen" or the Thirty Seven Bodhisattva Practices¹⁴ urges the reader to acquire knowledge and cultivate the compassionate mind through a process of listening, thinking and meditating if they want to attain Buddha-hood.

It also deals with Buddhist precepts and emphasises the need for virtues like selflessness and altruism.

For example, the tenth verse states that:

What is the use of one's own happiness when all mothers who have been kind to oneself since the beginning-less of time are in distress? Therefore, in order to ferry all sentient beings, generating the altruistic mind of Enlightenment is the practice of Bodhisattva.¹⁵

Similarly, the twenty-fifth verse states that:

It is necessary to give even ones own body when desiring enlightenment, what need is there to mention other objects? Therefore, it is the practice of the Bodhisattva to give gifts without the hope of future gains.¹⁶

One of the underlying themes of this text is the need to cultivate a compassionate mind by practising the six virtues: *Jinba* (altruism); *thsultrim* (observance of the virtuous path); *zoeba* (controlling angry

temperament); *tsendru* (concentration of the mind); *samten* (meditation) and *sherab* (acquiring knowledge).

From analysing the texts it is evident that the *Dzongkha* courses taught in the schools provide a viable mechanism for the transmission of values as these texts promote Buddhist ethics which is the source of most traditional Bhutanese values. Unlike the value education themes in the "Learning to Be" booklet, value education imparted through the *Dzongkha* texts dwell on familiar Buddhist ideas and can relate to the social and cultural context of the Bhutanese society.

However, it is not sufficient that these ethical values are outlined in the texts alone. It is also important that the students are proficient in the *Dzongkha* language to understand and appreciate the contents of the textbooks. It is also equally important that the method of teaching provokes thought and reflection rather than merely focusing on the language aspect alone. One of the most common criticisms leveled against the *Dzongkha* teaching system is that too much emphasis is given on rote learning rather than on understanding. This reflects the need for change in the teaching methodology as well as a greater emphasis on improving the *Dzongkha* language skills of the students.

Although efforts are being made to popularise the *Dzongkha* language through the establishment of the *Dzongkha* Development Commission, it is important to note that the state also needs the co-operation of parents in improving the *Dzongkha* reading and writing skills of the children. For example, in most households where both parents are educated, English is replacing *Dzongkha* and other local dialects as a medium of conversation. There is an ascribed value to the knowledge of the English language as it is common to hear compliments when a child exhibits fluency in English. Furthermore, the dominance of the English language media, through television, newsmagazines, children's books, and comics also reduce the frequency of *Dzongkha* usage. In addition, the acceptance of English for official correspondence in the bureaucracy and businesses also displace the need for *Dzongkha*.

One of the other factors contributing to a relatively weak *Dzongkha* skill is, perhaps, the limited time devoted to the language in the education curriculum. On a typical school week, *Dzongkha* is one of the six or nine subjects taught in the various classes allocated. Referring to table two, a student in grade eight learns six subjects. On a typical school week the student attends forty-three classes out of which 9 classes are for *Dzongkha*. Thus the total time devoted to *Dzongkha* is only one fifth of the total school time. Similarly in grade twelve, a student studies six subjects (depending on the choice of Science, Commerce or Arts stream) in thirty-four classes a week. The time spent on *Dzongkha* is reduced to less than one fifth as the student reaches grade twelve as shown below.

Table 4: Assessing Time Devoted to *Dzongkha* As a Percentage of All Subjects Taught*

Subject/ Grade	<i>Dzongkha</i>	Others	<i>Dzongkha</i> as % of other subjects
8	9/43	34/43	21%
10	9/44	35/44	20%
12	6/34	28/34	18%

Source: Information obtained from schools in the Thimphu valley, November 2000.

Thus the education system, for reasons stated earlier, fosters an inherent bias towards the English language leaving most students with mediocre skills in *Dzongkha* reading and writing. All the above factors and the nominal attention given to teaching *Dzongkha* in the education curriculum contribute to the difficulty in learning *Dzongkha*. Hence continuous efforts have to be made to improve *Dzongkha* education to ensure the intergenerational transmission of values.

Conclusion

From the preceding discussions it is evident that the forces of change brought about by modernisation and economic development increasingly undermine traditional values. In order to ensure a balanced sustainable and inclusive development process, it is important those traditional values like compassion, altruism, duty, responsibility and reciprocity are sustained. While efforts have been made recently to introduce value education in the schools, the *Dzongkha* courses in Bhutanese schools perhaps provide a powerful means for value transmission. These *Dzongkha* textbooks place the values imparted in the context of Buddhist philosophy and the Bhutanese culture, making it all the more relevant and comprehensible for the students. Furthermore, these texts also have a spiritual element that challenges the student(s) to imagine and think beyond the material and

* The numerator represents the number of *Dzongkha* (or other classes) in a week, the denominator represents total number of classes in a week. Each class lasts about 45 minutes.

tangible realm.

In order to foster a better understanding and appreciation of the traditional values embedded in the *Dzongkha* texts, it is important that continuous effort is made to promote the national language and popularise it through the generation of *Dzongkha* novels, comics and newsmagazines. It is equally important that the Bhutanese people in their roles as parents and individuals understand and appreciate traditional values and pass it to the future generations. While education is necessary, it is in itself not sufficient to enable the transmission of values.

Note

¹I would like to thank Lopen Yonten Phuntsho, Mynak Trulku Rimpoche, Aum Nyima Om, Ms. Misa Tanaka and many other friends for their assistance.

² Huntington, S.P. *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968 p. 32-33

³ Recent human development indicators show that average life expectancy has increased to 66 years, literacy rates have risen to 57 percent, primary health coverage to 90 percent and primary education coverage is near 72 percent.

⁴ The other development objective and strategies of the Eight Plan include: Self Reliance; Sustainability; National Security; Balanced development; Improving the quality of life; Human resource development, Decentralisation and community participation and private sector development. Ministry of Planning, Eighth Five Year Plan (1997-2002), Volume I Main document, Thimphu. p. 25

⁵ *Ley* means action; *jum* means cause or root and *drey* is the result or effect brought about by the action.

⁶ Gyatso Tenzi, the 14th Dali Lama, *Compassion and the Individual*, Wisdom Publications, 1992 p.5

⁷ *Phama dinlen jelni* which translates as reciprocating the parents, is an important concept in traditional social relationships. Just as the parent cared for the child, the child is expected to care for the parents in their old age.

⁸ Emphasis on independence being notional only, because according to Buddhist culture all living being are interdependent on one another.

⁹ Ura Karma, "Development and Decentralisation in Medieval and Modern Bhutan" in Aris, M., & Hutt, M. (eds) *Bhutan: Aspects of Culture and Development*. (UK: Kiscadale Ltd) 1994 pp. 25-51

¹⁰ Ministry of Planning, *Eighth Five Year Plan (1997-2002), Volume I Main document*, Thimphu p. 76

¹¹ Curriculum and Professional Support Division, Education Department, *Learning to Be Thimphu* (to be released in 2001)

¹² For example in order to elucidate the concept of *ley jumdrej*, or the maxim that good begets good, the text *Learning to Be* uses a story of two Alaskans and a St. Bernard Dog rather than using a story from Buddhist story or a Bhutanese folk tale. Ibid. Section II, pp. 23-24

¹³ Acharya Nagarjuna, *Letter from Nagarjuna to King Gautimiputra*, translated by Jampal L. (Motilal, Benarsidass, Delhi, 1983), p.6

¹⁴ Acharya dNgol-chu Thogs-med ñbZang- po *The Thirty Seven Bodhisattva Practices*, translated by Archarya Rigzin Dorjee and Bonnie Rothenberg, Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Varanasi 1988

¹⁵ *ibid.* p. 4

¹⁶ *ibid.* p.9

Bibliography

Acharya dNgol-chu Thogs-med ñbZang- po The Thirty Seven Bodhisattva Practices, translated by Archarya Rigzin Dorjee and Bonnie Rothenberg, Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Varanasi 1988.

Acharya Nagarjuna (1983). Letter from Nagarjuna to King Gautimiputra, translated by Jampal L. New Delhi.

Curriculum and Professional Support Division, Education Department, Learning to Be, Thimphu (to be released in 2001).

Gyatso Tenzi, the 14th Dali Lama (1992). *Compassion and the Individual*, Wisdom Publications.

Huntington, S.P (1968). *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Ministry of Planning (1996). *Eighth Five Year Plan (1997-2002), Volume I Main document*, Thimphu: Royal Government of Bhutan.

Ura, Karma (1994). "Development and Decentralisation in Medieval and Modern Bhutan" in Aris, M., & Hutt, M. (eds) *Bhutan: Aspects of Culture and Development*, UK: Kiscadale Ltd.

Appendix I

Value Education lessons taught at various grades in the book *Learning to be*

Pre Primary Level	:	Love of Family, Cleanliness (personal hygiene), Obedience to Parents and Teachers
Grade I	:	Love of Animals, Honesty, Friendliness, Thankfulness to parents, teachers and friends
Grade II	:	Love for Plants, Respect for Teachers and Friends, and Punctuality
Grade III	:	Love for Friends, Care of properties, Responsibility and Generosity
Grade IV	:	Obedience, Love for Friends and Family, Respect for Friends and Family and Cleanliness
Grade V	:	Helpfulness, Thankfulness, Punctuality and Respect
Grade VI	:	Helpfulness, Responsibility, Friendliness and Fairness
Grade VII	:	Honesty, Responsibility, Loyalty and Unity
Grade VIII	:	Honesty and Gratitude
Grade IX	:	Gratitude, Responsibility and Loyalty

Transmission of Values

Grade IX	:	Determination and Loyalty
Grade XI	:	Dignity of Labour, <i>Ley jumdrej</i> and Determination
Grade XII	:	Tolerance, Compassion and <i>Ley jumdrej</i>

THE ATTRIBUTES AND VALUES OF FOLK AND POPULAR SONGS

*Sonam Kinga**

"Recalling the music competition at the clock tower on the eve of His Majesty's Birthday, it was so wonderful to see our young talents actually singing pure traditional songs called the *Zhungdra*...But as the *rigsar* turn came, it was a total disaster - tunes were either English or Hindi, the music was unharmonised and totally off beat...it was a very sad trend. What's happening to our culture, have our youngsters run out of tunes and words?"¹

"The Thimphu crowd displayed the worst of urban stupidity when they ridiculed *Zhungdra* singers representing rural Thimphu during a music festival competition in 1995. Drunken youth booed and shouted down some very good classical artists".²

Introduction

Popular songs and music, which came to be known as *rigsar*, began to develop in Bhutan in the late 1960s, and they have gradually become part of a new entertainment culture. There has been an unprecedented growth of lyricists, singers, musicians and composers who have, within a short period of time, created a market for themselves. However, the development of *rigsar* songs is not a logical continuation of the folk song tradition. There is an abrupt rupture between the nature and treatment of subject, theme, form, style, tune and music of the traditional folk song and *rigsar*. Greatly influenced by non-Bhutanese songs and music from the very beginning³, *rigsar* songs are not differentiated as culturally representative. They are very popular particularly among the urban youths. Young boys and girls in rural areas are increasingly learning and singing them. Most of the music studios are specializing in producing them and therefore, they are much more available than traditional songs.

Songs and music are integral parts of Bhutanese culture not only as mere forms of entertainment but also as highly refined works of art reflecting the

* Researcher, The Centre for Bhutan Studies, Thimphu

values and standards of society. *Rigsar* songs and music however, lack the artistic depth and seriousness of traditional songs. The most significant trend in the development of modern songs is the abrupt break away from religious themes, which permeated most traditional songs to very secular and urban concerns. In their similarity and association with English pop songs and songs of Hindi films, *rigsar* songs no longer function as a repository of and a medium for transmitting social values.

This paper is divided into three sections. The first will critically analyse the various attributes of folk songs and draw some comparisons with *rigsar* songs. The second will trace the development of *rigsar* and look at institutions that promote it. It will also briefly discuss limitations of institutions concerned with promotion of folk songs and dances. In the third section, some of the religious, social and environmental values of folk songs, and, those promoted by *rigsar* will be studied. The paper will conclude by arguing that the popularity of *rigsar* songs and the specialization of music studios in producing them are gradually challenging the sustainability of the culture of traditional folk songs and music.

Section I: Attributes of Folk Songs

Twin Purpose of Songs and Dances

Songs and dances are considered primarily a medium of entertainment and celebration. But they have deeper spiritual significance; the accumulation of merit at two different levels. First, by virtue of merely singing and dancing, and consequently bringing joy and happiness, it is believed that one would be reborn in the realm of the gods. Second, songs and dances, like mask dances, are hymns and forms of offerings to the gods. If a singer or dancer is fully conscious of the spirituality of the songs and dances, they can serve as means of liberation and attainment of ultimate happiness. The great lamas and Buddhist scholars who composed lyrics always thought that songs and dances must ultimately contribute to human happiness. Therefore, the lyrics dwell mostly on religious themes. This, however, does not imply that there are no songs, which are very secular in subject and theme. Songs mostly assume the form of prayers, hymns, and dances like

that of the *Zhungdra*⁴, are performed by forming a line facing the altar and lamas or guests of honour, in a gesture of respect and worship.

Classification of Songs

The conventional classifications of songs into *Zhungdra*, *Boedra*⁵ and *Rigsar* completely exclude a wide genre of other songs. These three may actually be broadly categorized as Traditional Songs and *Rigsar*. *Zhungdra* and *Boedra* are traditional songs but there are many more songs that fall under this category. Songs may be further categorized into those that are dance oriented and those, which are purely vocal. *Zhungdra*, *Boedra*, *Yuedra*⁶, *Zhey*⁷, *Zhey*⁸ are all examples of songs that can be danced while others like *Tsangmo*⁹, *Alo*¹⁰, *Khorey*¹¹, and *Ausa*¹² are only sang. Songs can also be classified into religious and ordinary songs. *Tshoglu* and *Gurma* (religious songs), for example, are not intended for social entertainment but for prayers and rituals. Composed by saints like Milarepa and Dudjom Rimpoche, their lyrics and melodies are designed to arouse the faith of people in religion. All the songs can be generally classified into eight categories: i) *Lama choetoed ki lu* (songs of prayer and worship of lamas); ii) *Choe dang choed drel lu* (religious songs); iii) *Gylapoi toed lu* (songs of praise for the king); iv) *Gyalkhab ki toed lu* (songs of praise for the country); v) *Ga lu* (songs of happiness); vi) *Dza lu* (love songs); vii) *Thrul lu* (songs of sorrow); and viii) *Tashi moen lu* (songs of good wishes)¹³.

Unlike folk songs there is no diversity and richness of popular *rigsar* songs. At best they could be classified as *Dza Lu* given the singularity of theme they treat. In fact, *rigsar* songs are synonymous with love songs.

***Lozey* and *Tsangmo* - Ornaments of Speech**

Although many people do not consider *Lozey* as song, it belongs to one of the three *Zorig* (Arts), called the Ngag gi *Zorig* (Art of the Speech). *Zorig* is one of the five major sciences. While *Lozey* is mostly recited, some stanzas and paragraphs from a few well-known *Lozeys* have been sung and also recorded in a few instances. *Lozey* is of two kinds: one, a narrative of a story or a narration, usually of epic dimension; the other, an exchange of feelings, either of love or difference of opinion. The musical quality of

Lozey cannot be overlooked. It is poetry in its own right and is transmitted orally. Its remarkable aspect is the usage of spoken *Dzongkha* as the language of poetry and verse; *rigsar* songs have not accomplished this. *Lozey* and *Tsangmo* are different genres of songs, but they share two major similarities: they (except of the first kind in case of *Lozey*) must engage an opponent and cannot be recited or sung alone. The subject would either be one of love or challenge, of engagement to abuse and ridicule. Depending on the type, the opponent will respond and the debate will continue until a winner or a draw is declared. In both cases, messages will be conveyed through articulate usage of metaphors and symbols. They are never direct. *Lozey* and *Tsangmo* have their differences as well. There is no regular structure for *Lozey*. A recitation may be short or very long. On the other hand, *Tsangmo* is very well structured. It consists of four lines or a quatrain with two couplets. Each couplet is self-contained. The first usually makes a statement or describes a situation. The second one makes a statement or a conclusion based on the first. The beat of each line of the quatrain is iambic hexameter.

Origin of Songs

Zhungdra, which literally means Melody of the Centre or The Principle Melody originated in the *Dzongs* and spread to villages. *Dzongs* were and still are the centres of civil administration and religious activities. Two explanations are given for the origins of *Boedra*. The first one claims that they were popularised by *Boed Garps*¹⁴, who travelled through villages on official assignments. The songs they sang were called *Boedra* or the Melody of the *Boed Garps*. The second explains that pilgrims and traders who travelled to Tibet composed songs by imitating and adapting Tibetan songs, and therefore the name, *Boedra* which also means, the Melody of Tibet¹⁵. This second explanation is unlikely as the language, rhythm and tune of Tibetan songs are very different from Bhutanese folk songs.

Zhey are very regional in character. The composition of *Zhey* is normally identified with the coming of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal to Gasa in 1616¹⁶. Songs were also composed in different localities in Bhutan. For example, *Alo* is sung in the dialect of Kurtoe and its origin is ascribed to that region. *Zhetro Yarchoed*, which, like the *Alo* is an oral folk song, is common to Trongsa valley. *Khorey* is a type of song unique to Dungsam, *Ausa* to Haa, *Aulay* to Laya, *Achay Lhamo* to Ura and Omo Omo Pad Lung to Kheng.

The *rigsar* songs, on the other hand, originate mostly in urban centres of Bhutan. Thus we can say that their origin is sociological rather than political or geographical. The very difference in their origin influences the nature and concerns of the songs.

Commentaries on Society and Historical Events

An important aspect of folk songs is the social and historical information they contain. Some are commentaries on, and descriptions of *dzongs*, monasteries, *lhakhangs*, and sites of pilgrimages and as well as of ordinary houses. A few are travelogues. In one of the sub-episodes of the eleventh episode of *Goen Zhey*¹⁷ and in the eighth episode of the *Aulay* song of Laya, a detailed explanation of the process of the creation of the universe is given. During the tenure of the ninth Jêkhembo Gäwa Shaca Rinche (1744-

55), a "tax" known as the *tsunthrä* specified that one male offspring from each household was to enter monastic life. Sumd'a Trashi of Shanyishokha village who, although already a married father, was compelled to enter monastic life because he was an only son. His melancholic verse narrative of the genre known as '*loze*' was sung in the vernacular and is still a popular *Dzongkha* poem today. During the reign of the 37th Desi or "Deva Raja Trashi Dorji (1847-51), a servant to the Gâsa 'Lam by the name of Singge, betrothed a young maiden named Galem, but their parents denied them the right to marry. The grief-stricken Galem took her own life, and her moving song of lament of the genre known as *co'lu* is sung in *Dzongkha* to this day. Similarly, the *Dzongkha* '*loze*' of the *zimbö* of 'Wangdi Phodr'a, Pemi Tshe'wang Trashi of Shâkazhi, commemorates the tragic war between Trongsa and Bumthang during the reign of 43rd *Desi* Nâdzi Pâsa (1861-64). The vernacular '*loze*' of Jami Tshe'wang Padro of Shaphang U village commemorates the skill and distinction of Bhutan's first hereditary monarch 'Ugä 'Wangchu during his performance as arbiter in the Tibetan-British negotiations of 1904'.¹⁸ Like the *Lozey* of Sumdar Tashi, the folk song titled *Gelong Zhen Phen Daw* also gives detailed insight into the tradition of the *tsunthrä* or monk-tax.

Festivals and Songs

Zheys are a different genre of folk songs. They contain elements of both *Zhungdra* and *Boedra* in tune, melody and rhythm of dance. But the subject is more sublime and elevated. *Zheys* are the longest of songs. Unlike other songs, they are sung and danced only during specific local festivals, although shortened versions of the *Zheys* are now performed on other occasions. *Goen Zhey* is performed at Gasa during a three-day festival beginning on the 10th day of the 8th month, and must be completed within the three days of the festival. The performance of *Layapai Aulay* begins on the 15th day of the 8th month. *Cha* is performed in the village of Ney, Lhuntse only during the festival of that village. Although most *Zheys* like *Wang Zhey*, *Nub Zhey*, *Talopai Zhey* and *Paropai Zhey* developed subsequent to the coming of *Zhabdrung*¹⁹ from Tibet in 1616, *Goen Zhey* was performed during the coming of *Zhabdrung*. Its origin has mythical basis as well. *Nub Zhey* is one of the longest *Zheys* comprising of twenty-five different episodes, each lasting a minimum of five minutes. *Goen*

Zhey consists of twenty-one episodes and the Layapai Aulay of over fifteen episodes.

Lyricists and Lyrics

As with painters, relatively little is known about lyricists in Bhutan. Of hundreds of songs composed, there are no records identifying a song with a lyricist. Social memory is able to identify a few lyricists. Therefore, we can make only general comments about indigenous composers and lyricists. Lyricists of traditional songs were lamas, monks and scholars who had and have undergone monastic education and are highly learned persons. The 57th *Je Khenpo*, His Holiness Ngawang Gyeltshen, the late *Je Khenpo* Geshe Gedun Rinchen, Ashi Wangmo, the daughter of the first king and disciple of His Holiness the Je Karmapa, the Late Dasho Gaydon Thinley, and *Lopen* Nado were some of the greatest lyricists. Contemporary lyricists like the present *Je Khenpo*, His Holiness *Trulku* Jigme Choeda, *Lopen* Jampa Chogyal, *Dasho* Shingkar Lam, and *Lopen* Pemala are among the accomplished scholars who were educated in monasteries and Rigzhung institutes. *Lopen* Kunzang Thinley is one of the most prolific contemporary lyricists and has composed over 180 songs. Religious themes dominate most of their songs. A few of them have also composed *rigsar* songs.

Rigsar songs are composed by students, college graduates and teachers. Unlike lyricists and composers of folk songs, the singer, lyricist and musician of *rigsar* songs can all be identified. These informations are available on the flap of the audiocassette. Their limited association with the monastery and religious curriculum is noticeable in the themes and tunes of these songs.

Language of the Songs

The text of traditional songs are mostly verses, and poetry in their own right. Written mostly in *Chökey*, they constitute the Performing Arts and Poetry under *Rigney Chungwa Nga* (five minor sciences) and as a skill at Oral Excellence, a part of the *Zorig* (Arts) under *Rigne Chewa Nga* (five major sciences)²⁰. Since *Chökey* is the classical language of Bhutan, it can be understood only by a very limited section of the population. Students are not able to understand since it is no longer the medium of education. One of

the reasons for the popularity of modern *rigsar* songs is their composition in *Dzongkha*, which is more colloquial²¹ and easier to understand.

Mode of Narration

Songs are also narratives, of, for example legends, stories, human dilemmas, relationships. While first person narration is usually common in songs that address a beloved or implore a lama for salvation and refuge, most songs are narrated in the third person. The emphasis on 'we' rather than 'I' is also a recurrent feature of first person narrative songs.

Most *rigsar* songs are monologues, delivered by a lover to a beloved. However, they do not attain the depth and seriousness of traditional monologue songs in language, images, metre and style. The emphasis on individual thoughts and feelings dominate *rigsar* songs.

This shift in emphasis from collective social consciousness to individual consciousness is also representative of the growing urban culture where the traditional social fabric and networks are gradually weakening.

Musical Instruments

Musical instruments are not always played at singing and dancing sessions in villages and at informal gatherings. They are mostly used during formal public celebrations, and songs and dance competitions. They are intensively used at the Bhutan Broadcasting Service Radio and by private firms that specialize in producing audio cassettes. While some firms attempt to balance the production of modern and traditional music, most prefer to specialize in modern electronic and pop music.

Dramnyen (lute)²², chiwang (fiddle)²³ and lingm (flute)²⁴ are the three main folk music instrument. Yangchen (Dulcimer) is not an indigenous Bhutanese instrument and came to be used only in the 1950s. The materials used for making traditional musical instruments are very elementary and natural. Wood, bamboos, silken thread and horse tails are used. The kind of materials used have deep implications for the kind of music they are capable of producing. Most oriental music is based on the pentatonic scale,

and Bhutanese music intensively emphasize the perfect octave, perfect 4th and the tonic which are three of the pentatones.

Learning Songs - An Oral Tradition

Songs were rarely written down and documented. Even today, very limited numbers of songbooks are published. The first one titled *Folk Songs of Bhutan*, was published in 1985 by the Department of Education and contained 280 folk songs. Kunzang Thinley's *gLu deb 'blo gsar dga' ston* published in 1996 and *A Treasury of Songs of the Kingdom of Bhutan*, published in 1997 by the Special Commission are the only comprehensive song books available. Bhutan was an oral society and therefore, the transmission of songs through memory and oral recitation constituted, and continues to constitute, an important part of the learning process. This oral tradition was based, however, on a teacher-student relationship. The teacher was a lama, monk, lay monk or any person who knew a song and taught it to others. There must have been instances of writing songs in long hand, but they were never published for mass circulation. *Gup Mani* of Gasa, who died over 30 years ago, is believed to have possessed a book which contained the lyrics of Goen Zhey. No one has been able to trace it.

Lyricists do not always compose tunes and develop choreography. Dancers may perform choreography they find comfortable. A song may be sung in a few different tunes. There are variations in tunes and even in lyrics of the same song across different regions. However, most of them do have one particular tune. Like the lyrics themselves, the tune has also been learnt, taught and transmitted orally. Learning of lyrics is accompanied by learning the tune. They are hardly separated.

Songs and Their Context

Different songs are meant for different occasions and for different purposes, not for mere entertainment. As stated in *Shey Zoed Yid Zhin Norbu*²⁵ - a text that discusses, amongst others, some aspects of songs and dances are given; 'Don't sing sad songs at celebrations; don't sing happy songs at mourning; don't sing war songs at marriage, don't sing love songs while an enemy is being subdued and don't sing songs at times of sickness and death'²⁶. The context in which songs are sung is an important

consideration. *Alo* is usually sung at the point of departure of a friend or a relative. *Zheytro Yarchoed* is sung only when monks and lay monks are served refreshments during prayer ceremonies and rituals. Tashi Laybay is sung at the time of Chibdrel (a ceremonial procession of receiving guests of honour) and also toward the conclusion of festive and public celebrations. Different songs known as Tashi are sung to conclude a singing and dancing session on a positive note²⁷. There are songs sung at the work place, and songs sung only on particular religious or social occasions.

Composition of Lyrics

Traditional guidelines for composition of song lyrics are neither understood nor observed by lyricists of *rigsar* songs. Making incompatible comparisons where symbols and metaphors are inflated to convey a small point, or where they are incapable of conveying deep meanings are technical faults in composition. What is not permissible while composing lyrics is elucidated in a religious text called Melongma. According to it,

All composition for oral art
Should not be displeasing, such as
To write, 'the moon is white as the swan
The sky is pure like the ocean
Revere heroes like dogs
Fire flies illuminate like the sun'
Avoiding such incongruity, the learned composed
So compose keeping these in mind.

Vocal Quality and Practice

Vocal and behavioural discipline is necessary to sing and dance within a certain acceptable standard. There are four vices that must be avoided during singing and dancing. They are: i) singing at very high vocal pitch ii) singing with very sharp and piercing voice iii) frowning while singing and dancing and iv) asking/waiting for others to sing and dance²⁸. The emphasis on singing at an acceptable pitch of voice underscores the need for vocal training. There is no formal training, but continuous practice can enhance intrinsic voice quality and ability, especially for singing *Zhungdra*. Traditional folk songs are usually sung at a certain vocal amplitude which will not be drowned out by the music.

Although the quality of voice is regarded very highly, the meanings of the songs traditionally receive more emphasis. A traditional proverb reads, 'Consider the tune, not the voice; consider the words, not the tune and consider the meaning, not the words'.

Compatibility of Songs and Dances

One crucial distinction between traditional and modern songs is the compatibility of songs and dances. When traditional lyricists compose songs, they are usually conscious of the choreography and the sequence of steps that will be compatible with the tune of songs. Singers who compose tunes are even more conscious of the choreography for the song. So, in addition to songs like *Tsangmo* and *Alo*, all others are compatible with some sequence of movements that are generally performed. When *Dasho Gyonpo Tshering* was compiling the lyrics of *Goen Zhey*, many people in *Gasa* whom he approached had to perform the dance in order to remember the lyrics. Composition of lyrics, tunes and the dance are closely inter-related.

Singers line up in a single row to sing and dance *Zhungdra*, while a circle is the most popular formation for dancing *Boedra* and *Zhey*. Although the style and steps of dancing are gradually changing in institutional entertainment programmes, the original steps and movements are the most preferred ones in informal social gatherings and celebrations. Most Bhutanese are familiar with the generally accepted choreography and easily connect with the rhythm of the movements in a dance. While some of the *rigsar* songs can be danced in traditional steps to a limited extent, most of them are incompatible with the traditional choreography. Given the speed, rhythm and tune and the accompanying instrumental music, modern songs can either be sung as solos or danced like pop American songs as depicted in some recent Bhutanese films²⁹. The compatibility of songs and dances has deep implications for the nature and possibility of popular audience participation in singing and dancing that are important in enhancing socialization of the community.

Social Participation

Group participation is one of the distinguishing features of traditional songs and dances. One person does not perform a dance on his own. Of course dancers basically perform the same step and movements. People unfamiliar with the tradition may think it possible for any individual to perform the dance. However, dance is conceived not in terms of an individual but of group. Dancing is always a collective performance. By virtue of their participatory nature, traditional songs directly engage the audience they entertain.

Dancing does not discriminate and is socially cohesive. Irrespective of their status, people from all walks of life can join a dancing session. It is not unusual to find the king and queens or ministers dancing with ordinary people.

On the other hand, modern songs can be very limited in accommodating group participation. More often than not, they are monologues and songs per se. Lyricists neither visualize nor are conscious of a choreography that would harmonize with their songs. *Rigsar* songs developed on stage and were performed to a sitting audience. The use of the microphone further impeded any initiative to develop choreography. Besides, *rigsar* songs are mostly solos about a person, usually a lovelorn lover singing to a beloved making very blunt statements about their love.

Rigsar songs are commercial packages, sung and recorded in the isolation of studios and targeted for sale to an audience at a price. The audience is reached through a mechanical medium.

Section II: Emerging Changes- The Development of *Rigsar* Songs

Origin of *Rigsar* Songs

The first instance of the composition of *rigsar* songs dates back to late 1960's. Zhendi Migo was the first modern Bhutanese song. Its tune was directly imitated from that of Sayonara, a song in a Hindi film, 'Love in Tokyo'. It must have been very popular then. Choreography was developed for this song by the artists of Royal Academy of Performing Arts (RAPA) and performed during the Trongsa *Tshechu*³⁰. Lhamo Drukpa, a pop *rigsar* singer produced a remix of this song in her album 'Ney Rio Tala' released in 1998. It is also included in Norling Drayang's album Ausphalay and in Nazhoen Phuntshog Drayang's Lokhor. Another historical event in the development of *rigsar* song occurred in 1979-80, when *Dasho* Thinley Gyamtsho composed Dorozam and sang it at a school function. In the 1980s, when the National Council for Social and Cultural Promotion coordinated summer and winter scouts programmes for school children, most of the songs sung in the camps were in Hindi, Nepali or English. Of course a *rigsar* song or two had been composed a bit earlier, but they were more or less translation of Hindi songs. They were direct and easy to understand. *Dasho* Thinley, then a teacher at Samchi thought that songs would be a useful educational tool to teach students from southern Bhutan. They found *Dzongkha* readers which contained stories translated from *Chökey* hard to understand. Compositions of songs in *Dzongkha* would not only generate interest in songs but also facilitate learning the language. Therefore, the first *rigsar* songs were composed as means to fulfil educational purposes.

Besides songs, composers like *Dasho* Thinley and *Lopen* Tashi also composed nursery rhymes. A few of them are still aired on the Bhutan Broadcasting Service Radio. A youth organization called the Nazhoen Thrabten Tshogpa founded in 1984 by a few graduates of Semtokha Rigzhung Institute³¹ later began to produce and sing *rigsar* songs in public. The composition of *rigsar* songs underwent a change in concept and purpose in the mid-1980s beginning with Shera's³² performance of a song and music programme called Ngesem Ngesem³³ in 1986 at Mongar. This represented a point of departure, especially in terms of purpose and choice

of subject, from the kind of songs composed in the preceding five years. Entertainment, rather than educational values, was emphasised. Another feature of Ngesem Ngesem was the use of the electronic keyboard by Shera's band. It was very influential, introducing rhythms and beats that would not have been possible in traditional songs. However, Norling's production of a music album called Pangi Shawa³⁴ in 1995 marks the beginning of a new breed of songs and music, which anticipated the development of popular songs in the subsequent years. Most of the albums released after 1995 have similar musical compositions, choices of subjects and themes. They associate more with English, Hindi and Nepali music. It is evident that *rigsar* songs developed only after modern socio-economic development began in Bhutan in 1960. The first song was composed eight years later, after the establishment of the first cinema hall at Samdrup Jongkhar in 1960.

Songs in Vernacular Languages

The development of song writing in vernacular languages in tandem with the growth of *rigsar* songs is a very interesting feature. Presumably, many songs in vernacular languages existed. But only a few are sung today. There are few songs in Khengkha and Bumtapaikha, dialects spoken in central Bhutan. Bumei Karma Wangzom, Kampai Jaling Beto Gaidee, the most popular song in Khengkha is believed to have been presented to Zhabdrung when he arrived in Bhutan.

Sharchopkha has become the most popular among vernacular languages for composition and singing *rigsar* songs. While some studios have produced a few sharchogpa songs, Pelvision has been the most active producer of song albums in Sharchop. Most of the songs, if not all, in albums like Kharang Zaley Odo, Otha Zamling Nangka, Deley Deley are in sharchop.

Growth of Music and Film Studios

A remarkable development in the 1990s has been the growth of private music studios, which increasingly specializes in the production of *rigsar* songs. Except for Tashi Nenchu established in 1987, studios like Norling Drayang, Nazhoen Phuntshog Drayang, Melody Drayang, Mila and Pel Vision, which are all based in Thimphu, produce *rigsar* songs using

electronic music. Of course, they also occasionally produce folk songs. Norling Drayang started producing folk songs and music but switched to *rigsar* and modern music. Pel Vision attempts to maintain a balance between traditional and modern music, although their lyrics are mostly *rigsar*. Music firms argue that if they don't use electronic music for their songs, their productions would not sell well. This is an important consideration in the production of *rigsar* songs and music. All these studios were established for commercial purposes.

A few of these music firms also expanded into film production. Film companies are also increasing in number. Of the 24 Bhutanese films produced to date, most contain *rigsar* songs and music. They have become a powerful instrument in popularising *rigsar* songs. As part of a film, they are immediately learnt and sung. Recognizing the popularity of film songs, producers produce dialogues and songs on audiotapes, even before the film is actually released or soon after. The recorded sales of these tapes are very high.

Production of *Rigsar* Song Albums

The production of over a hundred albums in the last ten years is significant. (See Annex 1 for list of song albums produced as of March, 2001). Considering that each album has, on average, ten songs, a total of over one thousand *Rigsar* songs have been produced in the last decade. On the other hand, the number of album traditional songs and music produced is much fewer. And these, in turn, far outnumber the traditional songs composed and recorded in the very few song books that are available. Without a doubt, the number of traditional songs composed over the centuries has been much greater than the number actually available today. Most of them probably have been forgotten over the generations, since there was no system for documenting songs. The Royal Academy of Performing Arts has produced only one song (traditional folk song) and one folk music (instrumental) album. On the other hand, Norling Drayang intends to produce at least one *rigsar* album every month.

Songs and Music Programme on Radio and Television

The volume of production of songs and music albums greatly influence accessibility and listening habits. The market is flooded with *rigsar* music albums. The very fact that they are available on audiotapes is significant. Unlike books of traditional songs, taped lyrics, tunes and music are available in one integrated object. The impact, therefore, is much greater. The learning of songs now does not necessarily require a teacher. Because of limited production of traditional songs in audiocassettes, folk songs are still an oral tradition. The BBS has nearly two hundred *Dzongkha* songs recorded on open spool reels and an equal number in the Sharchop. It selects songs to play on air from these collections. Its Musical Production Group, which no longer exists, used to travel to remote villages, collect songs and air them from Thimphu. This programme could not be sustained due to high cost of production and the transfer of staff to other organizations. Nevertheless, BBS has played a crucial role in preserving and promoting traditional songs and music. Since 1999, it has also begun to play *rigsar* songs on air. While *rigsar* songs are specifically played on Thursdays, they are also played intermittently throughout the week along with other songs. This has become a factor in popularising *rigsar* songs, especially in rural areas where young boys and girls are keen to learn them. BBS television has not made any particular move to popularise either traditional or *rigsar* music. In its daily one-hour telecast, music fillers are used when the programme switches from *Dzongkha* news to English news and then to the half an hour programme. Both traditional and *rigsar* music are telecast. However, this airtime eventually will be sold for commercial purpose. Advertisements will take up this space. Cable TV operators, like KC Cables and Sigma Cables, telecast songs and music of both type on a special channel where they also make announcements and provide information to their customer.

Popularity of *Rigsar* Songs

Two of the most cited reasons for the popularity of *rigsar* songs are the language which makes them much more understandable and the music which is similar to those used for western popular songs. This preference on the part of the youth for *rigsar* songs because of the type of music used is a reflection of their preference for western popular music. The BBS, in its occasional listener survey about its English programmes, finds that the

top ten songs in the US or UK are also among the top ten in popularity among the youth of Thimphu.

The quantity of production of *rigsar* song albums has a direct consequence on its popularity. Customers have greater choice of songs and music, and their choice are more readily available. *Rigsar* music is played in taxis, buses, and other public transport and in restaurants. Recognizing the popularity of *rigsar* songs and their potential to influence passengers, the Health Division has produced a few music albums laden with health and sanitation messages. All the songs are in *Dzongkha*. Electronic musical instruments are used. Norling Drayang employs a full-time musician from Calcutta, India who composes the master rhythm for all the songs they produce.

Role of Royal Academy of Performing Arts and Tashi Nencha

The Royal Academy of Performing Arts (RAPA) is the oldest and the only such institute in Bhutan; it was formally established 'in 1967 with only 10 girls. Today, there are 54 students of which 13 are girls³⁵. Its purpose is to preserve and promote Bhutan's performing arts, especially songs, music and mask dances. It has definitely kept the original songs, music and choreography alive. It has also ventured to compose livelier music and develop different choreography for many songs. A few artists of this academy have been sent to schools and institutes to teach students. But most of them left the institute once they attained their retirement age, which were 25 for women and 35 for men. Today, it is 35 for both men and women. They are trained for four years. There is no formal system of sending the artists, after training, to any other institutes as trainers or teachers, although the current principal is exploring employment opportunities for the institute's graduates. Some artists are sent for a month or two on deputation to different Dzongkhags when they are requested to come and teach before the annual festivals. Schools in Thimphu also request for their service before their annual school concerts. However, they are mostly retained at the institute as performing artists. On the whole, the academy's social role has been limited. Not all of the artists are active or take performing arts as profession. They perform mostly for public events like the National Day, entertain state guests, and also perform during state dinners, official inaugurations and promotions. Lately, they also have

started to provide packaged cultural programmes for tourists. Nevertheless, their role has generally been confined to ceremonial functions. A major limitation for their activities has been the shortage of space and infrastructure, such as class rooms and hostels. The current hostel 'built in the 1960s was not able to accommodate the increase in the numbers of students over the years'. A recent Danish grant of Nu.10 million will help provide funds and support for the institute³⁶.

Similarly, the role and performances of Tashi Nenchu, a private music studio has also been limited to these few ceremonial events. Unlike other private music firms, Tashi Nenchu specializes in production of traditional songs and music. All seven song albums that it has produced are unique in comparison to the production of other firms. It has also produced dramas and films and frequently stages public performances. Like the Academy, it has participated in cultural performances outside the country. Tashi Nenchu's most valuable asset is the 87 year-old Aku Tongmi who was one of the most famous singer and dancer of his time. Despite his age, Aku Tongmi is able to teach the artists of Tashi Nenchu original songs and choreography and thereby continue an old tradition. It is only the artists of Tashi Nenchu who knows the choreography of the National Anthem. Aku Tongmi composed the lyrics, tune and choreography of the National Anthem in 1953. The lyrics were edited by the late *Gaydon* Thinley. As a pioneer in establishing private music firm in Bhutan, Tashi Nenchu trained many of the artists who later joined Pel Vision and Norling.

Songs and Music Course at the Institute of Language and Cultural Studies (ILCS)

Except at the ILCS in Sempokha, songs and dances are not taught as a part of the curriculum in any educational institutes. Of course they are performed in all schools for national and institutional events. Increasingly *rigsar* songs are becoming part of school concerts and group competitions. Students who go home to their villages for holidays popularise *rigsar* songs as they sing them during communal gatherings and annual rituals. Rural youths learn them from the students from their villages. *Rigsar* songs also are sung increasingly for *Dacham*³⁷.

At ILCS, songs, music and dances are taught right from grade XI to degree classes. Although they are only elective subjects, many students have taken

the courses. The objective and content of the courses are designed not only to teach students traditional songs and music but also to promote creativity and direct initiatives. An introduction to different types of songs, music and dances, a study of their origin, and researches on all folk songs and music orchestras form the theoretical part of these courses. Singing, dancing, learning to play musical instruments, composition of new and different lyrics, and the development of new choreography, all constitute the practical part. The three songbooks published so far are used as textbooks and reference materials, but there is no manual or textbook for teaching various aspects of these courses. The institute is in the process of conducting researches in order to develop comprehensive publications on songs, dances, music and choreography. In the absence of even limited publications of songs, the institute intends to enable each student who takes this course to come up with a publication of songbook when he/she graduates.

Section III: Value Analysis of Folk Songs and *Rigsar* Songs

Songs and Education

Monastic education in the traditional Bhutanese society was accessible only to monks and lay monks. However, ordinary people learnt about morality, ethics and other basic tenets of Buddhism through performance of rituals, prayer ceremonies, religious festivals, and mass teachings. This medium was nevertheless very informal. In absence of other medium of learning, folk songs have been very influential in educating the ordinary people on social, religious and environment values. As people sang the same songs through generations in almost similar tunes, they continuously reinforced these values, which found expression in the beliefs and practices of the people.

Traditional songs address a large section of the society. The morals and messages inherent in them are not only conveyed to listeners and the people beyond the immediate audience; they also remind the singers themselves about issues like the impermanence of life and relationships, and the importance of religion.

In this section some of the most fundamental religious, social and environment values reflected in folk songs will be discussed.

Social and Religious Values

Bhutanese culture is deeply influenced by Buddhism. Buddhism is the foundation of all social values. Since religious values permeate the morals, ethics and code of conduct of the Bhutanese, cultural and social values are often indistinguishable.

One of the most dominant religious themes treated in folk songs is the value of human life and the need to live it meaningfully.³⁸ Life is short and unpredictable like 'the lightning' and 'rainbow in the sky'³⁹. It is much 'rarer than gold, more precious than even the lives of gods'. It is an opportunity to 'practice the dharma' and 'liberate ourselves from the wheel of suffering'. Phrases echoing these messages recur in most songs in one form or the other.

Impermanence, which is central to the teachings of Buddhism is also treated in folk songs. Everything changes and does not last. Life has no permanence, and the body no fixity. Everyone is reminded about the importance of living a virtuous and meaningful life.

The importance of faith to and worship of the 'three jewels' of Buddhism – the Buddha, Dharma and Sanga is another recurrent theme. Songs sing about merits obtained through prayers, making offerings and seeking refuge in them. Lamas, who are the most important factor in helping attain liberation as teachers, also assume prominent place in songs of various kind.

Many verses from hagiographies of saints and great religious persons are sung as songs. There are repeated messages in them that insist on renunciation of attachment to luxuries of life and aspire for higher spiritual goals. These are tactfully conveyed through many symbols and metaphors⁴⁰.

The inevitability of destiny as a consequence of merit and demerit of one's previous lives is also highlighted in the songs. This is the most fundamental of Buddhist's principle; *Ley Jumdrey* - the belief in interdependence of action and result. What we are, man or woman, rich or poor, happy or sad,

united or solitary, abled or disabled are the consequences of our actions. Songs however, do not merely underline this fact but subtly imply that our future (lives) will depend on how we live our life now.

The concept of *tha damtshig* is one of the most fundamental social values. Literally translated, it reads as 'boundary of sacred oath' and refers to commitment and obligation of love, honour and loyalty in one's relationship with other people. Followers are obliged to respect, worship and be loyal to their masters for teachings and religious initiations. Children must be grateful to parents for their love, care and protection, subjects to sovereign for benevolent rule, peace and harmony in society. This is further condensed in the concept of *Dinlen Jelni*⁴¹ – 'repaying kindness'. It is built on the idea of reciprocity. Dedication of students to teachers, gratitude of children to parents, and faith and loyalty between husbands and wife are extolled as highest of social virtues.⁴²

Bhutanese always emphasize on *Tendrel* or good auspices. Every occasion or event has to begin and end on a positive and optimistic note. Whether it is house construction, marriage, promotion, celebrations or inaugurations, the significance of an auspicious beginning or conclusion is a very important social value. Some songs are specifically dedicated to fulfill such a purpose. Singing and dancing sessions always conclude with a song called Tashi Tashi. There are different versions of this song. If it were a public occasion, the song Tashi Labay is sung to conclude the event. While its chorus is always the same, there are different lyrics. These songs echo hopes and wishes for bumper harvest, abundant rainfall, a 'body without illness and mind without worries'. It ends by praying that everyone may once again meet the following year in a spirit of contentment and well-being.

Environmental Values

Folk songs have also served as a medium of emphasizing the spiritual, economic and aesthetic importance of the natural world. This aspect of songs is even more important and relevant to a society that is gradually becoming more urbanized and therefore, developing a very fragmented and economic view of the natural environment.

Nature - Citadels of Local Gods and Deities

The natural environment has been the greatest source of inspiration for lyricists of traditional folk songs. Its influence has been so strong that almost all recorded folk songs relate to nature either in their theme, imagery and symbols, or as objects of poetry and worship. In most songs, the sky, streams and rivers, mountains and cliffs, forest groves and even the subterranean have been portrayed as citadels or abodes of local gods and deities. The songs constantly emphasize the need to appease them and respect their citadels so that they reciprocate by blessing communities and villages with abundant rainfall and harvest, protect them from diseases and misfortune. On the other hand, if humans encroach upon their abodes, their wrath is believed to be expressed in the form of hailstorms, gales, landslides and floods that destroy crops, cattle, lives and property⁴³.

Nature - A Living Entity

Nature is believed to be a living force, a conscious entity possessing all the qualities of life, not an object or a mere biomass. Therefore, the sun, moon, sky, earth, trees, rivers, mountains and cliffs, animals and birds, the landscape are more than often personified in folk songs. They assume human characteristics and present themselves as capable of feelings and thoughts. This is a direct affirmation of the Buddhist belief in nature as living entity and therefore, deserving of love, compassion and respect. The songs continuously reinforce this belief, and it, has been one of the strongest indigenous social force in nature conservation.

Natural Symbols and Images

Local deities and gods, protective guardians, natural symbols like the sun, moon, stars, air, fire, rivers, trees, birds, animals, and the landscape are intensively used in traditional songs to build up metaphors and images. Perhaps the most recurring images are the sky and sun, mountain and snow lion, glade and reindeer, lake and fish, village and people. The use of symbols and images is one of the most important distinctions between folk and *rigsar* songs. An interesting feature of folk songs is the technique of conveying a message or emphasising a point through the use of different images. The depth of the song's meaning is built through repeated use of different metaphors in it. Only toward the end of the song is the actual

meaning stated. This is a narrative technique used to build arguments in order to convince the imagined listener. The quality of natural environment is also an indicator of communal prosperity. Woods devoid of wildlife, barren meadows, dried streams... are considered signs of misfortune for the village. They must always be there. Songs therefore, sing of the beauty of green hills, flowers and fruits, bees and birds, underling the importance of maintaining a constant ecological balance.

Sociological Concerns of *Rigsar* Songs

Most *rigsar* songs dwell on the theme of love. Only a few of them differ from this general trend. They are of three kinds: the first kind treats religious and social themes, and reflect values like those contained in folk songs. The music, language, rhythm and tunes are of course different. There is even a sharp contrast in usage of symbols and metaphors. The song Mitshe Thungku⁴⁴ sings of the shortness of human life and the importance of cultivating merit through pious deeds. Chuchen Dangmichuna⁴⁵ is a song about human ignorance of noble aspirations caused by blind attachment to momentary pleasures. Songs of Kelzang Dorji, a blind singer are very rich in religious themes. He sings about fate, destiny, the sacredness of life...His songs and music, and that of the students of National Institute for the Disabled are very distinct from other *rigsar* songs in the way they blend traditional styles with modern ones in terms of lyrics, tune and music. There are also songs that celebrate the virtue of 'repaying kindness of parents', charity to poor, obeisance to teachers and masters, and of love among friends, siblings and relatives.

The second kind is composed to promote social advocacy messages. Health and environment have been the most prominent subjects of such songs. They are usually produced under the sponsorship of institutions with similar interests. The Information, Education and Communication for Health (IECH) of the Ministry of Health and Education has produced song albums that convey messages related to health and hygiene, sanitation, abuse of narcotics, sexually transmitted diseases, smoking and alcoholism. The Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN) has sponsored production of a folk song album as a part of its black-neck crane protection strategy. It has made an audio visual of the song Shawa Phomo⁴⁶. This is frequently shown on national television. Another song, Cheden Drugi

Gyalkhab⁴⁷ has also been made into an audio-visual for screening on television. It was composed and sung on the occasion of the inauguration of the National Botanical Garden in Thimphu in 1999. 'Save the Tiger/Save Life on Earth' is a song album produced by the Nature Conservation Division in collaboration with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) as a part of their Tiger Protection programme. All songs in it are specifically composed for the programme.

The third kind deals specifically with issues that are indicative of changing social circumstances. They either comment or make objective statements about new trends in society. Pel Vision's latest album is titled Deley Deley meaning '(I) will go' in sharchop. The singer expresses her wish to migrate to Thimphu and stay with her sister and brother-in-law in view of the hard and difficult life in village. Her father cautions her. He cites examples of some of her friends who have gone earlier and become 'worthless'. The song is a direct comment on the consequence of rural-urban migration that is a growing social phenomenon. Another song in the same album highlights pretensions of people in terms of their wealth, status and purpose especially because of their association with urban values. It cautions girls in rural areas against advances from men who go to villages. A simple office peon going to his village in a rural area could pretend to be an officer and beguile girls. A driver would pretend to be owner of the car he is driving. At the core of this song is the theme of an assumed superiority of urban dwellers and workers in comparison to farmers in villages. Everything urban looks attractive, better and worth aspiring for. However, reality is different and even harsh. Life is measured along income levels. The value of money and people's slavery to it is clearly portrayed in a song called 'Oy Tiru' – Oh Money⁴⁸. Quite a few *rigsar* songs ridicule girls who aspire to marry husbands for their wealth and positions. 'True love no longer seems to matter' they sing. While it might appear to indicate degradation of marital values, it actually speaks about how people perceive marriage as source of economic security. However, this is not suggestive of an established social phenomenon but an emerging trend.

Religious and social values that are concerns of folk songs do not engage *rigsar* songs to any considerable extent. Most of them are expressions of love and its fulfilment, frustration of lovers, failure of personal relationships, hope of consummation of an affair, or perseverance of faith

and loyalty. Only a few differentiate themselves distinctively by dwelling on different themes. However, their concerns with social issues do not necessarily qualify them as repository of value-system of a changing society. Rather they project themselves as critique of changes and new developments in society.

Conclusion

This paper has analysed different attributes of folk songs, outlined the development of *rigsar* in the last decade and looked at various values that are promoted by both folk and *rigsar* songs. Although traditional folk songs and dances are still a living culture, they are being increasingly overtaken in popularity by *rigsar* songs particularly among the youths. Most of the music studios specialize in the production of *rigsar* song albums. The availability of traditional songs in audiocassettes is far less than those of *rigsar* songs. They still remain part of oral tradition. Institutional frameworks necessary for preserving and promoting traditional songs and music are limited and may not be in a position to check the proliferation of *rigsar* songs. The development and spread of *rigsar* songs therefore, greatly challenge the values and sustainability of traditional songs and music and, consequently, of traditional Bhutanese values.

Note

¹ A letter to the Editor titled, *Preserving Our Culture*, by Sonam Wangchuk, Karma Tshering and Pema Namgyel, *Kuensel* (the national newspaper), Dec 2, 2000.

² See *Kuensel* editorial, August 21, 1999.

³ Dasho Thinley Gyamtsho, Principal, Royal Academy of Performing Arts and Lop. Gyem Dorji, *Dzongkha* Editor, *Kuensel*, Personal Communications, Nov., 2000.

⁴ Classical songs sung in a very long melody.

⁵ See *Origin of Songs* in this section for explanations of both *Zhungdra*, *Boedra*, *Zhey*, *Zheym* etc.

⁶ Although there is no traditional usage of the word *Yuedra*, Jigme Drukpa, Vice Principal of the Royal Academy of Performing Arts coined it to identify songs that have originated in the villages.

⁷ Another genre of classical songs. See section on *Origin of Songs* and *Festival and Songs* for more details.

⁸ Unlike *Zhey* which are sung in different regions, *Zheyim* is sung only by women, in Tangsibji in Trongsa and Talo in Punakha.

⁹ See *Lozey and Tsangmo - Ornaments of Speech* for details.

¹⁰ A long melodious song sung at the point of a departure of a friend or relative to a distant place.

¹¹ Song unique to villages in Dungsam in eastern Bhutan.

¹² Song unique to Haa valley in western Bhutan.

¹³ See author's 'Introductory Preface' in Gyenpo Tshering (1997). *A Treasury of Songs of the Kingdom of Bhutan*, Thimphu: Special Commission for Cultural Affairs.

¹⁴ A category of medieval court servants who functioned as messengers and emissaries of local chieftains.

¹⁵ Lopen Kunzang Thinley (1996). *gLu deb glo gsar dga' ston*, Thimphu: KMT Press, p.21.

¹⁶ See *Festival and Songs* below for details on *Zhey*.

¹⁷ *Zhey* sung in the region of Goen in Gasa district. The song is unique to the region.

¹⁸ Driem, George Van (1994). "Language Policy in Bhutan" in Aris and Hutt (Eds.) *Bhutan: Aspects of Culture and Development*, Gartmore: Kiscadale, p.89.

¹⁹ The founder and unifier of modern Bhutan.

²⁰ The Five Major Sciences are: sowa rigpa (the science of healing or medicine), dra rigpa (the science of words or language), tshadma rigpa (science of dialectics), zo rigpa (science of mechanical arts) and nangden rigpa (science of spiritual knowledge of the Tri Pitaka). The Five Minor Sciences are ngyen ngag (poetry), debjor (grammar), tsi (astrology), ngon jed (synonyms), and doegar (performing arts).

²¹ Rinchen Namgye, Personal Communications, Nov., 2000.

²² It is believed to be the musical instrument of Lhamo Yangchenma, Goddess of Music, and is one of the most popular among folk music instrument.

²³ A two-stringed hand instrument. Its unfretted fingerboard is attached to a resonating drum with hollow bottom. It is usually made out of horn, wood or bamboo. Horse tail is used for its strings.

²⁴ An instrument with six finger holes, made out of bamboo. There are two kinds of flutes commonly used: the Dong Lingm or front-blown flute and Zur Lingm or the side-blown flute.

²⁵ A compendium of Tibetan Lamaist scholastic learning by Don dam smra ba'i senge, Thimphu: Kunsang Tobgay, 1976

²⁶ *op.cit.* ff.512.

²⁷ See *Social and Religious Values* in the paper

²⁸ Kunzang Thinley, *op.cit* pp.7-8.

²⁹ The song 'Jarim Dusa' in the film *Raywa* (Charo Entertainments) and 'Zamling Nangi Atsara' in *Shathra Nyingi Yoezer* (Yoezer Visions) are sung and danced just like American and Indian pop songs.

³⁰ The annual festival held inside the *dzong* (fortress) of Trongsa in Central Bhutan from the 8th to the 10th day of the 11th month of the Bhutanese calendar.

³¹ The institute has been upgraded to a degree college and renamed Institute of Language and Cultural Studies.

³² An undergraduate student then at Bhutan's only college located in eastern Bhutan.

³³ This is the name of his most popular song although other songs were also performed on that occasion.

³⁴ Literally translated as 'the deer of the glade'.

³⁵ *Kuensel*, p. 3, December 9, 2000.

³⁶ *Kuensel*, *Op. cit.*

³⁷ Dances performed by players during archery matches, especially when the target is hit

³⁸ For instance, the songs, *Zamling yangpai lingla* composed by Ashi Wangmo and *Ema menlam wangi* dwell on this theme.

³⁹ Theme of the songs, *Yabchi sendang damze loday* and *Che Nangsa deljor mili di*.

⁴⁰ The song *Gang singye yurel gyepa che* is an extract from the biography of Ashi Nangsa, a great Tibetan noble lady.

⁴¹ Theme of the song *Nyima sharchog lingi ling chogna*. In fact, this song directly highlights the value of dedication to one's lama, loyalty to sovereign, gratitude to parents and love to siblings.

⁴² For a detailed explanation on Bhutanese values, see Tashi Wangyal's *Ensuring Social Sustainability: Can Bhutan's education system ensure intergenerational transmission of values?* in this Journal.

⁴³ It is interesting to note that this negative attribute is not mentioned in the songs but implied by stating the benefits of appeasing them.

⁴⁴ It was composed and sung by Rinchen Namgye and included in his album 'Love 98'.

⁴⁵ Composed and sung by Jigme Ngedup, this song is in his most popular album 'Jigten Dhina'.

⁴⁶ It is included in the album 'Tashi Dawa' produced by Pel Vision.

⁴⁷ Later produced in Musical 99, by Norling Drayang.

⁴⁸ A song in the album 'Boedra Rigsar' produced by Nazhoen Phuntscho Drayang.

Bibliography

Don dam sMar ba'i seng ge (1976). *bShod mdzod yid bzhin nor bu*, Thimphu: Kunsang Tobgay.

Tshering, Gyonpo (1997). *A Treasury of Songs of the Kingdom of Bhutan*, Thimphu: Special Commission for Cultural Affairs.

Ura, Karma (1996). *The Ballad of Pemi Tshewang Tashi*, Thimphu: Karma Ura/Sponsor: Helvetas.

Thinley, Kunzang (1996). *Glu deb glo gsar dga' ston*, Thimphu: KMT Press.

Tobgyal, Kunzang and Dorji, Mani (1985). *Folk Songs of Bhutan*, Thimphu: Department of Education.

Kinga, Sonam (1998). *Gaylong Sumdar Tashi: Songs of Sorrow*, Thimphu: Sonam Kinga/Sponsor: Helvetas.

Institute of Language and Cultural Studies (1998). *rig gZhung mTho' rim slob gra'i rtsa' khrim: 1998-1999*, Thimphu: Institute of Language and Cultural Studies.

Table of Equivalencies: Transcription - Transliteration

Achay Lhamo:	A lce lha mo
Aku Tongmi:	A ku krong me
Alo:	A lo
Ashi Wangmo:	A zhe dbang mo
Aulay:	Au legs
Ausa:	Au sa
Boed Garps:	'bod sgarp
Boedra:	'Bod sgra
Bumei Karma Wangzom:	Bu mo'i Kar ma dbang zom
Bumtapaikha:	Bum thang pa'i kha
Cha:	cha
Che Nangsa deljor mili di:	khyod sNang sa dal 'byor mi lus 'di
Cheden drugi gyalkhab:	chos ldan 'Brug gi rgyal khab
Chibdrel:	chib gral
Chiwang:	sPyi dbang
Choe dang Choe drel lu:	chos dang chos 'brel glu
Chokey:	chos skad
Chuchen Dangmichuna:	chu chen sgra med chu
Dasho Gaydon Thinley:	Drag shos rgyal mgron 'Phrin las
Dinlen Jelni:	drin len 'jal ni
Dong Lingm:	gDong glingm
Dramnyen:	sGra snyan
Dratshang:	grva tshang
Dudjom Rimpoche:	bDud 'joms rin po che
Dungsam:	gDung bsam
Dza Lu:	mDza glu
Dzong:	rDzong
Ema menlam wangi:	'ema smon lam dbang gi
Ga Lu:	dga gLu
Gang singye yurel gyepa che:	Gangs sen ge gyu rel rgyas pa khyod
Gasa:	dGar sa
Gasa Lami Singye:	dGar sa bla ma'i seng ge
Gaylong Sumdar Tashi:	dGe slong sum dar bkra shis
Gaylong Zhenphen Daw:	dGe slong gzhen phan zla ba
Geshe Gedun Rinchen:	dGe shes dGe bdun rin chen
Goen Zhey:	dGon gzhas

Gup Mani: rGapo ma ni
Gurma: mGur ma
Gyalkhab ki toed lu: rGyal khab ky i stod glu
Gyalpoi toed lu: rgyalpo'i stod glu
Gyonpo Tshering: mGon po tshe ring
Jarim dusa: 'ja rim 'du sa
Je Karmapa: rJe kar ma pa
Je Khenpo: rJe mkhan po
Jigten dina: 'Jig rten 'di na
Kheng: khen
Khengkha: khen kha
Khorey: mKho re
Kuensel: kun gsal
Kurtoe: sKur stod
Lama choeted ki lu: bla ma chos stod ky i glu
Ley Jumdrey: las rgyu 'bras
Lhakhang: lHa khang
Lhamo Drukpa: lHa mo 'brug pa
Lhamo Yangchenma: lHa mo dByangs can ma
Lhuntse: lHun rtse
Lingm: glingm
Lopen Jampa Chogyal: slob dpon 'jam pa chos rgyal
Lopen Kunzang Thinley: slob dpon Kun bzang 'phrin las
Lopen Nado: slob dpon gNag mdog
Lopen Pemala: slob dpon Pad ma la
Lozey: blo ze
Melongma: me slong ma
Milarepa: mi la ras pa
Mitshe thungku: mi tshe thung ku
Nazhoen Phuntshog Drayang: na gzhon phun tshogs sgra dbyangs
Nazhoen Thrabten Tshogpa: na gzhon 'khrab ston tshogs pa
Ney: gNas
Ney Rio Tala: gNas ri bo ta la
Ngagi Zorig: Ngag gi bzo rig
Ngawang Gyeltshen: Ngag dbang rgyal mtshan
Ngesem: nge sems
Norling Drayang: Nor gling sgra dbyangs

Nyima sharchog lingi ling chogna: nyi ma shar phyogs gling gi gling
phyogs na
Tiru: ti ru
Pangi Shawa: sPang gi sha ba
Paropai Zhey: sPa ro pai' gzhaz
Pemi Tshewang Tashi: Pad ma'i tshe dbang bkra shis
Punkha: sPu na kha
Rigney chewa nga: rig gnas Che wa lnga
Rigney chungwa nga: rig gnas Chung wa lnga
Rigsar: rig gsar
Samdrup Jongkhar: bSam grub ljong mkhar
Semtokha Rigzhung: sems rtogs kha rig gzhung
Sharchopkha: shar phyogs pa'i kha
Shawa Phomo: sha ba pho mo
Shera: shes rab
Shey Zoed Yid Zhin Norbu: bShod mdzod yid bzhin nor bu
Shingkar Lam: Shing mkhar bla ma
Talopai Zhey: rTa lo pa'i gzhaz
Tashi: bkra shis
Tashi Dawa: bkra shis zla ba
Tashi laybay: bkra shis legs dpal
Tashi moen lu: bkra shis smon glu
Tashi Nenchu: bkra shis snyan cha
Tendrel: rten 'brel
Tha damtshig: mtha' dam tshig
Thinley Gyamtsho: 'Phrin las rgya mtsho
Thrul Lu: 'khrul glu
Trongsa Tshechu: Krong gsar tshe chu
Trulku Jigme Choeda: sprul sku 'Jigs med chos sgrags
Tsangmo: tsang mo
Tshoglu: tshogs glu
Tsuenthrel: bTsun khral
Ura: 'ura
Yabchi Sendang Damze Loday: yab chi gsan dang 'bram zas blo gros
Yangchen: dByangs can
Yuedra: gYus sgra
Zamling nangi atsara: 'Dzam gling nang gi a tsa ra
Zam ling yangpai lingla: 'Dzam gling yangs pa'i gling la

Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal: Zhabs drung Ngag dbang nam rgyal
Zhendi migo: gzhan 'di men dgo
Zhetro yarchoed: bZhes spro yar mchod
Zhey: gZhas
Zheym: gZhas mo
Zhungdra: gZhung sgra
Zorig: bzo rig
Zur lingm: zur gLingm

Annex 1: Audio Cassettes Produced by Different Firms and Organizations as of February 2001

Sl.No	Producer	Title	Production Cost (Nu.)	Year
1.	Jigmi Drukpa	Modern Bhutanese Songs	8000	1991
2.	Jigmi Drukpa	Jigten Zamling Nangka	15000	1993
3.	Jigmi Drukpa	Songs and Music from Bhutan	50,000	1994
4.	Jigmi Drukpa	Milerapa (<i>Gurma</i>)	100,000	1995
5.	Jigmi Drukpa	Endless Songs from Bhutan	Unknown	1999
6.	Lhamo	Ney Rio Tala	Unknown	Unknown
7.	Lhamo and Suresh Moktan	New Waves	Unknown	Unknown
8.	Adap Pasang and Ngedup Dorji	Tashi Tendrel	Unknown	1998
9.	Melody Drayang	Boomo	32,500	1998
10.	Melody Drayang	Bouydra Rigzar	Unknown	1999
11.	Melody Drayang	Denno Denno	15,000	1998
12.	Melody Drayang	Hello Hello	35,000	1998
13.	Melody Drayang	Meelam Meelam	20,000	1998
14.	Melody Drayang	Melody Drayang	35,000	1999
15.	Melody Drayang	Metho Yum Yum	Unknown	1999
16.	Melody Drayang	Millenium 2000	38,000	1999
17.	Melody Drayang	Sho Sho	25,000	1998
18.	Melody Drayang	Silent Love	30,000	1997
19.	Melody Drayang	Taxi Taxi	25,000	1997
20.	Melody Drayang	Thuendrel	Unknown	2000
21.	Nazhoen Phuntshok	Best of Sonam Dorji Vol. 2	Unknown	Unknown

Sl.No	Producer	Title	Production Cost (Nu.)	Year
	Drayang			
22.	Nazhoen Phuntshok Drayang	<i>Boedra</i>	25,000	1996
23.	Nazhoen Phuntshok Drayang	Cracktong	38,000	1997
24.	Nazhoen Phuntshok Drayang	Lokhor 12	55,000	1998
25.	Nazhoen Phuntshok Drayang	Pangtse Kera	50,000	1999
26.	Nazhoen Phuntshok Drayang	<i>Boedra Rigsar</i>	30,000	1996
27.	Nazhoen Phuntshok Drayang	Semkha Thralamlam	40,000	1998
28.	Nazhoen Phuntshok Drayang	Za Daw Za Nyim	45,000	1997
29.	Nazhoen Phuntshok Drayang	<i>Zhungdra</i>	Unknown	Unknown
30.	Nazhoen Phuntshok Drayang	Ata Khaujay	Unknown	1999
31.	Nazhoen Phuntshok Drayang	Drenchen Pham	Unknown	1999
32.	Nazhoen Phuntshok Drayang	Meto Lung	Unknown	1999
33.	Nazhoen	Lopkhang:NID	48000	2001

Attributes and Values of Folk and Popular Songs

Sl.No	Producer	Title	Production Cost (Nu.)	Year
	Phuntshok Drayang			
34.	Norling Drayang	Ausphalay	Unknown	1998
35.	Norling Drayang	Bhutanese Songs Vol. 20	Unknown	1995
36.	Norling Drayang	Bhutanese Songs Vol. 67	Unknown	1995
37.	Norling Drayang	Bhutanese Songs Vol. 68	Unknown	1995
38.	Norling Drayang	Bhutanese Songs Vol.80	Unknown	1997
39.	Norling Drayang	Bhutanese Songs Vol.81	Unknown	1997
40.	Norling Drayang	Bhutanese Songs Vol. 21	Unknown	1995
41.	Norling Drayang	Boedra Rigsar	Unknown	1998
42.	Norling Drayang	Boedra Rigsar Vol.2	Unknown	Unknown
43.	Norling Drayang	Boedra Rigsar Vol.3	Unknown	Unknown
44.	Norling Drayang	Hingten	Unknown	Unknown
45.	Norling Drayang	Boedra Rigsar-I	Nu. 42/Copy	1999
46.	Norling Drayang	Boom Boom Boom	Unknown	1996
47.	Norling Drayang	Dhorozam	Unknown	1998
48.	Norling Drayang	Gawai Nyendro	Unknown	1997
49.	Norling Drayang	Hey Bumo	Nu. 42/Copy	1999
50.	Norling Drayang	Instrumental Melodies	Unknown	1998
51.	Norling Drayang	Jalam Jalam	Nu. 35/Copy	1998
52.	Norling Drayang	Jigdrel	Unknown	1998
53.	Norling Drayang	Jigten Dhina	Unknown	1996
54.	Norling Drayang	Karma Mindu	Unknown	1996
55.	Norling Drayang	Love 98	Nu. 42/Copy	1999
56.	Norling Drayang	Namgyal Khangzang	Unknown	1993

Sl.No	Producer	Title	Production Cost (Nu.)	Year
57.	Norling Drayang	Namkhai Samu	Unknown	1996
58.	Norling Drayang	Ngelam Ngelam	Unknown	Unknown
59.	Norling Drayang	Norling Drayang	0.50 Lakh	1997
60.	Norling Drayang	Norling Drayang-I	Nu. 35/Copy	1998
61.	Norling Drayang	Norling Drayang-II	Nu. 35/Copy	1998
62.	Norling Drayang	Norling Drayang-III	Nu. 42/Copy	1998
63.	Norling Drayang	Oma Tshega	Nu. 35/Copy	1996
64.	Norling Drayang	Pangi Shawa	Unknown	1996
65.	Norling Drayang	Sa Zamling	Unknown	Unknown
66.	Norling Drayang	Sergye Gyeltshen	Unknown	1993
67.	Norling Drayang	Silver Jubilee Hits	Nu. 42/Copy	1999
68.	Norling Drayang	Talop Lepchu 1	Unknown	1998
69.	Norling Drayang	Talop Lepchu 2	Unknown	1998
70.	Norling Drayang	Tendrel Zam	Nu. 38/Copy	1996
71.	Norling Drayang	Thridu Nim	Nu. 35/Copy	1998
72.	Norling Drayang	Yewong Bumo	Unknown	1996
73.	Norling Drayang	Zapai Metto	Unknown	1996
74.	Norling Drayang	Oye Oye	Unknown	2000
75.	Norling Drayang	Wai Tasha	Unknown	2000
76.	Norling Drayang	Tshengoen Ngoenletho	Unknown	2000
77.	Norling Drayang	Semki Lhamo	Unknown	2000
78.	Norling Drayang	Bu Tashi	Unknown	2000
79.	PelVision	Bhutanese Songs, vol. VI	35,000	1997
80.	PelVision	Demi Amai Chalu	20,000	1996
81.	PelVision	Gurma	30,000	1996
82.	PelVision	Instrumental	15,000	1996

Attributes and Values of Folk and Popular Songs

Sl.No	Producer	Title	Production Cost (Nu.)	Year
83.	PelVision	Kharang Zalay Odo	60,000	1998
84.	PelVision	Matog Ngesem	85,000	1999
85.	PelVision	Neten's Remix	20,000	1995
86.	PelVision	Otha Zamling Nangka	Unknown	1997
87.	PelVision	Pemi Tshewang Tashi	Unknown	1998
88.	PelVision	Phuntsho Wangmo	22,000	1996
89.	PelVision	Religious Songs	Unknown	1998
90.	PelVision	Tashi Dawa	Unknown	1999
91.	PelVision	Tsatsi Poktor	Unknown	1997
92.	PelVision	Lugar Thramo	Unknown	Unknown
93.	PelVision	Gaylo Gaylo	Unknown	Unknown
94.	PelVision	Zoom Sex Sex	Unknown	Unknown
95.	PelVision	Oy Bumrog	Unknown	Unknown
96.	PelVision	Songs of Black Necked Crane	Unknown	Unknown
97.	PelVision	Deley Deley	Unknown	Unknown
98.	Tashi Nencha	Daw Butsu	50,000	1998
99.	Tashi Nencha	Gawey Gawey	50,000	1998
100.	Tashi Nencha	Music From the Dragon Kingdom	16,000	1990

Sl.No	Producer	Title	Production Cost (Nu.)	Year
101.	Tashi Nencha	Religious Melody	20,000	1992
102.	Tashi Nencha	Traditional Songs	20,000	1992
103.	Tashi Nencha	Ya Barna Phurwey	50,000	1998
104.	Tashi Nencha	Zangdog Pelri	Unknown	Unknown
105.	RAPA	Nangi Norbu	Unknown	2000
106.	RAPA	Yang Gyen	Unknown	2000
107.	NRTI	Yangchen Zam	Unknown	Unknown
108.	National Institute for the Disabled	Muensel	Unknown	1998
109.	IECH, Health Division	Music for Health. Vol. 1	Unknown	1998
110.	IECH, Health Division	Music for Health. Vol. 2	Unknown	1998
111.	Mila	Gawai Rinchen	Unknown	2000
112.	Mila	Milong	Unknown	2001
113.	WWF	Save the Tiger	Unknown	2000
114.	Teacher's Training College	Sherig Chogjur	Unknown	2000
115.	Roy Cameron	Songs from Laya	Unknown	2000

MASS MEDIA: ITS CONSUMPTION AND IMPACT ON RESIDENTS OF THIMPHU AND RURAL AREAS

*Phuntsho Rapten**

Introduction

Mass Media in Bhutan primarily refers to the radio, Kuensel (the national newspaper), cinema halls, television and Internet. These are the main media disseminating information and serving as sources of entertainment. Although different forms of media were introduced since the launching of socio-economic development in the 1960s, television and Internet services were introduced only in June 1999. While television, newspapers, cinemas and Internet services are largely confined to the urban areas radio is the only effective communication medium in the rural areas.

A 1998 listener survey¹ of five *Dzongkhags* (Thimphu, Paro, Chukha, Punakha and Wangdue) gives an idea of the penetration of the media in Bhutan. Taking an example of all the households in five *Dzongkhags* on average, 63.1% own at least one radio receiver, 22.6% own a tape recorder, 6.9 % own a TV screen, 8.4% own a video player or recorder, and 6.5% own a telephone. Although Kuensel is also widely circulated in the country, its readership in the villages is very limited due to a low literacy level.

The media in Bhutan have progressively enhanced individual awareness by widening the scope of information transmission beyond the traditional face-to-face oral interaction to literacy-oriented communication and now to an electronic media. They have helped to share information about the past and present, depict social, cultural and historical aspects of Bhutan that helped to create a common culture, tradition and system of values.

However, the mass media and information technology are increasingly becoming powerful instruments for the penetration of global culture and the values of a global market into Bhutan. This presents one of the greatest

* Researcher, The Centre for Bhutan Studies, Thimphu

challenges to Bhutan as it transitions from a traditional society into the age of information and technology. While the aim is to reap the benefits of mass media, its excessive influence threatens to undermine indigenous culture and value-system. The immediate consequences of such a penetration are already visible through a creation of new Bhutanese culture in major urban centres like Thimphu and Phuentsholing. This new culture is entirely different from traditions of the past, and the culture of rural Bhutan where 79% of the population lives.

Considering the vastness of the subject, this paper, being the first of its kind, only attempts to elucidate the following:

- Evolution of Mass Media
- Media Flow and Consumption, and
- Impact on some residents of Thimphu and rural areas.

Methodology

A questionnaire was designed to identify the role of mass media in the rural and urban areas, how different people select different content of the media and interpret it in different ways and how they influence their needs, interests, attitudes and common values. In-depth interviewing was the primary method used to gather data for this study. In the rural areas, only two villages were selected based on the following criteria:

- Location of the village at least 4 kilometres from the main highway
- Villages are clustered (to have easy access to different households) but situated in different *Dzongkhags*
- Villagers possess at least one radio, and
- Number of households between 20 to 100.

Based on the above criteria, the following villages were selected for the study:

- Tangsibji which has approximately 75 households and is situated 4 Km from the highway in Trongsa *Dzongkhag*
- Lomnyekha, with about 85 households, and situated 5 Km from the highway in Chukha *Dzongkhag*

The *Gup*² or *Mangi Ap*³ was interviewed first who in turn helped to build a pool of informants in the village. While interviewing, special care was also taken so that the pool of informants was representative of the village in relation to gender, age, occupation and economic status.

Unlike the questionnaire for the rural areas, which focused mostly on radio and very little on Kuensel, the questionnaire for urban residents focused on television, Kuensel, radio and other newspapers. Among urban centres Thimphu was chosen for two reasons: Firstly, Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS) television and cable television were first launched in Thimphu. Secondly, a majority of all media consumers are located in Thimphu. The questionnaire was distributed to students, civil servants, businessmen, military personnel, and housewives in different places so as to get a cross sectional view.

Section I: Evolution of Media

Kuensel, the National Newspaper

The first modern medium of communication was introduced into Bhutan in 1967 when Kuensel was started as a bi-monthly, internal government bulletin. It was upgraded into a newspaper format with a weekly circulation in August 1986. Today a 20-page newspaper is the only news print medium in the country. Its predominant readership is the urban elite and educated public. It publishes three simultaneous editions in different languages: the English edition: 12,000 copies; the *Dzongkha* (the national language) edition: 3,000 copies; and the *Lhotshampa* edition: 200-300 copies⁴. There are no other newspapers or magazines published in Bhutan. The few other newspapers and periodicals available in the market are entirely dominated by Indian English-language publications like Times of India, Telegraph, Economic Times, Hindustan Times, India Today, and The Outlook. Other international publications available include Newsweek, The Economist, Far Eastern Economic Review, etc. Government organisations, corporations and the private sector mostly subscribe to these papers and periodicals. However, the readership is confined to a relative few, such as senior members of the government and bureaucracy, or to a few leaders in the private sector.

Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS)

A rudimentary radio network was first begun when members of the National Youth Association of Bhutan (NYAB) started its first radio broadcast in English on an amateur and voluntary basis using the Civil Wireless Department's 400-Watt Short Wave transmitter on 11 November 1973. It was then only a weekly one-hour transmission. As expectations from its listeners grew over the years, the station became a part of the Department of Information and Broadcasting in 1979. Broadcasting hours were then increased to nine hours a week; three hours daily on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays. With the installation of a 5 KW short-wave transmitter in 1986, BBS radio officially replaced the Radio NYAB on air. However, with the development of a new 50 KW short-wave transmitter and a new studio complex in 1991, BBS made a major breakthrough in the radio system by enabling its transmissions to cover more distant areas in the

Kingdom. Coinciding with the 45th Birth Anniversary of His Majesty the King, on 11 November 2000, the BBS started its broadcast in the morning by increasing its airtime from over 42 hours to 60 hours a week. It broadcasts daily in four languages, *Dzongkha*, the national language, *Sharchopkha* and *Lhotshampa*, two major regional languages, and in English. Today Bhutanese people can easily catch radio signals through FM in Thimphu, Paro, Wangdue and Punakha and through short-wave and medium-wave throughout the country. Plans are underway to cover whole country with FM transmission.

Cinema Hall and Video Library

Cinema halls are the oldest form of media communication penetrating the entire country. Out of 11 cinema halls in Bhutan, only nine are operating at the moment, after the ones in Lungtenphu and Deothang ceased to operate. The first cinema hall was started in 1960 in Samdrup Jongkhar followed by MIG in Phuentsholing in 1964 and Losel in Gelephu and Luger in Thimphu in 1972⁵. Screening of films varies from hall to hall both during the weekdays and weekends. While the Luger Theatre in Thimphu screens twice daily on working days and thrice on weekends, halls in Phuentsholing screen movies four times a day. In 1999 it is estimated that Bollywood productions were most popular in all the cinema halls except the Norgay Cinema in Phuentsholing that screens mostly English films⁶. Cinemas in Phuentsholing, Thimphu and Gelephu procure their films on contract basis from distributors of EIMPA (East Indian Movie Producers Association) based mostly in Siliguri, West Bengal. These films are not censored in Bhutan because the Censor Board of India has passed them and hence cinema hall managers consider the films permissible to be watched in Bhutan.

Apart from films, videocassettes are also easily available in all most every district and even in some satellite towns like Gedu, Tala, Khaling, etc. Out of the total number of 160 video libraries in the country by June 1999, 76 are located in Thimphu. The first video library was set up in Phuentsholing in 1970 and it was the only one until 1980 when the first video rental, 'Fashion', was set up in Thimphu.

The programmes and documentaries produced by the Development Communication Centre were among the first local audio-visual productions on Bhutan. A private A-V company, Ugetsu Communications established in 1987, made a major breakthrough by producing the first Bhutanese tele film, *Gasa Lami Singye* in 1988. Today there are many enthusiastic Bhutanese film producers, which to date have produced about 24 Bhutanese films.

Television

Television was officially launched on June 2, 1999. This made a dramatic change in the media, first by legalising TV broadcasting in Bhutan, and second, by making it accessible to a larger section of the population. Television, however, is not new to Bhutan. Before it was confined only to some families in certain social categories, which received signals through illegal dish antenna. Although BBS TV broadcasts for only one hour every day, cable TV service, which was also launched immediately after the introduction of BBS TV, provides a greater diversity of programmes. Some cable operators provide more than 40 channels.

Internet

Internet service in the country was also introduced at the same time as BBS television. However, access to Internet is very limited and concentrated mostly in the urban areas due to an easy access to computer and telecommunication networks and the presence of comparatively more computer-literate people. Druknet, the sole service provider in Bhutan has more than 1820 paying customers, mainly concentrated in Thimphu. Most of them are government users. The public also have access to the Internet through 'Internet cafes'. There are six in Thimphu, at least two in Phuentsholing and one in Bumthang. Internet is now becoming a powerful instrument of communication as it reduces the cost to acquire and disseminate information. Besides, it is very economical to conduct international transactions and coordination activities.

Section II: Media Coverage and Consumption

Kuensel

The primary role of Kuensel is to provide news about Bhutan to the Bhutanese. Its 20-page format includes 6 pages of home news, 1 page of an opinion section, 3 pages of international news (1 page each for world news, sports news and science and health), 6 pages of advertisement, 2 pages of literary section and 2 pages of leisure.

Kuensel provides four other services that are very significant. First, its editorial section discusses issues of public importance and concern that may have an impact on national policy. Second, its opinion column enables people to express their views and opinions. Third, its literary section encourages the youth to write stories and poems, thereby improving their literary habits. Fourth, its advertisement section informs people about the availability of jobs⁷.

It is a fact that as the district headquarters moves further from Thimphu, the distribution of Kuensel becomes sparse. Table 1 in the appendix shows that apart from its direct subscriptions, Thimphu alone received 3457 copies, Chukha 1270 copies, Paro 890, Bumthang 200 copies, Trashigang 310, and

Trashiyangtse 11 copies. However, its readership is very limited in the villages. Retired civil servants, *gups* and *chimis*⁸, community teachers and extension workers only read it occasionally as and when it is available through post or from friends.

It is also estimated that 25.3% of Thimphu population purchase Kuensel weekly and 10.1% occasionally. Similarly, 5.8% of the Paro population purchase Kuensel weekly and 13.1% occasionally, and 2.5% weekly and 5.8% occasionally in Wangduephodrang⁹. The following table shows the readers' choice of language in five *Dzongkhags*.

Sl.No	<i>Dzongkhag</i>	Kuensel readership by language in percentage		
		English	<i>Dzongkha</i>	Nepali
1	Chukha	72.9	21.8	16.6
2	Paro	60.2	58.4	0
3	Thimphu	84.2	35.1	4.1
4	Punakha	55.7	71.8	0
5	Wangdue	55.4	71.8	0

Source: Kuensel Reader Survey, Kuensel/CSO/Danida, 1998.

May

It is evident from the above table that readers in general still prefer the English language edition. This is an indication that *Dzongkha*, the national language, which is the Bhutanese national and cultural identity, still needs to be promoted. The total readership for all editions of Kuensel is estimated at 125,000. However, the readership of Kuensel is very poor in rural areas. The following table shows the significant choice of reading.

Reading Preferences (Percentage of readers)

Sl.No	Contents of Kuensel	Want More	Don't Read
1	National News	41.7	2.2
2	Leisure	30.2	7.6
3	International News	25.9	15.2
4	Literary	23.2	11.1
5	Letters and Viewpoints	18.6	16.7
6	Editorials	13.7	23.4

Source: Kuensel Reader Survey, Kuensel/CSO/Danida, 1998.

May

Besides Kuensel, people also have access to other newspaper and magazines. The following tables show the distribution of newspaper and periodicals and their potential buyers in the three largest bookstores in Thimphu.

Types of daily newspapers sold for the month of November 2000

Bookstores	Times of India	Telegraphs	Economic Times	Statesman	Asian Age	Hindustan Time	The Hindu	Indian Express
Pekhang	135	84	26	11	4	3	3	1
DSB	103	111	23	56	63	16	14	0
Mega	4	6	0	1	0	1	0	0
Total	242	201	49	68	67	20	17	1

Types of weekly periodicals sold for the month of November 2000

Bookstores	India Today	The Outlook	The Week	Time Magazine	News Week	Asia Week	The Economist	Frontline
Pekhang	70	2	1	40	15	26	23	32
DSB	36	9	7	25	27	20	29	33
Mega	5	2	1	3	1	3	1	2
Total	111	13	9	68	43	49	53	67

Types of newspapers subscribed during the month of November 2000

Customers	Times of India	Telegraphs	Economic Times	Statesman	Asian Age	Hindustan Time	The Hindu	Indian Express
Govt. Offices	163	124	34	31	25	10	6	1
Corporations	8	25	6	22	14	6	5	0
Private Firms	26	27	7	4	23	4	6	0
Institutes/Schools	4	4	0	0	1	0	0	0
Individuals	41	21	2	11	4	0	0	0
Total	242	201	49	68	67	20	17	0

Types of periodicals subscribed during the month of November 2000

Customers	India Today	The Outlook	The Week	Time Magazine	News Week	Asia Week	The Economist	Frontline
Govt. Offices	79	7	2	65	37	37	40	47
Corporations	11	0	2	3	6	6	7	2
Private firms	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Institutes/Schools	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Individuals	17	5	5	0	0	6	5	16
Total	111	13	9	68	43	49	53	67

Source: Data collected from three bookstores in Thimphu in the month of November 2000.

The above figures reveal that government offices are the largest buyers. They subscribe for 67.3% of Times of India, 61.6% of Telegraphs, 69% of Economic Times and 45.5% of Statesman. For periodicals, they subscribe for 71% of India Today, 53% of The Outlook, 95% of Time magazine and 75% of The Economist.

BBS Radio

Considering the topography of the country, diverse language groups and low literacy and income level, radio serves as the most cost effective and accessible source of news, information and entertainment among the Bhutanese people. The programmes that are broadcast are diverse in nature, from public service programmes to entertainment.

During the weekdays, BBS radio broadcasts for nine and half hours: three and half hours in *Dzongkha* language and two hours each in English, *Lhotsham* and *Sharchogpa* languages. On average, the broadcasting duration for different contents in a day is roughly 2 hours and 20 minutes for news, 2 hours for music, 55 minutes for advertisement and 30 minutes for *zakar*¹⁰. BBS also broadcasts some special programmes on specific days for about three hours and thirty-five minutes in all the languages. Such programmes include farming, health, environment and youth (Monday & Tuesday), culture, religion, women, *namthar*¹¹ (Wednesday & Thursday), and teaching, feature, story and jokes (Friday). However, during the weekends BBS broadcasts for only 7 hours. During the weekdays music is played for about 15 to 30 minutes in the afternoon in all languages and even longer during the weekends (See table 2 for more detail).

BBS radio is primarily geared towards the rural population and covers about 90% of the Bhutanese population. BBS estimates that there are 200,000 to 250,000 radio receivers in the country with a total listening population of over 400,000 people¹². The expansion of FM networks from FM 92 and 96 Mhz for the listeners in capital to FM 88.1 Mhz and FM 98 Mhz to four neighbouring districts have increased the radio coverage.

Of those who listen to radio daily in five *Dzongkhags*, on average 84.4% listen to the *Dzongkha* language broadcasts, 26% listen to the English service, 21% listen to *Sharchogpa* service and 21.1% listen to the *Lhotshampa* service¹³. In Thimphu alone, 71.3% of the daily listeners listen to *Dzongkha*, 44.3% listen to English, 29.2% listen to *Sharchogpa* and 22.8% listen to *Lhotsham* programmes.

With regard to news preferences, a majority of the people prefers national news followed by local and international news. However, 37.7% of the listeners (from five *Dzongkhags*) want more of music, 11.2% want more of agriculture programmes, followed by announcements and health programmes with 6.7% and 5.6% respectively.¹⁴

Television and Movie Halls

BBS television telecasts a one-hour programme every day; from 8pm-9pm during the weekdays and from 7pm-8pm during the weekends. The first thirty minutes covers news in *Dzongkha* and English. Another thirty minutes covers various programmes either produced by the BBS, acquired locally or from outside Bhutan. At the moment, BBS television is only available to Thimphu valley. However, some cable operators relay each evening's programme to other towns the following day or a few days later. Since the launching of the television till 30th of November 2000, BBS TV has telecast 487 programmes¹⁵ of which 36.5% (177) are in *Dzongkha* language (including some repeated programmes). The programmes include *Dzongkha* drama, visits of the royal family to different districts, festivals, serials (Dorozam, Lam and the turquoise), films (Semkha Thralamlam, Gasa Lamey Singye, Phama) etc. Also during the same period, about 52 % (253) of the total entertainment programmes shown are on Bhutan. Since

February 11 2000, BBS TV also introduced a programme 'Bhutan This Week' (collection of the week's news) that is telecast every Friday in *Dzongkha* and English alternatively.

As of now, there are 27 licensed commercial TV cable operators in the country. It is estimated that there are more than 10,500 subscribers. Today cable TV is available in district centres of Thimphu, Phuentsholing, Paro, Samtse, Samdrup Jongkhar, Gelephu, Trashigang, Bumthang, Chukha, Monggar and Wangduephodrang and in satellite towns like Gomtu and Gedu. Dish antennas are also available in Pemagatshel, Zhemgang, Sarpang, Dagana, Tsirang and Haa. Therefore, a majority of the *dzongkhags* are connected to television.

Apart from television, movie halls still continue to serve as a popular source of entertainment to the public.

Types of movies shown in different halls in 1999

Sl.No	Cinema Hall	Nos. of movies screened		
		Hindi	English	Nepali
1	Thimphu (Lugar)	83	15	5
2	Phuntsholing (Norgay)	54	72	3
3	Phuntsholing (MIG)	108		
4	Gelephu (Losel)	48	24	2

Source: Interim data collected for a study on Mass Media in Bhutan by The Centre for Bhutan Studies, January 2000

This data clearly show that Hindi films make up 80.5 % of a total number of 103 films shown in Lugar Theatre in Thimphu. Similarly, 64.8 % of the 74 films shown in Losel cinema hall in Gelephu are Hindi films during the same year. Conversely, all the films shown in the MIG cinema hall in Phuentsholing are Hindi. Norgay Hall in Phuentsholing during the same period showed 55.8% of English movies. Hindi Movies are extremely popular in Bhutan and 80% of cassettes available for rent in video libraries in the country are also Hindi movies.

Section III: Impact of Media

As media audiences have different individual backgrounds, intelligence, interests and attitudes, these invariably influence their perceptions and interpretations about the incoming message and, therefore, the impact varies. Although its specific impact in villages and Thimphu will be discussed separately, in general, the media has a tremendous impact in sustaining and weakening, if not eroding, the fabric of social life.

It has enabled people to have access to different sources of information and entertainment. It has also facilitated the people to see different peoples of the world (especially prominent personalities), their diverse cultures and customs, religion, and their way of life, thus, creating better ideas and perceptions about the world. The media has also helped to document endangered species, vanishing cultural heritage and life styles and activities of the past.

At the same time it has also influenced people to accept global culture and values. This has led to the undermining of indigenous culture and practices. The excessive advertisement that is now available on television more than on videos leads to changes in dress style and to new consumption demands particularly among youth, which constitutes about 57%¹⁶ of the total population. This is already visible through the display of more modern consumer goods in the market. Besides, violence portrayed on television encourages violence. Scenes of nudity and sexuality, implied or other wise, undermine the sanctity of family values and society at large.

Consumption and Impact Among Some Residents of Thimphu

Out of the total respondents, 45% are female and 55% are male. They comprise of students, government employees, housewives, military personnel and businessmen between the ages of 15 to 60 years. Among all the respondents, 4% do not possess television but have access to it through friends and neighbours. 39% bought a television set after the introduction of television. 23% do not listen to radio because they feel that television is more informative. 90% of informants buy Kuensel weekly and the rest only occasionally or on alternative weeks. 57% read other newspapers like Times of India, Telegraphs, Economic Times and The Asian Age.

Although television viewing hours are directly dependent upon the nature and type of programme, about 38% of viewers watch between 3 to 4 hours a day, 18% watch between 5 to 6 hours a day and about 16% watch between 1 to 2 hours a day. In terms of channel preferences, females mostly watch MTV, followed by Zee TV, B4U, Star Movie and Star World. Similarly, male viewers mostly watch the National Geographic followed by BBC, Star Sports, ESPN, CNN and HBO. Children mostly watch Cartoon Network followed by Kermit and Star Sports. However, almost all of them watch BBS television when it is telecast.

Among those who listen to BBS radio, 50% listen in the evening, 13% in the morning and 18% both in the morning and evening. 76% of them listen to the English service, 58% to the *Dzongkha* service, 18% to the *Sharchogpa* service and about 7% to the *Lhotsham* service. A majority of them listen to news followed by music, environment, education, health, *zakar* and religion and *namthar* programmes. Their listening hours vary from 10 minutes to 7 hours. Amongst listeners, 93% listen to BBS radio, 45% BBC, 20% Voice of America, 18% All India Radio and 5% Radio Nepal.

Of those who buy Kuensel (weekly and occasionally), 92% buy the English edition, 16% buy the *Dzongkha* edition and 1% buy the Nepali edition. About 58% read home news, 25% read international news and editorials, and 22% read the viewpoint and advertisement pages. But 23.8% read all the sections.

Since the respondents clearly indicated that radio and newspaper do not impact them negatively in any way, the following section particularly looks at the impact of television among some residents of Thimphu.

Advertisement and Consumerism

Television influences people's life style greatly through its visual impact. The advertisements on television introduce consumer goods and modern ideas about life and work. These invariably tempt the consumers to adopt western lifestyles of conspicuous consumption. For instance, the repeated advertisements on new cars, new clothes, high-tech cell phones, and latest

cosmetic and kitchen appliances generate new desire among the consumers. About 30% of informants reported that they have been influenced by the advertisements. Incidentally most of them are females. Under its influence, they have bought different products like frying pans, shampoo, face cream, clothes, shoes, tooth paste, Bournvita, soap and Coca-Cola to name a few. They have also bought goods, which are usually accompanied by free gifts. They identify more with the modern elements on television than older people do. The most dramatic change is seen in their way of thinking which are reflected in their approach to clothes, to concepts of love and beauty and other lifestyle images, which are continuously impressed upon their minds through television. As the average urban Bhutanese family becomes wealthier, things that were once luxuries are now becoming a necessity. Two-wheelers and television sets are good examples. And the choice of such goods is highly influenced by advertisements.

It is also a fact that advertisements create desires, which cannot be satisfied by people's current economic position. Crimes and corruption are often born out of economic desires. While no research has been carried out to determine this link, incidences of juvenile delinquency reveals some related evidence.

Restructuring of Human Relationship

"Since the June 2 launch of BBS's television service, the daily routines of many people in Thimphu-if not their lives-have changed."¹⁷ It has undoubtedly changed their sitting arrangements, meal timings, pattern of communication and transformed many other similar social activities. Before the arrival of television, household members often sat together after meals to tell stories and share their experiences. Now the television has become their focal point of attention. Some parents have developed a tendency to spend less time with their children and to delay their household chores and ignore some family matters in order to see their favourite programmes on television. Since the introduction of television, meals are also being served at different hours and sometimes in different locations. It has also changed their sleeping habits. 50% of the respondents agreed that it has greatly shifted their sleeping hours to late night (11 to 12 am). Face-to-face interaction with neighbours and family members is also declining although a few of them argued that family interaction has increased.

However, at least 35% of them certainly felt that it has decreased their interaction with their neighbours because they spent their free time watching television.

Development of children

Children are the most vulnerable section of society and most easily influenced - desirably or undesirably- by television images. Although parents in general agreed that it has enabled their children to learn new languages and improve their speaking, it has created a new kind of generation where electronic entertainment is taking away their time for reading and writing. Since they are kept engaged and not bored very frequently, this does not provide enough time for children to think and be creative. Now they watch more and play less. 45% of the respondents reported that their children watch television between 1 to 12 hours a day.

The following excerpts clearly show the impact of television on children. "My son has several stories to narrate ... 'Appa, *goonda* (villain) was beaten up by *keta* (hero) and then the policemen appeared and took all of them to jail....' In a minute's time, he runs into the kitchen and comes running back ...He holds a spoon, which he pretends is a microphone, in one hand, and solicits my attention. With his eyes closed and his chest pushed forward, he starts reproducing some part of the sentences from the World Wrestling Federation fights. He has different stories to tell everyday. He has different actions to demonstrate almost everyday.. They (some high school girls) also watch MTV and other music channels like MCM and B4U Music. Whenever they are free, they are most certainly discussing Sharukh Khan, Madhuri Dixit and a host of other Bollywood stars. I interrupt and ask them how old Madhuri Dixit is and one of them proudly answers, 'she is thirty-four'."¹⁸

Cultural Influence

Among other forms of media, television plays a vital role in moulding people's opinion. The more a society is exposed to external forces and ideas, the more transformation it undergoes. Once an individual or an institution in the society accepts something new, it profoundly impacts other cultural values. Since cable television provides programmes for 24

hours, audiences gradually become powerless and accept the importation of external cultural productions. This changes people's perception, ideas and behaviour. Foreign cultural products often influence youth and its consequence is seen in the way they dress, speak and think. "Indeed, it may be no exaggeration to say that we are now facing the emergence of two relatively distinct Bhutan. The difference between them is being defined along the traditional differential faults of language, religion, environment, customs, and even dress. But the situation is more complex. First, the new culture is being created in specific localities, but the fault line between the two cultures runs through Thimphu and Phuentsholing and into the heartland of the other Bhutan. Thimphu and Phuentsholing are urban centres whose population is drawn from all over Bhutan, and the new culture impacts the members of Bhutan's various sub-cultural groups throughout country through their members who reside in Thimphu and Phuentsholing. The ties between the urban and the rural population are still such that people visit their villages and inevitably, consciously or unconsciously, take home elements of the new culture created by the media."¹⁹

Although television provides entertainment, it also creates conflict among its viewers when they only own one television set. Children like to watch cartoon, housewives like to watch Hindi serials and films, and husbands like to watch Star sports. The conflict culminates when all favourite programmes are shown at the same time. Some times, it even provokes misunderstanding and creates unpleasant atmosphere.

Impact in the Rural Areas

Bhutan is predominantly a rural society where access to modern telecommunication and media is very limited. The villagers of Tangsibji and Lobneykha do not have access to any modern mass medium except radio, which is the most popular among them. However, due to the language barrier, most of them only listen to BBS radio in the *Dzongkha* language let alone listening to other stations.

Since the impact of radio is not as immediate as the audio-visual impact of television BBS radio repeats the same programmes in different languages in a day to catch the attention of its audiences. The following section explains

the impact of radio among students, farmers and lay priest according to their choice of programmes.

Students

School children constitute about 28% of the respondents from two villages. Students between grades three and seven listen to BBS radio only in the *Dzongkha* language more in the evening than morning because they need to wake up early in the morning and start early to reach school on time. Among the students interviewed between 9 to 17 years 100% listen to news and songs, 85% listen to education programme and 71% listen to health programme. The news keeps them informed about the current activities of the nation and world at large. Being young, they all listen to modern Bhutanese songs rather than traditional songs for two reasons. First, the lyrics and tunes are very appealing and captivating because they are mostly composed around the theme of love. Their tunes, usually borrowed from Hindi or Tibetan songs are easier to get familiarised with. Second, they prefer modern electronic musical instruments, which are more diverse and powerful than traditional instruments such as *lingm*, *dramnyen*, *chiwang* and *yangchen*. The songs that they learn from radio are usually sung and danced in school during its annual concert and inter-house song and dance competitions. They also sing and dance during the annual rituals conducted at home or at their neighbour place. Through such singing and dancing they are able to socialise in the community. Traditional songs are not so appreciated by the young because it takes time to understand and appreciate the values of traditional songs, unlike modern Bhutanese songs, which are mostly love songs that appeal them. Apart from music, they also listen to educational programmes because they discuss the education system and its values, which are very relevant to them. They like to listen to a replication of class room teaching programme because a comprehension followed by its question-answer session usually enable them to learn new lesson and morals and helps to improve their analytical and listening skills. They also listen to health programmes because they keep them aware of health and sanitation and other health issues such as family planning, HIV and AIDS.

Farmers

70% of the respondents are farmers between 20-65 years of age. 100% listen to news, 85% listen to music, 80% to *zakar* and farming, 74% to health and 62% to environment. However, they cannot listen to BBS radio daily because they are more in the field than at home even during the weekends.

Moreover, as the BBS transmission closes at 6.30 pm during working days, people can hardly catch the programme after the work. Therefore, the frequency of consumption of news and other programmes is also limited. But whenever they are at home they listen to radio preferably in the morning between 7-8am and after 5pm. in the evening. The news, amongst others, keeps them informed about royal visits, development activities and the current security problems (ULFA & Bodo) in the country. Unlike students, most of the farmers prefer to listen to traditional songs like *boedra* and *zhungdra*. They transmit religious, social and environmental values, of which the elder people are very fond. They also listen to *zakar* because it enables them to schedule their activities appropriately. It foretells the appropriateness of an intended journey, business and construction undertakings, consecration and conduct of religious rites etc. Farmers also listen to farming programmes, as they inform them about the scientific and modern method of farming, traditional cropping practice, seasonal crop diseases and measures to be adopted among others. Besides, they also provide information about the market price of various crops in different seasons. This greatly helps the farmers to estimate how much profit they would earn if they sell their crops outside the village. The radio also makes farmers aware about the need to preserve and promote the environment.

Lay Priest

12% of the respondents are lay priests who serve religious functions in the village. All the respondents reported that they listen to news, music, and *zakar*. However, 90% listen to religion and *namthar*, 83% to health and 66% to environment programmes. The impacts of news, music, *zakar* and health are the same. But the religious and *namthar* programmes have special value to them. For instance, they reinforce the values of compassion and altruism, the benefit of prayers and rituals and the meaning of impermanence that are important in making them more human, generous and humble. Besides, this type of programme also disseminates the merits and virtues gained by some of the religious practitioners and dos' and don'ts for human beings. It also addresses the advantage of being born a human being and the possibility to attain enlightenment in one's lifetime.

Like the urban experience, rural areas have their own incidences of conflict arising mainly from choice of programmes. Conflict often arises among household members when they own a single two-in-one tape recorder. Often housewives and children love to play modern Bhutanese and Hindi cassettes while older people love to listen to radio for news and music. They complain that songs played on the tape recorder often irritate them and try to turn them off if possible. They succumb most of the time, except when their favourite *boedra* and *zhungdra* are aired. These they listen to with full satisfaction.

Another incident occurred in Lomnyekha village about a year ago during their annual *Bumdey*²⁰ recitation. People gathered in an open ground to see a video brought by one of the businessmen for public entertainment during the ceremony. Older people wanted to see a Bhutanese film while younger ones wanted to see a Bollywood or American production. Eventually they could not resolve their conflict and older people cut off the electric line.

Conclusion

Due to the difference in distribution and consumption, the impact of media differs between rural and urban areas. Since villagers are mostly illiterate, radio is the only medium through which they are being informed, both about the nation and the world at large. In particular, through radio they learn about government policies and development activities taking place around the country. However, despite the availability of many stations via radio, most Bhutanese only listen to BBS radio due to the language barrier. Therefore, the variety of news, programmes and entertainment are limited and hence the impact of media is also limited in the rural areas. Had there been television instead of radio in the rural area, the impact would have been very different, because of its visual powers.

However, its impact in urban centres is both positive and negative. It has enabled urban residents to have access to different sources of news and entertainment. It has also enabled people to express opinions and participate in public discourse. The television has further enabled people to see beyond their traditional borders, peoples and culture of the world and, therefore, broaden their perceptions and ideas. On the other hand, it has encouraged adoption of western lifestyles of conspicuous consumption,

erosion of native values and languages and changed their interactions with family and neighbours. It has also allowed foreign culture to penetrate and influence traditional cultural practices. Although its impact at the moment is very marginal, it may increase over the years.

The greatest challenge that Bhutan is facing at the moment is to make a conscious and informed choice in order to benefit from mass media and information technology, and at the same time keep its negative forces at bay. Bhutan also needs to take precautions against the possible emergence of an information gap and place emphasis on providing relevant media content. In order for the media to play an effective role in the development of the nation, it must promote education and awareness, and enhance public discourse and participation.

Notes

¹ BBS Listener Survey: BBS/CSO/DANIDA, May 1998.

² Village elected headman.

³ Community Leader.

⁴ RGOB (2000). Development Towards Gross National Happiness, Seventh Round Table Meeting, 7-9 November, Thimphu: DADM, MOF, p.67.

⁵ CBS(2000). Mass Media: Legislation and Policy Issues (Unpublished).

⁶ See interim data collected for a study on Mass Media in Bhutan by The Centre for Bhutan Studies, January 2000.

⁷ RGOB (2000). Development Towards Gross National Happiness. Ibid., p.68.

⁸ People's representatives to the National Assembly.

⁹ See Kuensel Reader Survey, Kuensel/CSO/Danida, May 1998.

¹⁰ Astrologer reports on the day. It is a custom in Bhutan to consult an appropriate day with an astrologer before performing any social or religious activity.

¹¹ Hagiography.

¹² RGOB (2000). Development Towards Gross National Happiness. Ibid., p.69.

¹³ BBS Listener Survey. Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Data received from BBS library.

¹⁶ RGOB (2000). Development Towards Gross National Happiness. Ibid., p. 57.

¹⁷ See Kuensel editorial titled "Media momentum" dt. August 14, 1999.

¹⁸ See Karma Galay's viewpoint on 'Impact of cable TV-a parent's perspective', Kuensel dt.23/9/00.

¹⁹ Kinga, S, Raptan, P and Galay, K (2000). Non-Traditional Security in South Asia: Information Flow, Society and Culture-Globalisation and Information Technology in South Asia with Special Reference to Their Impacts on Bhutan. p.,12.

²⁰ Recitation of 100,000 stanzas of Buddha's teachings consisting of 12 volumes.

Bibliography

Herman, Edward S and Mc Chesney, Robert W (1998). *The Global Media, The New Missionaries of Corporate Capitalism*, Delhi: Madhyam Books,.

Institute for Integrated Development Studies (1996). *Mass Media and Democratisation-A Country Study on Nepal*, edited by Anand Aditya, Kathmandu: Nepal Lithographing Co. (Pvt.) Ltd.

Johnson, Kirk (2000). *Television and Social Change in Rural India*, New Delhi: Sage Publication.

RGOB (2000). *Development Towards Gross National Happiness-Seventh Round Table Meeting, 7-9 November, 2000*, Thimphu: Department of Aid and Debt Management, Ministry of Finance.

Table 1: Weekly Kuensel Supply as of 25.11.00

Sl. No	Dzongkhag/ Place	Distribution of Kuensel by language			Total
		English	Dzongkha	Lhotsh- ampa	
1	Thimphu				3,457
2	Chukha	1270	263	45	1578
3	Paro	890	175	17	1082
4	Haa	100	60	5	165
5	Wangdue	230	130	10	370
6	Punakha	208	135	0	343
7	Bumthang	200	160	0	360
8	Mongar	190	65	4	259
9	Tashi Yangtshi	11	7	0	18
10	Trashigang	310	150	5	465
11	Samdrup Jongkhar	280	135	3	418
12	Sarpang	300	100	17	417
13	Tsirang	110	40	20	170
14	Samtshi	250	75	4	329
15	Zhemgang	70	20	0	90
16	Lhunthsi	70	40	2	112
17	Pema Gatsel	40	15	0	55
	India (North East)	110	1	30	141

Source: Kuensel Corporation, Thimphu, November, 2000

Table 2: Radio Schedule

Weekdays: Morning

Language	BST	Content
<i>Dzongkha</i>	0700	Anthem/Prayers
	0710	Advertisement
	0720	Zakar
	0730	News Brief
	0740	Farming (Mon, Tues), Cultural (Wed, Thurs), Teaching (Fri)
	0750	Health (Mon, Tues), Religion (Wed, Thurs),
	0800	News
	0810	Advertisement
	0820	Environment (Mon, Tues), Women's (Wed, Thurs), Feature (Fri)
	0830	News Brief
	0840	Zakar
	0850	Youth (Mon, Tues), Namthar (Wed, Thurs), Story & Jokes (Fri)
	0857	Services
English	0900	News
	0910	Advertisement
	0915	Services
	0920	Buddhism Series (Mon, Wed, Fri) - Youth Forum (Tues, Thurs)
	0930	News Brief
	0940	Farming the Bhutanese Way (Mon, Wed, Fri) - Zakar (Tues, Thurs)
	0950	Toh Baygye Oye (Mon, Wed, Fri) - Region in the News (Tues, Thurs)
<i>Lhotsham</i>	1000	News
	1010	Advertisement
	1015	Services
	1020	Environment
	1030	News Brief
	1040	Health
	1050	Agriculture
<i>Sharchogpa</i>	1100	News
	1110	Advertisement
	1115	Services/Zakar
	1120	Religion (Mon, Tues) - Culture (Wed, Thurs) - Namthar (Fri)
	1130	News Brief
	1140	Zakar
	1150	Agriculture (Mon, Tues) - Health (Wed, Thurs) - Legshey (Fri)
	1200	Transmission Break

Weekdays: Afternoon

Language	BST	Content
English	1400	News
	1410	Advertisement

	1415	Education Calling Teachers (Mon), Topical (Tues), Buddhism Series (Wed), UN Calling Asia (Thurs), Bhutan This Week (Fri)
	1430	Music
Lhotsham	1500	News
	1510	Advertisement
	1515	Health (Mon), Topical (Tues), Request (Wed), Local Talents (Thurs), DJ's Choice (Fri)
	1530	Music
Sharchogpa	1600	News
	1610	Advertisement
	1615	Farming (Mon), Health (Tues), Request (Wed), Cultural (Thurs), Request (Fri)
	1635	Listener's Choice (Mon, Tues, Thurs)
Dzongkha	1700	News Brief
	1710	Environment (Mon), Youth (Tues), Culture (Wed), Cultural (Thurs), Namthar (Fri)
	1735	Health (Mon), Request (Tues), Farming (Wed), Religion (Thurs), Bhutan This Week (Fri)
	1800	News
	1810	Advertisement
	1815	Music (Mon, Wed, Fri), Request (Tues, Thurs)
	1830	Close Transmission

Weekends

Language	BST	Content
<i>Dzongkha</i>	1000	Anthem/Prayers
	1015	Zakar/Advertisement
	1020	Stories & Jokes (Sat), Teaching (Sun)
	1035	Request (Sat), Guest of the Week (Sun)
	1100	Music
	1200	Feature (Sat), Education Calling Teachers (Sun)
	1220	Request
	1300	News
	1310	Advertisement
	1315	Request/UN Programme
<i>Sharchogpa</i>	1400	News
	1410	Advertisement
	1415	Short Stories & Jokes (Sat), Request (Sun)
	1435	Listener's Choice (Sat)
<i>Lhotsham</i>	1500	News
	1510	Advertisement
	1515	Request (Sat, Sun)
English	1600	News
	1610	Advertisement
	1615	Thimphu Top Ten (Sat), Request (Sun)
	1700	Close Transmission

Source: Bhutan Broadcasting Service, Thimphu, December 2000

BHUTANESE CONTEXT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

*Karma Galay**

Introduction

Civil society is an issue of great interest, and a topic of important theoretical and political discussion, in many parts of the world, both more developed and less developed. The issue concerns that public space in society which is occupied by neither state or church, nor by their organs, in which open and independent conversation about society and culture can take place and in which citizens can organise social movements, voluntary organizations, popular organizations, and citizen's bodies. The conversation in the space provided civil society concerns the state, the society, the culture, the nature of responsibility and citizenship. The organizations of civil society endeavour to protect the individual living in the society and to provide safety, stability and the opportunity to act independently of the state or church and their institutions. Where public space and civil society exist, it is the arena in which the society and culture also define the institutions and procedures of market or determine the degree to which extra-market forces, such as state or custom, will govern the market. Finally, civil society, public space, is the arena in which the institutions of cooperation and trust among the people and the ability of communities to organise themselves for common purposes, outside the control of state or church, exist. The accumulation of such institutions, trust, and ability constitutes the social capital, which is a crucial factor that makes civil society to exist and function effectively.

Some aspects of civil society in Bhutan will be discussed in this paper, based upon the general theoretical description provided above. Moving from traditional community associations and forums to the emergence of new forms of associations provides both institutional and historical perspectives. Categories of associations and organizations are defined according to the nature of their activities, and the description of these

* Researcher, The Centre for Bhutan Studies, Thimphu

activities illustrate the role of civil society in Bhutan. The role of social capital, such as trust and cooperation among the people, in the socio-economic development of the country, the role of government in creating an enabling environment for the growth of civil society, and some of the distinctive characteristics that differentiate civil society in Bhutan from civil society, elsewhere, are also discussed.

Historical Perspective

An analysis of civil society in Bhutan must be rooted in the history and nature of Bhutanese communities. A community unit usually consists of a village or a group of households. However, sometimes, different communities may exist within one village. For the sake of convenience, a village will be considered as a community unit in this paper.

Individuals in any particular village share many interests simply by virtue of the fact that they are inhabitants of the same village. Consequently, a strong sense of cooperation and interdependence among households or individuals historically prevails in the villages. Although it is often said that this sense of solidarity is due to shared Buddhist beliefs, other factors also determine this solidarity. The way in which village resources are managed and the way in which festivals and ceremonies are organised also determine this solidarity.

The inhabitants of a village share more than just the geographical nomenclature of the village. They own and share different resources, which are registered as communal property. Such resources include pastures, drinking and irrigation water systems, roads, bridges, community-halls, and monasteries. Different communities have their own systems of managing these communal properties and organising local festivals. It is such systems of management of communal resources and organisation of festivals, which are unique to different localities that introduce the concept of civil society into our understanding of Bhutanese villages. Therefore, it is useful to discuss some aspects of the management of such communal properties. Some case studies of the construction of communal properties, such as roads and the organization of annual festivals will be described in the following section.

Section I: Traditional Associations

Construction and Maintenance of a Feeder Road in Lomnyekha, Chhukha

The feeder road to Lomnyekha, which is about five kilometres from the Thimphu-Phuntsholing highway, was constructed in 1984. The idea of constructing this feeder road was conceived by three community leaders. Two of them were businessmen and one a retired *gup*¹. This idea of road construction was discussed in one of the community meetings. The rest of the people of the village responded positively to the proposal put forth by these three leaders.

The three leaders acted as coordinators to mobilise resources and seek approval from the authorities for the construction of the road. The people agreed to make contributions both in labour and in cash. There were no standards fixed for cash contribution. People contributed according to their abilities. A common fund was created from the cash contributions made by the businessmen, civil servants, and other people in the village. However, with the consensus of all the members of the community, a standard was set for the contribution of labour. It was mandatory that every adult between the ages of 18 and 60 work on the construction of the road. This meant that if a household had five persons in the above age group, all of them had to work every day in constructing the road, until the project's completion.

A bulldozer was hired from Bondey farm in Paro. Payment for hire of the bulldozer came from the common fund that was generated from the voluntary contributions. More than one hundred persons worked everyday. Two *Chupoens*² of the village were given the responsibility for coordinating the labour. Penalties of Nu.50 and Nu.30 respectively were fixed for male and female absentees. Apart from labour and cash contributions, different households voluntarily took turns to host lunch, tea and dinner for the whole work force.

As soon as the formation cutting was completed, the whole village concentrated on making drains, constructing culverts, and levelling the surface of the road. Labour contribution was still compulsory, but people from some households, who possessed other resources volunteered to use

them. Those who owned trucks and tractors used them to bring stones and mud for levelling the road. Community leaders recall that because of the strong sense of cooperation, construction of the road was completed in one month.

The *chupoens* of the village have been entrusted with responsibility for coordinating the maintenance of the road. During the monsoons, when there are occasional roadblocks due to landslides, the *chupoens* inform the community and, as in the construction of the road itself, the community response is spontaneous and the roadblocks are removed in a matter of hours.

Operation of a Monastic Credit Scheme in Chapcha

The prevalence of a sense of trust and cooperation among the people is very strong in *Chapcha* village. As in *Lomnyekha*, they have constructed a farm road. *Lopen*³ Changlo, who runs a monastic school at the *goenpa*,⁴ coordinated the construction of road. As a *lopen* at the local monastery and *gondhey*⁵, he had no problems raising funds and building consensus among the people.

As a *Lopen* at the monastery, he also coordinates to the organization of religious ceremonies, such as annual *bumdhey*⁶ and *nyungney*⁷. These ceremonies are organised through voluntary contributions made by civil servants, businessmen and farmers of the village. *Lopen* Changlo says that such contributions from the people are not a new practice. He recalls his days as a young *gomchen*⁸ at the monastery, when people contributed rice, chillies, and other resources for the performance of various religious ceremonies at the monastery.

The voluntary contributions, in both cash and kind, far exceed what the monastery can spend for the performance of religious ceremonies. The excess contributions, together with other contributions made by the people for different purposes, enable the monastery to accumulate a good reserve fund. It currently possesses a total revolving fund of more than Nu. 700,000. This fund is used for the purposes of carrying out occasional

minor repairs and maintenance activities of the monastery. Such activities require only small expenditures.

In consultation with the other community leaders, *Lopen* Changlo has converted the excess fund of the monastery into a community credit scheme. He and other community leaders have fixed a simple interest rate of Nu.3 a year for every Nu.20 borrowed, which is 15% per annum. However, those people who avail themselves of this credit pay back Nu.4 for every Nu.20 that they borrow. The extra Nu.1 is being paid as their contribution to the monastery. Thus, the real interest rate is 20% per annum.

Certain criteria have been developed for the allocation of credit to the needy people of the village. First, is that another household in the village must guarantee the loan. Second, credit is allocated only for the purposes of house renovation, the purchase of corrugated galvanized iron sheeting for roofing, and for the purchase of land and housing in the village. Credit cannot be obtained for the purchase of a vehicle or a business venture. *Lopen* Changlo maintains, at the monastery, the records of the credit allotted to different people in the village.

The disbursement of credit takes place only once a year. On the 30th day of the tenth month of the Bhutanese calendar, the whole community of Chapcha gathers at the monastery. Civil servants and businessmen from the village also attend. Among other activities and discussions that day, the gathering reviews the recovery of credit and makes decisions on new disbursements.

This scheme is very popular among the community's members. Apart from the need to have a guarantor, no other collateral is required. Even when debtors are not able to repay a loan due to some problem or misfortune, the rest of the members of the community forgive the defaulters. The credit facility is also considered an opportunity for the borrowers to perform their service to the monastery.

Traditional Water Users' Association in Tangsibji, Trongsa

Almost every household in Tangsibji owns some paddy field. During paddy cultivation, these fields are irrigated with water from a single irrigation channel. All households cultivate their paddy fields at almost the same time. In order to prevent conflicts over use of water from the irrigation channel and to ensure that every household gets its fair share of water, the community of Tangsibji has been following a system which sets the rota for different group of households to irrigate their fields.

For this purpose, the village is divided into three groups, known as *drongdheb*, *lekyap* and *zoorkyap*. This grouping of the households is done on the basis of the fertility of the fields that the households own. Those households, that own the most fertile fields are grouped together as *drongdheb*, those with average fields as *lekyab*, and those with infertile fields as *zoorkyab*. This categorization by the fertility of the soil demands an explanation. In each group, it is possible to have households that have lands with various levels of fertility, but it is not the case.

In earlier times, the paddy fields of *Tangsibji* belonged to *Trongsa dzong*⁹. Local people carried out the cultivation of these fields on a lease basis. A system called *thogjog*¹⁰, which is still prevalent in many parts of the country, was practised. According to which, the people, often a group of households together, were required to give fixed amount of paddy to *Trongsa dzong* annually. This amount was agreed between the *dzong* and the people on the basis of the fertility of the fields. Fertility assessment, which was normally established by assessing past yields, played an important role in determining the amount that each household was required to pay. In a situation, in which either an individual or a group of households was required to pay a fixed amount of paddy to the *dzong* annually, a combination of households cultivating fields of different levels of fertility would not have been feasible. This is the origin of the system of grouping of households into three groups based on different levels of fertility.

Each group appoints a leader called a *leytshen*¹¹, who, with the senior *chupoen* of the village, forms the committee that decides on the rota (*chukor*)¹² for sharing water for a particular year. The rota is not fixed through verbal discussion and therefore, it is not subject to negotiations or alterations by influential members of the committee. Lots are drawn to fix

the rota and, therefore, the order for water use is a matter of chance. As soon as every household completes paddy planting, the committee calls a meeting of the community, on, of course, an auspicious day; the meeting takes place either at the monastery or at the *chupoen's* house. Traditionally, every household used to participate in this meeting, but nowadays most of the time only the members attend. Three bamboo sticks the length of a forefinger are prepared, and each one is marked with one or more crosses. The one with the single cross is the stick that represents the *drongdheb*; two crosses represent the *lekyab* and three crosses the *zoorkyab*. The *chupoen* holds the three sticks in his hands and prays for adequate rainfall and good harvest. Only the two ends of the sticks are visible to other members and the crosses are hidden in his hands. The sequence or order of pulling the stick out of *chupoen's* hands remains same every year. By the virtue of possessing the most fertile land, the representative of *drongdheb* is the first person to pull a stick from the *chupoen's* hands. It is believed that if the stick that the representative of *drongdheb* pulls out is the one with the single cross, i.e. the group's own stick, the crop yield for the year will be good. However, since it is a matter of chance, this doesn't normally happen. The stick that the representative of *drongdheb* pulls out is one with either two or three marks. Whichever group's stick the representative of *drongdheb* pulls out entitles the first turn to use water. The second representative, i.e. the one representing *lekyab*, then pulls one of the two remaining sticks and whichever group that stick represents becomes the second group to use water from the channel to irrigate their fields. Thus, *chukor* or rota for irrigating the fields is established. The duration of time for each group to access the water is one night and one day, starting from the night on which the turn is fixed and is repeated in that order until it is no longer necessary to irrigate the fields.

The architects of this system did not rule out conflicts and violations. In order to prevent conflicts between the groups due to violation of the rota, punishment has been fixed for the violators. The form of punishment, however, has undergone a transformation over the years. The elderly people of the village recall that when they were young, the violators were required to offer *zongtshen-soom*¹³ to the community. Only the few wealthy households, could afford to pay this fine. This punishment was replaced by the digging of paddy field. The violator was made to dig a patch of a few

metres wide in every household's field. This came to be considered somewhat inhumane, because as it took many days for the violator to complete the digging. Today, violators have to deliver mail and other government consignments to the neighbouring village of *Kella*. This is considered punishment not only in terms of the sacrifice of time that the violator must be absent from work but also because the journey to *Kella* village in summertime is very difficult. The path that links the two villages passes through thick jungles, so the violator has to risk attacks from wild animals. Moreover, s/he, has to pass through thick bushes of stinging nettle and could suffer a significant loss of blood from the bites of numerous leeches.

The Five-Day Annual Archery Match in Ingo, Haa

The community of Ingo gathers together each year for five days. This is not to pay tribute to any local hero or to pray to a local deity. It is, rather, an annual tournament that has taken place since time immemorial. Two teams are formed; sometimes the contest is between teams made up, respectively, of younger and older men, sometimes between two age groups more loosely defined.

The event itself is not particularly interesting, since such occasions are quite common in villages throughout the country. What makes this particular contest interesting is in the contest of a discussion of civil society in the way in which the community organizes itself for this event. Every household has to contribute an equal amount of rice, meat and other edibles, together with firewood necessary for the occasion. Normally, there is no event in village life when a household would refuse to make a contribution, but here each year two households, identified in the rota described above, are responsible for the cooking for the community. An elderly person is given the task of overseeing the contributions of the different households and of taking care of the stock gathered.

For the entire five days of the contest, the whole community gathers at the community hall. This event not only provides the community with an opportunity to celebrate together but acts as a forum for the discussion of problems that different members face. For example, at the last contest, the community discussed the problem of the shortage of money faced for performing the necessary rituals and services when relatives die; they decided to raise funds to help at such moments. The community now has a common fund to which its members can turn in times of emergency.

These case studies are only examples of various kinds of organizations and institutions that exist in different parts of Bhutan. They illustrate how communities organise themselves to manage resources and to conduct festivals and religious ceremonies. These structures prevent conflicts between community members and ensure the sustainable use of resources. It is through such institutions that the public is able to participate in the community life in various areas of activity.

Section II: Contemporary Associations

New and more modern types of associations and organizations are also coming into existence in various groups of communities. Most are being formed by educated people and, unlike the traditional associations that operate on the basis of unwritten customary rules and norms, most of these new associations and organizations are governed by written rules and regulations. The first such association to be formed was the National Youth Association of Bhutan¹⁴. It was formed by a group of young civil servants in 1973. This association was intended specifically to provide a radio broadcast in English on the weekends. It became a part of The Department of Information and Broadcasting in 1979 and thus was absorbed into mainstream government organizations.

The second contemporary association was formed in 1978 by a group of civil servants¹⁵. They made contributions and conducted a *tshechu*¹⁶ at the Memorial Chorten in Thimphu on the 15th day of the 4th month of the Bhutanese calendar. This first *tshechu* stimulated the group to decide to make the *tshechu* an annual event. As the group was engaged only in organization of *tshechus*, it came to be known as *Tshechu Tshogpa*;¹⁷ since

this annual *tshechu* was performed at Memorial Chorten, it came to be known as *Chorten*¹⁸ *Tshechu Tshogpa*.

Interactions among the members of this *tshogpa* have increased as a consequence of their cooperation in conducting the *Tshechu*. Whenever a relative died or some misfortune struck in a member of the group, the others provided help. Such occurrences increased with time. Finally the group decided that, in addition to its main mission of organising *tshechus*, its members would also assume a mandate to help each other in times of difficulties. It formulated a well-defined constitution for its operation and named itself the *Lothuen Tshogpa* in 1983.

In 1981, the 53rd session of the National Assembly passed a resolution to establish the National Women's Association of Bhutan (NWAB), which was organised that same year. The government provided both personnel and other resources required for the initial operations of the NWAB. This should not be mistaken for government interference in the operation of a non-governmental organization. The government did not play any role in the day-to-day functioning of this organization.

Another association was formed by a group of former students of *Semtokha Rigzhung*¹⁹ Institute in 1985²⁰. It was stimulated by the fact that civil servants in those days worked in their offices from 9 a.m. till 2 p.m. and thus had a considerable, almost excessive, amount of leisure on their hands; in that period, there was comparatively little entertainment available to occupy the leisure time of a newly urbanizing class. The group met every day after office hours and practised drama. The dramas were then staged in public. As the formation of their association coincided with the International Year of Youth (1985), they named their association as The Youth Welfare Association of Bhutan. It was renamed The Bhutan Youth Development Association in 1987. In that year, too, another major non-governmental organization, the Royal Society for Protection of Nature was established, under the patronage of His Majesty the King.

Parallel to this development of associations and organizations through private initiatives, a similar development was taking place within the government sphere. In 1981, the government initiated a policy of decentralization. District Development Committees were established in all

the districts. A decade later, in 1991, Block Development were constituted. These two government-sponsored institutions enable the people to plan and implement development activities in their respective districts and blocks. This has fostered among the people a great sense of ownership and commitment to development activities. The success of these two institutions has encouraged people to establish several other associations, such as school management boards, village development committees, village health development committees, associations of potato and apple growers, and beekeepers' associations, and host of other committees.

It is against this background that non-governmental associations and organizations in Bhutan must be discussed. While several associations already existed, new ones began to develop in the early 1970s and 1980s, and more are being established every year. Today, there are hundreds of associations, both traditional and non-traditional.

Section III: Types of Contemporaray Associations

Associations in Bhutan can be grouped into five categories, based on the purposes for which they are established and the nature of their activities. First, there are associations or institutions that have been created for the management of resources. Such resources normally include communal properties such as pastures, bridges, monasteries, community halls, drinking and irrigation water supply schemes, and roads.

The second category consists of those that are relief based. Most of the new associations that have come into existence since the early 1970s fall into this category. Previously, the entire community acted as a relief organization and is still prevalent in many villages. These more modern associations, however, were established to provide relief to bereaved members due to loss of children, spouses or other relatives and to help during times of sickness. Apart from physical help in terms of contribution of labour and other resources, bereaved members are provided with a certain amount of money from the association. These amounts differ depending on whether the death is of children, spouses, parents or other relatives. For instance, the Charter of *Deling Phendhey Tshogpa* outlines the following compensations for the deaths of different category of relatives of a member:

Sl. No	Deaths	Compensation (Nu.)
1.	Husband or wife	7,000
2.	Father/Mother	7,000
3.	Parents-in-law	4,000
4.	Children above 5 and under 25 years	5,000
5.	Children above 1 and under 5 years	3,000
6.	Children above 3 months and under 1 year	1,500

Different amounts are specified for misfortunes with which members themselves may be afflicted. When a member suffers disability through loss of limbs or sight or paralysis of the body, or when a member has to undergo a transplant of organs such as the heart or kidney, he or she is entitled for Nu.5,000. If a member dies, the bereaved family is paid Nu.10,000 as a consolation.

The third category of associations consists of those whose purpose is to conduct different religious ceremonies. These associations conduct *tshechus* and other religious ceremonies on auspicious days. *Tshechu* tshogpas in the villages conduct *tshechus* on the 10th, 15th and 30th day of every month of the lunar calendar. The *Nyungnyey* Trust Fund of *Bartsham* conducts the *nyungnyey* annually.

Fourth, there are associations that advocate or carry out government policies. The National Women's Association of Bhutan conducts activities that promote the development of skills among the female population. In this way, it ensures that the government's policy of promoting income-generating activities for women is effectively pursued. The Royal Society for the Protection of Nature promotes the government's policy of environmental conservation. Through support to different business ventures, the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry ensures effective implementation of the government's policy of demonopolisation and private sector development. The Bhutan Youth Development Association executes different activities related to youths and environmental preservation. It conducts camps and scouting sessions for the youths.

The fifth category includes commercial associations. For example, one of the main purposes for which Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators was established was to enable the tour operators to liaison with different organizations that have a stake in the development of the tourism industry. The Contractors Associations of Bhutan was formed to provide a common forum for the discussion of issues that affect the construction activities in the country. The *Sonam Nyamrub Tshogpa* of Trashi Yangtse was formed to cultivate and market *shitake* mushroom. Similarly, several associations like Potato Growers Associations, Apple Registration Groups, Beekeeping Association and Milk Cooperatives are functioning in different parts of the country. These associations not only discuss issues and problems confronting them but also market their products together in order to enjoy the benefits of economies of scale.

In addition to indigenous and national associations and non-governmental organizations, there are eight international non-governmental organizations and associations operating in Bhutan at the present time:- The Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV), Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO), Volunteer Service Associations (VSA), Save the Children Federation, (SCF), HELVETAS, German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), and Netherlands Development Cooperation (SNV), and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

Section IV: Activities of Contemporary, Non-Traditional Associations

Many of the recently established, non-traditional associations engage in particular economic and social activities that, in one way or another, mark them off from other associations of a more traditional nature, whenever they are or were established. For example, the *Phunstho Norbu Tshogpa* owns a share of Bhutan National Bank worth approximately Nu.100,000.

The National Women's Association of Bhutan has introduced programmes like non-formal education and group savings and credit schemes in order to provide opportunities for women to develop skills and generate income. Weaving centres have been established in different parts of the country to train rural women in weaving. Besides, the Women's Association engages in buy-back arrangements whereby the products woven by rural women are

bought. It has installed several fuel-efficient stoves in rural homes, reducing health hazards resulting from inefficient traditional stoves.

The Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry is a forum through which the interests of the business personnel in the country are protected. It negotiates interest rates and other terms and conditions that financial institutions impose on business people for loans, it identifies industries to be managed by private enterprises. The Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators and the Contractors Association are forums, which discuss issues pertaining to their own industries and initiate discussions with the government or any other parties involved in one way or another with their work.

The Bhutan Youth Development Association has recently installed fuel-efficient community stoves in two monasteries and nunneries in Trashigang. It conducts workshops to promote environmental awareness, and it organises camps and other activities for the youth. It is planning to carry out a situational study of street children and prostitution in urban areas.

The Royal Society for Protection of Nature promotes environmental education through its assistance in opening nature clubs in schools and its participation in designing school curriculum. The *Sonam Nyamrub Tshogpa* in Trashi Yangtse promotes social forestry through the planting of oaks and other species of plants in the region.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty Against Animals (RPSCA) was formed by a group of young volunteers, and they collect waste food from local vendors and restaurants and feed the stray dogs in Thimphu. It carries out anti-rabies and sterilisation activities. The Voluntary Artists Studio, Thimphu, provides training to young artists and facilitates the participation of artists in national and international competitions.

Section V: Organizational Structure and Source of Funds

With the exception of associations that are based in the villages, almost every association mentioned in this study has a written charter. The associations or institutions in the villages are governed by unwritten sets of

rules and norms that are generally accepted within the community. The charters of the contemporary associations outline their aims and objectives, their code of conduct, the roles and responsibilities of the members and portfolio holders, the members' benefits, etc.

Committees are formed to manage and run the activities of the association. Normally, there are two committees: an Executive Committee and a General Committee. The Chief Executive Committee consists of a chairman or president, a secretary, public relations or welfare officer, and an accountant or treasurer. The General Committee, which consists of three or four members, supports the Executive Committee. The members of both committees are elected. Their tenure and responsibilities are specified in the association's charter.

The National Women's Association of Bhutan, the Royal Society for Protection of Nature, the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Contractors Association of Bhutan and the Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators are formally organised, and each one has an office. The rest of the associations do not have offices, and their meetings take place in various places depending upon convenience, such as hotels or members' residences.

These associations rely on different sources of funds for their activities. Most of the informal associations survive on the basis of the modest contributions made by the members. These contributions consist of entrance fees for new members and monthly fees for regular members. Both the entrance and monthly fees differ from association to association. Fines collected from absentees at the meetings also go into the common fund. In a few associations, if a member travels abroad he or she is required to contribute a certain percent of his/her daily subsistence allowance to the association's fund. Some formal associations like the Contractors Association and the Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators also run their activities through funds gathered from their entrance and regular membership fees.

The government has authorised the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry to collect 40% of the license renewal fees and 0.25% of the total value of letters of credit from Bhutanese exporters. Other sources of funds

for its activities include membership fees and the sale of business licence forms. It gets occasional donor assistance for performing services such as the training of entrepreneurs. The National Women's Association used to receive certain grants from the government, but this was discontinued in 1995²¹. Today, its activities are funded by UNICEF. It has also received some assistance from Denmark and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. The main source of funding for the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature is the assistance that it receives from the Bhutan Trust Fund for the Environment. It also collects a nominal fee of Nu.100 from each of its members.

All these associations require their books of accounts to be audited at regular intervals. While most of the formal associations follow the government's rules and audit their accounts of income and expenditure twice a year, the informal associations audit their books at the end of each year.

Conclusion

Civil society in the form of different community associations and organizations forms an integral part of traditional Bhutanese society, not the design of modern Bhutan. They provide the people with opportunities to participate in taking decisions related to different activities that have a bearing on their day-to-day lives. The new and emerging associations formed by the educated people are really only an extension of the traditional associations. Most of the new or contemporary associations are relief-based, and some act as links between the government and the people. The Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Associations of Bhutanese Tour Operators and the Contractors Association of Bhutan associations negotiate issues of interest to the business community in Bhutan. Apart from providing skills to help women earn incomes, the National Women's Association of Bhutan also works towards assuring gender equality between men and women.

In addition to acting as a mechanism or space for the public participation in decision-making, civil society plays an important role in economic development and in the environmental and cultural preservation of the country. Many communities have constructed farm and feeder roads on

their own. This has provided them access to markets and other social services, such as schools and hospitals. Reliance on traditional norms in the allocation and management of communal pastures and the use of water have ensured efficient and sustainable utilization of resources. These practices are of paramount importance to the government's environmental policy. By assuring fair and just access to common properties, they prevent conflicts within the community. The role of associations and communities in the maintenance of monasteries and in the organization of religious ceremonies and traditional games, plays an important role in sustaining Bhutan's rich cultural heritage.

Despite the existence of a vibrant civil society and the important roles it plays, some of our development partners have often remarked that civil society does not exist in Bhutan. Civil society in their countries usually consists of registered organizations. In contrast, traditional social organizations were never required to register with the authorities. In Bhutan, civil society exists perhaps more informally than formally and plays many important roles in the socio-economic development and preservation of our culture and environment.

Analysis also confirms the important roles that social capital play in our society. Social capital in the form of community leadership and trust and cooperation among the people plays an important role in Bhutanese society. It has not only enabled successful implementation of projects and programmes initiated by the communities themselves; it has also enabled the cost effective implementation of several government-funded projects and programmes in many parts of the country. Its role in the maintenance of development projects forms an important factor in promoting the policy of sustainable development in the country.

The Royal Government plays an important role in sustaining a vibrant civil society in Bhutan. The policy of preserving our rich culture and tradition creates an enabling environment for the survival of the diversity of both traditional community organisations and contemporary associations and organizations. The rules and the forms of such associations are preserved. The diversity and richness of such local institutions are often fed into national policy. The government's policy of instituting water users' associations for both drinking and irrigation schemes in different parts of

the country has been drawn from the example of traditional water users' associations. Today, there are more than four hundred²² users' associations for irrigation schemes in different parts of the country.

The policy of decentralization, which the government introduced in early 1980s, has gone a long way in nourishing and promoting civil society in Bhutan. We can conclude that in Bhutan the government and civil society exist in a symbiotic relationship, each contributing to the other. In order to further promote the growth of civil society, the Royal Government is in the process of preparing NGO and Cooperatives Acts as a legislative framework for the further development of Bhutanese civil society.

Notes

- ¹ Elected representative of a block.
- ² Representative of a group of 10 households.
- ³ Bhutanese word for a Teacher.
- ⁴ Monastery.
- ⁵ Monastic school.
- ⁶ Ceremony in which 16 volumes of religious scriptures are recited.
- ⁷ Religious ceremony in which people fast for a day and a night.
- ⁸ Lay priests.
- ⁹ Fortress.
- ¹⁰ A system in which a person cultivating the field is required to pay fixed amount of paddy or other crops to the leaser of the land.
- ¹¹ A community leader.
- ¹² Rota for sharing water.
- ¹³ Three different types of textile products, viz.
- ¹⁴ Dasho Kunzang Wangdi, Auditor General, Personal Communications, December 2000.
- ¹⁵ Mr. Zangla Namgyal, National Assembly, Personal Communications, November 2000.
- ¹⁶ Religious ceremony performed on the auspicious days.
- ¹⁷ An Association or a Committee.
- ¹⁸ Stupa.
- ¹⁹ Institute for traditional/Buddhist studies.
- ²⁰ Mr. Goenpo Dorji, Kuensel Corporation, Personal Communications, December 2000.
- ²¹ Dasho Daw Dema, Secretary, NWAB, Personal Communication, December 2000.
- ²² Mr. Kelzang Tshering, Chief Irrigation Officer, Ministry of Agriculture, Personal Communication, December, 2000.

Bibliography

Blomkvist, Hans and Swain, Ashok (2001). "Investigating Democracy and Social Capital in India", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 8, February 24.

Jayal, Niraja Gopal (2001). "Democracy and Social Capital in Central Himalaya-Tale of Two Villages", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 8, February 24.

Mahajan, Gurpreet (1999). "Civil Society, State and Democracy", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 49, December 4.

Rudolph, Susane (2000). "Civil Society and the Realm of Freedom", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 20, May 13

Tripathy, S.N. (2000). "Cooperatives: Its Growth and Dimensions".

Xirong, He "Collective Identity and Civil Society", *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series III, Asia, Volume 15*.