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Editorial

Rabsel has come a long way since its humble beginnings in 2002. While the journal may not present the same rigour and refinement normally associated with publications of this kind, *Rabsel* has been true to its original aim – to introduce a culture of research and enquiry, and to provide a forum for researchers, teachers and students, educational thinkers and practitioners to share their views and experiences.

The CERD Education Journal has drawn contributions from a wide cross-section of educators from across the length and breadth of the country as well as occasional inputs from academics and scholars from universities and institutions abroad. Feedback from the remotest community schools, colleges and reviewers from further a-field attests to the usefulness of the materials shared through the journal. *Rabsel's* contribution to the building of professional literature on national education has been significant.

This Autumn, *Rabsel* celebrates a rich harvest of insightful research papers, reflections on professional practice and some profound views on issues related to educational practice. 'Forgiveness in Education' takes up an issue that has critical implications for the quality of personal and institutional life and, ultimately, for the quality of social and national well-being. An evaluation of the B.Ed (Primary) Distance Education programme highlights the challenges facing the intent and reality of the initiative.

The views and opinions of senior citizens and civil servants on the quality of education in a certain dzongkhag make interesting and insightful reading. Feedback from the trainees on a Chemistry lecturer's professional practice provides deeply reassuring and revealing information for reinforcement and improvement.

'Dawa – the story of a stray dog in Bhutan' is put through a microscope and discussed in the light of some traditional literary types. A 'Trend Study in Language and Grammar' is expected to institute a useful strategy to see the pattern of Class X students' performance in English. We celebrate the National Institute of the Disabled in the 'Portrait of an Institute' this Autumn.

The study on the prevalence of Protein Energy Malnutrition in Pre-School Children in Chubu Gewog highlights some serious problems of health suggesting wider implications than is often taken for granted. 'Getting Published' is a very timely and insightful that aspiring researchers and academic writers will find especially instructive.

Perhaps, hardly noticed by anyone, in the midst of all the talk about the perceived decline in the standard of education, there was a most inspiring story of great significance to our country. Devi Charan Baraily, a Class X student of Damphu Higher Secondary School, Tsirang, made scientific history by inventing an instrument for measuring height. Here is a snapshot! If the scientific community were to examine and acknowledge this invention, we could, perhaps, claim a place in the sun.

In the face of the momentous changes sweeping across our country today, it is education that our people will look up to for light and learning. The kind of educational vision and practice we espouse and advance could make a critical difference to the quality of our children's future and the future of our beloved country.

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Forgiveness: A Missing Part of the Education Conversation

Dave Fulton¹

At the Office of Character and School Culture in the Denver Public Schools, we begin our work with a school by asking faculty and community members to describe habits of mind and habits of heart that they wish to promote in their students. Our work then centers on intentionally designing a learning environment – from rituals and rites of passage to discipline policy to instructional approaches– likely to nurture those traits. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the traits and dispositions most often selected tend to cluster around core virtues such as respect, responsibility, and caring.

But I recently visited a high school where the faculty discussed an entirely different virtue – one that is rarely mentioned in educational circles: the virtue of forgiveness. In what follows, I discuss why this school is interested in nurturing forgiveness and make the case that forgiveness is a virtue highly relevant to our larger conversations about education, for both students and teachers – in America and in Bhutan.

During their discussion of values, the staff at Florence-Crittendon noted that many of their students come from difficult backgrounds and have suffered many hurts in their lives. Poverty alone can inflict many hurts. This led to our discussion about forgiveness because it is the virtue with perhaps the greatest power to help us gain freedom from injuries of the past and to not pass them on to others. The staff felt that by equipping students with at least a vocabulary about forgiveness – and hopefully more –they would have a greater chance of flourishing as human beings. In this article, I argue that this is true for teachers as well.

I begin by defining terms and by addressing the mistaken concern that forgiveness is exclusively a religious concept, which may be the biggest reason that we do not discuss it in schools today.

Not Just a Religious Concept

Because of a constitutional separation between church and state, schools in America are prevented from promoting explicitly religious dogma in schools. For instance, schools cannot begin the day with a Christian prayer. Things, of course, are different in Bhutan and on a recent trip there I enjoyed watching students recite the Manjushri prayer together at the morning assembly. But with the coming constitutional monarchy as well as a growing interest in pluralism, schools may feel reluctant to promote explicitly Buddhist concepts. As I state below, this hesitation – at least with the concept of forgiveness – is unnecessary in both Bhutan and the U.S.

Public schools are not prevented from discussing or nurturing a sense of compassion or of justice simply because compassion and justice are concepts discussed at great length in the Bible as well and in other religious texts. The same holds true of forgiveness. These are fundamental values, upon which a flourishing life is based. Not surprisingly, then, they are promoted by nearly all the world's religions; this latter fact ought not be a reason to be shy about promoting them in non-religious settings.

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Secular philosopher Hannah Arendt made precisely this point in *The Human Condition*. In her words: "The discoverer of the role of forgiveness in the realm of human affairs was Jesus of Nazareth. The fact that he made this discovery in a religious context and articulated it in religious language is no reason to take it any less seriously in a strictly secular sense." In her mind, the secular application of forgiveness, and that of some similar dispositions, "have been neglected because of their allegedly exclusively religious nature"(Arendt, 1959).

Arendt believed that along with promise keeping, forgiving was one of the central pillars that holds societies together. She wrote that promise keeping mitigates the "chaotic uncertainties" and unpredictability of the future, whereas forgiving prevents us from being chained to the past and allows us to create the world anew. She says that the freedom of forgiveness "is the freedom from vengeance, which encloses both doer and sufferer in the relentless automatism of the action process, which by itself need never come to an end." In other words, forgiveness interrupts the seemingly automatic transgression/revenge complex, which often results in even more violence and hatred. One thinks of Mahatma Ghandi's famous dictum about revenge: "An eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind," or of Archbishop Desmond Tutu's pronouncement that "Without forgiveness there is no future."

As we consider forgiveness, we notice that none of its aspects are inherently religious. Robert Enright, a professor of educational psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has spent twenty years studying forgiveness – what it is (and what it is not), how to facilitate it, and even how to measure it. He endorses a secular definition of forgiveness offered by many mainstream philosophers: *the process of replacing resentment with goodwill towards someone who has hurt you unfairly* (North, 1987).

Besides its secular nature, a few things are worth noticing about this definition. First of all, forgiveness is presented as a process, not as a single act. This fits with our experience that forgiveness is hard work and is not completed by simply uttering the words, "I forgive you." Commonly, especially for deep hurts, feelings of anger and resentment towards the wrongdoer resurface for years.

Second, the definition makes clear that we forgive a person, not the act he or she committed. It is therefore irrational to speak of forgiving an act of adultery, but not necessarily of forgiving an adulterer. Note that, regarding justice, nothing in the above definition of forgiveness precludes the possibility of punishment. It is conceivable, for instance, that a teacher could come to forgive a student who cheated on a test for breaking his trust, but still give the student an "F" for the test. Forgiveness involves softening of the heart towards another person, not condoning his or her behavior.

Cognitive psychologist Robert Chapman, author of the curriculum *Thought Power*, even takes forgiveness out of the moral sphere and views it simply as a prudent – and, importantly, a teachable – problem-solving strategy. He points out that we all will at some time hurt others as well as be hurt by others and that forgiveness can help us heal hurts and improve our relations with others. He includes an entire chapter on teaching what he calls the "interpersonal skill" of forgiveness, both of self and of others. He notes that far from being an act of weakness, forgiving is a sign of personal strength and, perhaps not surprisingly, tends to facilitate higher self-esteem (Chapman, 1994).

Forgiveness and Students

If sustaining emotional injuries is an inevitable part of being human, why do we not systematically nurture dispositions in our students to effectively deal with these hurts? Many schools in America attempt to meet this need by teaching some set of conflict resolution skills. Most approaches are helpful in navigating through an immediate conflict, but I have yet to see one that honors the fact that resentment – sometimes deep resentment – can remain long after the conflict has allegedly been resolved, nor one that provides tools, such as forgiveness, to deal with such injuries.

Imagine a sixth grader who is called names and is humiliated in front of her peers during a conflict with another student. It is likely that she could *manage* the immediate conflict by working through the traditional conflict resolution steps (each tell her side of the story, brainstorm solutions, etc.) and get through the day just fine. But it is also likely that the resentment created by the humiliation will remain long after the two parties have shaken hands. This is the kind of anger that can become destructive and weigh her down, sort of a continuous victimization. Forgiveness – which admittedly might not be a real possibility for weeks or even months in this case – is certainly not the only way to deal with resentment, but it is often one of the most effective.

Forgiveness is relevant to the lives of students in at least one other important way. An alarming number of students think ill of themselves, both in the academic as well as moral domains. Many have come to believe that since they have done poorly on a test or occasionally have fallen short of the moral mark, that they are bad people. What is missing is any gentleness towards oneself, which recognizes that part of learning and part of being human involves making mistakes and that our inherent worth is not compromised by our performance in life. High stakes testing and the growth of some values education programmes that take a particularly dark view of human nature have only made this issue more salient. Taking a broad instead of narrow view of ourselves (which includes viewing ourselves over time as well as appreciating both our strengths and weaknesses), and holding ourselves in high regard despite our failings, undeniably makes it easier for us to do the same to others.

At this point, parents might raise a few objections. Their primary fear might be that for schools to present forgiveness as an option for resolving resentment risks creating human doormats who will inevitably be overrun by bullies. If forgiveness is nurtured responsibly, this fear is unfounded. First of all, forgiving implies that the victim recognizes that he or she has been unjustly treated and that the perpetrator does not necessarily *deserve* to be forgiven, thus upholding proper standards of justice. (Strictly speaking, no one has a *right* to be forgiven: it is a gift given freely by the victim.) Doormats, on the other hand, tend to blur the boundaries between just and unjust treatment. Second, forgiving another does not require either using the words “I forgive you” (which might embolden a bully to continue bullying) or reconciling with the person who hurt you. In the case of the playground incident, it might be best that the two girls not play with each other for a while. Third, doormats tend to report low self-esteem, whereas those who forgive tend to be proud of themselves for forgiving.

Forgiveness and Teachers

In *The Courage to Teach*, Parker Palmer writes about the inner lives of teachers and he argues that we teach well when we feel whole as human beings. I would suggest that personal injuries – from students, parents, and colleagues – sustained over a career are a major source of unwholeness in the lives of teachers. It is rare to come across a teacher who cannot think of a student, parent, or peer who hurt them deeply sometime during his career. If these hurts are never resolved, teachers can develop a

protective wall around themselves, which can separate them from warm relationships with students and from their passion for teaching.

I know a popular high school teacher who was publicly humiliated by a senior (not his own) several years ago. At a graduation party, this student made a lewd gesture to the teacher in front of the other students and parents at the party. Though he thought he had been able to simply “brush off” the insult, the teacher was overcome by intense feelings of anger when he saw this student again a full three years later. One wonders where he had been storing such anger and what effect this had on his relationships with other students in the interim.

On the other hand, I met another high school teacher recently who actually did seem to possess the skills and the orientation to which I am referring, even though he had not thought of what he was doing as ‘forgiveness.’ He told me of a student with whom he was having a particularly difficult time, and that he was working hard to illuminate and focus on the positive qualities in him.

This teacher seemed to recognize something that almost all of us teachers know, but sometimes forget – that acts of disrespect by students are not really statements about us and our worth: they are more about the confusions that these students are feeling at this time in their lives. This perspective seemed to free this teacher from taking things too personally (but not necessarily foregoing punishment) and from being dragged down to the level of his student’s behavior.

Being able to reframe students in this way has two important effects: first, it prevents the insults from sticking for too long, which can affect other relationships (even those outside of school); second, it prevents teachers from developing a largely negative view of students. We all know teachers who hold this essentially negative view of most students, and I am convinced that it is often a function of unhealthy relationships with a *few* students. We become very different teachers, not only to those few students but also to the entire class, when we are able to transform those few oppositional relationships into ones in which we feel even the slightest degree of goodwill towards those students. Our energy and creativity seem to re-emerge.

In addition to recognizing that students are often more confused than they are rotten-to-the-core, thinking about what we ourselves might have been like at that age may present another way to help reframe our view of some students. Though I was considered generally a good student and polite kid, I cringe when I think of the things that I said or did to some of my middle school teachers; yet I think I turned out to be a fairly decent person. My behaviour was more likely a result of my confusions or of my desire to gain status in front of my peers. I suspect it is the same for many other students. Perhaps if we enlarge our view of not only who the students are now, but also of *who they might someday become* – decent people, who, like me, might come to regret many of their thoughtless acts – we might find it easier to take their acts less personally, which makes it easier to forgive them and unburden ourselves of anger.

This point is worth emphasizing. Teaching can be an enormously challenging job; whether in American or Bhutan, class sizes always seem too big, textbooks and supplies too few, and support from community and administration can seem unreliable. Therefore, we need all the tools we can find to make us feel our most whole as human beings, and therefore, our most effective as teachers. Unburdening ourselves of anger from difficult relations with students (or colleagues) – past or present – can help considerably in this regard. Forgiveness is one way to do this.

Schools That Foster Forgiveness

There are several things that a school can do to nurture forgiveness, both directly and indirectly. They fall roughly into four areas: promoting emotional intelligence (especially at an early age); adopting an approach to discipline that humanizes both victim and wrongdoer; highlighting themes of forgiveness in existing curricula; and making forgiveness part of the vocabulary and climate of the school.

Emotional Intelligence

Children who have a strong awareness of and ability to regulate their emotions – such as guilt, shame, jealousy, and anger – are in a much better place both to receive and to offer forgiveness than those who cannot. (Matthieu Ricard made a strong case for nurturing emotional intelligence in schools during a recent speech in Thimphu.) Of particular importance is an ability to regulate anger, for someone regularly blinded by anger is unlikely to forgive. Moreover, those with high “emotional intelligence” are likely to develop into people who recognize the psychological costs of clinging to excessive resentment. Years of resentment and bitterness are high prices to pay for being hurt unfairly years earlier. Therefore, schools wishing to nurture forgiveness should systematically develop foundations of emotional literacy in students. (For a comprehensive evaluation of school-based programmes to nurture emotional intelligence, see the website of the Collaboration for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning at www.casel.org.)

Discipline

Schools could also adopt an approach to discipline that humanizes both the wrongdoer and the victims. This does not mean, however, that the approach should be soft. Indeed, many view authoritative discipline – as opposed to permissive or authoritarian discipline – as the approach most conducive to moral growth (Damon, 1988). In this regard, many schools are turning to a paradigm of restorative discipline, where wrongdoing is viewed as breaks in relationships instead of as merely breaks in rules, and where the aim is to restore a sense of wholeness to both victim and wrongdoer. Unlike traditional approaches to discipline, the victim has some say in how the harm will be repaired. Significantly, this approach also helps the wrongdoer regulate shame in appropriate ways and offers opportunities for him to re-enter the moral community with dignity. It is surprising how many students own up to misdeeds when they are given options to repair the harm.

Curriculum

There are many curricular choices that a school can make to promote forgiveness. Although the list is not long, there are several children’s books that touch on the theme of forgiveness. Some examples are Even Bunting’s *Summer Wheels* and *Smoky Nights*, Pat Cummings’ *Carousel*, Kevin Henkes’ *Lilly’s Purple Plastic Purse*, Edith Hope Fine’s *Under the Yellow Moon*, and Caryn Yacowitz’ *Pumpkin Fiesta*. Patricia Raybon’s *My First White Friend*, highlighting how forgiveness (and reframing) helped her work through bitterness from race prejudice, is appropriate for both middle and high school students. At the high school level, classic novels such as *Catcher in the Rye*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Les Misérables*, and plays such as “Death of a Salesman” and August Wilson’s “Fences” provide rich opportunities to discuss forgiveness.

In addition to highlighting themes of forgiveness in literature, schools can highlight acts of forgiveness, or at least of healthy alternatives to revenge, in current events and

throughout history. Take, for example, South Africa's relatively peaceful transition from apartheid. According to Archbishop Tutu, "Our miracle almost certainly would not have happened without the willingness of people to forgive, exemplified spectacularly in the magnanimity of Nelson Mandela" (Enright and North, 1998). Although non-violence does not necessarily equal forgiveness, the theme of forgiveness could certainly be drawn from discussion of the lives of Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and other civil rights leaders such as Cesar Chavez and W.E.B. DuBois. Such discussions could certainly challenge the claim that forgiveness and non-violence are acts of weakness.

Part of the School Vocabulary and Climate

The quality of a school's culture can strongly impact whether virtues such as kindness, care, and forgiveness are nurtured and expressed. A warm and supportive environment that 'holds' both staff and students tends to bring out the best in people and makes it safe to care for others, apologize when necessary, and forgive when appropriate. Imagine, for example, the effect that a principal would have on both staff and students were he or she to publicly apologize to a group of students for an error in judgment. Such an act creates space for similar acts by others in the future. On the other hand, acts of kindness and generosity are comparatively rare in toxic and highly punitive environments, which tend to bring out the worst in people. Moreover, since words we use in the hallways, classrooms, and offices of our school help shape its climate, forgiveness is more likely to take place in schools where words such as 'forgiveness,' 'generosity,' and 'compassion' are used regularly and have currency. Again, the acts of the school leadership are important here.

The Process of Forgiveness

Forgiving a student (or a parent, or a fellow teacher) does not mean that you let him or her off the hook. Nor does it mean that you necessarily have to be friends with him or her again. As I mentioned earlier, forgiveness has more to do with softening one's heart towards another and resolving not to grant that person ongoing power over you by allowing negative feelings to weigh you down. Below are some common stages that people tend to go through when forgiving another (Enright, 2002):

Uncovering Phase: One recognizes the emotional cost to clinging to deep resentment. One recognizes that other strategies to deal with the hurt have been ineffective.

Decision Phase: One decides that forgiveness is worth exploring and commits not to pass pain on to others.

Work Phase: The primary task of this phase is reframing the wrongdoer. Notice that one is not reframing the event (the wrongness of which might not be reframable). Here, one is trying to take a broad view of the other and is trying to take the perspective of and to understand him or her. Also, one is looking for examples of when the other acted with decency or even kindness, suggesting that he or she is not a fundamentally bad person.

Deepening Phase: During this phase the victim often feels a certain emotional release and sense of personal empowerment for choosing forgiveness.

Discussion and Conclusion

Before concluding, a brief discussion about the connection between forgiveness and compassion and *Ley Jumdrej* is warranted. With the caveat that I am in no way a religious expert, it does seem that the concept of forgiveness can be approached and understood through the concepts of compassion and *Ley Jumdrej*. As mentioned above, an important part of the forgiveness process is reframing: seeing the person who hurt you with fresh eyes and an appreciation of both his struggles and of his positive qualities. An ability to view him sympathetically and as a whole person who is more than just the wrong he committed, seems central to compassion.

Though trying to avoid the trap of excusing behaviour, a teacher might look with compassion at the whole child – his background, his family, the hurts he may have sustained, and the times he exhibited care and compassion to others – and feel a new softness toward him, which is a major part of forgiving.

Ley Jumdrej is also related to forgiveness in important ways. Gandhi's statement, mentioned earlier, "An eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind" seems a perfect expression of this concept. Action and reaction, cause and effect. An appreciation of this concept might help us realize how our response to hurt affects both ourselves and others. Am I, as a teacher, perpetuating a cycle of revenge and negativity, or am I strong enough to end the cycle and begin a cycle of goodwill? How can I nurture this appreciation in my students?

Education can be described as the daily process of recreating the world. It is through our interactions, policies, and curriculum that we assert what values this recreated world will have. Every day is an opportunity to create a more just and loving world, or one that is more harsh. This article is not to suggest that forgiveness – and the related concepts of compassion and karma – replace all other core virtues in this process of education; rather, it is to argue that forgiveness may have more relevance to our work as educators than we might have previously thought.

And it is to suggest that forgiveness is neither an exclusively religious virtue, nor one that is so mysterious that it defies development in students. Nurtured properly, forgiveness promises to improve the lives of both teachers and students, by fostering growth and limiting *stuckness*. Fundamentally, as Hannah Arendt argues, forgiveness provides space to recreate relationships and to begin things anew. This is what we would wish for the students at Florence-Crittendon and for every teacher they encounter along the way. And for students all over Bhutan and for the teachers *they* encounter along the way.

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A Formative Evaluation of the B.Ed. Primary Distance Education Programme Introduction

Tshering Wangmo²

Distance education established its roots as a form of instruction at least 150 years ago as correspondence study (Holmberg, 1981). The term 'distance education learning' describes any instructional arrangement where the teacher and the learner are geographically separated (Moore & Thompson 1997). Today, the more popular term for this type of learning at a distance is distance education or planned learning that normally occurs in a different place from teaching and as a result requires special techniques of course design, social instructional techniques, special methods of communication as well as special organizational and administrative arrangements (Moore & Kearsley 1996). Such a mode of study took birth in Bhutan only in December 1995 with a Bachelor of Education course designed for upgrading the teachers with primary teaching certificates. This course consists of a two-year Diploma in Primary Teaching followed by a three-year B.Ed degree in Primary Teaching. The first batch of students graduated in 2003.

The course briefings are done through a compulsory four weeks of residential period every year and assessments are done through a series of assignments throughout the year followed by some examinations at the end of each year. The modules/units taught conventionally are redesigned into self – instruction materials. The mode of delivery is mainly print-based and just last year an online programme was introduced for the fourth year candidates.

The distance education programme is an innovative approach to education in Bhutan because we never had such a programme before, besides the regular ones. Innovations in distance education frequently involve new teaching methods, new media, new student groups, new curricula and new institutions (Woodley & Kirkwood, 1988). Currently, most of these programmes such as the Masters in Education (Management), Diploma in Management, B.Ed in Dzongkha, all tend to be rushed with little opportunity for any review or piloting. Fullan (2005:55) rightly says "The process of change is difficult and frustrating to grasp because it requires leaders to take into account factors that they would rather not have to stop and deal with. They would rather lay out the purpose and plan and get on with it". And that is exactly how this particular distance education programme started off too. I agree with Fullan: "Change does not work that way" (Fullan 2005:55). Furthermore, it's about establishing the condition for continuous improvement. "It's about innovativeness not just innovation" (Fullan 2005:55).

This study is termed as a Formative Evaluation ... because the intention of this evaluation is an on-going process for the betterment of the whole programme and definitely not an end in itself. Scriven (1991:168) defines a Formative Evaluation as one that is conducted during the development or improvement of a programme or product and it is conducted often more than once, with the intent to improve". Furthermore, Li (online) say that the evaluation of a distance learning programme should take a formative evaluation approach, which suggests (1) that the evaluation is part of a process of building a better programme and (2) that the function of this evaluation is part of a built-in mechanism for programme development.

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The aim of evaluation in the case of any organization should be to support that organization in achieving its goal. In other words, to enable it to become a more effective organization within whatever constraints it has to operate (Calder 1994). Evaluation is a necessary concomitant of improvement. We cannot make our programmes better unless we know their weaknesses and strengths and unless we become aware of better means. We cannot be sure whether the goals we set match the needs of the people they are intended to serve. We cannot plan effectively if we are not aware of the options and their relative merits; and we cannot convince our constituents that we have done a good job and deserve their continued support unless we can show them evidence of it. (Stufflebeam 1986). In other words, a programme evaluation focuses on how well a particular educational programme, curriculum or teaching method work, how it might be improved and how it compares with alternatives (Woodley & Kirkwood 1988).

Thorpe (1993:5) defines evaluation as “the collection, analysis and interpretation of information about any aspects of a programme of education and training, as part of a recognized process or judging its effectiveness, its efficiency and any other outcomes it may have”. She adds that what differentiates evaluation from other related activities is not that judgments and opinions are made, but that they are made to be seen. Scriven (1993) too asserted that evaluation can strengthen the plans for services and their delivery in order to improve the outcomes of programme to increase the efficiency of programme. However, many factors involved in the success of distance offerings make the creation of a comprehensive evaluation plan a complex and daunting task (Moore, Lockee, & Burton 2002).

There is no one way to evaluate a distance education programme. Research into training and educational evaluation has led to a number of theoretical approaches that can be divided into two broad categories. The first category includes those approaches that tend to favour a more utilitarian orientation that seeks to measure programme effectiveness through an evaluation process aimed at establishing whether programme goals and objectives have been attained. The second category includes approaches that rely on a more subjective approach that seeks to first reveal the concerns of all involved parties in an effort to inductively gather information concerning programme outcomes (Taylor, 1998). Examples of the former include both objective-oriented approaches (Metfessel & Michael, 1967) and the Discrepancy Evaluation Model (Provus, 1972), management-oriented approaches like the Kirkpatrick model (Kirkpatrick, 1976) and the CIPP Model (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985). Examples of more subjective approaches include Goal-Free Evaluation (Scriven, 1972) and participant-oriented approaches (Guba & Lincoln, 1981) which are almost exclusively driven by the stakeholders. And many other recent approaches such as Flagg's (1990) pre-test and post-test investigation; Mehrotra et.al's (2001) input – process – outcome; Potts et.al's (2000) input – throughput – output; Simonson's (1997) accountability, effectiveness, impact, organizational context and unanticipated consequences framework.

After a careful review of a number of evaluation approaches, it is apparent that management-oriented approaches are most appropriate, particularly since the overarching goal this evaluation is to provide both the programme and the decision-makers with information regarding the efficacy of current instructional strategies and delivery methods. Whatever approach we use, the important fact is to use a comprehensive and systematic approach whose usefulness will depend on the particular concerns we have and on which we want the evaluation to shed light. The present study tend to shed light on the context, input, process and the product aspects of the programme; Therefore, Stufflebeam's CIPP model is deemed to be the

most suitable one because it focuses on the four areas that I mentioned above. Moreover, it is designed to be used by external evaluators to collect the type of data about programme-wide effectiveness that can assist managers in making judgments about programme worth. One of the additional strengths of the CIPP evaluation model is that it can be utilized for both formative and summative evaluation.

What is the CIPP Model?

The CIPP Model (Stufflebeam 1986) (Context-Input-Process-Product)

This approach is based on the view that the most important purpose of the evaluation is not to prove, but to improve. It sees evaluation as a tool by which to help make programmes work better for the people they are intended to serve (Stufflebeam 1993). Fundamentally, it is intended to promote growth of an institute or programme systematically to obtain and use feedback so as to excel in meeting important needs or at least to do the best they can with the available resources.

This model had its rough beginnings in the 1960s when others like Scriven (1991), criticized its design, saying that it had too much bias towards the concerns and the values of the educational establishment. Scriven further charged that the approach was preoccupied with fostering improvement, thus neglecting the fundamental role of summative evaluation (Scriven cited in Stake 1983). Calder (1994) was of the opinion that it would be a mistake to think of the distinction between the two roles of evaluation because just as data gathered for formative purposes can be used for summative decisions, data gathered for summative purposes can be and often is used for formative purposes. Evaluation, after all, is an evolving and cyclical process, not static or really ever complete; it is dynamic and meant to inform and improve future endeavours (Thorpe 1993).

Thus, according to all the arguments, Stufflebeam believed that the CIPP Model of evaluation should be used both to guide decision-making (the formative role) and to supply information for accountability (the summative role). This is one reason why this Model is deemed suitable for the present study because it does not concentrate so much on guiding the conduct of an individual study, but focuses more on providing ongoing evaluation services to the decision-makers in an institution (Stufflebeam 1983)

The CIPP Model is based upon four evaluation stages which can encompass the main aspects of a course, programme of instruction or a major project.

Context evaluation considers questions regarding the setting and goals for the instructional programme. It is particularly concerned with setting programme goals that meet learner-needs. Input evaluation looks at system resources in order to make judgments about how instructional approaches should be structured in terms of their content, budgets and schedules. Process evaluation makes judgments about how well an instructional programme has been implemented. Finally, in the Product evaluation phase, the evaluator is interested in how well the outcomes of the instruction have met the programme goals and the stakeholder-needs. During this phase, the evaluator is also often interested in collecting data about any unintended outcomes.

Ultimately, the evaluation report is used to supply decision-makers with information about whether to continue, modify, or terminate all or part of an educational or training programme.

Content Analysis

As stated above, the product evaluation phase checks whether the outcomes of the instruction meet the programme-goals and the stakeholder-needs. This study will use content analysis for the product evaluation phase.

Berelson describes (cited in William et.al. 1977:187) content analysis as a research technique for objective, systematic and qualitative description of the content communication. When we are systematic and objective, we minimize to a greater deal any personal biases that might intrude into the evaluation; we collect only congenial data to our theoretical ideas. Content analysis should serve a useful purpose in adding important knowledge to a field of study or yielding information that is helpful in evaluating and improving social or educational practices.

Nearly all the methods that we use in research do employ some kind of direct involvement with persons. However, content analysis is a thoroughly unobtrusive method and it can serve to complement the findings of a more obtrusive method.

Content analysis for the present study will be the collection of the final marksheet for the particular cohort of respondents and then compare their academic performances in their responses to the questions. The intention is to see if there is any significant relation between their responses to the CIP variables and their academic performance because the general assumption is that student academic performance is best explained or can be predicted by the combined effects of the CIP variables. This finding will be very essential to distance education programme planners, to guide them in the most efficient and cost-effective mix of variables, that will bring about desirable changes in the students.

The Questions

This study used the major tenets of Daniel Stufflebeam's CIPP Model. The evaluation is mainly formative in structure with the main intention of improving the programme in terms of its context, input, process and product variables. Some of Quimbo's questions are modified and used in this study.

1. The Student Profile

Age, work place, gender, elective subjects.

2. Context Evaluation

- * Are the objectives of the programme suitable to the learners and to the programme?
- * Is the course challenging?
- * How prepared were the students for the programme?
- * Was the online programme useful?

3. Input Evaluation

The Course Materials

How is the quality, appropriateness and the adequacy of the materials used?
Were they useful for the successful completion of the assignments?
How efficient was the delivery of materials?

Student Support

How well could the students use the library facilities?
How helpful were the tutors?

4. Process Evaluation

- * How suitable were the teaching/learning strategies used?
- * To what extent has the programme contributed to the students' cognitive, professional, and personal enrichment?
- * How adequate is the feedback system to assess student performance?

Methods

Cusick(1973:227) says that "The methodology used in any research should be intrinsically related to the basic assumptions about the nature of the phenomena to be studied". Thus a questionnaire survey and content analysis are deemed suitable for this particular study because of the nature of the context (developing country with very limited electronic access and the tyranny of distance).

Questionnaire Survey

The strength of a survey method is that it gathers data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions. More often than not such conditions help identify standards against which existing conditions can be compared (Cohen & Manion 1997).Vaus (1995) also explains that survey research seeks an understanding of what causes some phenomenon. There is no all-encompassing rule for when to use a questionnaire. The choice will be made based on a variety of factors including the type of information to be gathered and the available resources for the experiment. A questionnaire can be quite inexpensive to administer. Although preparation may be costly, any data collection scheme will have similar preparation expenses. The administration cost per person of a questionnaire can be as low as postage and a few photocopies. Time is also an important resource that questionnaires can maximize. A questionnaire is easy to administer confidentially. Often confidentiality is necessary to ensure that participants will respond honestly. Questionnaires are versatile, allowing the collection of both subjective and objective data through the use of open or closed format questions. And because of its ability to cover large areas and many respondents, this method has become the dominant method of data collection in social research (Lin 1976:220). Further, Moser and Kalton (1971) claim that nine out of ten social surveys use a questionnaire of some kind making it the most commonly used technique in survey research. Thus, the present study too employs this most commonly used technique of the survey research.

A well designed questionnaire requires several steps from the identification of the research problem to the analysis and interpretation of the data. Careful attention to details and using procedure to enhance response, especially conducting follow-ups, will do much to overcome the problems of a questionnaire survey (Weirisma 1991).

Questions like any other course materials need a considerable amount of thought and care in their construction and design if the respondents are to find them interesting and easy to complete. Asking the right kind of questions can do much to improve educational effectiveness (Cronbach 1983).

Process of devising the questionnaire

The final draft of the questionnaire has four parts. Part 1 consists of the basic profile of the respondent and Parts 2 to 4 consist of the context, input and process variables. Questions in Part 2 to 4 use a self - rated four to five point Likert scale with differing rating criteria as per the suitability to the variables used in the questions.

Some extra lines are provided at the end of each part which allows respondents to express their views more freely in case they were restricted by the closed questions. Thus the questionnaire on the whole uses a combination of both quantitative and qualitative approach. Punch (1998:242) says that –

The quantitative approach conceptualizes reality in term of variables, and relationships between them. It rests on measurement, and therefore prestructures data and usually research questions, conceptual frameworks and design as well. On the other hand, the qualitative approach deals more with cases. It is sensitive to context and process, to lived experience and to local groundedness, and the researcher tries to get closer to what is being studied.. It aims for in-depth and holistic understanding, in order to do justice to the complexity of social life.

Thus, the methodological justification for bringing the two approaches together is to capitalize on their strengths and to compensate for their weaknesses (Bryman ,1988). The questionnaire for the study is designed to obtain data in four different areas as explained below.

Part 1: Profile of the respondent

The profile of the respondent was intended to collect personal data encompassing work place, gender, age range and elective subject. Although all the information collected in this area may not have been of significant use in this study, however, some of the data collected can be of good use for later studies. For instance, comparison can be made between the elective subjects in terms of their context, input, process and product components, so that we can see which subject needs more attention.

Part 2: Context

This part entailed collecting items aimed at finding out whether the objectives of the distance education programme matched the participants' expectations. Whether the participants were prepared for the programme and whether the programme was challenging.

Part 3: Input

This section had two parts **a. Quality of Materials** and **b. Support**. The items under the first part are intended to find out the suitability and adequacy of the resources used in the programme. The last two items intend to find out the effectiveness of the on-line support which had been recently introduced in the distance programme. The items under the second part are intended to find out the quality of support provided to the participants, in terms of library and tutor support.

Part 4: Process

This section encompasses three parts – **a. The teaching-learning strategies used** – whether the activities maintain an equal balance of the performance objectives. **b. professional and personal development** –this area is tended to find out how the distance Education Programme aided their professional and personal development, and **c. feedback** – The last two items under this part aim to find out the usefulness of the feedback system for the participants.

Sample

Weirsmas(1991) defines sampling as a subset of the population to which the research intends to generalize the results. In many research situations, the primary aim is to study a group with the intention of generalizing to some larger group. The larger group or the population for this study consist of the B.Ed (Pry.) distance education learners. Both Wiersma(1991) and Silverman(2000) maintain that purposive sampling allows the researcher to choose a case which illustrates some features in which they are interested.

Data collection

Before the collection of any data some of the obligations that social researchers need to consider are the ethical issues involved. Cohen and Manion (1997) share their concern on this issue:

Ethical concerns encountered in educational research in particular can be extremely complex and subtle and can frequently place researchers in moral predicaments which may appear quite irresolvable. One such dilemma is that which requires researchers to strike a balance between the demands placed on them as professional scientists in pursuit of truth, and their subjects' rights and values potentially threatened by the research (Cohen&Manion, 1997:347).

Utmost care was taken in considering the opinions and beliefs of the respondents. Since the study involved humans, ethical clearance was a requirement. The researcher in consultation with the supervisors applied to the University of New England Human Research Ethics Committee, seeking approval for collecting data. The researcher also submitted an application to the Director of the National Institute of Education asking approval to collect data. In both cases approval was granted in writing. Furthermore, the most important ethical consideration concerned the actual respondents. They were given the choice to respond to the questionnaire or not. The questionnaire did not provide any space for the respondents to mention their names. Anonymity and confidentiality of responses were assured and maintained. All possible means were employed to respect their views and status. While designing the questionnaire, care was taken not to use too much of the participants' valuable time.

Data analysis

The data collected in this study were from two sources, the questionnaire and content analysis. The questionnaire collected two types of data: numbers and words. Numbers came from the Likert rating scales for various items and the unstructured content was from the open-ended questions used at the end of each part. Babbie (2004) rightly commented that to conduct a quantitative analysis, a researcher often must engage in a coding process after the data have been collected so as to reduce large amounts of

idiosyncratic items of information to a more limited set of attributes composing a variable. Thus, the Profile of the Respondents in Part 1 was coded as follows:

Profile	Code
Work Place: Rural	1
Urban	2
Gender: Female	1
Male	2
Age: 31 - 35	1
36 - 40	2
41 - 45	3
Elective Subject: English	1
Geography	2
History	3

The data were then transferred from Excel into the SPSS (Software Package for Social Sciences) programme for further analysis using descriptive statistics. The use and purpose of descriptive statistics, as Rose and Sullivan state, is:

The interpretation and summarization of frequency distribution (the number of cases in the categories of a variable) and percentage distribution (the percentage of cases in the categories of a variable (Rose&Sullivan1996:84)

Frequency distribution helps us understand the number of cases in the categories of a variable, whereas the percentage distribution provides the percentage of cases in the categories of a variable.

All items in the Profile section of the questionnaire were analyzed using this statistical process. For the other questions under context, input and process, percentage tabulation was done manually. As the sample was not that large, it was found more convenient to do it thus. The information could be presented in a simpler way. However, a cross tabulation was found suitable to be used for analyzing the product data.

The nature of the data in this study required such analysis. Each table had two variables- questions and ratings (Likert scale ratings). Thus, what percentage of respondents rated what scale was done by cross tabulation. The results of the respondents were tabulated using this statistical sub-routine.

Findings (Quantitative Data)

This part of the paper is organized into four major areas- firstly the **respondents' profile** followed by the data gathered under the **context**, **input** and the **process** variables of the programme. "A perfectly designed and carefully executed and brilliantly analyzed study will be altogether worthless unless you can communicate your findings to others (Babbie 2004:A22).

The Respondents' Profile

Gender

Table 1(a) - Respondents' representation by gender
Gender of respondents

	Frequency	Percentage		
Valid male	20	66.7		
female	10	33.3		
Total	30	100.0		

What is understandable from **Table 1(a)** is that more males responded than females. From the 27 females selected for the sample, only 10 of them responded which is 33.3 % and from the 27 males, 20 responded which is 66.7 % of the total sample.

Age

Table 1 (b) - Respondents' representation by age

Age of respondents

	Frequency	Percentage		
Valid 31 - 35	3	10.0		
36 - 40	20	66.7		
41 - 45	7	23.3		
Total	30	100.0		

The age of the youngest respondent is 33 and the oldest is 45. The majority of them (66.7%) are in between the ages of 36 and 40 years. Contrary to the 1997/98 BCIT (British Columbia Institute of Technology) Distance Education Survey findings, the ages of the candidates in this programme are very likely to drop in the coming years. The reason being that priority of enrollment for the senior teachers was respected.

Table 1 (c) - Respondents' representation by elective subjects
Elective subjects of the respondents

	Frequency	Percentage		
Valid English	13	43.3		
History	10	33.3		

Geography	7	23.3		
Total	30	100.0		

The distance education programme at present offers only three electives along with the other PCS (Primary Curriculum Studies) modules. The majority (43.3%) of the respondents were from English elective, 33.3% from History and 23.3% from Geography. This is quite a good representation of the larger population which consists of maximum English elective candidates followed by History and Geography.

Table 1 (d) – Respondents’ representation by work-place
Working place of the respondents

	Frequency	Percentage		
Valid rural	19	63.3		
urban	11	36.7		
Total	30	100.0		

It’s understandable from the table that majority of the respondents- 19 -(63.3%) are from the rural areas and the rest from the urban towns and cities. An indication of this can be the need felt by these particular teachers to contribute something to helping the improvement of the programme. Much of the qualitative data for this study came from respondents from the rural areas.

As usual, those teachers who are in the urban areas have better access to facilities such as reference books, computers, light, and communication with the training institutes which are based in urban areas too. Mutanyatta (1989) too found in his study that students from places with lighting facilities performed better than those who were in different situations. Most of our distance education participants are from remote areas, meaning places with no road or electricity.

Context

The frequency distributions usually expressed in raw scores or percentages for each of the variables under the three major topics – **context**, **input** and **process**- are given under **Appendix I**. The **tables** below show the percentage of the responses under each variable.

Table 2 – Context (%)

4 – Yes, 3 – maybe, 2 – no, 1 – don’t know.

Statements	1	2	3	4	Total%
Does the programme match the objectives?			23.3	76.7	100.0
Were your objectives met by the programme?			33.3	66.7	100.0
Were you prepared for the programme at the beginning?		40	20	40	100.0
Was the programme difficult for you?			36.7	13.3	100.0

	3.3	46.7			
Were the assignments useful?		3.3	23.3	73.3	100.0

Just as the findings of Quimbo (online), Mutanyatta (1989) and the NIE (2004), the response to the first variable is quite positive. In a sense, 23 of the respondents (76.7%) agreed that the programme suited its objectives and did meet their expectations. However, preparedness for the programme was a bit doubtful for 60% of the respondents. This is understandable because of the fact that these teachers have been in the field for more than five years and, thus, have lost touch with books and studies. Therefore, having to face them once more can be very demanding. Maximum number of the respondents (46.7% and 36.7%) either felt the programme not difficult at all or were not very sure of it. This can mean that most of them did not find the programme very challenging which was also voiced in the NIE (2004), study where the tutors suggested a review and revision of the course modules and the programme. In their own words "...to make it more robust and challenging for the learners" (NIE: 2004:5). On the whole (73.3%) the assignments were found useful although the candidates did face difficulties in doing them. This issue will be discussed later.

Input

The two pertinent input areas assessed in this study are the teaching /learning materials and the student support system of the programme. Any distance education programme would not function well without proper attention being paid to these components. Let's first look at the responses for the materials.

Table 3 (a) - Quality of materials (%)

	5 – Excellent,	4 – V. good,	3 – Good,	2 – Fair	1 – Poor	
Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Total%
Adequacy of the materials for the study.	3.3	30	46.7	20		100.0
The organization of the contents		20	43.3	36.7		100.0
The attractiveness / presentability of materials.	10	16.7	40	33.3		100.0
The readability of the materials.		20	33.3	36.7	10	100.0
The usefulness of the materials.		3.3	20	66.7	10	100.0
The accessibility to online programmes.	56.7	26.7	13.3	3.3		100.0
The usefulness of the online programme.	50	23.3	13.3	13.3		100.0

Unlike in the Distance Education Survey of British Columbia Institute of Technology (1997/98) where the quality of the learning materials is found to be exceptionally good, Quimbo(n.g), Nyondo & Koigiri (1998) this study proves that the materials were of moderate quality specially in terms of adequacy and attractiveness.

The accessibility and the usefulness of the on-line programme was definitely a problem area with half of the respondents rating them as 'poor'. Most of them said that they did not have any access to such facilities in their locality. And a few wrote that even if they had, the services were very poor. Some lines in their own words regarding this issue are recorded in a later chapter discussing qualitative data.

Support

For this study, support is discussed purely in terms of the library and tutor-support. These two are the only support available at present to the students under discussion.

Table 3 (b) – Support System (%)

	5 – Excellent,	4 – V. good,	3 – Good,	2 – Fair	1 – Poor	
Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Total%
The helpfulness of the tutor	3.3	13.3	23.3	50	10	100.0
The responsiveness of the tutor	6.7	13.3	33.3	40	6.7	100.0
The library service		10	20	40	30	100.0
Your ability to learn from the tutor's comments		20	40	40		100.0
The supportiveness /constructiveness of comments	6.7	16.7	33.3	33.3	10	100.0

Most of the respondents had no complaints about the library service given by the Institute. About 70% felt that it was either very good or excellent. However, in the qualitative data, some respondents did recommend some changes for the betterment of the library service. The responsiveness of the tutors and the constructiveness of their comments do not rate as good as the library service the reasons of which will be discussed later.

Process

According to Stufflebeam (1993), the main use of the process evaluation is to obtain feedback to aid in carrying out a programme as planned, or modify the plan if found seriously flawed. This area assessed those aspects of teaching and learning processes that dealt with factors that enhanced students' cognitive, professional and personal developments and it also assessed the adequacy and the timeliness of the feedbacks provided to the students.

Table 4 (a) - The teaching / learning strategies used (%)

5 – Always 4 – Most of the time 3 – Sometime 2 – rarely 1 – Never

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Total%
Did the programme require you to -						
Memorize concepts and facts?	3.3	10	60	26.7		100.0
Understand concepts and ideas?			20	26.7	53.3	100.0
Apply learning to your own job?		3.3	23.3	40	33.3	100.0

Analyze data/description/arrangements?	3.3		36.7	36.7	23.3	100.0
Synthesize and put ideas together?		6.6	26.7	50	16.7	100.0
Evaluate using your own judgments/ values?			40	43.3	16.7	100.0

On the whole, the data show a good use of all the teaching strategies demanding a good combination of all the cognitive levels.

Table 4 (b) - Professional and personal development (%)

	4 – Yes	3 – Maybe	2 – No	1 – Don't know	
Statements	1	2	3	4	Total%
How much did the programme help you in -					
Building confidence in your work.			6.7	93.3	100.0
Improving your work skills		6.7	10	83.3	100.0
Personal growth	3.3	3.3	26.7	66.7	100.0
Feeling of security			23.3	76.7	100.0

A glance at the table shows that most of candidates agree that the programme helped them develop professionally and personally. 93.3% (28) of the respondents feel that the programme helped them in building their confidence in work. This must be true because in a world where everyone inquires about your qualification, a B.Ed certificate is definitely better than a PTC (Primary Teacher Certificate). Moreover, such an upgrading of qualification can definitely boost their feeling of security, which is clearly shown by the rating of 76.7%. For these teachers who had been teaching in the different pockets of the country for not less than five years without much resources or help from anyone, this programme is a refresher's course where they once more can read or learn some new tricks of the trade; in other words, improve their skills. The teachers' appreciation is reflected in the strength of their positive reaction (83.3%).

On the whole, almost all the respondents perceived a relatively high level of satisfaction over the personal and professional development provided by the programme.

Table 4 (c)- Feedback (%)

	4 – V. Good	3 – Good	2 – Fair	1 – Poor	
Statements	1	2	3	4	Total%
Timely feedback on the assignments	66.7	30	3.3		100.0
Adequacy of the feedback on the assignments	30	46.7	23.3		100.0

One serious area of concern was the turn-around time of the assignments. 66.7 % of the respondents find it very poor. Around 76.7 % find the adequacy of feedbacks between poor and fair. This looks like an area which needs maximum attention.

Product

As discussed in the above chapters, the general understanding is that the CIP (context, input and process) have some impact on the product part of a programme (Quimbo n.g, Stufflebeam 1993). This part of the study compares the respondents' final examination marks with some other variables such as their working places and the elective subjects with the help of the cross tabulation system. The consolidated marks for the 28 respondents were collected from the Distance Education Coordinator of the National Institute of Education, Samtse, with the permission of the respondents. Their identities were kept anonymous because in the questionnaires, they wrote their index numbers and their marks were written according to the index numbers.

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
			Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Elective Subjects * Final Score for the Year	26	86.7%	4	13.3%	30	100.0%

From the table above, we can notice that the study has information on 86.7% of the total sample. That's because the four missing respondents did not have to do the Year 2004 examination, therefore, there were no marks for them. These candidates were grade 12 passed, so they were eligible to enter the first year (2005) of the B.Ed course directly.

Elective Subjects * Cross tabulation of final scores for the year

			Final Score for the year				Total
			75 - 84	65 - 74	50 - 64	Belo w 50	
Elective Subject s	English	Count	3	4	4	0	11
		% within Elective Subjects	27.3%	36.4%	36.4%	.0%	100.0 %
	History	Count	0	6	4	0	10
		% within Elective Subjects	.0%	60.0%	40.0%	.0%	100.0 %
	Geography	Count	1	3	0	1	5
		% within Elective Subjects	20.0%	60.0%	.0%	20.0 %	100.0 %
Total		Count	4	13	8	1	26
		% within Elective Subjects	15.4%	50.0%	30.8%	3.8 %	100.0 %

Maximum number of the respondents seemed to have scored between 65 -74%, 65% have scored above 65 which is not that bad a result. From the scores, we can assume many things - despite the problems, if they could score that well, they would do even better if some improvements were made with the learning materials and feedback system. Some of candidates did comment that the programme was not challenging; therefore, the scores shown above could be an indication of that, too, or maybe, the tutors' corrections were not very serious as commented on by some of the respondents –*"The tutors need to be more serious about their corrections"*.

Work Places * Cross tabulation of final scores for the year

Work Places *Cross tabulation of final scores for the year

			Final Score for the Year				Total
			75 - 84	65 - 74	50 - 64	Below 50	
Work Places	Rural	Count	2	6	7	1	16
		% within Work Places	12.5%	37.5%	43.8%	6.3%	100.0%
	Urban	Count	2	7	1	0	10
		% within Work Places	20.0%	70.0%	10.0%	.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	4	13	8	1	26	
	% within Work Places	15.4%	50.0%	30.8%	3.8%	100.0%	

It's obvious that students who work in towns and cities will have better and more resources compared to those in the rural areas (the ones with no electricity and road). As is shown by the table above, 90% of the respondents from the urban areas scored above 65 and only 50% of the rural respondents scored the same. These scores are based on their over-all assignment marks and the examination marks. The advantages of having access to more facilities such as books, friends, light, computer etc. in the urban area are reflected in scores. Mutanyatta (1989) too observed in his study that students from the places with light performed better. Therefore, to be fair, the adequacy and the quality of the learning materials for all the candidates are an area to be addressed.

On the whole, the result looks good which means that with improvement in the context, input and process aspects of the programme, the scores may be even better in future.

Findings (Qualitative Data)

The compilation below is done from the information provided for the open-ended questions at the bottom of each set of questions.

Context

From the sample, 19 students had some thing to say in this area. Most of them felt that the number of assignments was a bit too high to handle with quality. A couple of them wrote that some of the assignments were not of much use. One such comment was *"While providing us with assignments, things like how relevant/how much learning*

it will provide, has to be considered and not just word limits of 10,000 or 15,000; which just takes a huge amount of time and not much of learning". Another commented "Assignments were useful but candidates, who do not have enough facilities in the remote, find it just impossible to get the right kind of references"

Five respondents with English elective recommended that there should be more content taught and they also expressed difficulty in getting the references recommended for the modules. Some seven of them recommended a 50:50 examination and assignment for all the units. The existing practice is that some units are purely based on assignments, some have 40:60 examination and assignments and some 50:50. A couple of them commented, *"The course is not that challenging and satisfying"*, which is further reflected in their ratings above.

Input

Materials and Online facilities

21 Candidates in this area and their comments were mostly on the online support issue. Most of them felt that this facility was just not feasible for the teachers in the remote areas. One wrote, *"Online programme is very difficult for the teachers in the remote schools. For instance this year I went three times to Trashigang Dungkhag to do the online assignments but the internet of NIE was not working"*. Another commented, *"The idea of the online programme was good but it needs improvement because the materials provided on it are very poor"*. A couple of them recommended that the DE students should be given practice on using the internet. One of them wrote, *"the online programme should not be compulsory for everyone; taking in account the time, accessibility and the walking distance from the school to the internet centre"*.

Four of candidates commented that some of the modules were not reader-friendly and, therefore, needed revision. Another wrote that some contents in the modules were not very useful – *"Some of the modules are hardly of any use, I never had to open them while doing my assignment"*. One recommended that the NIE should organize the sale of the required reference books during the residential period.

Support

20 Candidates in this area and most of them expressed the view that they could not learn anything from the tutors' feedback on their assignments as they never received any. One of them wrote, *"Most of the assignments were never returned, neither did we have any comments whereby we could improve ourselves. I could have learnt a lot more through my tutor's comments. I am not satisfied with my course though I have reached Level V"*.

Another one wrote, *"We hardly get comments from the tutors. In most cases we do not even get back our assignments. The tutors say that the assignments are being recycled that's why they are not given back. But if more effort is put by the tutors in changing the questions and tasks every year, the recycling of the old assignments will not take place"*. A couple of them commented that the tutors should take the corrections of the assignments more seriously and another one requested that there should be some kind of flexibility in the due dates of the assignments from the remote areas.

Four of them appreciated the help rendered by the library staff; however, the shortage of reference books was still an ailment. And to add to the problem, some of the books remained with one person for a long time.

A few of them had some comments on the tutors employed for the DE programme –

- *Identify more competent tutors rather than just fill the vacancies for name sakes.*
- *Inexperienced tutors picked from schools are not much of help. We expect someone who is superior to us and knows his/her subject matters well. The permanent NIE tutors are fine.*
- *Frequent change of tutors is very confusing. When the module is offered by someone during the residential period and the assignments for the same is marked by someone different. This creates imbalance in marking.*
- *There should be more incentives for the tutors, so that we get more competent tutors who will work hard for us.*

Process

Strategies used for teaching/learning

Only three of candidates wrote something in this area and all three felt that the inclusion of such varied strategies in the teaching / learning process of the distance education programme was very useful.

Personal and professional development

In spite of the numerous shortcomings, both the quantitative and the qualitative data show that the respondents highly valued the DE programme, on the whole. All of them agreed that the programme helped them in both personal and professional development. Most of them wrote that the programme made them feel much more confident and secure in their jobs. One wrote that the programme made him more disciplined and kept him occupied.

Feedback

This is the area where the respondents made a lot of hue and cry:

- *Most of the assignments are given back only during the residential time whereby our marks are already calculated and we cannot make any changes. Feedback is rarely written on the assignments.*
- *I would be very glad if the concerned tutors could return the assignments with the marks and the detailed feedbacks in time.*
- *Corrected assignments should be sent to the schools with the feedback for improvement.*
- *Generally only the marks are reflected on the assignments and no positive or negative comments are reflected.*
- *Tutors are overused, therefore less time to provide feedback*
- *Timely feedback is very poor.*

And many more comments on the similar note.

Discussion

Context

As explained in the NIE (2004), study, the curriculum for the Bed distance education programme is the same as the one for the internal B.Eds, the reason given being the need to maintain the same standard. However, this could be one main reason why the majority of the respondents expressed that the course was easy and not very challenging. The fact is, there is a vast difference between the internal and the

distance students, mainly in the areas of their experiences and needs. The internal students have one year of teaching experience before they enroll for this course, but the distance students would have had at least five years of teaching experience before their enrolment in the programme. Therefore, for the internal candidates the present curriculum is fine because they need an equal amount of methodology and content, whereas, the distance mode students need a larger portion of content and lesser methodology, and they did express this in their responses. Shuell (cited in Biggs, 1999) says that if the students are to learn desired outcomes in a reasonably effective manner then the teacher's fundamental task is to get them to engage in learning activities that are likely to result in their achieving those outcomes. Therefore, not only do we have to design activities suitable for the outcomes, with some of the modules, we may have to redesign the outcomes too, according to the need of the learner.

One respondent writes - *'EDN 130 is just a repetition of what we have already learnt in our previous training and the assignments are just a big burden; they are not challenging'*. Some of the modules offered to the internal students may not be required for the distance students. And to strike a balance between the two, these modules can be replaced by something more useful and relevant for the distance learners or they can have fewer modules which can be dealt with in depth. When the focus is more on the quality and not the quantity of work, the programme might be able to cater to their deeper learning. After all the fact of the matter is, no single theoretical base provides complete prescriptive principles for the entire design process of any programme. Furthermore, much of the current debate concerning teaching and learning in higher education discusses the advantages of moving from a didactic concept of teaching to a more mutual respect and collaborative reflection-based teaching for improving both teaching and learning (Ramsden, 1992a, 1992b; Trigwell&Prosser, 1999) cited in (Smyth 2003).

Rowntree, (2000:online) rightly say that a logical starting point when beginning to design a course, particularly for distance learners, is to ask what we know about our learners, especially what are their needs, expectations and conditions; otherwise, we cannot be sure that the distance education course will match what they need for successful learning. All our distance learners are adults and the theorists of adult learning believe that there are certain forms of reasoning, thinking and judging in adult life that are qualitatively different from those characteristics of adolescence and childhood (Brookfield 1995). This awareness is very essential for anyone who is in the process of designing distance courses or materials. Knowles (cited in Brookfield, 1995) says that to an adult, their experience is who they are, thus, if we fail to recognize or ignore their experiences, this would mean the same as ignoring them as a person. Therefore, it is always helpful to start with the learners' experience rather than with an educator's predefined agenda. Such an agenda may serve the purpose for regular students, however, the nature of the distance students' demand is something more. Therefore, as recommended by NIE (2004), the existing modules and their contents need to be revisited. A needs analysis survey would serve a good purpose in this area, particularly to find out the needs of the distance students so that appropriate and challenging contents can be offered to them.

Input

Learning Materials

'Although efforts have been made to make the learning materials as self-instructional as possible, design and development of learning materials have so far been a single-person job', (NIE 2004:11). The good side of this is the attempt to move away from the inherent danger of quickly adopting materials that were written elsewhere in order to avoid some of the developmental costs. Nyondo (2000) too recommended that

materials be developed internally in the country, or, better still, within the institution providing the courses. Course writers usually have their own teaching and learning philosophies and beliefs that might be at odds with local realities. However, the fact is that course development and design are basically people-oriented activities that call for creativity and innovation. Therefore, one or two people working at it might not do justice to the whole work. Sherry (1996:350) quoted that "many people must collaborate to produce and disseminate quality distance education materials". We need editors, technicians, media specialists, focal persons, lecturers, designers etc. because the development of high quality instructional materials calls upon a wide range of expertise that is not normally found in the repertoire of skills of any one person (Naidu 1994).

Nyondo (2000) rightly says that course development and design are not just one person's job, it's more a people-oriented activity. At present, all the modules in the programme are made by individuals who offer the module. Thus, in future more people should collaborate in designing these books; people who have ideas on how to go about it.

For most of our distance learners in Bhutan, the materials provided from the Institute are the only resources that they have in enhancing their learning, therefore, the quality of these materials cannot be compromised. Ramsden (2003) asserts that an effective course will have its materials arranged in such a way that the issues addressed generate confidence and interest in students and this confidence in one's ability to learn a subject is essential for success. If possible, each module should have a study guide which will direct the course activities before, during and after instructions; this document can provide students with a level of orientation to the distance education experience. Most importantly, this book should make the learners aware of the seriousness of plagiarism and how to avoid it.

A syllabus containing logistics, course policies instructional activities, assessment information and some additional information such as samples of projects or assignments should be made. This book can serve as an organizing document for the entire course. There should also be a resource book, where useful reference materials are included; such a book will be very useful to the distance learners in Bhutan because of the remoteness of the places that they work in.

The aims and the objectives of the modules should be very clear to both the teacher and the learner. The learning activities should be very much connected to the aims and objectives set. Moore et al (2002) add that the distance materials should read more like tutorial than a lecture. We must also avoid cramming up the materials with too much information, rather we should strive to include less and then ensure that students learn that smaller part properly.

Just like any other kind of course development, course development for distance education requires thorough planning and organization. Because of the nature of the distance education programme and the separation of the teacher from the students, it is important for the course designers to think visually. By visuals, I mean the inclusion of diagrams, charts or lists of ideas and concepts in the reading materials because these often make it easier to understand complex ideas. Heinich et al (2002) as cited in Simonson (2003) that taking time to develop good visuals will enhance the quality of the learning experience. Some other ways of making the materials user-friendly is by keeping plenty of 'white space' to enhance readability as well as for making notes; appropriate font size will be helpful, and using coloured papers for

separating topics was found to be helpful too. Basically, what successful learning is to describe successful interaction between learners, context and the instruction?

The discussions above reinforce the necessity of having a set of books for each of the units. More so, for our kind of learners for whom these will be their only references, each unit should have a well prepared Study Guide, a Syllabus and a sustainable Resource Book. Some of candidates suggested that the NIE could organize a reference book sale during the winter residential period by communicating with the book-sellers nearby. This would not be a difficult thing to do as there are many book-sellers across the border (NIE Samtse is near the Indian border).

Computer mediated education has grown from non-existent to near ubiquity in the final decade of the 20th century in the West and its ripples have definitely spread all over the world and touched places like Bhutan. However, the geographic distribution of the population introduces factors that have a strong influence on the practice of distance education in the country. Since majority of the population is rural-based, we cannot take advantage of most of the benefits brought about by advances in educational and telecommunications technologies. Access to modern technology is limited or non-existent in rural areas. And at the moment, the government cannot afford to put educational, health and other necessary facilities in every rural community. Therefore, as commented on by the respondents, the on-line programme should not be compulsory for all. Those who have access to this facility can choose to use it and for the others, there should be adequate print materials which will help them in their work.

Some respondents recommended the need to recruit competent lecturers –

Identify more competent tutors rather than just fill the vacancies for name sakes.

Inexperienced tutors picked from schools are not much of help.

This means the tutors for the distance education programmes cannot be just anybody; they should be someone well trained for this purpose. Therefore, some kind of training for these tutors particularly in this area has to be arranged.

Support

Most of our distance learners are spread out across the remote pockets of the country, therefore, support in any form is a dire need for these learners. What do we mean by learner-support? Wright (1991:63) describes learner-support as “the requisite student services essential to insure the successful delivery of learning experiences at a distance”. Thorpe (1987) describes learner-support as ‘the elements of an open learning system capable of responding to a particular individual learner’. Hui(1989) describes learner-support as the support incorporated within the self-learning materials, the learning system and assignment marking. Robinson (1995:225) writes “There is enormous variation in learner-support systems in open and distance learning”. Commonalities lie in similar goals such as ‘providing interactivity and dialogue’, ‘personalizing a mass system’, ‘mediating between learner and the materials, the institution and the learners’, ‘institutional responsiveness to individuals’, ‘differentiation of support services according to different group and individual needs, but with diverse ways of achieving them.

Therefore, it is generally acknowledged that there are different kinds of learner-support systems. However, for this study, the focus was mainly on the tutor and the library support of the programme. These are the only two supports available at the moment. On the whole, the respondents did not have many complaints about the two support systems. However, in the qualitative data, a few have expressed the problem

of the library books being with one person for a long time. Therefore, for the better functioning of the library, these much-demanded books should be kept in reduced circulation so that everyone gets a chance to read them. As is done in many other universities, such books can be called back at short notice. The distance education students have access to the library books only during the residential period due to the limited books which have to be used by the regular students too.

Process

Assessment and Feedback

Heywood, (1989) rightly says, that assessment is an integral part of curriculum and instructional design, not an after thought, as is so often the case...Curriculum design, assessment and evaluation begin at the same point. Therefore, what is an effective assessment?

Angelo (1995) described assessment as an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. He further added that it involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectation and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain and improve performance. Ramsden (1992), on a similar line, briefly described assessment in practice as having two functions: to tell us whether or not the learning has been successful and in conveying to students what we want them to learn.

An effective assessment should involve fostering students involvement, positive feedback on the performance, linking assessment to learning, learning from the students, deploying a variety of methods focusing on validity and planning assessment to achieve educational and not administrative values (Ramsden 2003). These general points about the importance of assessment apply whatever the mode of study.

Newmann and Wehlage and their colleagues found that some of the most successful schools had teachers and administrators who focused on their student work (through assessment) and then changed their instructional practice accordingly to get better results and they did all of this on a continuing basis (Newmann & Wehlage, cited in Fullan 2000).

In a distance teaching institution, assessment has, if anything, an even sharper focus on the students' experience, given the physical distance between students and between students and the accrediting institution. However, as commented on by some of the respondents '*...tutors might like to emphasize more on the quality rather than the quantity of assignments*'. NIE (2004:12) too agree with this: '*In the end what counts may be how well students do it and not how many they have to do*'.

This means the number of assignments in each unit need to be looked at more carefully. There should be a balance in the number of assignments given by each unit. By the nature of the comment given above, it would be also necessary to examine the usefulness of the assignments given.

The elements of good assessment like the elements of good teaching are applicable to any institutional setting regardless of where the participants are. However, some issues of assessment apply especially to the distance learners. Many of these students have been away from the regular classroom for several years, they work full-time and most of them have families to care for as well as social or community obligations. For these students, some kind of flexibility in the assessment may be of great help. For instance, we really cannot penalize the distance learners like the regular ones or demand the same number of readings from them because of the remoteness of the

places that they work in. They could negotiate the submission time over a longer period of time.

The student experience that through doing assignments, they discover what they know and can do, and also where their knowledge or abilities are weaker. The assignment task may stimulate them to revisit earlier study and motivate them to engage in greater depth with the subject-matter of their course (Godsell&Miers 1994). It is not until students start to work on their assignment and the tutors give their feedback that they know whether or what they have learned from their studies. Thus, effort has to be made in giving the much-needed feedback as soon as possible. It follows from this that we should give feedback no less attention than the design of teaching and learning environments.

Assignments are formative in that feedback from a tutor influences future course of study and summative in that the grades count towards the final credit. Grading alone is not an adequate response to student assignments, and the purpose of comments is to create a written dialogue with the student, as well as to correct and amplify the student's answer. One of the purposes of continuous assessment has always been to assist in the development of the student's learning, and not solely to grade what has been achieved (Roberts 1996).

The feedback from a tutor is, therefore, vital both because it comes from an authority figure and counts towards their achievement of a credit, and because they have few such opportunities to check understanding and have comments on their progress generally. Feedback is crucial not only from a constructivist perspective on student learning but also in relation to student motivation. Many students begin study with some doubt about their capacity to achieve a credit. A poor grade on the first assignment can be enough to lead them to decide to drop out. Furthermore, without connectivity, distance learning degenerates into the old correspondence course model of independent study. The student becomes autonomous and isolated, procrastinates, and eventually drops out (Sherry, 1996) Therefore, effective distance education should not be an independent and isolated form of learning- it should approach Keegan's ideal of an authentic learning experience.

Motivation is also affected by the quality of the comments received from a tutor. Therefore, encouraging timely feedback from tutors goes a long way in enhancing the interest of the distance learners.

Product

It goes without saying that the context, input and the process aspects of a programme have a direct or indirect effect on the product aspect. In Quimbo's findings, these issues were quite evident. However, in this study, the scores of the respondents on the whole were neither outstanding nor too bad. From the data collected above, we can see that the respondents can do much better if some changes take place according to the recommendations made. In the qualitative data, quite a few of them have suggested 50% examinations and 50% assignments for all the units, because at present some modules are purely assessed by the assignments and some modules have a 40: 60 assignments and exams respectively. Therefore, the general observation was that the ones with no examinations did better than the ones who had examinations and the authenticity of the assignments was also questioned.

Recommendations

“Since education is essentially an applied field, research in education should yield some recommendations for alterations in education (Tuckman1972:311).

In the light of the feedback from the respondents -

- There is a need to revise and modify the curriculum and the modules for the distance learners, in terms of their content as well as in their quality. Some not very useful modules can be replaced with some more useful ones. The design of the modules is another thing that the tutors will have to sit together and discuss so that they become more reader-friendly and self-instructional. Provision must be made for continually updating courses which depend on volatile information, to keep the subject-matter current and relevant (Porter 1994cited in Sherry 1996).
- For each unit, a Study Guide, A syllabus and a Resource Book would complement the programme and sustain the learners.
- Before the revision, a ‘needs analysis survey’ would supplement in the design and content of the modules.
- A 50:50 examinations and assignment for all the modules was a recommendation made by many of the respondents.
- Flexibility in the assignment submission dates.
- On-line programmes be optional.
- The library to locate the most used references and allow only short loans so that a book needed by many may not remain a long time with one person.
- Uniformity in the number of assignments for each module with a focus on quality and not quantity would encourage deeper learning. Also the usefulness of the assignments to the learners be examined before assigning it.
- Possibilities of organizing reference book sales during the residential period. NIE could arrange it with the bookshops across the border.

NIE (2004) rightly comments that without trained full-time personnel to manage the programme, any effort made may be short-sighted. In the midst of the institutional rush toward distance education that began in the 1950s, and has accelerated towards the 21st century, some crucial issues are in danger of being forgotten. That’s the formal opportunities for faculty and professionals in higher educational institutions to develop knowledge and skills in distance education, and particularly in the management of distance education. Therefore, as asserted by Bernath (2000), there are two crucial needs which are –

1. The need for faculty and administrators of the distance education programme in to develop a broader perspective of the general foundations of distance education and learn critical knowledge and skills such as the actual process of developing, delivering, supporting, guiding, evaluating and administering distance education courses and programmes.
2. The need for a global perspective among distance education faculty and administrators so that they can benefit from the knowledge of how other institutions approach distance education and solve problems, particularly in cross-cultural contexts, because of the fact that distance education is increasingly becoming a world-wide enterprise occurring in a wide variety of ways, and using a variety of levels of technology.

Distance teaching is conducted by the academic staff who also have a full on-campus teaching load along with other demands of research and administrative responsibilities. Therefore, the teaching staff has very little time available to prepare or improve the distance education courses or the learning materials. Thus, if something has to happen for the betterment of the programme, the tutors involved in the programme should be allotted fewer classes with the internal B.Eds; their workload

with the distance programme should be balanced along with their internal workload. If this cannot be done, then there should be some sort of an incentive for these tutors who have extra load to shoulder so that they will shoulder it well. Furthermore, they would be able to provide timely feedback to the students.

However, in some studies on the relationship between extrinsic reward as a way of instructional support and faculty motivation, it was reported that the faculty motivation toward teaching at a distance seemed to rely basically on the activities associated with the act of teaching per se, rather than on extrinsic or monetary rewards (Peirpoint & Hartnett, 1988; Taylor & White, 1991; Wolcott, 1999, cited in Marcus 2004). However, it does not mean that the faculty does not appreciate the extrinsic reward at all. In fact, Dillion (1989) and Jackson (1994) cited in Marcus 2004) claim that the incentives provided by higher education institutions are critical to motivate faculty members in distance education.

Nyondo (2000) asserts that to have an effective learner-support system, it is imperative that the professionals involved in the design of the system do understand their learners. To be able to do this, they must be familiar with the following:

1. Learning/study habits: how much time are the students likely to assign to their studies? For example, some of our students are still expected to provide for the families at the same time as they are engaged in studies. The majority of our students are rural-based. And their daily provisions come from their on the land. The urban-based students may have other distraction.
2. Age and gender of the learners are also an important consideration. For example, younger students are more likely to be more amenable to use of modern technology than their older counterparts. A female student may be expected to do house chores more than her male counterpart. Regional differences and expectations do exist.
3. Home environment: do they have facilities for study at home? A student might have no room for private study. Results of a study on home environment are discussed later. Are the family members supportive? What is the community's attitude to education? Normally, at the time of the design of the materials, the course writers have only a general knowledge of the type of student that is expected in the course. They have to rely on their experience.
4. Availability of local support: are there e.g. peers, relatives that are educated and can render assistance? Is there a library in the community? Urban-based students may have a library nearby, but it is not possible for our rural-based students to use it. For these students, the only support that they are likely to have is that which is embedded within the learning materials.
5. Geography: how widely spread is the student population? Is it possible and worthwhile to organize local centers of study? What facilities do they have in the local communities? Students, for example, are generally expected to telephone the tutors for assistance. The urban-based students are likely to have access to a payphone. But students in the rural areas may have to travel as much as 15-20 kilometers to nearest Post Office, the most likely place to have a payphone. An understanding of these circumstances will lead to more realistic plans for the support of student learning.
6. Other socio-economic factors that come to mind are cultural idiosyncrasies. For example, it is generally regarded as rude to question authority figures. This impacts on the learning of the (distance) students. Learning materials are thus regarded as absolute truth.

Implications for further study

Besides the NIE (2004) study, this is the second study done in Bhutan on a distance education programme. Consequently, there are many implications for further study. The following are a few of the areas which may be manageable, and more importantly, useful:

1. The BCIT (2002) had looked into some areas like the student characteristics, student motivation and tutorials in their study. Similar areas can be studied with the Bhutanese distance students.
2. Although distance education has been seen as promising by some, in the eyes of others, it has been seen as something less than education typically received on a university or college campus: "They are the stepchildren of college courses, good for community relations but not considered part of mainstream higher education" (Turner, 1989 cited in Flowers et al 2004). Using the same CIPP Model, a comparative study could be carried out between the B.Ed distance students and the B.Ed regular students.
3. A study could be even focused on the performance of the rural distance learners compared to the urban distance learners.
4. In the more developed countries, they use a lot of media in the teaching and learning process, especially in the distance education programmes. On the contrary, the distance programme in Bhutan is very much print-based. Comparing the two would show the vision for the distance education programmes in the near future.

It is hoped that other studies will follow to add to the better understanding and enhancement of the distance programmes in Bhutan.

Conclusion

It is very essential for the evaluator to understand that evaluation is not merely accumulation and summarization of data that is clearly relevant for decision-making, although there are still evaluation theorists who take that to be its definition (Scriven 1991). Scriven says that evaluation has two arms- only one of them is engaged in the data gathering, while the other collects, clarifies and verifies relevant values and standards. He says even with two arms in place, evaluators need a head to coordinate them, and that requires not only deciding on the instructions that have to be given to the arms so that they bring in the right package of elements, but it also requires solving the problem of how to combine what the arms deliver in some justified and systematic way. I now clearly understand what he meant by that, for an evaluation of anything is definitely a long step beyond data gathering and careful thought has to be given to its whole procedure.

Thorpe (1993:3) says that "Responsiveness" is one of the determining characteristics of good teaching, but it is only possible if we first have information about the learner and the learning to which we can respond. So is the case in trying to improve a programme, unless we examine the existing situation of the programme, we cannot be sure of the particular areas which require special attention. And for doing this, the study could not have used any better model than Stufflebeam's CIPP Model which does not leave any stone unturned where programme evaluation is concerned. This model guided me well through my studies. It helped me in focusing on the pertinent areas (the context, the input, the process and the product) of the programme. It makes no special provision for formulating and testing hypothesis because it provides information on context, input, process and product and gives a rich array of background data against which to interpret and understand outcomes (Stufflebeam, 1993)).

I can already foresee the use of this model in many other areas in my profession; for instance, I can use it to evaluate a specific module that I offer to the trainees or for many such manageable studies which will enhance the quality of my teaching and my students' learning.

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Quality of Bhutanese Education: A Survey Report

*Kinga Dakpa*³

Introduction and Rationale

It has been quite a while since the quality of education has been the topic of discussion among the general public and even in the Cabinet and the National Assembly. Some are concerned that the standard has declined in the last two decades or so while others believe that the overall standard has actually improved. However, neither of the schools of thoughts can provide sufficient and convincing evidence or proof to support their views. It is, in fact, difficult for any one to make a generalization on standards or quality, especially with regard to education without first having the term “standard” or “quality” adequately defined and qualified. When we talk of the quality of education, do we refer to the quality of our students’ or graduates’ literacy skills – speaking, reading, writing and arithmetic? If yes, are these all that are there in education? Or do we refer to something broader, something beyond literacy and

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numeric skills, such as wholesome education? Nevertheless, those working in the Ministry of Education have been lately attacked by a barrage of questions. Perhaps, without a least suspicion that quality of education can be argued only within the limits of definition and validation of the terms used in the argument. The Bhutanese educators and the so called “the Bhutanese educationists” could neither sufficiently defend themselves. In essence, the argument here is that generalizations such as the standard or quality of education having improved or down done, can be made only on the basis of standard research findings. Such sweeping statements must be based on concrete results of the analysis of policy documents, curriculum, pedagogy, teacher and teacher training quality, infrastructure and facilities, school effectiveness and the comparative study of the end-product (the students and the graduates of the last five to 10 years).

Objective

This simple survey was intended at finding out how the educated lot (with the academic qualification of at least Class VIII and above), working in various occupational and vocational bands under Samtse Dzongkhag, felt about the quality of education in Bhutan. The questionnaire was targeted only at the “educated” population so that the questionnaire was read with understanding and appropriate responses provided in writing. The section of population who are “30 years and above” were chosen so that both the past and present states of education in Bhutan are within their purview.

The primary objective of the survey was to discern their opinions as to whether ***the quality of education in Bhutan in the last 10 – 15 years had declined or not.*** It was also to, further, extract from them the evidences or instances to support their points of view. The survey was also intended to find out some of the factors that may have contributed to the decline in quality.

Limitations and ethics

The scope of this survey is limited to finding the views of the educated population (30 years and above) of Samtse Dzongkhag with regard to the current quality of education in comparison to that of 10 to 20 years back. This survey does not in any way attempt to generalize the opinion of the total population of Bhutan on the issue of the quality of education in the country. The views and the opinions expressed in this report are, therefore, the true versions from the respondents the confidentiality of whose identifies shall be respected and kept confidential. Further, the views and opinions expressed by them, and reproduced in this report, are not intended to be used to speculate on the true state of education in Bhutan.

Respondent Sample

Questionnaires were sent out to 116 persons in the age range of 30 years and above with a minimum academic qualification of Class VIII in the various occupational strata within Samtse Dzongkhag. Out of 116, only 70 (60.34%) questionnaires fully completed were received back. The fairly poor turn-over could be attributed to poor communication facilities between here and the locations where the questionnaires were sent out to. Of the 70 respondents, 52 were males and 18 females.

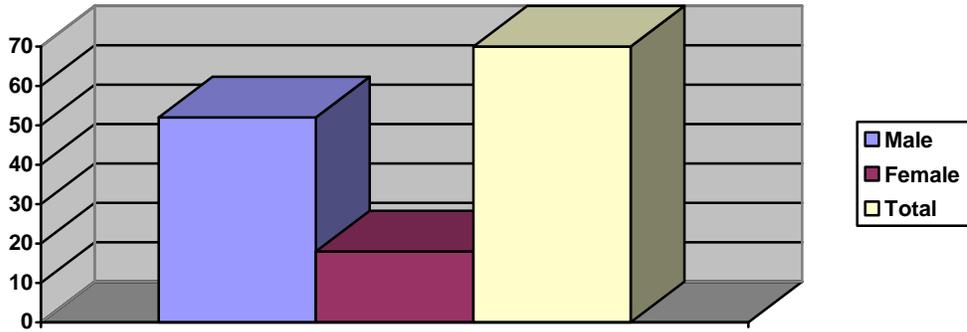


Figure 1: Number of respondents by gender

Respondent Qualifications

The respondents comprised of 9 Master Degree holders, 9 Post Graduates, 16 Bachelor Degree holders, 18 Diplomas, 7 Class XII, 8 Class X and 3 Class VII.

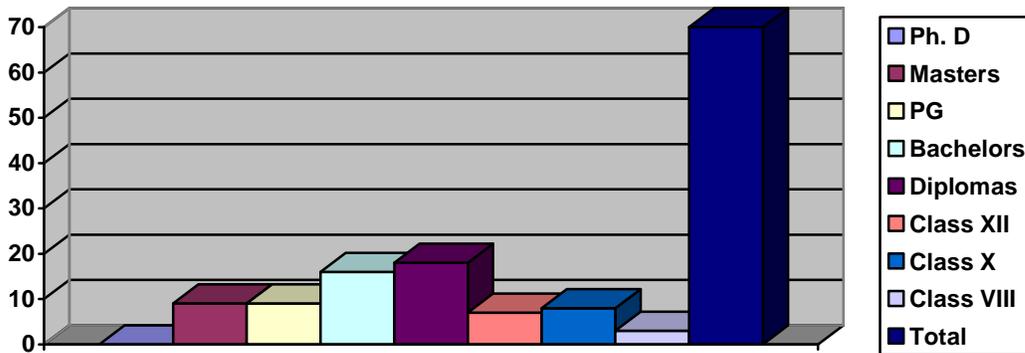


Figure 2: Number of respondents by qualification

Respondent Occupations

The maximum number of participants were from the Ministry of Education (25), followed by those from autonomous agencies (13) and 8 from Armed Forces, 7 from the Ministry of Finance, 6 from the Ministry of Agriculture, 6 also from the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, 4 represented the business community and only one was from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

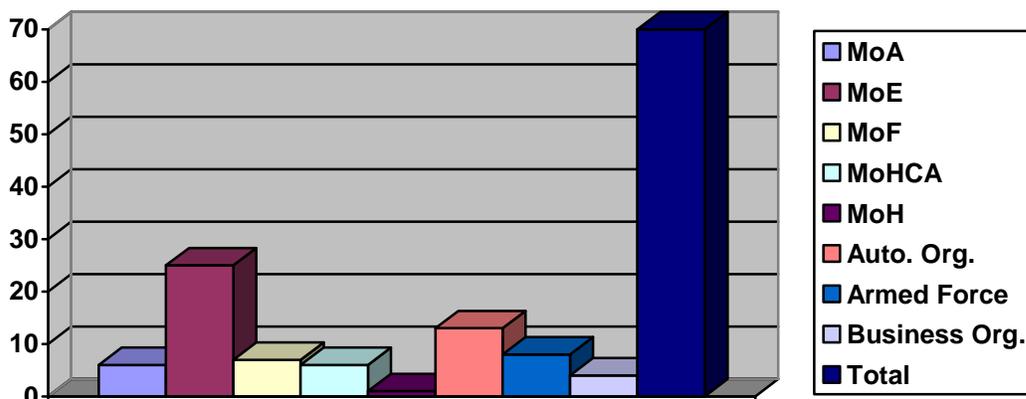


Figure 3: Number of respondents by occupation (Ministry)

Responses

The respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement that the standard of education has declined in the last 10 to 15 years. In response to this question, 18 (25.71%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 35 (50 %) agreed, 5 (7.14%) did not know, 9 (12.86%) disagreed and 3 (4.29%) strongly disagreed with the statement.

Out of 25 respondents working in the Ministry of Education, 6 (24%) strongly agreed with the statement, 13 (52%) agreed, 2 did not know, 3 disagreed and one strongly disagreed. Of the total 6 who represented the Ministry of Agriculture, 50 % (3) strongly felt that there had been a decline, while one of them just agreed, one did not know and one strongly disagreed. Six out seven in the Ministry of Finance also felt that the quality had gone down and one did not know. However, almost 67% of the 7 staff who represented the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs disagreed with the 92 % of the respondents representing the autonomous agencies who believed that it had gone down. Those representing the armed forces (87.5% of them) agreed with the respondents from the autonomous agencies while the business community were neutral.

In general, 53 (75.71%) believed that there had been a decline (18 of them strongly) against 12 (17.14%) who did not agree (3 of them strongly).

Therefore, the majority of the educated people working under Samtse Dzongkhag were concerned that the quality of education in Bhutan had gone down as compared to that of 10 to 15 years ago.

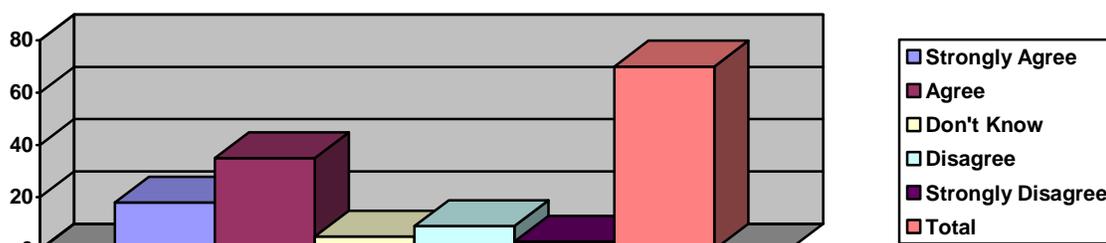


Figure 4.1: Number of responses by choice

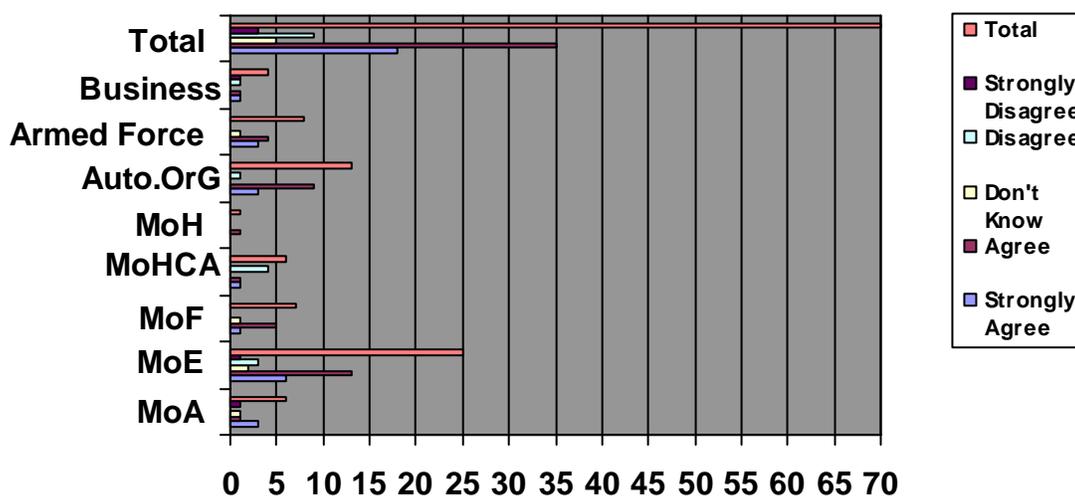


Figure 4.2: Number of responses by choice and occupation

	MoA	MoE	MoF	MoHCA	MoH	Auto. Org.	Armed F	Business	Total Res.
Strongly agree	3	6	1	1		3	3	1	18
Agree	1	13	5	1	1	9	4	1	35
Don't Know	1	2	1				1		5
Disagree		3		4		1		1	9
Strongly disagree	1	1						1	3
Total Res.	6	25	7	6	1	13	8	4	70

Figure 4.3: Chart of no. of responses by choice and occupation

The Decline in the Quality of Education

Evidences

The 75.71 % of the respondents who believed that the quality of education had declined gave various reasons to support their views. These were some of the reasons they gave:

1. Standard of primary education

They felt that the overall quality of the education provided at primary levels (PP to Class VI) was poor. For instance, most of the students in Class II or even III could not read or write alphabets properly. Some children studying in Class IV/V were not able to write their own names correctly. Some of the respondents pointed out that while they were in Class III, they were able to read story books and could write letters both in Dzongkha and English and some of them claimed to have written official documents such as agreements while they were

in Class V. Whereas, the students at the same class levels now could not read or write simple sentences correctly. The students now were not interested to read and learn beyond the confines of the classrooms. They have become narrow-minded and rigid in their beliefs. As a consequence of that, their reasoning abilities and broader concept on subjects had become constricted due to the philosophy of “learn and read what teachers teach,” in the exact words of one of the respondents. Some of the educated parents were concerned that their children studying in primary schools never accepted corrections even if the teachers were wrong.

2. Standards of Secondary and Tertiary Education

With regard to secondary and tertiary education, the respondents who believed the quality had declined felt that compared that of 15 to 20 years ago, the standard now had “markedly gone low”. The present graduates did not have 50% of the standard they should have at their level of qualification. The present secondary school students and graduates were superficial in their knowledge – they knew a little bit of everything without any depth – corresponding to being “Jack of everything and a master of none”. There was quantity but no quality in education now. Class XII students could not express themselves properly either in written or spoken language. Majority of the students in higher classes and even graduates were poor in IQ, lacked analytical capabilities and general knowledge and were low in general intellectual energy. The students now were very poor not only in science and mathematics but also in the English language and grammar. Students in Class X/XII could not speak fluently or write anything correctly. Even the graduates faced difficulties in writing sentences properly. As they lacked analytical, reasoning, intellectual, physical and even moral skills and values, they were not able to do well in public competitions.

The Decline in the Quality of Education

Factors

Those who believed that the quality of education had deteriorated identified the following as the factors:

1. Policy and System

Among the 53 (out of 70) respondents who said the quality had declined, 20 (37.74%) of them pointed at NAPE system as the factor that had contributed to the decline. They supported their opinions by stating that the system, though excellent in principle and philosophy, was out of place in Bhutan due to huge class sizes, lack of resources and unprepared teachers. The NAPE system could not be implemented effectively in the field as the teachers were not properly trained and inadequately prepared in the system. This had been aggravated by the large number of students in the classrooms where individual attention required by the system was not possible. Further, primary schools in Bhutan have not had the required equipment, facilities and resources which were paramount to the success of such a system. They added that the adoption of such western systems without testing their applicability had been one of the main setbacks of the education system in Bhutan.

Similarly, frequent changes in the overall education policies had resulted in the lack of focus, lack of co-ordination and created confusions in the system and

added to the deterioration. There had always been confusion over prioritization. Where was the primary focus – on academics or non-academics? In the pretext of wholesome education, the schools had been burdened with all kinds of requirements from various divisions that derailed the school academic plans, overloaded students and teachers with daily activities and responsibilities taking away teaching and study time – after all that and at the end of the day, the student academic transcripts were the only ticket to the town. Some indicated that the national goal, *education for all (up to class X)*, was predictably in contrast with the quality education. Which was the focus again? Quantity or quality? But practically in pursuing the quantity – education for all – quality had been compromised. And in the same pursuit, there had been frantic and ad-hoc up-gradations of schools without proper infra-structural development, facilities and properly trained teachers in place.

A few respondents mentioned such factors as inequitable and low incentives and low motivation of teachers. Placement, training, promotion and transfers of teachers were not transparent and equitable. Teachers placed in urban and remote places were mostly stuck in the same place for years or for life in some cases. Until recently, most teachers in the remote areas did not get training opportunities and timely promotions as compared to those in the urban areas due to poor communication facilities. Other reasons such as limited in-service programme for teachers and lack of opportunities for exposure for the majority of the teachers have also been cited. Yet some other respondents pointed out the abolition of pre-primary classes (nursery, LKG and UKG), lifting of boarding facilities (resulting in no guided studies), and also abolition of corporal punishment from the school system, etc. that had to do with the quality of education in Bhutan.

Some mentioned that the Ministry of Education lacked a system ensuring the right person for the right job.

2. Curriculum

School Curriculum had been thought as another major factor for the downfall in the quality of Bhutanese Education. Some 13 respondents believed that the curriculum was “too tentative” – frequent changes brought about in the text-books had made the curriculum weak and faltering. Low standard of language syllabus, teaching of words before alphabets (“Apple” before “A”), doing away with the teaching of English Grammar, absence of graded readers and introduction of Druk English Series in the primary and junior levels had weakened the foundation of education in the students.

The gap in the syllabus between Class VII/VIII and IX/X caused by, for instance, the introduction of Integrated Science (for VII/VIII) and huge syllabus against incompetent (content-wise) teachers had also been factors. The removal of Shakespeare from the curriculum and even the incompetence of curriculum officers had been pointed out by some respondents.

3. Assessment and evaluation

The defects in the assessment and evaluation processes had also been pointed out as the contributors to the decline. These included change of ICSE/ISC board to BBED board, introduction of Continuous Assessment and easy promotion system up to Class X. The testing and examination system such as

multiple choice questions have encouraged students to gamble instead of studying and the removal of class tests and monthly tests had made students incompetent in their studies.

4. Resources and facilities

One of the greatest challenges that the Bhutanese education had been grappling with was the teacher shortage against heavy student enrollments, as rightly pointed out by a significant number of participants. Teacher shortages were felt at all levels of schools and more acutely in remote areas. Educational facilities at the disposal of the schools were incongruent with the heavy tasks of delivering quality education. Many of the respondents cited that class sizes in most of the Bhutanese schools were unmanageable to address quality. Others indicated that inadequacy or lack of teaching aids and resources had hampered the quality.

Some, however, implied that distribution of resources (including teacher supply) among the schools of the same level were inequitable.

5. Teachers and Teacher Training

The factors related to teachers, teacher training and teaching had also been strongly cited. In this section, quality and qualification of teachers have been questioned by a significant proportion of the respondents. Teachers were blamed as unqualified, incompetent in teaching, not adequately trained, young and immature, weak in professionalism, self-discipline and dedication, lacking in care and attention for students. Teachers were also blamed for lacking cooperation among themselves, being adamant and rigid in attitudes and irresponsible for student failures and incapable of dealing with child psychology. The teacher training system had also been indicted for ineffective training of teachers including a weakness in the selection of training candidates. In many cases, the decline had also been caused due to lack of strong head teachers in the school system.

6. School system

Another significant proportion of the respondents had the school systems to be blamed for the deterioration of quality. These included the adoption of liberalized attitudes by teachers towards their students – schools were in particular blamed for not using corporal punishment to discipline students. Such opinions have been contradicted by some others by pointing out that teachers were strict and insensitive to students' needs and feelings, sometimes to the extent that teachers caused fear in the students impairing their learning. Similarly, they expressed conflicting views on homework and assignments. Some felt that students had been given too much homework and assignments resulting in the lack of study time, while some others stated that students were not given enough assignments. Schools and teachers were also responsible for spoon-feeding the students and getting them ready only for examinations instead of inculcating positive attitudes and enthusiasm towards learning. According to the respondents, admission of underage children and monotonous class-teacher system in the primary schools were other reasons for poor quality. The frequent change of subject teachers and non-completion of syllabus were also mentioned. They also felt that there was too much teacher movement during the academic session.

7. Social and Environmental Factors

Some respondents expressed their concerns about the modern distractions that were increasing every year that impeded the proper development of students both mentally and physically. Other social and adolescence associated problems affected the smooth education of the children today. In the face of such problems, most of the parents in Bhutan were incapable of providing appropriate care and guidance to their children. Some pointed out that for many children the unfriendly atmosphere at home such as broken families, parents' indulgence in gambling, drinking and fights, lack of parental care and attention to their children had increasingly affected the quality of education in Bhutan in the last one or two decades.

The Improvement in the Quality of Education

Evidences

Those who believe that there was an improvement in the quality of Bhutanese education, however, propounded the following points of argument:

The current students and graduates were better all-round educated as they had more and variety of skills (wholesome education) compared to their counterparts 10 to 15 years ago. Students and graduates of those days had nothing more than a "bookish knowledge". They felt that the standard in English and Dzongkha had actually improved. They also believed that students and graduates were now more dynamic and were capable of challenging their teachers/lecturers and even the system both academically and intellectually. Besides, production of graduates had increased manifold, and the increased number of students at the higher levels winning scholarships despite heavier competition and raised cut-off points indicated improvement. Further, local authors and writers were increasing year by year and were mostly the products of the modern education system.

Some of the respondents argued that many people misconstrued the concept of standard or quality. They said that "standard" or "quality" had been used by people so loosely that it had been equated with attributes such as communication skills. This was on such unfounded basis that they were (those who believed that the quality had declined) making generalizations which were absolutely wrong.

Improvement in the Quality of Education

Factors

Those respondents who believed that there was an improvement in the quality of education said that the adult population who did not have access to education at all were now given basic functional education through non-formal systems such as NFE (quality or quantity?). The quality in general had improved due to the recognition of the value of education by parents. The parents were now concerned about the education of their children and put in more care and efforts. These respondents also liked to believe that the number of qualified teachers had now increased. They also seemed to find the relationships and cooperation between teachers and students more congenial and professional now. The present teachers and parents were also found to

be more supportive and attentive to the students. Above all, educational facilities and resources had increased manifolds as compared to a decade or two ago. In view of the above, the quality of education, as they believed, had improved now.

Conclusion and Recommendations

While it may not be of standard and exhaustive in its field, this simple survey, in itself, could be significant in that some sort of an investigation into the state of Bhutanese education is being attempted, probably for the first time. This survey also indicated how much aware and concerned our people are with regard to the education of their children. The simple study, in essence, expresses the views and opinions of the respondents with specific reference to the issues that had been prompted by the questionnaire. The data/ information provided by this survey could serve as the basis for further and larger studies that are urgently required to be carried out in the sector.

Most of the factors pointed out by the respondents, in themselves, were recommendations that the concerned stack-holders should follow up for addressing the issues. The key categories of factors presented in this report require further investigation to come to minute details to enable the education policy-makers, planners and programme implementers to retune their time, energy and resources.

Postscript:

I wish to sincerely thank the respondents for their invaluable contributions by way of freely and frankly expressing their views in the questionnaire. My gratitude should also go to some of my friends who helped me distribute and collect the questionnaire back. Their contributions, I hope, shall go long way in shaping the future of the Bhutanese Education System.

Appendix-I

Survey Questionnaire

1. Your gender: Male [] Female []. (Please tick the appropriate response)
2. Your age (in completed years):
3. Your qualification (Please tick one of the most appropriate responses given below):
Ph.D [] Master [] Post Graduate [] Bachelor []
Diploma [] Class XII [] Class X [] Class VIII [].
4. Your occupation:
 - 4.1 Title of your current position/ business:
 - 4.2 Name of your Department/ Organization/ Business:
 - 4.3 Name of your Ministry:

5. The quality/ standard of education in Bhutan has gone down in the last 10 - 15 years. (Please tick the most appropriate response from the list given below)

- 5.1 Strongly agree []
- 5.2 Agree []
- 5.3 Don't know []
- 5.4 Disagree []
- 5.5 Strongly disagree []

Please justify your above response by stating three evidences/ examples:

Reason 1:

Reason 2:

Reason 3:

In your opinion, what are the factors that may have contributed to the decline in the quality/ standard of education in Bhutan? Briefly explaining each of them, please state as many factors as you can think of in the space provided below (use a separate sheet, if required). **(You do not have to answer this question if your response for Question 5 (above) was 5.3, 5.4 or 5.5.)**

A letter to focal/ contact persons

To,

May 22, 2006

.....,
.....,

Samtse.

Subject: Completion of survey questionnaire

Sir/Madam,

I am, on own interest, conducting a short survey on the standard of Bhutanese education in the last 10-15 years. At the moment, the survey is confined to only within Samtse Dzongkhag. The preliminarily sample selected comprise educated Bhutanese nationals who are 30 and above years old in all occupational bands.

I shall be, therefore, highly grateful if you could kindly distribute the questionnaire as per the above criteria and the details given below and send them back to me as soon as they are duly completed by the respondents. I hope you would not mind my choosing you as the focal/ contact person for this location/ organization:

Location	Organization	No. of	Focal Person	Remarks
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		Respondents		

Thank you for your kind support

Yours Faithfully

(Kinga Dakpa)
Samtse Higher Secondary School

Appendix II

A letter to the respondents

Concerns have been expressed by many stakeholders and the general public that in the last one or two decades there has been a decline in the quality/standard of education in Bhutan. As a member of a responsible organization, I have, for quite some time, been interested to know whether there is actually a decline or not. I am also interested to identify some of the possible factors that may have contributed towards the decline, if there is any.

It would be helpful, therefore, if you could spare some of your precious time to respond to the few questions outlined below. The items in the questionnaire will require you to express your valuable views and opinions. Please feel free to express them honestly and, of course, as per the requirement of the questions.

I am targeting this questionnaire only to the Bhutanese nationals who are 30 and plus years of age with at least adequate literacy level (literate enough to answer the questions in the questionnaire), throughout all occupational strata under Samtse Dzongkhag.

While I understand that this small survey will neither reflect the overall scenario and opinion of the general public of the country nor make any significant generalization, it is intended to at least discover the tip of the ice-berg. With your valuable contributions I intend to make a short write-up so that it may lead to further investigations to possibly address the concerns of our nation.

Your identity shall be fully confidential and protected.

You do not have to sign or write your name.

Kinga Dakpa
Samtse HSS

Introduction

The National Institute of Education (NIE), Samtse in a bid to groom quality Bhutanese science teachers instituted science programmes at the institute in 1983. Since then, hundreds of science graduates have been trained and placed in different schools. I am fortunate to be one of the faculty members of Chemistry Department in NIE. I have been teaching Chemistry for the last five years.

Over the years, I have put on my best professional attire to give my best to those students who came and went. I believe that there are better ways of delivering the course, a strategy that best suits the students. Through this study, I wish to seek students' views and opinions and adopt a strategy to teach Chemistry which would enhance their interest in the subject.

Statement of Research Problem

This study aims to find the effectiveness of the present strategies used by the tutor in teaching Chemistry and to mitigate the flaws, if any, by seeking views and opinions of the learners. This will assist the tutor in creating a more conducive learning environment, and thus, improve further.

The following questions were used to collect data:

What are the students' preferred teaching-learning strategies for the Chemistry modules?

Which of the strategies the tutor practised helped their learning?

Which of the strategies the tutor used were not liked by the students?

Which of the supplementary materials the tutor used helped students learn better?

What are some of the suggestions to improve the teaching-learning of Chemistry?

Research Methodology

A survey questionnaire with pre-coded and open-ended items was administered to the B.Ed first year Chemistry students. I have used two types of pre-coded survey questionnaire both rated on the five-point Likert scale. The class comprised of five females and twenty males.

The quantitative data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The statistical analysis is confined to descriptive frequency distribution for easy understanding and access. A coherent theme and pattern have been derived from the qualitative data and discussed accordingly.

A RESULT: REFLECTIONS

A.1 Statistical Data: Effectiveness of teaching-learning strategies used:

A total of twenty five students took part in the survey. The participants comprised of five women and twenty men. They are from B.Ed first year secondary science cohort. All the participants are twenty years of age and above.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of the rating on the five-point Likert scale.

⁴ Lecturer in Chemistry, Samtse College of Education, Samtse.

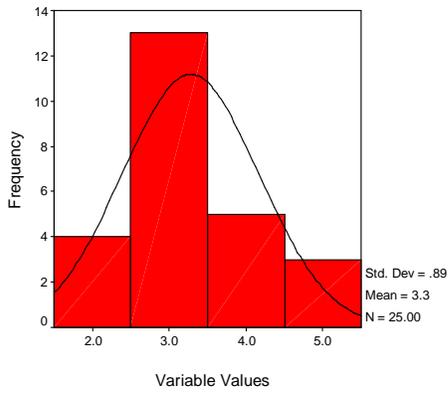
Scale	Value	Group Work in the Class	Classroom Discussion	Worksheet for Practicals	Use of Teaching Aids	Tutor's Demonstration	Tutor's Lecturing
Not at all effective	1			F=3	F=4		
				12%	16%		
Somewhat effective	2	F=4	F=1	F=6	F=9	F=1	F=1
		16%	4%	24%	36%	4.0%	4.2%
Effective	3	F=13	F=7	F=3	F=6	F=3	F=2
		52%	28%	12%	24%	12.0%	8.3%
Very effective	4	F=5	F=13	F=10	F=4	F=13	F=8
		20%	52%	40%	16%	52%	33.3%
Overwhelmingly effective	5	F=3	F=4	F=3	F=2	F=8	F=13
		12%	16%	12%	8%	32%	54.2%

Looking at Table 1, it is quite encouraging to report that on the whole the teaching-learning of Chemistry is very effective as a majority of the students have rated it very high. 'Effective' has been rated between 8.3% - 52% across all areas. 'Very effective' has been rated higher than all other areas. It rated between 16%-52%. 'Tutor's Demonstration' and 'Tutor's lecturing' were rated as 'Overwhelmingly effective' as 32% and 54.2% respectively rated the scale.

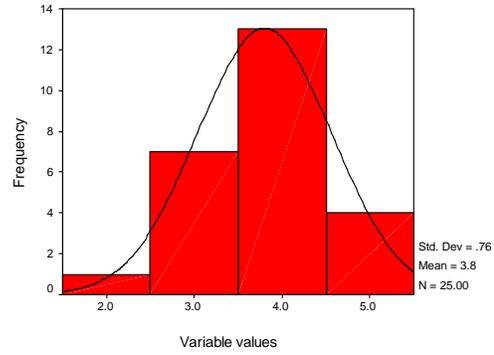
On the other hand, 12% of the respondents rated 'Worksheet for Practicals' as 'Not at all effective' while 40% of the respondents say it is 'very effective' and 12% say it is 'Overwhelmingly effective'. Four students rated 'Use of Teaching Aids' 'Not at all effective', while 16% rated it 'very effective', and 8% 'Overwhelmingly effective'.

Statistical data can also be presented in the form of Histogram with normal curves as below:

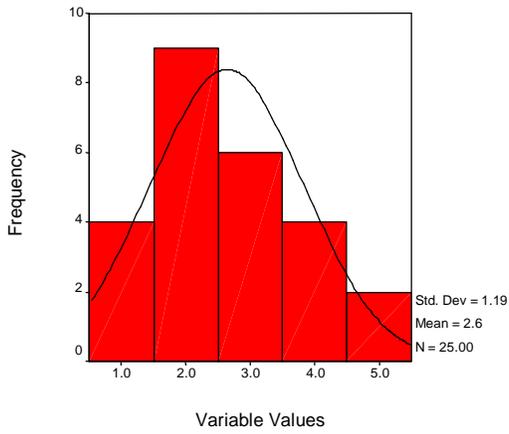
GROUPWORK IN THE CLASS



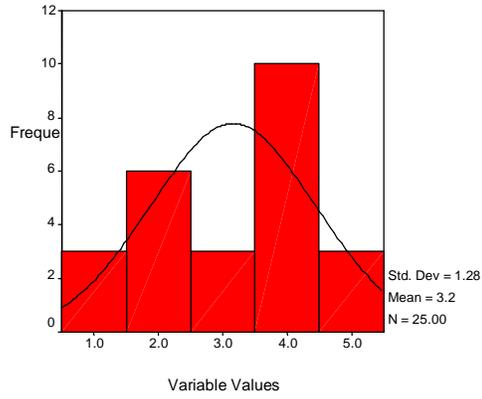
CLASSROOM DISCUSSION



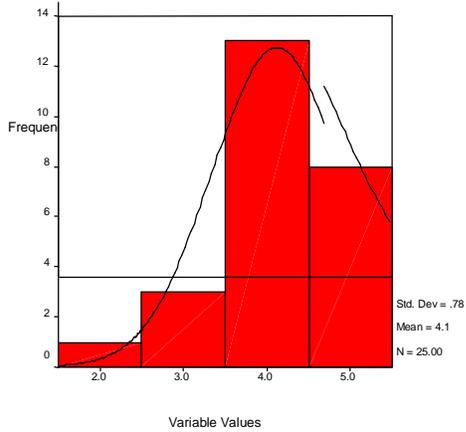
USE OF TEACHING AIDS



USE OF WORKSHEET FOR PRACTICALS



TUTOR'S DEMONSTRATION



TUTOR'S LECTURING

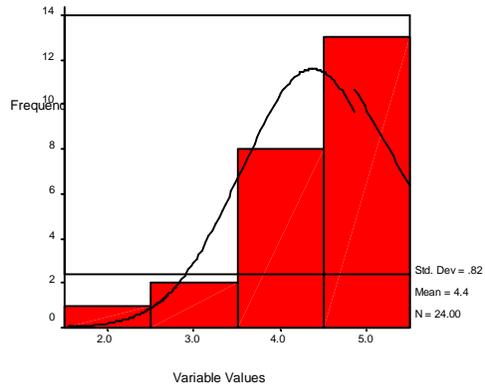


Table 2. Frequency distribution of the rating on the five-point Likert scale

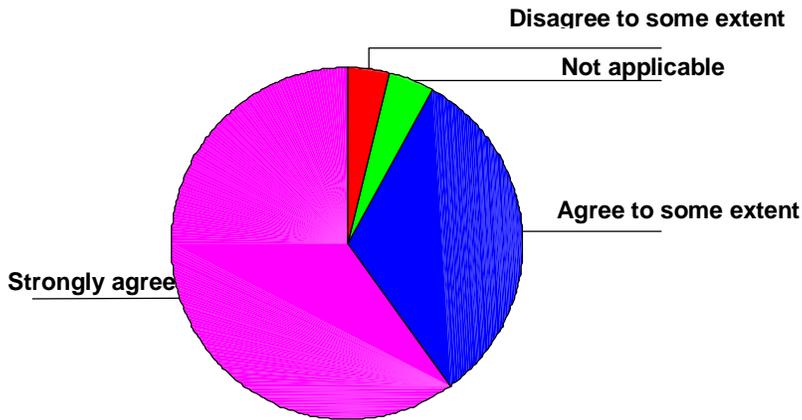
Variables	Strongly Disagree (1)		Disagree to some extent (2)		Not Applicable (3)		Agree to some extent (4)		Strongly Agree (5)	
Classes regularly held.			F=0 1	04%	F=01	04%	F=8	32%	F=15	60%
Teaching well organized.							F=2	8%	F=23	92%
Concepts explained with clarity and examples.							F=2	8%	F=23	92%
Lectures, Readings, Projects, Assignments & Lab work effectively coordinated.					F=02	08%	F=1 3	52%	F=10	40%
Course academically challenging, relevant and interesting.			F=0 1	04%	F=02	08%	F=1 2	48%	F=10	40%
Tutor showed concern for student learning & progress.							F=0 7	28%	F=18	72%
Tutor conveyed interest & enthusiasm for the subject taught.							F=0 4	16%	F=20	80%
Tutor spoke in way, which could be understood by the class.							F=0 2	08%	F=23	92%
Tutor was approachable & willing to schedule extra class.			F=1 3	52%	F=02	08%			F=10	40%
Tutor created a positive learning environment for students.			F=1 0	40%					F=15	60%
Tutor encouraged students to express their views in the class.					F=02	08%	F=0 3	12%	F=19	76%
Tutor stimulated students to think independently and creatively.					F=02	08%	F=1 2	48%	F=11	44%
As a result of this, my beliefs & attitudes have changed positively.			F=0 1	04%	F=02	08%	F=1 0	40%	F=11	44%
Assignments were carefully marked and useful feedback provided.	F=0 2	08%	F=0 8	32%	F=04	16%	F=0 9	36%	F=02	08%
Tests & assignments were a reasonable measure of student learning & ability.					F=04	16%	F=1 2	48%	F=09	36%

The strategy used to deliver the Chemistry modules seem to be very effective. The data in table 2 is testimony to this. Students have rated it on the higher scale. 'Strongly Agree' has been rated between 8% - 92%, which is the highest compared to all other areas. 92% of the respondents really appreciated the practices like 'Teaching well organized', 'Concepts explained with clarity and examples' and 'tutor spoke in way, which could be understood by the class.'

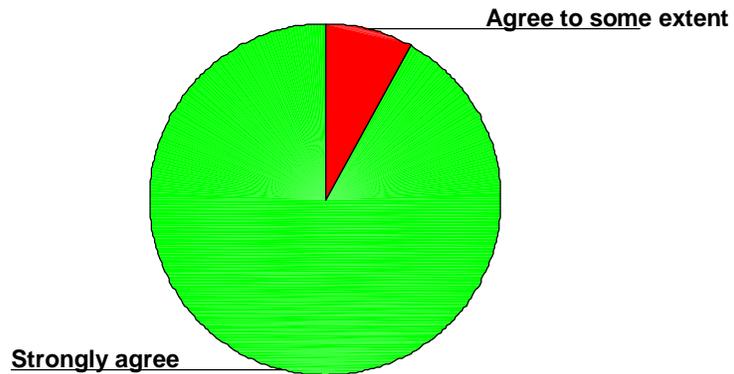
However, 8% respondents claim that practice like 'Assignments were carefully marked and useful feedback provided.' is not quite true, whereas 44% says it is otherwise.

Statistical data can also be presented in the form of Pie chart as shown below:

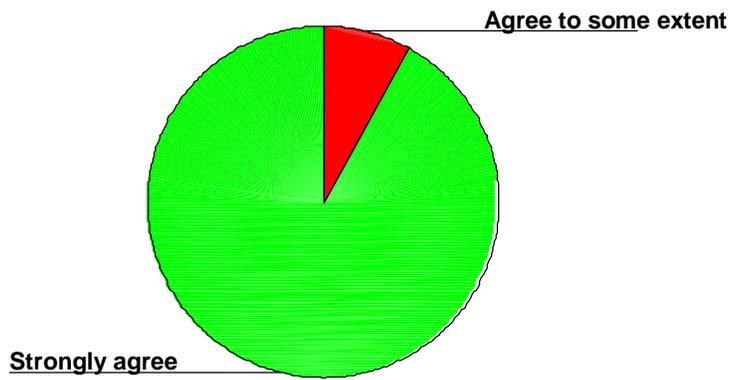
I. Classes are held regularly to an agreed schedule during the semester.



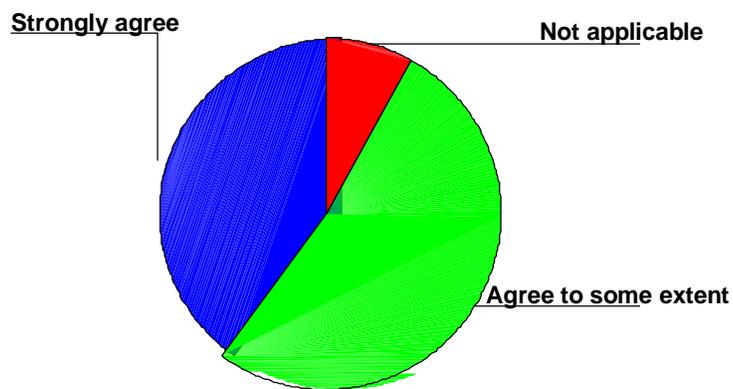
II. The teaching was well organized and focused.



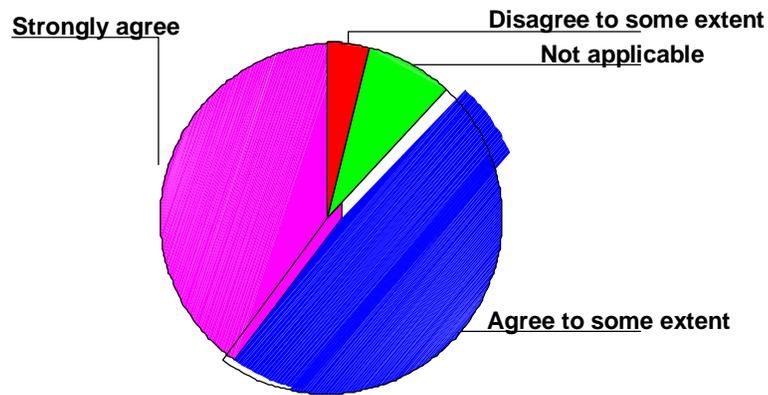
III. The tutor explained concepts clearly with relevant examples & illustrations.



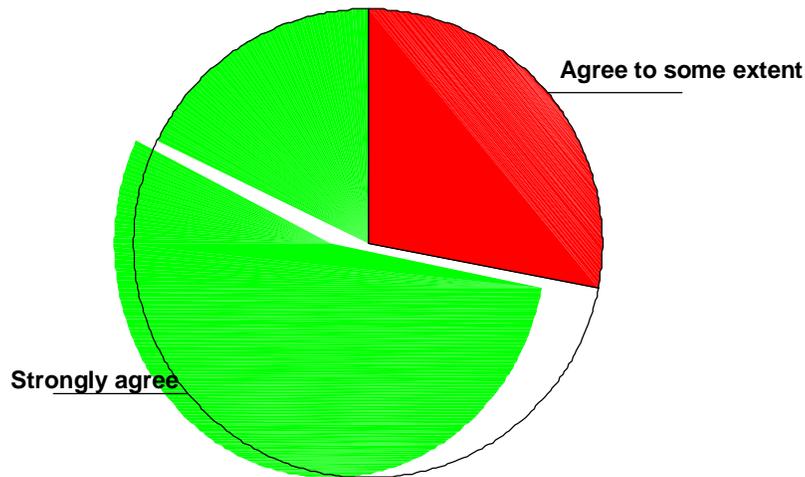
IV. Lectures, reading, projects, assignment and lab works were coordinated effectively.



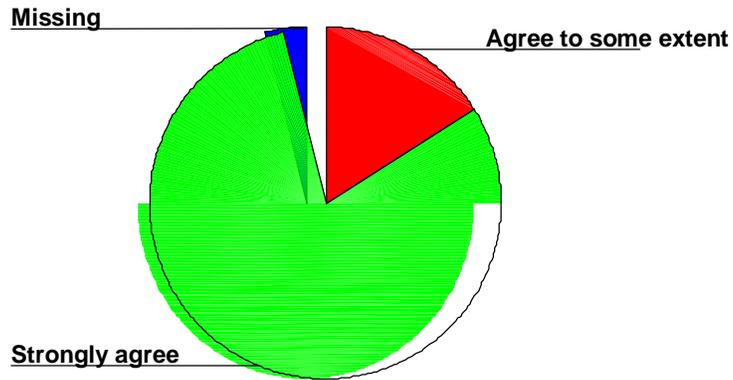
V. The course contents were academically challenging, relevant and interesting



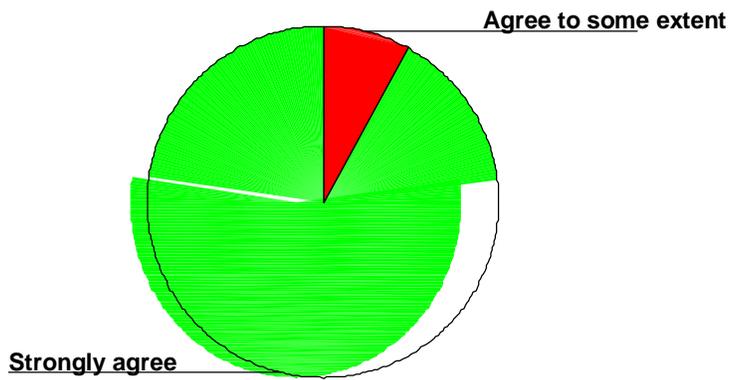
VI. The tutor showed genuine concern for student learning and progress



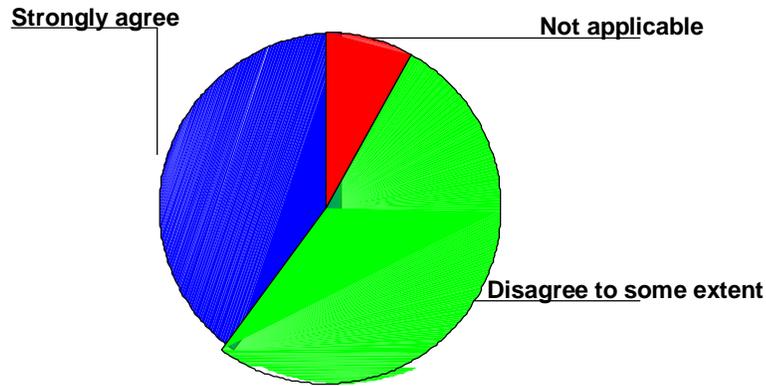
VII. The tutor showed strong interest and enthusiasm in the subject taught



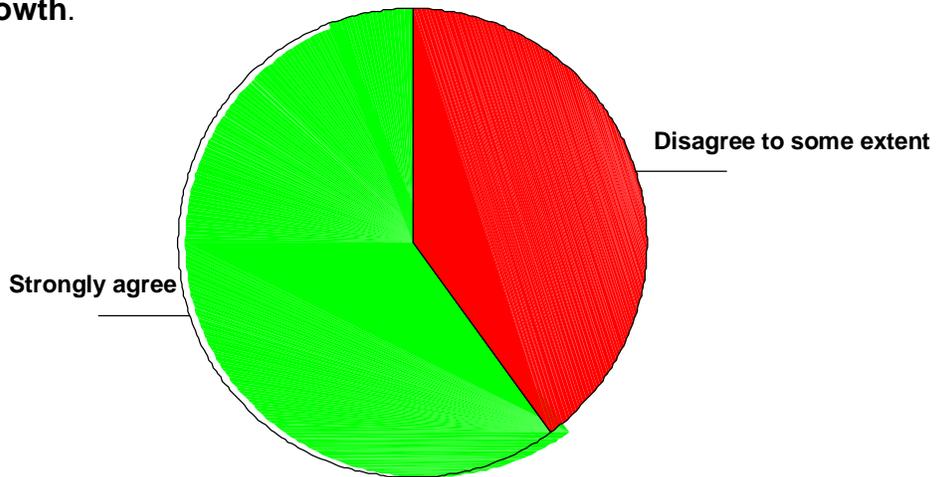
VIII. The tutor spoke in way which could be clearly understood by the class



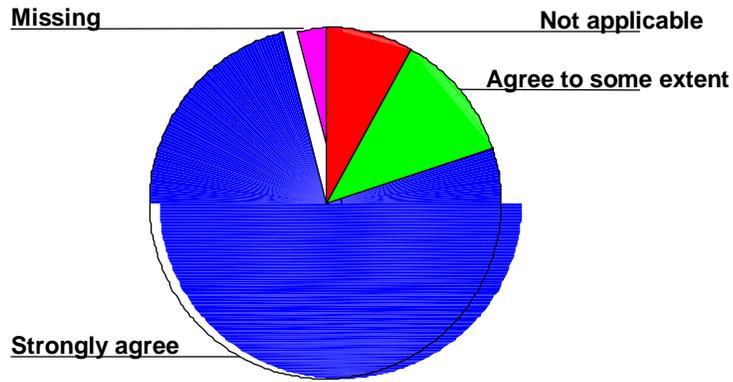
IX. The tutor was approachable and was willing to schedule extra consultation time with the students.



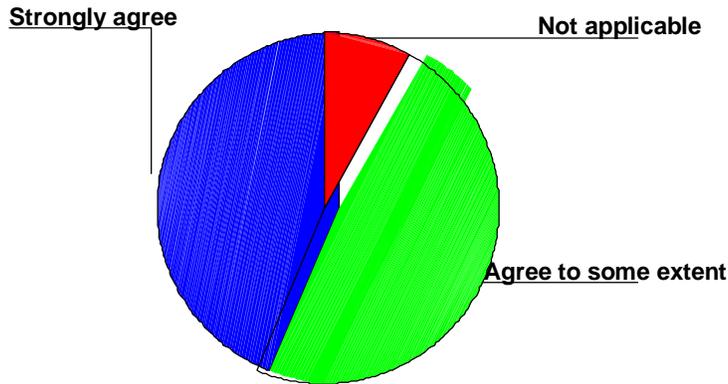
X. The tutor created a positive learning environment helpful to learning and growth.



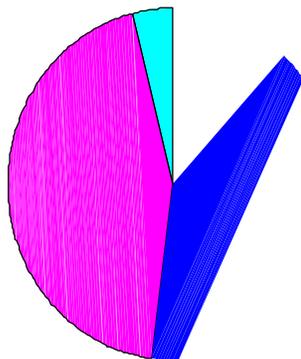
XI. The students were encouraged to express views and participate in class discussion.

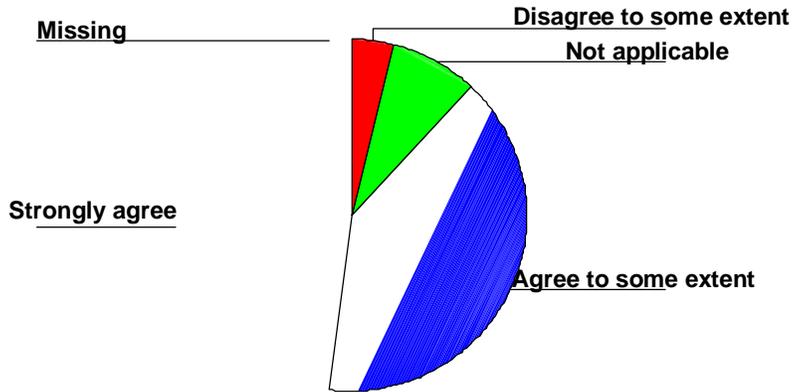


XII. The tutor stimulated students to think independently and encouraged originality and creativity.

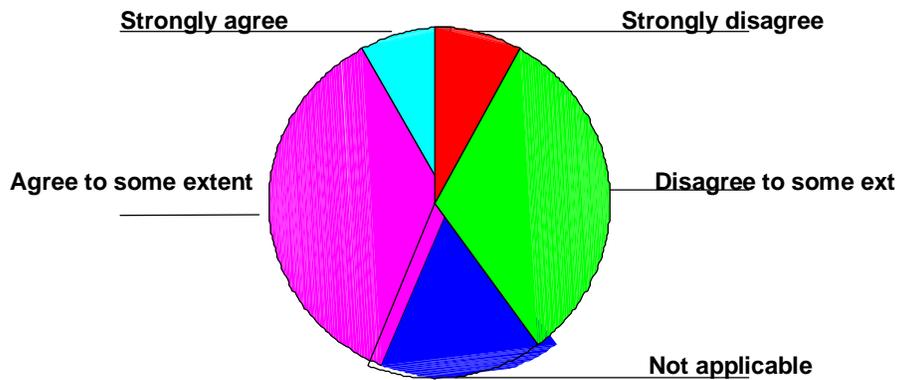


XIII. As a result, some of my beliefs and attitudes have changed positively.

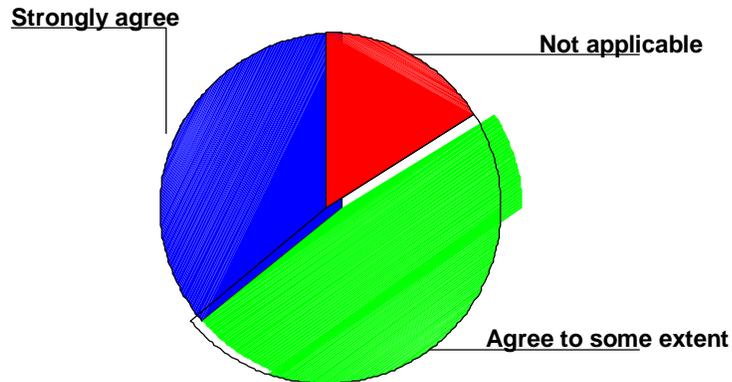




XIV. Assignments were carefully marked and useful feedback provided on student progress



XV. Tests and assignments were a reasonable measure of student learning and ability



A.2 Best practices of the tutor

In the survey questionnaire, open-ended question was included to garner students' views and opinions on the teaching-learning practices adopted by the tutor. Upon repeated pondering over the data, the following qualities emerged and re-emerged, which I termed as best teacher practices: Punctuality; Learning environment; Content knowledge; Preparation & organization; and Teaching.

A.3.1 Punctuality

50% of the students responded that the tutor is always punctual and the classes are held regularly. I agree because I don't miss any class and I adhere to the class timings strictly. This was one of the comments that was made by other classes too on several occasions. Namgay says, 'sir is always punctual and has a very good time management.' Seden pointed out that 'he is very punctual and classes are held regularly.' This was further reiterated by Lungten 'The tutor is time conscious. He conducts the class on time and leaves the class on time.'

A.3.2 Learning environment

I always believe that for optimum learning to take place, every student in the class should be given a same platform and treated equally despite shortcomings. They must be given an assurance that their presence is felt and not ignored, views respected and not rejected, mistakes corrected and not ridiculed, and efforts rewarded.

A lady got bitterly upset when her husband was made to teach English in a prestigious school in India, not because her husband was teaching English, but because her English teacher treated her badly in her school days some 30 years ago. Such can be the impact and repercussion even on the students' later life.

So as teachers, we have to be very careful with our speech and actions. Do not try to please somebody in the class if it is going to bring displeasure to the rest of the students. So far as I am concerned, I treat every student in the class with equity. I make sure that they are comfortable in my class, their views are respected and

everybody is attended to without disparity. The following students' responses will substantiate my above points:

Chundu: The tutor never uses negative reinforcement, rather encourages us to improve.

Utha: The tutor is friendly and most of the time he shares educative incidents which help to create conducive learning atmosphere.

Dorji: We are encouraged to speak without hesitation. He is very friendly and open

Chimi: The tutor is approachable and we feel free to discuss our doubts and problems.

Rinzin: The tutor respects students' view and incorporates them in the lesson.

Karma: He uses simple approaches to teach and create a peaceful learning environment.

Sonam: He always creates an environment of ease and comfort filled with inspiration and active activity.

Sangay: Tutor comes up with new and relevant ideas which add to our knowledge.

Kezang: Tutor has changed my attitude toward Chemistry and he is my source of inspiration.

A.3.3 Content Knowledge

One of the basic requirements of an ideal teacher is the knowledge in the subject. This gives strength to the tutor and the tutor is also likely to gain students' trust and confidence to confide in his/her teaching. Most of the students say that I have good subject knowledge. For example:

Tashi: The tutor has a very good content knowledge and dissemination of information to students is good.

Dorji: He explains the content knowledge in detail and initiates effective discussion.

Raika: He gives adequate content knowledge.

A.3. 4 Preparation and Organization

The key to successful lesson is planning and organization. A tutor who plans his/her lesson well knows what to teach, what activity to carry out and how to cater to the students of varied learning abilities. I always go to the class well prepared. I feel highly motivated and confident when I am well prepared. Most of the students were appreciative of my planning and preparedness. For instance:

- Wangmo:** The tutor comes well prepared and organized. Sometimes I wonder from which corner of his brain he takes out the names of scientists and dates. This encourages me to become like him in future.
- Lethro:** Tutors' organization of classroom activities is very good.
- Penjor:** Every lesson done is well prepared.
- Tamang:** All his lectures are well organized.
- Dukpa:** Your teaching is systematic and well organized.
- Yeshi:** He involves us in analytical and problem solving activities.
- Kunzang:** The tutor provides opportunity to share our knowledge about the particular topic.
- Rinchen:** He comes mentally prepared.
- Ugyen:** Lesson organization and monitoring of students activity is perfect.
- Jigyel:** He incorporates advanced teaching strategies in his teaching.
- Dekar:** Explanation is vivid and share incidents which are related to the content.

A.3.5 Teaching

A significant number of students seems to appreciate the way I conduct my class. Following are some of the responses:

- Tshering:** The tutors' way of teaching is excellent above all. I like the way you give directions and instructions.
- Kinzang:** Your teaching is simple, effective and easily comprehensible. Your teaching develops curiosity in the learners.
- Gyeltshen:** Sir, I love your way of teaching. Teaching is excellent for all types of class.
- Dorji:** Brain storming before going to the real lesson adds extra information to the learners.
- Sherub:** The way you motivate student is good. I also appreciate the way you conduct practicals.
- Kelden:** Use of chalkboard is good. He has a good communication skill. Your teaching is interesting, enriching and overwhelming.
- Sonam:** Skills of introducing the lesson and teaching systematically. Ways of giving instructions and skills of asking questions.

A.3.6 Resourcefulness and Helpfulness

As a teacher, one should not confine one's role within the teaching period and the realm of the textbooks. One should be willing to extend support and resource students even after the class hours. The knowledge derived from books is not enough; students must acquire knowledge in other areas too. I have been very open to the students and they find me friendly and approachable. I make myself available to them for help and discussions. If you are approachable to the students, they look at you as a role model and resourceful and a source of inspiration.

Sonam: The tutor is farsighted and very informative. He provides extra information beyond the text. He is a very good role model.

Karma: He is resourceful, knowledgeable and convincing. He has a remarkable personality and very capable lecturer.

Thinley: The tutor is energetic, resourceful and very enthusiastic about teaching. He is ever willing to spend extra hours with students.

B. Bad practices of the tutor

The questionnaire also invited students to mark any bad practices that they observed in my teaching of Chemistry. After going through their comments, following themes were derived: Teacher centered class, Irony sometimes, Teacher stationary, Less use of teaching aids, Need to organize field trips and outdoor activities, and Need to raise voice.

B. 1 Teacher dominating class: The greatest weakness that I have and still tend to continue is have a teacher-centered class. Most students commented that I dominate most of the classroom discussion and prevent them from interacting. This promotes students dependency on the teachers. Thinley says 'Lesson is geared more around tutor.'

B. 2 Irony sometimes: Two students commented that I wore a serious look at times and used sarcasm. This creates tense atmosphere and we find it uncomfortable to approach and talk. According to Dekar 'Sometime sir look so serious that we hesitate to ask questions and interact.' 'We are in a dilemma as to whether sir is joking or scolding us' says Karma.

B. 3 Teacher lacks movement in the class: I was taken aback by this comment. I have never realized that my movement was confined to the area near the blackboard. It is true that the tutor should not be stationary, rather move around the class and interact with students. The movement of tutor in the class alerts them and their proximity gives a feeling of closeness and being wanted. Gyeltshen says that 'Tutors' movement in the class is restricted and we feel like we are left out.'

B. 4 Use of teaching aids: The use of teaching aids has an added advantage as it supplements the classroom teaching. It also adds to the variety and motivates students. Some students were of the opinion that I should make optimum use of teaching aids to supplement and instill motivation and interest in the students. Chimi pointed out 'he needs to use more teaching aids to make teaching more effective.'

B. 5 Field trips and outdoor activities: This has definitely been a weakness on my part. Somehow, I have not been able to organize field trips. Taking students on field trips gives a break from the four walls of the classroom. It also gives them first-hand experience in the related matter. In Chemistry we deal with topics like cement and metallurgy. The students' concept of the manufacture of cement and metallurgy could be further enriched if they visit a cement plant and some mining sites.

B. 6 Raise voice: Another interesting observation made by one or two is on my need to raise voice while teaching. It is true because on the day you have too many classes or when you lecture for long, your voice gets soft. Perhaps, as a remedial to this, I should organize student-centered lessons so that they do most of the talking.

B. 7 Tiring class: One student mentioned that sometimes my class is tiring as I teach continuously without a break. This is true because I want to make best use of every second in the class. Perhaps, may be I should give them short break in between.

C. Suggest ways to improve teaching of Chemistry

Another open-ended question like: What aspects of the tutors' instructional style need to improve in order that the students learn more effectively? was included to seek suggestions on how to improve my teaching of Chemistry.

Most of the students wrote complimentary notes like "no comments", "keep it up", "keep the same spirit", "Thank you", "excellent", etc. but a few students suggested that I need to encourage independent learning and not spoon-feed them; there is a need to organize field-trips and outdoor activities, to use more teaching aids to make teaching more effective; raise voice while teaching; provide reference materials for further learning and procure more reference books in the library.

The themes discussed under negative practices complement the suggestions mentioned above except for the:

C. 1 Need to provide reference materials and procurement of reference books in the library- A few students suggest that I should provide reference materials to them. It won't be possible for me to provide reference materials to them but yes I can direct them to the source from where they can get the materials. Every effort is being made to equip the library with adequate reference materials in all the disciplines.

D. The third open-ended question required students to list ideas that they picked up from my teaching on which they wish to work later on.

Most of the students commented that my teaching was exemplary and they got exposed to different teaching-learning strategies, some of which they wish to adopt later.

Karma likes the idea of brain-storming before introducing the real lesson.

Lungten appreciates my approaches to teaching Chemistry especially the way I introduce the lesson, skill of giving instructions, asking questions and use of reinforcement and systematic presentation of information to the students.

Thinley says I have learnt how to motivate students, the necessity of providing background information about a particular topic and how to organize and conduct practical classes.

Chimi is of the opinion that my teaching has been exemplary particularly in the areas of encouraging and supporting students, not resorting to favouritism, being punctual all the time, being humble and efficient time management.

"I wish to teach like sir in future, who comes well prepared and organized, and who never hurt students during the teaching learning process rather encourages us to move further" says **Galey**.

According to **Kinzang** 'Your teaching is excellent and I wish to adopt your style in my future teaching.'

E. The last question seeks students' overall reaction to my teaching /Chemistry course.

Some 23 students responded making the response rate of 92%. After going through their comments, I got utterly flattered and highly encouraged as their reactions were very positive and overwhelming. For instance:

Rinchen: Before I had a very vague ideas of Chemistry, but after having you as my Chemistry teacher, I have improved a lot. You are a brilliant Chemistry teacher I have ever come across.

Chundu: You are excellent. Your teaching is highly appreciable. You are very smart in conveying the message.

Raika: You are the best Chemistry teacher I ever had. I like you to continue teaching Chemistry to us during my stay in NIE.

Tashi: you are very effective in delivering the module. I find the module quite easy may be it is because of the tutor.

Jigyel: Your teaching is interesting, enriching and overwhelming.

Rinzin: Your class is interesting and is looking forward to work with you in future too.

Kelden: Overall, your teaching is the best.

Utha: I am happy with your teaching. You can glorify me.

Kesang: I like your way of teaching. I wish to learn Chemistry from sir only in other semesters, So that I can lean Chemistry more.

Tamang: Your teaching is very effective and understandable.

Namgay: Your teaching is motivating. You are one of the best tutors that I have come across.

Yeshi: Your teaching is excellent and I wish to adopt your style in my future teaching.

Sonam: Tutor is very resourceful, enthusiastic and energetic to teach.

Jamtsho: I see sir very appropriate as a lecturer. I have never come across teacher like sir in my life. I really respect you for your benevolent teaching.

Penjor: I would like to appreciate your hard work and for being a best teacher that I ever had.

Conclusion

This small piece of work has been quite a significant and enriching experience for me. It has helped me address my strengths and weaknesses in the areas of academics in particular and pedagogy in general. Before this research, I was complacent about my teaching and I was taking things for granted. I was of the opinion that my teaching was effective with some years of teaching experience to my credit. To my dismay, the comments from the students suggest that I need to re-look at some of the strategies that I adopt in the class and do necessary work to improve the weaker areas.

It is imperative that a tutor must practise what he/she preaches. Having a sound knowledge in pedagogy does not bring effective teaching unless one practises it and, secondly, what a tutor considers as the best approaches in teaching may not necessarily be the students' preferred ways of learning.

In the institute, we have the practice of students evaluating tutors and the modules they handle at the end of every semester. Most of us tend to look only at the best practices and ignore the bad practices instead of reflecting on them. At times we also show resentment to those students who rate us badly. The feedback carries tons of information and it could only be revealing if the tutors could ponder over it patiently, but, unfortunately, it remains concealed.

This research has helped me to become a better tutor by reflecting on the insights conveyed by the students. I would like to reiterate what Mr. Singye Namgyel, Principal, Academic Affairs, NIE, Paro has written in Rabsel, Volume VIII, Autumn, 2005. 'The fellow lecturers of the two institutes should embark on a similar project as I believe some of the teaching is not in line with "**PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH**" ' p 47.

Dawa: the story of a stray dog in Bhutan: A Review

Chandra Shekhar Sharma⁵

Introduction

The shortage of indigenous works in English has been deeply felt for a long time in Bhutan. This concern was published in Kuensel: "The shortage of material was felt at all levels but was critical at the primary level according to SSEB officials."¹

This shortage is specially felt by educationists and curriculum advisors, for a large part of the curriculum has to depend on the works of foreign authors. "Most of the articles included in Druk English, the text for primary classes, are written by foreigners."²

The perception of shortage has many dimensions, but the chief among them is that the students were exposed to 'foreign thinking and writings' where the Bhutanese context is absent. The pioneers delved into possibilities and finally it was decided that "The plays of the 16th century English playwright and poet, William Shakespeare, which has been a dominant part of the English curriculum, will no longer be taught in schools. The decision came following the revision of the English curriculum for classes pre-primary to XII that is being discussed in a curriculum workshop in Thimphu."³

The available bulk of Bhutanese literature in English is very small but the quality worried the concerned people more than the quantity. In selecting the indigenous material for curriculum quality has been a major concern. The officials pronounced this concern as a challenge. And amidst this challenge, Kunzang Choden's novelette "Dawa: the story of a stray dog in Bhutan" was chosen.

However, many Shakespeare enthusiasts "expressed their nostalgia for the greatest English playwright". The director of CERD, Thakur S Powdyel, said that he felt a sense of loss in the prospect of Shakespeare as a playwright being dislodged from the curriculum.

"Since we are accustomed to having Shakespeare, there is going to be a void which will be difficult to fill," he said adding that "the playwright and poet was too precious an icon to lose...." ⁴

The bulk of Bhutanese literature is religious or scriptural in nature. Because of small readership and limited printing facilities in the past decades writing and reading fiction took time to develop as a social trend. Writing fiction has recently gained momentum. "Dawa" is a welcome arrival.

⁵ Lecturer in English, Royal Bhutan College of Technology, Phuntsholing.

Kunzang Choden is an accomplished writer. She has two novels, two translations of short stories, a descriptive eco-cultural research work and a few articles to her credit. Though the bulk of her work may not be particularly large, yet she emerges as an important literary figure on contemporary Bhutanese literary scene. Her success as a novelist can be gauged by the fact that three of her four books are published by foreign publishers. These books have been translated into Turkish; one was the fastest selling book of the month it was launched.⁵

"Dawa" is Kunzang Choden's first fictional work. It took just two weeks – the shortest time in Choden's life to complete a book.⁶ The 128-page long novelette touches various aspects of Bhutanese society and circumscribes. Written in somewhat of a picaresque fashion "Dawa" touches upon different kinds of quest in the mind of the reader. This paper attempts to analyse the confusions and different dimensions of this work.

Confusions regarding "Dawa"

First confusion regarding "Dawa" is whether it is a short novel or a short-story or a novelette. Traditionally, "A novel is an extended narrative.....its magnitude permits a greater variety of characters, greater complication of plot."⁷

"Dawa" has a limited length. The span of the plot is not elaborative. Secondly, there are very few characters other than Dawa, the protagonist, that play any major role in the story. Maybe the writer doesn't want the plot to be overcrowded with a lot of characters. On this basis, can "Dawa" be termed as an extended short story? This may be another point to think about. A short story, says Abrams, "is a brief work of prose fiction, and most of the terms for analyzing the component elements, the types, and the various narrative techniques of the novel are applicable to the story."⁸ Further, he says "a short story writer introduces a very limited number of persons, cannot afford the space for leisurely analysis.....and cannot undertake to develop as dense and detailed a social milieu as does the novelist."⁹

Though "Dawa" has a limited number of characters and it does not afford space for leisurely analysis, yet it provides a considerable commentary on the socio-cultural atmosphere of the society the story is set in. It is a multidimensional fiction with lessons, information and critique.

Given these possible paradigms, positioning "Dawa" becomes difficult. On the one hand, there are reservations about hailing "Dawa" as a novel, and, on the other, there are factors that suggest that it is more than a short story. However, there are some other works like Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* that do not boast extended lengths.

Another proper term that could be applied to "Dawa" is novelette or novella. A novelette or novella is an elaborated form of short story that is shorter in length as compared to a novel but longer than a short story. It can be termed as a mini novel, and has the feature of middle length. The plot, characterization and length of "Dawa" suggest it to be more of a novelette or novella.

Dawa's heroism is also questionable. He is not a born hero with heroic qualities inherent in his character. He has knowledge, wit and humour but lacks other leadership skills like strength, courage, strong will and love for heroic and adventurous deeds that are characteristically required of a hero. Though the writer

says that Dawa dreamt of becoming a leader, we don't find in him any yearning for or devotion to becoming a hero or a leader.

What Dawa does to face the challenges can be gauged from following instances:

"But Dawa knew better than to challenge them. He looked away as a gesture of non-aggression. Dawa realized that he would be torn to pieces if he would challenge this ferocious pack, so he lowered his tail and put it between his hind legs, hanging his head so low that his nose touched the ground.....Dawa remained silent and submissive." ¹⁰

And

"Dawa had just fallen into a powerful leadership post in the first few hours of his arrival in Thimphu.....The sudden disappearance of the previous leader created the unusual situation, and he had been accidentally chosen" ¹¹

His leadership comes to him merely because of luck and circumstances. In the later part, Dawa even regrets as to why he has become a leader. Fearing the pain of a disgraceful life, after stepping down from the position of 'Leader of Howling', Dawa escapes. Dawa's submissiveness and fears about the future and his tendency to escapism shows Dawa to be less than a hero. Dawa can be termed just a chief character or protagonist but not a hero which means "A person noted or admired for nobility, courage, outstanding achievements etc" ¹²

A brief survey of 'Dawa'

Through 'Dawa', Kunzang Choden has successfully projected Bhutanese society with its virtues and vices. The sentences are very simple and informative, conveying the purpose behind their usage. In some instances, she not only informs us about the affairs but also tells us about the general condition of the society. A glimpse of the simplicity of her style can be obtained from the following description:

"He went outside each window and listened carefully. There were two classes in which the students were being taught the honorific terms. The teacher would say the ordinary term and then the honorific equivalent in a singsong tune, and the children repeated after him in singsong chorus." ¹³

Dawa is born in Paro, a beautiful valley in western Bhutan. While he is still in his infancy, his mother and siblings are killed. Dawa is left alone in this world to encounter different places and people and their views. Dawa's 'bigger-than-normal dog brain, in his bigger-than-normal head' is different from that of other dogs. It is full of curiosity, knowledge, wit and beliefs. His curiosity drives him to Thimphu which he considers his home till the end. With Thimphu he has emotional attachment, but Paro - where he is born - bears no importance in his life.

His life in Thimphu starts with fears and struggle. But his howling skill that he had honed at Paro accidentally makes him a leader of dog community. So says the author "It was not by accident that he became a leader. He had dreamt of it, worked hard and honed his potential skills to an art form, finally raising the art from to a magical, mystical formula with hypnotic effects." ¹⁴ Later, however, the narrator says, "He had just been pushed into the position of leadership by circumstances...." ¹⁵

Dawa is a puppet in the hand of luck right from the beginning. Dawa's misfortunes erode his boldness, peace and joy of being a "Leader of Howling" with two shocks that come to him at the same time. He is plagued with mange and is struck with the nightmare of becoming an underdog and its disgraceful aftermath. He consults old Dampa, his personal critic and after consultation and guidance, flees Thimphu to move to the unknown solitary cave where a nun meditated during leprosy and got cured. The dog is more like a devoted pilgrim who moves to different places and finally reaches a temple. Failing to find the desired cave where the nun meditated and got herself cured of leprosy, he starts living 'under an outcrop of a rock' later to know surprisingly that it was the place he was looking for, it was the place where the nun meditated and got her self cured. Dawa later decides to return back! But where? Paro or

Thimphu? The answer lies here:

"But Thimphu was the home Dawa chose, and here he will spend the rest of his dog days. The front of *Changankha lakhang* is the ideal place to enjoy the dusk of an old dog's life" ¹⁶

Before settling at Thimphu, Dawa visits Paro to meet Molay but he finds she had passed away a long time ago.

The course of novelette thus makes it a picaresque work. Dawa moves from one place to another in unending quest and mental agony giving rise to a novelette which is picaresque in nature and social at the soul.

Dimensions of the novelette

Kunzang Choden has successfully tried to incorporate various aspects of the society and her responses towards some of the trends. Her prose style is very simple and plain. This simplicity and plainness keeps the reader with the story till end. The simplicity in style can be understood at the very outset where she introduces Dawa:

"Dawa is yellow brown dog. His coat is ragged and patchy, and he looks a bit scruffy all over. That's because he is a survivor of chronic mange which plagued him for a long time. He is an old dog." ¹⁷ Choden's simple narrative makes it interesting and real. Her characters come before us as real characters of life and blood.

Local references and beliefs play a substantial role in incorporating realism in the novelette. They have been woven into the plot with a purpose. Apart from their referential value, they provide a good understanding about the socio-cultural milieu of Bhutan and makes "Dawa" realistic. It is the effect of artistic blending of local colour, Buddhist values and beliefs that make the reader feel as if the characters are from the real world. The plot and characters are so well juxtaposed with the real places in the country that on the whole it constitutes a dappled but real picture of Bhutan.

The Paro valley where Dawa was born has not been described as deeply as Thimphu or the other places Dawa stays in. Perhaps this is because it was Paro where puppy Dawa "yelped and whined and watched helplessly as the family feasted - and soon afterwards he watched them foaming at their mouths, their bodies twitching and jerking convulsively. Finally, each dropped like a rock falling off a cliff." ¹⁸

Perhaps, it was this painful incident that has never made Dawa to feel Paro as his home. It is, therefore, Thimphu which gets a considerable space in the life of Dawa. Some lively descriptions of Thimphu and its different parts are worth of note:

"As Dawa neared the town, night fell, and the first lights were switched on. Thimphu was like the dark sky full of stars; big bright ones, sparkling ones, little ones blinking shyly" ¹⁹

Apart from this brief introduction, there is 'Doebum Lam behind the big meat shop', 'Bridge of Prophecy', 'vegetable market', 'Motithang', 'Chagankha lakhang' etc. There are other places and passes too. Dawa's encounters and experiences at Pelela, Dochula, Kikila, Mongar, Bumthang, Tang etc and the portrayal of these places with their real features and significances also contributes to realism. However, the descriptions are very brief..

Buddhist values and Buddhism are another key dimension of the novelette without the discussion of which any analysis of the novelette is incomplete.. The characters including Dawa have deeper Buddhist values and beliefs. The peaceful atmosphere spread across the plot, the role of old witty guiding characters like Molay and Dampa, and Dawa's beliefs in monks, myth, peace, pilgrimage and reverence towards old age signify prevailing Buddhist values.

The old characters are symbolic and represent a class of Bhutanese that is often detached from the worldly affairs and devotes their life to spirituality. Molay, the old bitch credited with being the origin 'half the dog population in Paro' is portrayed as visionary, considerate, wise and witty through her discourse:

'Koto, I never minded how you look. I like you because you ask intelligent questions. All my descendents are so content and insular in their outlook. Paro is the world for them.....Poor things, so content that they forget that they are descendents of a great ancient lineage which they should uphold and be consciously proud of. They should be curious and ambitious to ask questions like you.' ²⁰

She attests the importance of her old age not only by guiding but also "...in an unhurried but dignified manner [by which she] planted a ticklish dry lick behind Dawa's right ear as gesture of blessing and farewell." ²¹

Another old character that resembles the aged Bhutanese in various respects is Dampa. He is a considerate critic and wise personality. He 'live(s) in Changankha, near the temple.....a loner.' Dampa represents a class of the old Bhutanese who laments over the glorious past and disintegrating values in the newer generation, which is a characteristic trait of senior citizens of modern Bhutanese society. Whether it is criticising Dawa for the way he speaks Dzongkha, or sending him to monks, or helping him to go on pilgrimage, Dampa's intention is to drive Dawa who represents younger generation, to move towards perfection in terms of cultural, ethical and older values so that they can be preserved.

Compassion and belief in karma are two basic characteristics of Buddhist monks. We find these two pronounced in a very practical way here in the novelette. The older monks have been portrayed in a very reverential manner and as true carriers of these characteristics and Buddhist values. The younger monks have been held up to ridicule for their moral and ethical deviations:

"....the monks used to speak Dzongkha, but not anymore. These days they are too exposed to and influenced by other cultures and languages. It's impact of TV, they say, and monks do enjoy watching a good deal of TV." ²²

Two old monks represent the traditional, compassionate, learned and devout monks. These are the monk at Changankha and the other at Thowadrak. The kindness of the

monk at Changankha is portrayed in a kindly light: "he dangled the fistful of rice he had been pounding into dough in his hands.....but the scent of monk definitely embedded in the rice dough..... The monk followed the traditional convention of putting small spittle on the rice to befriend a strange dog. Dawa would never forget this smell. No body had done that for him, and he nearly melted with happiness.....the monk had such a sweet and kind tone of voice, and the language he spoke was impeccable, the purest Dzongkha.....The monk often turned to him and spoke in the kindest and gentlest of tones: 'You poor dumb animal, if only you could speak we could have a good conversation. It must be some karmic connection that you should follow me so dutifully. You are a good companion' " ²³

The monk's instruction to the younger monk who was going to beat Dawa at the peak of his strength at Thowadrak is a sign of compassion:

"...the lama suddenly stopped in his tracks and looked at him, then clapped his hands in childlike delight and let out a single loud laugh. 'Ha stop, Phuentsho,' he shouted and held Phuentsho's hand just as the young monk had raised his stick high above Dawa's head.....Look. Look. I say, I say look at the dog, it has such a comical face. It is almost like he is saying something to me. It is so pathetic with its mange. May be it came to us for protection. May be it has a karmic connection to this sacred site. Poor thing. Let it be. " ²⁴

There are some similar elder characters who have such outlook deeply embedded in them. The chapter on *Thowadrak* provides a glimpse of Bhutanese attitude towards holy places.

The novel also contrasts rural life and urban life from the eyes of Dawa. Thimphu for him is a big place with market and a variety of people with urban idiosyncrasies like having pet, big bungalows, care-takers, critics, a few people to visit that lhakhang at Memorial Chorten.

Though for him Thimphu is a place where 'more people' live and 'more people means more food....., and more food means more dogs'²⁵ but after Dawa's arrival in Thimphu we see that city life has been portrayed as a life of business, challenges and struggles. On the other hand, when, in later chapters, we see Dawa in villages, we find him living contentedly, happily and peacefully. Though he is not a leader in villages, yet he feels more happiness than before.

The difficulties faced by villagers due to the lack of facilities are presented indirectly in contrast to the privileges enjoyed by their urban counterparts. This representation is mild and natural throughout but it becomes poignant, sharp and sarcastic when the narrator, through Dawa's eyes, describes *Tang*. Here is a glimpse.

"There was no electricity, no telephone. But the people were resourceful; even without telephones, they could communicate very effectively." ²⁶

And the way they communicate:

"...two old women standing very precariously on a small mound and cupping their hands around her mouth. The other, who was leaning heavily on a walking stick, was standing by the old women on the mound. She extended one hand to support her friend so that she did not lose her balance. The old woman on the mound coughed and cleared her throat before she shouted, 'Dasho-are-coming-for -a-question-and-answer-

meeting-tomorrow-each-household-must-bring-eggs-or-butter-cheese-and-chili-and-gather-at-the-kinzom-bridge-pass-on-the-message'... " 27

Similarly in *the full moon night* there are two rural women 'carrying heavy baskets on their backs who win our sympathy with their simple attitudes:

"Don't look down the cliff. Look instead toward the hillside, and I will guide you.' Holding hands the women trailed along the narrow footpath, carefully placing one foot after the other and literally shuffling along any trail." 28

Human behaviour coloured with greed and other moral flaws are the butt of criticism too. The author is harsh and humorous while dealing with human beings in contrast to the dogs. In some cases, the criticism becomes quite severe: "They (residents of Thimphu) were more or less immune to the nightly canine howling, just as the people in the biggest cities of the world are not bothered by the continuous flow of traffic and the loud sirens that scream through the streets, day and night." 29

The wretchedness of humans is condemned in various places: 'Some wretched person had laced the meat with deadly poison, proof of the killer instinct in the human beings. Humans were not to be trusted." 30

Dawa's learning makes him a laughing stock, to get ridiculed by Dampa: "You look ridiculous, just like a human being...We must learn from the human beings but we must never imitate them." 31

Another conversation that ridicules human beings is in *the full-moon night* where the three women reach the Thowadrak after a long tiresome and fearsome journey with loads of gifts and offerings. The care-taker receives them in a way that intrigues us:

"Receiving the presents, the caretaker said, 'there is no need for gifts. You should not have carried anything for me all the way up. Should you not keep them for the Lama? You don't have to give me all this....'

"We have presents for the Lama. These are for you..." 32

Dishonesty, another flaw in modern people is marked in an instance in Thimphu where the two workers throw the meat rather than pack it as instructed by the owner. They throw smaller pieces from the back-door as packing them is not convenient for them.

Even the flaws in bureaucracy are highlighted by the writer. The chapter *In Tang* is a scathing criticism of useless administrative procedures. The conversation of the two old women praises the innocence of rural people, their exploitation and the useless formalities. The chapter gives us a brief but serious picture of what happens at village meetings. Through her rural characters, writer questions the usefulness of such meeting where villagers don't know anything about meetings:

"I don't know. The message did not say which Dasho. Must be some junior Government official..... These days every Government official is a Dasho when they come into our villages."

This is a comment on the meetings:

" 'After all the meetings we have attended, our uneducated villagers do not understand the implication of meetings yet.....'

You are ever so hopeful. Remember the last meeting? After we had waited the whole day, the young Dasho asked some questions like "Do you prefer Swiss Brown or Jersey cows. And give 10 reasons for your preference"

.....

Were you there at the meeting when the officials asked why we don't like wild boars in our crop-fields? " 33

One may feel that the writer's aim in portraying this incident is to make us laugh but it is not so. It demands us to rethink rural issues with a different sense. The later part of the incident makes the writer's motive clear. In fact, the chapter *In Tang* is a window to the pains and exploitation rural people go through. People from far places of the valley walk into the appointed places with cheese, eggs, rice, butter, and ara for the meeting and wait for a long time in the sun. Later, they are informed 'without any greeting or apology' about the postponement of the meeting. They are asked to make sure that they come the next day otherwise the absentees would be fined.

The irony here is that if the officials don't come the next day, then they would be informed when they should come again. The incident asks us to think seriously about village life and its pains. It appears that the author wants to say that villagers' pains and sufferings are beyond the apperception of those who rarely walk but move in cars, who enjoy the warmth of room-heaters when the villagers suffer cold, who have A.Cs to shield themselves from the heat of the sun.

Conclusion

There may be reservations to regarding "Dawa" as a novel in English, but the novelette is an important piece of work in various senses. It has tried to fill the void in local writing. It has given an answer to those who lament over the shortage of Bhutanese literature in English and shown the way to newcomers. Though the novelette discusses various aspects of Bhutanese society in brief, yet it presents them in purposeful manner. The local references are woven artistically with the plot. The plot is a microcosm of changing Bhutan. The characters are fictitious yet they represent different cross-sections of society. The novel is a window to various aspects of Bhutanese society.

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Performance of Class X Students in Language and Grammar: A Trend Study

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Abstract

This study is primarily a trend study aimed at determining the performance of Class X students in language and grammar. Besides its primary aim of trying to establish a pattern in Class X students' performance in language and grammar over a period of time, this study intends to find correlations between the students' writing performance and different social, linguistic and demographic factors. While the study may not be comprehensive and exhaustive, it will certainly bring to light some of the factors on which, by and large, their performance hinges. The patterns and themes that emerge from this study will be established and validated by subsequent studies over the next few years. Although the subsequent studies of the same type will be linked to this study, the cross-sectional data of this and each future study will stand as a separate entity in its own right.

Background

English is truly *the* global language. Its use is international and its significance unquestionable. English is all the more significant for countries like Bhutan. But for our ability to use the English language, a country like Bhutan can languish on the sidelines of the international community and remain in the backwaters of scientific and technological progress. English is a vital fibre of the global village.

Bhutan's tryst with the English language was made as soon as it started its modern education system. When the modern western-style education system was first

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introduced in the country in the early 1950s, the medium of instruction was Hindi. But soon, the country, which was just beginning to open itself up to the wider world, came to realize the greater importance of English. Subsequently, in 1966, some primers and readers in English and *Choekey* were developed. Then, the medium of instruction was switched from Hindi to English. By the early 1960s, English as one of the media of instruction in the country received priority equal to Dzongkha. This is evident from the report the former Prime Minister, Lyonchhen Jigme Y Thinley, made to the 82nd session of the National Assembly in July, 2004.

We remain grateful for the wise policy of His Majesty the late King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck to take full advantage of the English language which is in fact the international language- the language of the sciences, technologies, trade, and international relations.

Indeed! Besides it being one of the media of instruction, English has long been used as one of the official languages in Bhutan. In fact, the Bhutanese have preferred English to Dzongkha in official correspondence and meetings. It is, therefore, that the National Assembly resolved that only Dzongkha be used in official correspondence and meetings except when non-Bhutanese are involved. Even His Majesty the King himself has issued a decree underlining the importance of Dzongkha and significance of its promotion through a wider use of it. But English is still widely used in official correspondence and it is heard more than Dzongkha in official meetings.

It is against the backdrop of the high priority that English has received in the country that one starkly sees concerns over its standard. After a few decades of using English as an important medium of instruction as well as communication, Bhutan has for sometime now begun to doubt whether it is up to the mark in its use. It is the importance such as a Kuenselonline writer attaches to English that gives rise to the concerns over its standard.

English as the international language is the language of science and technology and commerce. It is also the language of our relations with the global community. For a country like Bhutan, whose own nascent national language is in the process of development, English plays a vital role to open ourselves up to the wider world. ...English has stood Bhutan in good stead. It is, in fact, through the good use of this foreign language that we have come to the present state of socio-economic development. ...We know that English is indispensable in our quest to be part of mainstream global transformation. If we cannot do without it, it would be always wise to use it well... (date: July 8, 2005)

So how well do we use English? The answers to this question have been at best not encouraging and at worst worrying. For quite a few years now, the Bhutanese, especially those in the education circle and the corridors of power, have had a perception that the standard of English in Bhutan has declined or is on the decline.

While we have good reasons to be gratified with our success in the domain of educational provision, we are beginning to feel concerned about the quality of our output measured in terms of the performance of our students graduating from our schools and institutes. We are particularly concerned over the declining standard of languages especially English. (Lyonpo Sangay Ngedup, former Education Minister, in his forward to *The Silken Knot: The Standards for English for Schools in Bhutan*)

This perception, whether it is grounded or naïve, is now spilling over to open public forums like educational meetings, seminars and online forums.

Why has English in our schools deteriorated? I feel this is mainly due to the introduction of NAPE system in our schools. ... Is deterioration or lowering of standard of English in schools due to lack of proficient English teachers in schools or due to lack of concerted effort required to be put on in studying English by the students? (date: July 8, 2005)

The above Kuenselonline writer has already believed that the standard of English in the Bhutanese schools has declined. He is now contemplating where the rains started beating us. But an opinion on RAOonline Bhutan is less impulsive and more pragmatic:

Is there a decline in the standard of English in schools in Bhutan, or is the notion merely “perceived”? There is no definite answer. One group- including many teachers around the country feels that the standard is deteriorating. Other teachers pointed out that the decline could be attributed to the “cumulative effect” of many factors. For instance, the young age of students and cramped classrooms could have a lot to do with the falling standard. Some educationists, however, do not agree that the standard of English is declining. Students themselves think that they “are doing pretty fine in English”.

In the same vein, Zangpo (2005) asks whether the perception among the Bhutanese that the standard of English in the country has declined or is declining holds water.

Going by the flurry of activities initiated by the erstwhile Ministry of Health and Education and the current Ministry of Education, the official line of opinion on the standard of English in the country is not far from that of the general public. Not that the official line of opinion is being swayed by the increasingly popular general perception.

Wiley et al (1998) have observed that English language development needs to be guided by specific goals and standards for the traditional skill areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing. They also observed that in schools with linguistically diverse populations, an explicit focus on English language development should be an even greater concern.

It is in this knowledge that Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD) in 2002 developed a set of standards for English to be followed by the Bhutanese schools. *The Silken Knot: Standards for English in Schools in Bhutan* was published as a tool to measure the standard of English in the Bhutanese schools. The birth of this standards document can be attributed to the perception of decline in the standard of English in the country, and the need to establish respectable exit standards for our students at various levels of their schooling.

Following the publication of *The Silken Knot*, from January 27, 2003, to February 5, 2003, a workshop highlighting presentations on the Standards and implementation of the recommendations was organised to make sure that the Standards were effectively implemented in the schools. Fifty-five English teachers from across the country attended the workshop facilitated by the Director of CERD, teacher trainers from the two NIEs and two Dzongkhag Education Officers.

More recently though, there have been more scathing criticisms of the standard of English in the country. Senior and more experienced officials that form the cream of the society have begun to say that even a university graduate cannot write a proper application. This criticism too has found its way to Kuenselonline:

...education system in our country is ... jack of all trade and master of none ... even a [university] graduate cannot write an application properly, and you can imagine ... class XII passouts... (date: October, 20, 2004)

While for some, this 'unfortunate phenomenon' draws a bold line under the standard of English in the country, for others, it is an isolated case of our raw graduates lacking specific skills. For the latter, one swallow does not make a summer.

In fact, *The Silken Knot*, one of CERD's first publications, took birth from such recent criticisms, debates and concerns over the standard of English in the country. With the establishment of CERD, the concept of research leading to plans and policies has become a greater reality. Many of the Ministry of Education's initiatives to improve the standard of English in the country came as a direct response to the recommendations made by CERD in its maiden study on the standard of English that resulted in the publication of *The Silken Knot*, and other studies like *The Profile of High School English Teachers*. The overhaul of English curriculum and the Post Graduate Diploma in the Teaching of English for in-service teachers of Classes IX to XII are cases in point.

In 2004, the Ministry of Education took a bold step to review and reform the English curriculum from Class PP to XII. The revised curriculum is expected to make teaching-learning process student-centred and enable our students to learn enough language skills in the modern idiom. While the ministry's intent is on updating and enriching the curriculum and make teaching-learning process more vibrant, there is a mild undercurrent of fear in some critical observers that the curriculum content is watered-down a little in the name of skills development in the students.

In a bid to determine and monitor the quality of education in the country, the Bhutan Board of Examinations is in the process of doing the National Education Assessment (NEA) in Literacy and Numeracy. In this system-wide study, English is one of the first subjects to be put under the microscope. The NEA at Class VI level was completed in 2003. The NEA at Class X level is underway.

From 2005, the Ministry of Education started a Post Graduate Diploma in the Teaching of English for in-service teachers of Classes IX to XII. This programme was initiated to boost the teachers' teaching skills and upgrade their professionalism and qualifications.

Today, English is learnt in the Bhutanese schools as one of the mandatory subjects from pre-primary level to pre-university level.

It is in the light of all these opinions and concerns about the language in Bhutan that the current standard of English in Bhutan should be seen and the cumulative effect of all these activities should be studied.

Literature Review

Factors affecting students' academic achievement have always been a crucial topic for research around the world. The education system being relatively young in Bhutan,

studies in this area are rare. Despite the fact that the education system is just beginning to understand the concept and significance of research, some promising progress has already been made.

Silken Knot: Standards for English for Schools in Bhutan (CERD, 2002) observed that students in Bhutanese schools 'are relying on skills and information which they have developed in the lower grade levels where they were taught to read, write, spell and speak to a level appropriate to their age and development. They need to build on these and to do so need further direct instruction in the upper grade levels in each of the areas of English addressed by the Standards.' The document also observed that since both students and teachers were judged on the success of students in the examinations, the role of the teachers came to be defined as 'the explicators of text and the students' role as recorders of the explanations, usually directly into the textbook.

'The Primary Schools and the Junior High Schools up to Class VII do a better job of teaching a fuller range of English knowledge and skills. Beyond that level, however, the teaching of English for the most part has been reduced to the transmission of approved information for the examinations, including the practice/send-up examinations.'

National Education Assessment in Bhutan: A Benchmark Study of Student Achievement in Literacy and Numeracy at Class VI (BBE, 2004) suggested that in teaching and learning of English at Class VI level, 'more reading instruction takes place than speaking, with grammar falling somewhere between them. More writing appears to take place than any of the other areas.' The document recommended that 'in-service workshop should emphasize teaching of balanced language skills.'

Zangpo (2005) found out that in terms of writing performance, '66.4% of Class VI and 43.2% of Class V students are working at the level expected to be fit for Classes PP and I. A mere 13.8% of Class VI students and 7.7% of Class V are working at the level set for Classes IV or V. 19.8% of Class VI, 49% of Class V, and the whole of Class IV students do not at all have a place in *The Silken Knot*'. The study also observed that the children in urban primary schools do better in written English than the children in rural primary schools. 'The dichotomy set between rural schools and good standard of English is, therefore, reasonable.'

Away from home, studies have concluded that the amount of television viewing has a direct effect on students' academic achievement, particularly in their writing skills. Studies reported that achievement scores in reading, mathematics, and written expression were 'sharply lower' among students who viewed more than six hours of television per day (Felter, 1984, cited in Thompson et al, 2003). But it is reported that 'the type of programming is more important than the intrinsic qualities of the medium itself' (Thompson et al, 2003).

Caldwell et al (1996), Cromwell (1997) and Okpala et al (2000) have reported that student achievement is influenced by parents' education level. In general, 'children of parents with higher levels of education perform better, on average, on assessments of academic achievement.' The study also indicated that the high school graduates from high-income families are more likely than high school graduates from low-income families to go directly to college.

Studies have also concluded that students' attendance in school is a strong determinant of their academic achievement (Betts R et al, 2003).

Research Question and Purpose of Study

Owing to difficult geographical settings, cultural, social and linguistic diversity, schools in Bhutan have remarkably different teaching-learning environments. While no study has so far been done in the country to find out how different factors affect students' academic performance and to what degree, studies in the region and further afield have shown that socio-cultural and linguistic factors play a big role in students' performance.

Studies have also shown that the effect on students' performance in English is starkly evident where a number of cultures and languages come into play in an enclosed environment.

The school environment in Bhutan is such that it reverberates with at least four languages: English, Dzongkha, Lhotshamkha and Tshangla. While English is their second language for native Dzongkha speakers in the western region of the country, for the speakers of other languages, it is their third language in a strict sense of the term. Officially, schools in Bhutan are bilingual. Dzongkha and English are the media of instruction across the country. While Dzongkha is used only in the learning of the subject itself (with the exception of recently introduced Environmental Studies in Dzongkha in primary schools), all other subjects are learnt through the English medium. Therefore, students in Bhutan are faced with a dual challenge of learning English and using English to learn. This will have serious implications on how the language is learnt.

Primarily, the current study is intended to be a trend study of Class X students' performance in language and grammar. It will look at the performance of Class X students in selected schools over a period and establish a pattern. The primary question, therefore, is: How do Class X students in Bhutan perform in language and grammar? This question will have many sub-questions. Where is Class X students' performance in language and grammar heading by the year? How fast or slow is the pace of the upward or downward trend? How consistent is the trend? In other words, this study will try to find out the performance standard of Class X students in language and grammar. Here, it is important to be clear about the difference between content standards and performance standards.

Content standards are designed to define what a student is to be able to know or do. Performance standards are intended to specify how well the students achieve the standard and at what level of performance they are able to achieve it. A student's level of performance is evaluated in terms of benchmarks (Wiley et al, 1998). Content standards focus upon what students should know and be able to do, whereas performance standards determine 'how good is good enough' (cited in Doan F Marie, 1998).

While this study may not establish a normative performance standard in written English in the country, it will yield some generalizable findings by virtue of its longitudinal as well as cross-sectional data collection strategy.

Besides being a trend study, this research intends to determine the correlation between different socio-economic, linguistic and demographic variables and students' academic performance.

Students' performance will be determined by a written test based on their syllabus.

The independent variables in the study will be gender, type of school, education background of parents, mother tongue, choice of television channel and personal interest. Independent variables are variables that (probably) cause, influence, or affect outcomes (Creswell W, 2003).

Among the dependent variables are age, the language students speak at home and in school, the amount of time students study outside school hours, the teacher input, students' effort and hard work, students' reading habit, students' attendance in school, students' participation in literary programmes, the amount of time students spend watching television and whether students are boarders or day-scholars. Dependent variables are variables that depend on the independent variables; they are the outcomes or the results of the influence of the independent variables (Creswell W, 2003).

The intervening or mediating variables in the study will include the distance students walk to school, the amount of time students study English outside school hours, the amount of time students get to practise writing in English, the types of books students read, students' motivation in learning English and availability of a television set in their homes. Intervening or mediating variables are variables that "stand between" the independent and dependent variables, and they mediate the effects of independent variable on the dependent variable. (Creswell W, 2003).

The study will seek to determine how students' writing performance is influenced by the above dependent variables, how the dependent variables are in turn influenced by intervening variables and how the correlation between all the variables are controlled by the control variables. For instance, how does the educational background of parents affect students' language and grammar skills and how students' linguistic background correlates with their performance.

Besides its intent of establishing a broad pattern of students' performance over the years, this study will also establish a pattern in the correlation between the student performance and socio-economic and demographic factors. For example, if the educational background of parents is found to be affecting the performance of students, the study will try to find out, in the following years, whether this finding is consistent.

Since this study coincided with the high school English curriculum revision, it will find out a link between the current curriculum and the revised curriculum. It will find out how the revised curriculum impacts the student's writing skill.

Significance of Study

At a time when the whole of the country is debating the standard of English in our schools and the government is taking a number of concerted efforts to address the problems that might be affecting the standard of English, this study will be a part in the national scheme of activities as well as an individual piece of research.

In a wider national context, this study will put the general opinion on the performance of Class X students in language and grammar into some kind of perspective on two counts. This study is cross-sectional as well as longitudinal. It covers a fair number of students in both urban and semi-urban settings. Therefore, the findings will be quite generalizable.

In view of the study's findings, one will be able to gauge at least one skill area of English. The performance standard of students will be highly significant when seen against the backdrop of the content standard represented by *The Silken Knot*. The juxtaposition of the performance standard with the content standard will expose the gap between the two.

The study will not only expose the gap between the performance standard and the content standard, it will also reveal factors that have created the gap. The recommendations for bridging the gap will naturally emerge from the findings of the study.

Besides, this study will also shed light on how wide the gap between the performance standard and the content standard is and how fast it is growing or shrinking. This will give the educational planners and policy-makers reasons for concern, worry, or hope. Thus, problems can be arrested.

This study will be useful to other stakeholders in education who in the Bhutanese society play a smaller role in the education of young children. They are particularly parents, guardians and relatives, who have a huge stake in the education of youth. While studies around the world have indicated that parents are as important as teachers and school environment in the education of their children, Bhutanese children are largely left to be nurtured by teachers, often only within the four walls of the classroom. This study will highlight some of the areas in which parents and guardians can play significant roles in the education of their children.

Furthermore, this study will inform the decisions and actions of teachers and school authorities, which will have a direct bearing on student achievement. The findings of the study will, for instance, show whether the teacher's giving homework to the student and correcting it on a regular basis has any implication on student performance, or whether boarding facilities can help boost the student's academic achievement.

Apart from policy and decision implications of the findings, the study will be highly significant in its own right as a benchmark study of Class X language and grammar. A similar study some five or ten years down the line, when compared with the present study, will yield significant results on the much-debated standard of English in the country.

Fortunately, this study will be the last one to be done on the students who have studied the current English curriculum. One or two years from now, when the new curriculum comes into force, there will be a significant shift in the teaching-learning process, which will directly impact on student achievement. A similar study of this kind in the future, which will be based on the new curriculum, will be a benchmark study on the new curriculum. Thus, a comparison between the old and the new curricula will naturally emerge.

Method

The study is largely quantitative for it is basically an objective study of discovering facts and trends inductively through use of statistics. Interviews, observations and documents were not used.

For this study, cluster sampling was used because the site of the study included eleven higher and middle secondary schools. The school authorities were requested to

arrange a section of Class X consisting of 40 students. Accordingly, except for Darla Higher Secondary School, exactly 40 students were taken from each of the school. If the section chosen by the school authorities had more than 40 students, extra students were asked to be withdrawn on a voluntary basis. If the number of students in the section chosen, however, was below 40, the required numbers of students were randomly picked up from any other section.

The sample was selected for the researchers by the school authorities based on the school's convenience. Therefore, the selection process of the sample was nonprobability or convenience sampling (Babbie, 1990, as cited in Creswell W, 2003)

In the choice of sample, the researchers did not do any stratification, which meant that specific demographic characteristics of individuals (e.g., sex, age) were not pre-determined and the sample would not reflect the true proportion of individuals with certain characteristics of the population (Fowler, 1988, cited in Creswell W, 2003). All the variables that were under observation in the study were left to come into play naturally. The sections chosen, though, already had fairly balanced number of boys and girls with a fair age range.

The samples were selected from three districts: Thimphu, Paro and Chukha. Three high schools each were taken from Thimphu and Paro Dzongkhags, and four high schools from Chukha Dzongkhag. The high schools are: Yangchenphu Higher Secondary School (YHSS), Motithang Middle Secondary School (MMSS) and Lungtenzampa Middle Secondary School (LMSS) in Thimphu Dzongkhag; Drukgyel Higher Secondary School (DHSS), Shaba Middle Secondary School (SMSS) and Gaupel Middle Secondary School (GMSS) in Paro Dzongkhag; Tsimalakha Higher Secondary School (THSS), Darla Higher Secondary School (DRHSS), Chapcha Middle Secondary School (CMSS), Gedu Middle Secondary School (GDMSS) and Phuntsholing Higher Secondary School (PHSS) in Chukha Dzongkhag. From this point, the above abbreviations will be used to refer to the schools.

The eleven schools were divided into two categories based on their social settings: urban and semi-urban. The schools in the urban setting include YHSS, MMSS, LMSS, DHSS, SMSS, GMSS, PHSS, and the schools in the semi-urban setting are DRHSS, CMSS, THSS, and GDMSS.

The study covered a total of 430 students in 11 schools which is a fair representation of Class X students in the 11 schools.

This study used two research instruments- a questionnaire and a test paper. In the study, the test score represents student achievement in language and grammar. The test paper, which was based on Class X syllabus, tested the students in comprehension, essay writing, poetry, and language skills. As in their national level examinations, the test paper carried 100 marks and took two hours to complete.

Initially, two test papers and a questionnaire were prepared. Two test papers and the questionnaire were piloted to some 50 Class XI students in the beginning of 2005 in DHSS. The reason for pilot-testing the items on Class XI students was that the students would just have been promoted to Class XI and their level of knowledge would be what was expected of Class X students. After pilot-testing, the better of the two test papers was selected. The ambiguities and technical errors in both the questionnaire and the test paper that emerged on pilot-testing were pruned away.

The questionnaire contained variables that cause, influence, or affect student performance. Both the questionnaire and the test paper were self-administered. The test paper was carefully prevented from leaking both during and after the study.

Data Analysis

After the test and the questionnaire were administered, the answer papers were evaluated by the researchers and another relevant person. The answer papers were strictly evaluated to determine the true picture of the students' performance. The paper evaluators made sure that no element of sympathy or consideration that often came into play in schools distorted the true picture.

Once the papers were thoroughly evaluated and marked, the test score became a dependent variable which could be influenced or affected by many independent variables. The student test score became the central data of analysis. The student test score, when juxtaposed with the independent variables, showed the relationship between the students' writing performance and socio-linguistic and demographic factors.

The data were analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). The analysis mainly focused on correlations, cross-tabulations, comparison of mean scores and percentage points. While more than 99% of the data were analysed statistically, a broad theme was developed from the students' reasons for their love for or dislike of English.

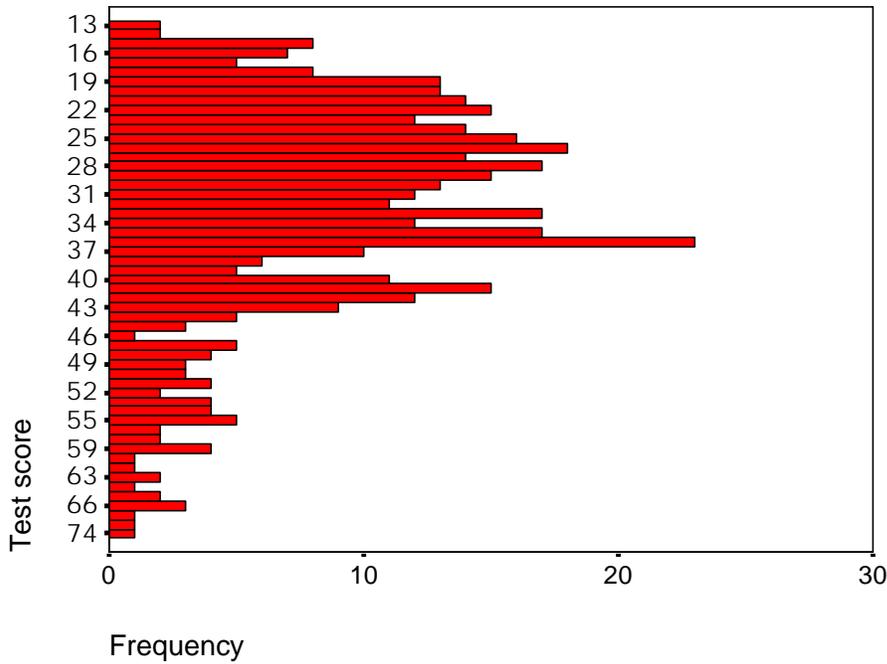
Correlations between Mean Test Scores and Different Variables

Table 1. Overall mean test score

Numbers	Valid	430
	Missing	0
Mean		32.81
Median		31.00
Mode		36
Std. Deviation		11.714
Skewness		.829
Std. Error of Skewness		.118
Percentiles	25	24.00
	75	40.00

Figure 1

Overall mean test score



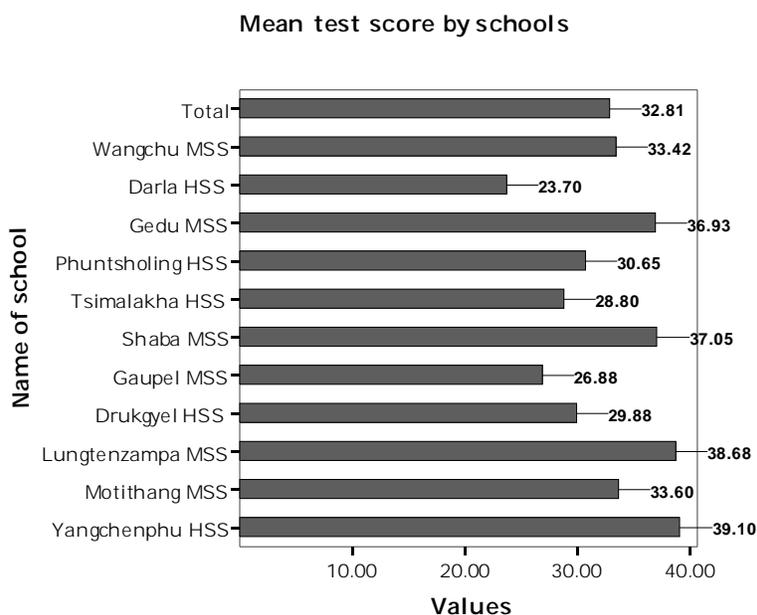
Overall mean test score: The overall mean score of the students stands at a little below 33 (total=100). As Figure 1 shows, the score curve is negatively skewed with the number of students ebbing away in the higher score range, which means that the majority of students have scored below the mean. This is also clear from Table 1. While the upper quartile stands at 40, the lower quartile is 24.

Table 2. Mean test score by school

Name of school	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum score	Maximum score	% of total number
Yangchenphu HSS	39.10	12.539	18	74	9.3%
Motithang MSS	33.60	12.645	15	65	9.3%
Lungtenzampa MSS	38.68	14.862	14	70	9.3%
Drukgyel HSS	29.88	9.482	15	56	9.3%
Gaupel MSS	26.88	10.776	15	64	9.3%
Shaba MSS	37.05	9.524	22	66	9.3%
Tsimalakha HSS	28.80	8.835	14	54	9.3%
Phuntsholing HSS	30.65	10.705	13	55	9.3%
Gedu MSS	36.93	9.598	22	66	9.3%
Darla HSS	23.70	8.425	13	55	7.0%
Wangchu MSS	33.42	9.716	19	62	9.3%

Total	32.81	11.714	13	74	100.0%
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Figure 2



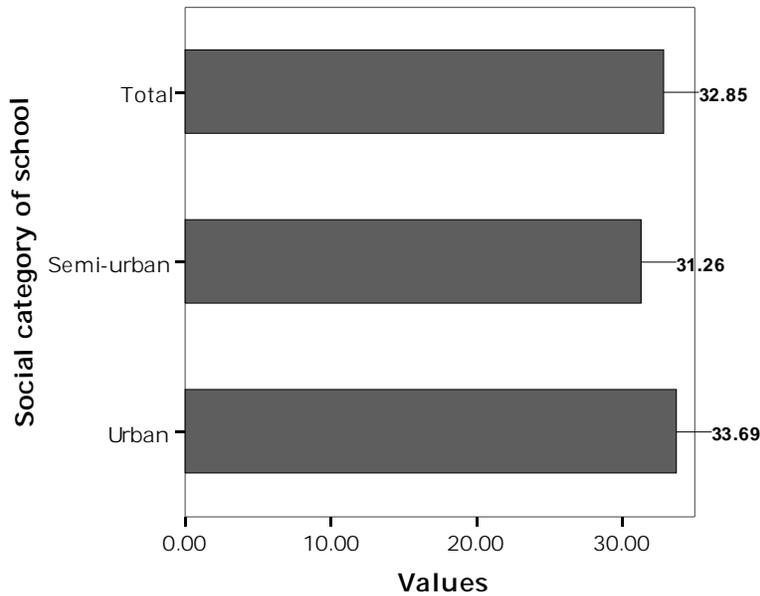
Mean test scores by school: In terms of mean test score, Yangchenphu HSS and Lungtenzampa MSS are in the lead with 39.10 and 38.60 respectively. Interestingly, the highest score and the lowest score are from the schools with the highest mean score and the lowest mean score respectively. There is a big difference of 15.40 score points between the mean scores of Yangchenphu HSS and Darla HSS. For Darla HSS, the standard deviation too is smaller than that of Yangchenphu HSS which means that the scores are less likely to be much higher or lower than mean.

Table 3. Mean test score by social setting of school

Social category of school	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Urban	33.69	12.335	74	13	65.3%
Semi-urban	31.26	10.285	66	13	34.7%
Total	32.85	11.709	74	13	100.0%

Figure 3

Mean test score by social setting of school



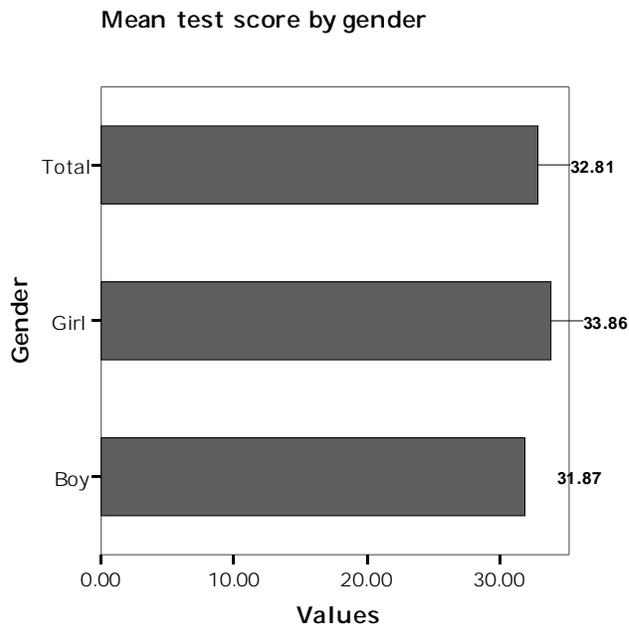
Mean test score by social setting of school: The mean test score of the urban students is higher than that of the semi-urban students by 2.43 score points. The scores of both the groups of students do not deviate much from the mean.

However, the difference in range is quite significant. While for the former, it is 61, it is 53 for the latter. Although the mean test score of the urban students as a whole is slightly better than that of semi-urban students, taken school-wise, it is as inconsistent as that of semi-urban students as evident in Table 1. The mean test scores of two of the urban schools are below that of some semi-urban schools. The overall mean score of the urban students is mainly boosted by the mean test scores of Yangchenphu HSS, Lungtenzampa MSS and Shaba MSS (See Table 1). The urban students constitute 65.3% of the total number because 7 schools in the sample are from the urban areas.

Table 4. Mean test score by gender

Gender	Mean	Std. deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Boy	31.87	11.984	68	13	52.6%
Girl	33.86	11.347	74	13	47.4%
Total	32.81	11.714	74	13	100.0%

Figure 4



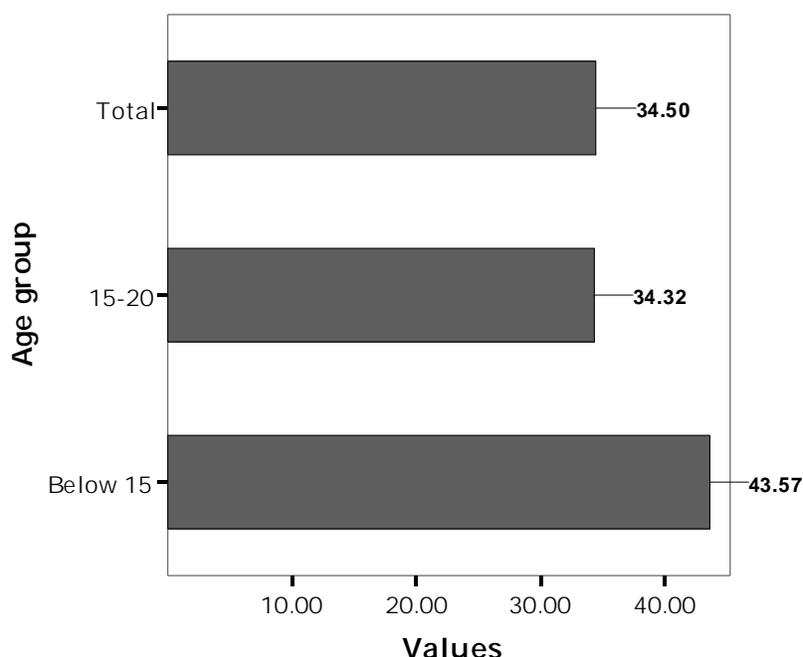
Mean test score by gender: As shown in Table 4 and Figure 4, the mean score of girls is higher by almost 2 score points than that of boys. This difference in mean score is small, but considering the almost negligible difference in standard deviation, it is significant. Consider the range. It is significantly higher in case of girls. All of these indicate that, in any case, the girls, as a whole, are slightly better than the boys.

Table 5. Mean test score by age group

Age group	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total numbers
Below 15	43.57	16.339	68	21	2.0%
15-20	34.32	21.105	74	13	98.0%
Total	34.50	21.043	74	13	100.0%

Figure 5

Mean test score by age group



Mean test score by age group: Reasonably, 98% of the students fall in the age group of 15-20 years old. The mean score of the 2% who are below 15 years of age is much higher than the older group despite the fact that poor performance of even one or two of them would have seriously affected their mean score. It is interesting to surmise that the 2% of under 15-year-olds would have been admitted to school latest by four years of age. Or they would have skipped a class level or two on account of their outstanding academic performance, which is less likely in the present education system. Otherwise, if they were admitted to school at the youngest permissible age of six years, they would already have been 16 years of age in Class X.

It will be interesting to see who the parents of these children are and where they come from.

Table 6. Parental background and under-15 children

Mother's occupation	Age group	Father's occupation					Total
		Farmer	Businessman	Government servant	Lay monk	Others	
Farmer	Below 15	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housewife	Below 15	0	0	2	0	0	2
Business woman	Below 15	0	1	0		0	1
Government servant	Below 15		0	2		2	4

Others	Below 15	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total						2	7

Table 7. Social category of school and number of under-15 children

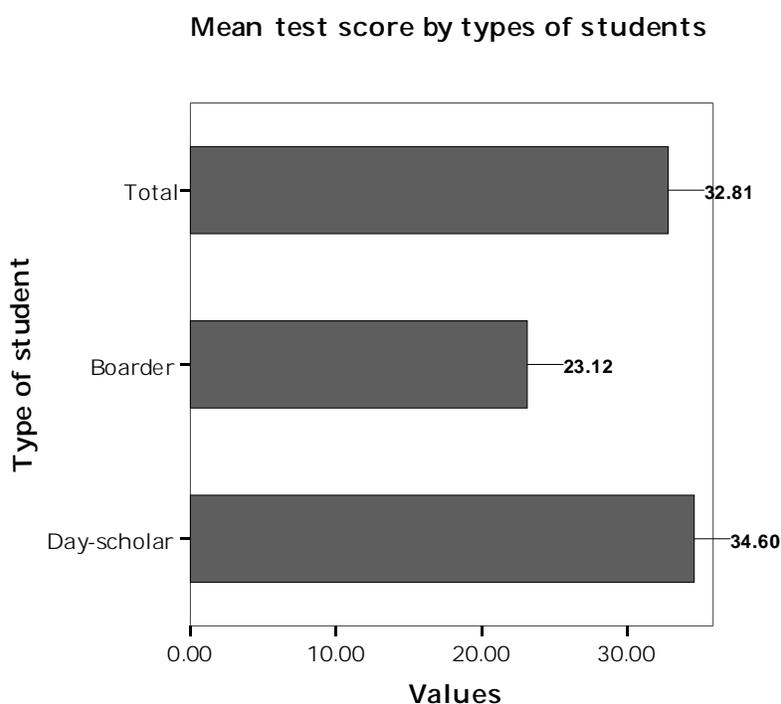
		Social category of school		
		Urban	Semi-urban	Total
Age group	Below 15	6	1	7

Table 6 and Table 7 show that the children of parents working as government servants in an urban setting are more likely to be admitted to school and attend higher classes at a younger age than the children of farmers and lay monks living in a semi-urban setting.

Table 8. Mean test score by types of students

Type of student	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Day-scholar	34.60	11.605	74	13	84.4%
Boarder	23.12	6.345	42	13	15.6%
Total	32.81	11.714	74	13	100.0%

Figure 6

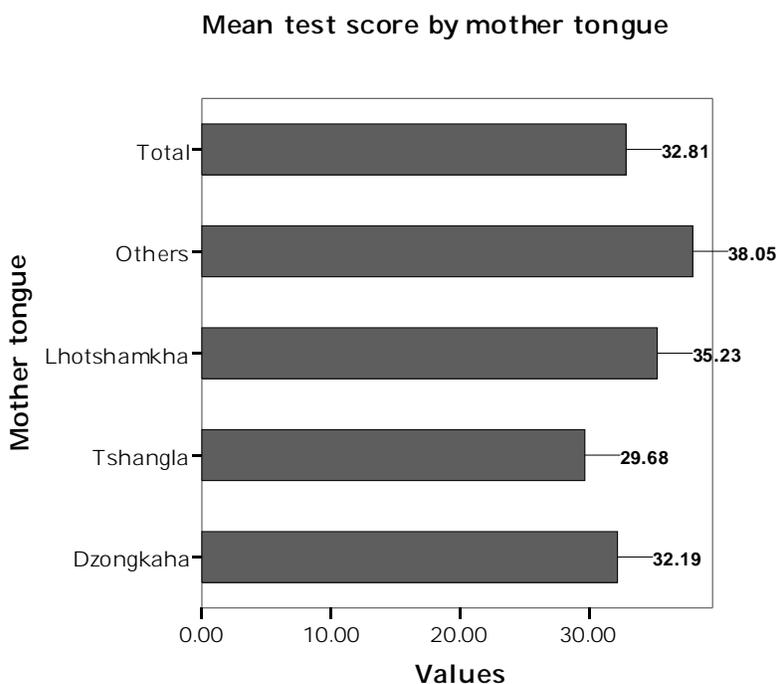


Mean test score by types of students: As Table 8 and Figure 6 show, there is a difference of 11.48 score points between the mean test score of boarders and day-scholars. The range difference between the two is also significant. In a way, this figure is interesting. While boarders are generally presumed to get more time for and guidance in study and co-curricular activities and, therefore, expected to perform better, day-scholars have done better. This cannot be a statistical anomaly. It may be that educated urban parents and guardians are providing better and more guidance to their school children than schools.

Table 9. Mean test score by mother tongue

Mother tongue	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Dzongkha	32.19	11.648	74	13	46.0%
Tshangla	29.68	10.239	56	13	23.3%
Lhotshamkha	35.23	11.583	66	15	20.9%
Others	38.05	13.146	70	20	9.8%
Total	32.81	11.714	74	13	100.0%

Figure 7



Mean test score by mother tongue: As shown in Table 9 and Figure 7, the speakers of languages other than Dzongkha, Tshangla and Lhotshamkha have the highest mean score. *Others* include other Bhutanese languages as well as non-Bhutanese languages. The Bhutanese languages include the regional languages like Kurtoepkha, Bumtapkha, Khengkha and Mangdepkha, the non-Bhutanese languages include the regional Indian languages like Hindi, Bengali and Urdu. It is possible that the mean score of *others* is significantly boosted by some well-performing Indian children studying in some of the schools.

Among the speakers of our own languages, the speakers of Lhotshamkha have the highest mean score. Although the difference between the mean scores of the speakers of three languages is small, considering the negligible difference in standard deviation, mean scores are significant.

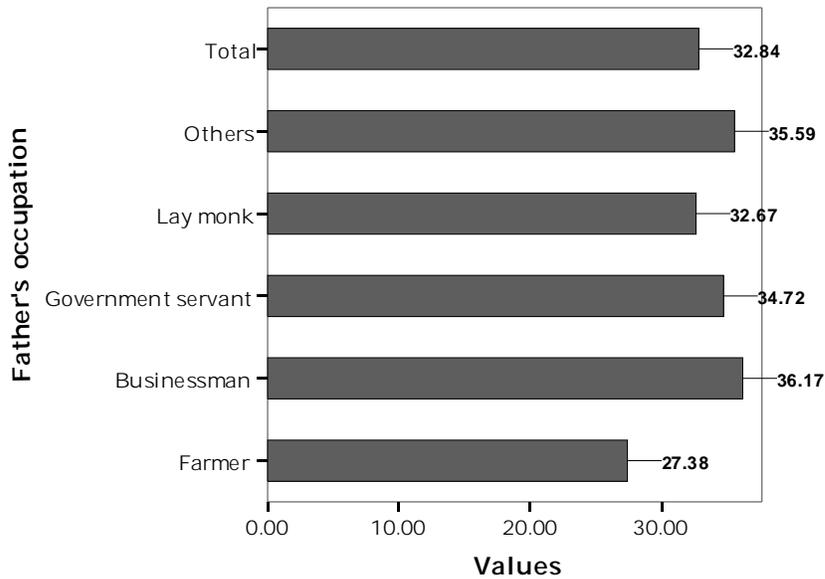
A significant factor could have contributed to the better performance of the speakers of Lhotshamkha: parental background. The schools under study are mostly in the regions where there are virtually no Lhotshamkha speaking communities. Therefore, it is very unlikely that the Lhotshamkha speaking participants in the study are children of farming parents and highly likely that their parents are educated government servants and private employees who stay in the region. We see that the children of educated parents have performed better (see Table 10 & 11, Figure 8 & 9). Even if their parents are farmers back in their hometowns, their guardians must be public or private employees with some level of education.

Table 10. Mean test score by father's occupation

Father's occupation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Farmer	27.38	7.816	62	13	30.1%
Businessman	36.17	13.493	66	13	21.4%
Government servant	34.72	11.898	74	15	43.8%
Lay monk	32.67	5.774	36	26	.7%
Others	35.59	11.500	57	16	4.0%
Total	32.84	11.712	74	13	100.0%

Figure 8

Mean test score by father's occupation



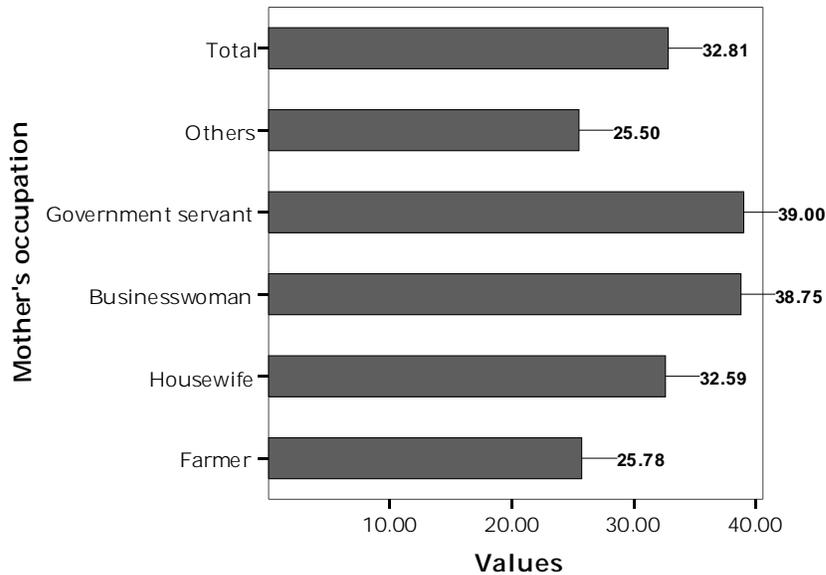
Mean test score by father's occupation: Earlier on, we have seen that urban students have the highest mean score. Now we are narrowing down the focus. We now look at who all have, perhaps, contributed most to the mean score. As evident in Table 10 and Figure 8, the children of *others* and businessmen have obtained the highest mean scores. *Others* here include any occupation or profession other than the ones listed like contractors, freelance painters and sculptors, film makers. The children of government servants scored the next highest mean with the highest range of 59.

Table 11. Mean test score by mother's occupation

Mother's occupation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Farmer	25.78	7.855	62	14	16.1%
Housewife	32.59	10.849	70	13	62.0%
Businesswoman	38.75	14.642	66	16	9.3%
Government servant	39.00	12.662	74	17	12.1%
Others	25.50	3.536	28	23	.5%
Total	32.81	11.728	74	13	100.0%

Figure 9

Mean test score by mother's occupation



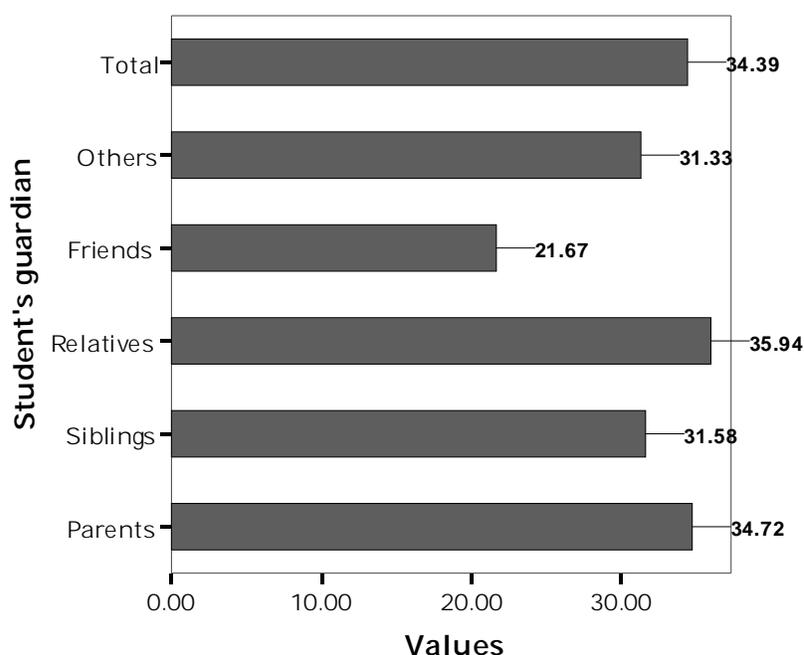
Mean test score by mother's occupation: Here, the children of mothers working in government service have scored the highest mean followed by those whose mothers are businesswomen. *Others* here too include any occupation or profession other than the ones listed like contractors, freelance painters and sculptors, film makers. Here too, the mean score of the children of a farming parent is one of the lowest. Now the picture is becoming clearer. We understand why the mean score of the urban students is higher than that of the semi-urban students.

Table 12. Mean test score by students' guardians

Student's guardian	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Parents	34.72	11.604	74	13	79.9%
Siblings	31.58	9.978	64	15	9.8%
Relatives	35.94	13.600	66	14	8.7%
Friends	21.67	.577	22	21	.8%
Others	31.33	13.013	44	18	.8%
Total	34.39	11.663	74	13	100.0%

Figure 10

Mean test score by students' guardians



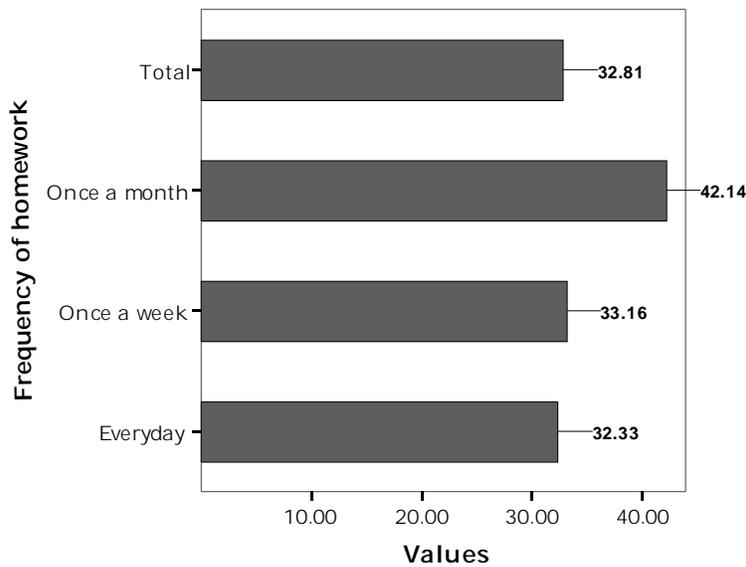
Mean test score by students' guardians: Table 12 shows that close to 80% of the students are taken care of by their parents. The rest are looked after by their siblings, relatives and *others*. *Others*, which is a mere .8%, include the guardians who are neither parents, siblings, nor relatives or friends. While the mean score of the children who have their parents and relatives or siblings as their guardians are almost equally high, the mean score of those taken care of by friends is markedly low. It is hardly surprising considering that young friends can rarely be good guardians. While the identity of *others* remains dubious given that the credible guardians of children should be parents, siblings, relatives, or rarely friends, the mean score of the children whose guardians are *others* is almost equal to that of those whose guardians are siblings. This makes the credibility of *others* as guardians less dubious.

Table 13. Mean test score by frequency of homework in English students get

Frequency of homework	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Everyday	32.33	11.219	70	13	59.3%
Once a week	33.16	12.200	74	13	39.1%
Once month ^a	42.14	15.016	68	22	1.6%
Total	32.81	11.714	74	13	100.0%

Figure 11

Mean test score by frequency of homework in English students get



Mean test score by frequency of homework in English students get: As indicated by Table 13 and Figure 11, the students who get homework in English once a month have much higher mean score than that of those who get it once a week or everyday. While at face value, the figures seem quite unlikely, they are not totally unexpected.

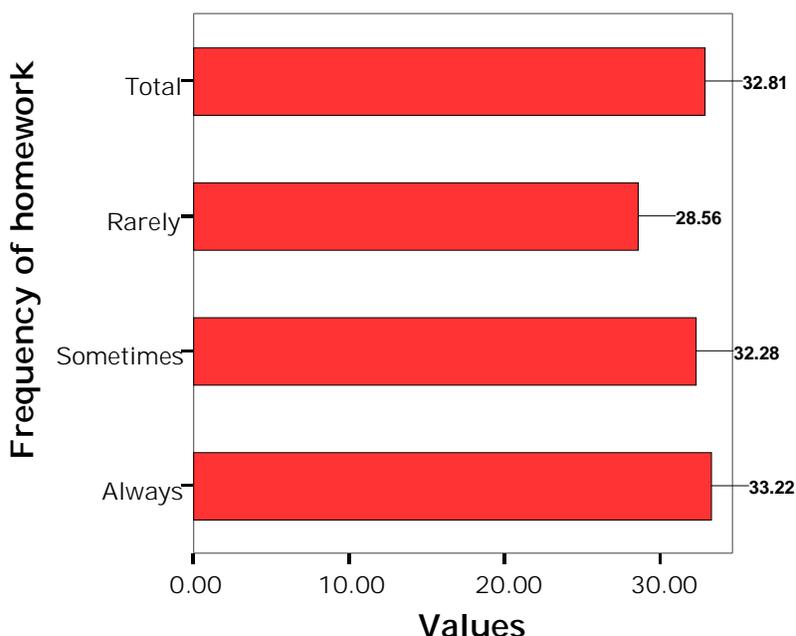
There are two important mediating variables that come into play here: how often the homework is done, or, more importantly, how often the homework is corrected by the teacher. The teacher may give homework each day, but if it remains undone, or even if it is done, if it remains uncorrected by the teacher, it is going to have little positive effect on the student's performance (see Table 14 & 15; Figure 12 & 13).

Table 14. Mean test score by frequency of homework done

Frequency of homework done	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Always	33.22	12.353	74	13	64.6%
Sometimes	32.28	10.674	68	13	33.3%
Rarely	28.56	6.346	40	22	2.1%
Total	32.81	11.728	74	13	100.0%

Figure 12

Mean test score by frequency of homework done



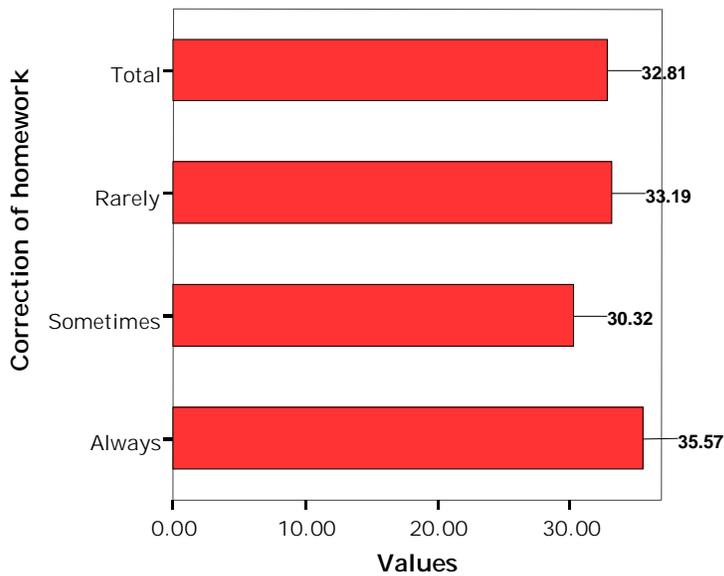
Mean test score by frequency of homework done: Here, as Table 14 and Figure 12 show, it is clear that the mean score of the students who do homework more frequently is higher than that of students who do homework less frequently. This means that the more students do the homework, the better they perform academically. Considering that a little more than 33% of the students do homework sometimes only, there is no doubt that the frequency of homework the students get does not mean much to their academic performance (see Table 13 and Figure 11).

Table 15. Mean test score by frequency of homework corrected by teacher

Correction of homework	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Always	35.57	12.503	74	13	44.2%
Sometimes	30.32	10.875	68	13	49.8%
Rarely	33.19	7.343	52	21	6.0%
Total	32.81	11.714	74	13	100.0%

Figure 13

Mean test score by frequency of homework corrected by teacher



Mean test score by frequency of homework corrected by teacher: In Table 15 and Figure 13, the mean score of the students who say that their homework is always corrected by the teacher is the highest. What is interesting here is that 49.8% (nearly half) of the students say that their homework is corrected by the teacher sometimes only.

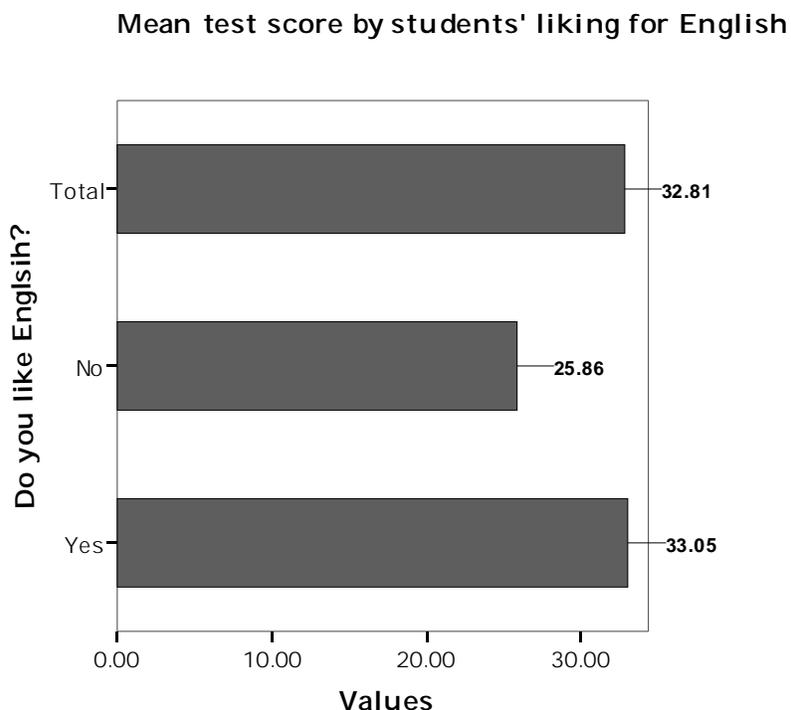
Given that the score of students is affected by how often he or she does his or her homework and how often the teacher corrects it, the figures in Table 13 and Figure 11 are not out of place.

What is interesting to note is that mean score notwithstanding, the students who say that they get homework everyday, do it always and the teacher corrects it always have scored the highest marks in the test.

Table 16. Mean test score by students' liking for English

Do you like English?	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Yes	33.05	11.770	74	13	96.7%
No	25.86	7.231	36	13	3.3%
Total	32.81	11.714	74	13	100.0%

Figure 14

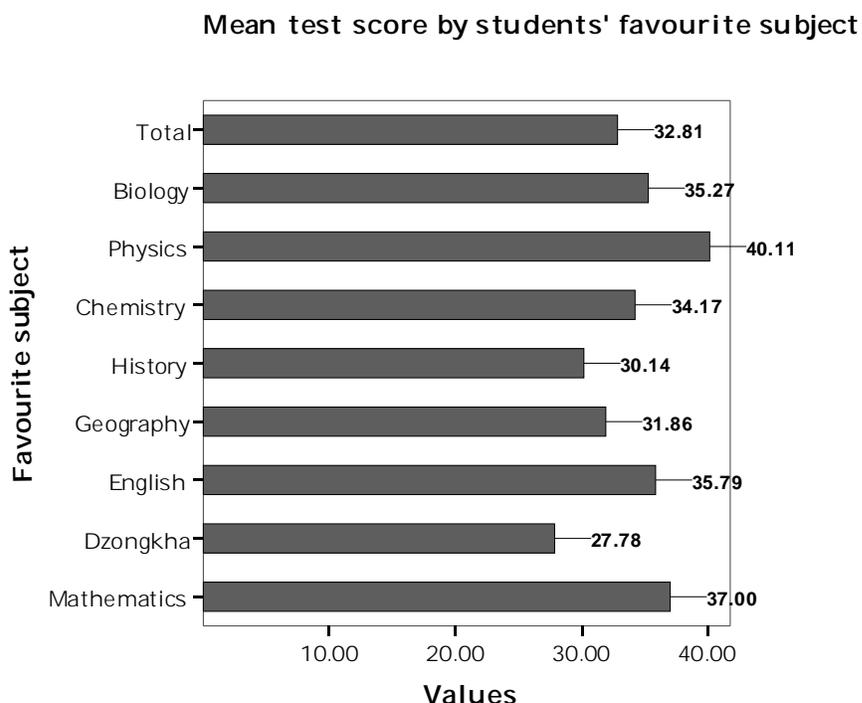


Mean test score by students' liking for English: It is clear from Table 16 and Figure 14 that there is a strong correlation between the students' liking for English and writing performance in it. The more students like English, the better they score in it. 96.7% of the students say that they like English, which accounts to almost all the students. The question that arises here is, if the students' liking for English is directly proportional to their test score in it and if more than 96% of them like English, why is the overall mean test score just 32.81? The answer is, there are many controlling and intervening factors that come into play such as which is their favourite subject, how much they study English, how much they use it in their day to day lives, how regular they are in the English class, what their parents are.

Table 17. Mean test score by students' favourite subject

Favourite subject	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Mathematics	37.00	11.822	70	16	19.3%
Dzongkha	27.78	8.374	56	13	34.0%
English	35.79	13.090	66	16	21.4%
Geography	31.86	9.254	52	18	4.9%
History	30.14	9.925	57	15	5.1%
Chemistry	34.17	11.692	54	15	2.8%
Physics	40.11	20.411	68	13	2.1%
Biology	35.27	11.787	74	15	10.4%
Total	32.81	11.714	74	13	100.0%

Figure 15



Mean test score by students' favourite subject: As shown in Table 17, English is the favourite subject of 21.4% of the students, the second highest percentage after Dzongkha, which is the favourite subject of 34% of the students. But the fact that a subject is one's favourite does not necessarily mean that one can be good and do better in that subject. It all depends on why a subject is one's favourite.

The mean score of the students who say that English is their favourite subject is 35.79 while the mean score of those who say that Physics is their favourite subject is 40.11. Even the highest marks are scored by those whose favourite subjects are Mathematics, Physics and Biology.

Why students like English and why they don't?

In the students' response to why they like or dislike English, there are some distinct patterns. While some of the reasons are rooted in social realities, some of them are highly personal.

The most dominating theme is that English is the international language. One student writes that she likes English because it "is a universal language spoken in each and every nation." Another thinks that she likes English "because...without English knowledge...each individual is a bird without feathers." Yet, others write that they like English because "this is the only language that the whole world can understand". Therefore, "it is a must to know English."

The next dominating theme is that it is fashionable to know English. While one student writes that she likes English "because it's cool to speak English", others write that "if we speak English, other people will appreciate us" and "it gives us some kind of reputation".

Quite a lot of the students like English because “our English madam is very nice”, or, “our English teacher is very interesting”, or, “our teacher is good and teaches us properly”.

Some students like English for personal reasons. They like it because they “can score more marks in English”, or, “it is interesting”, or, “I am good in English”, or, “I like reading books which are most of the time in English”.

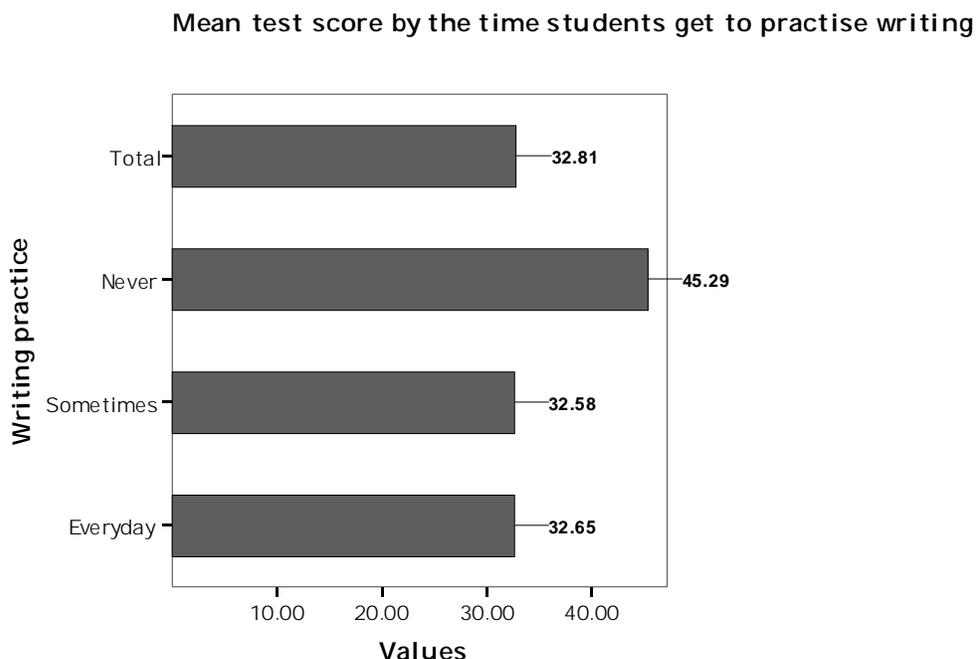
A few of the students think that they must like English because “English is [a] language that help[s] our career”, or, “when we go for higher studies, we need to be good in English”, or, “it is a compulsory subject”.

The overriding responses to why the students do not like English are two. They do not like English either because “it is my hardest subject” or “I am very poor in *speling* and also *grammer*”.

Table 18. Mean test score by the time students get to practise writing

Writing practice	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Everyday	32.65	12.386	70	13	34.1%
Sometimes	32.58	11.182	74	13	64.3%
Never	45.29	15.359	68	27	1.6%
Total	32.81	11.757	74	13	100.0%

Figure 16



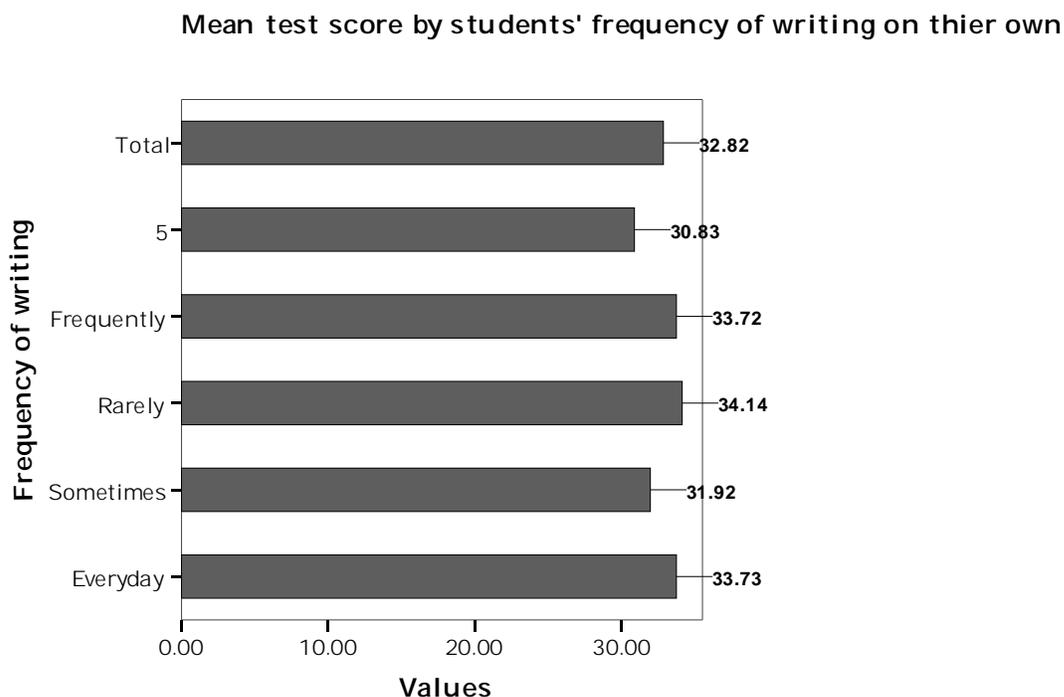
Mean test score by the time students get to practise writing: According to Table 18, 64.3% of the students get time to practise writing sometimes only, which means that

the bulk of the students does not have enough time for writing practice. But the consolation is that only a small percentage of them (1.6%) says that they never have time to practise writing. Ironically, the mean score of those who never get time to practise writing is the highest. This could be because they constitute only 1.6% of the total students.

Table 19. Mean test score by students' frequency of writing on their own

Frequency of writing	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Everyday	33.73	12.831	74	20	47.8%
Sometimes	31.92	10.289	63	15	42.1%
Rarely	34.14	12.775	65	13	3.3%
Frequently	33.72	10.803	54	19	6.8%
Total	32.82	11.687	74	13	100.0%

Figure 17

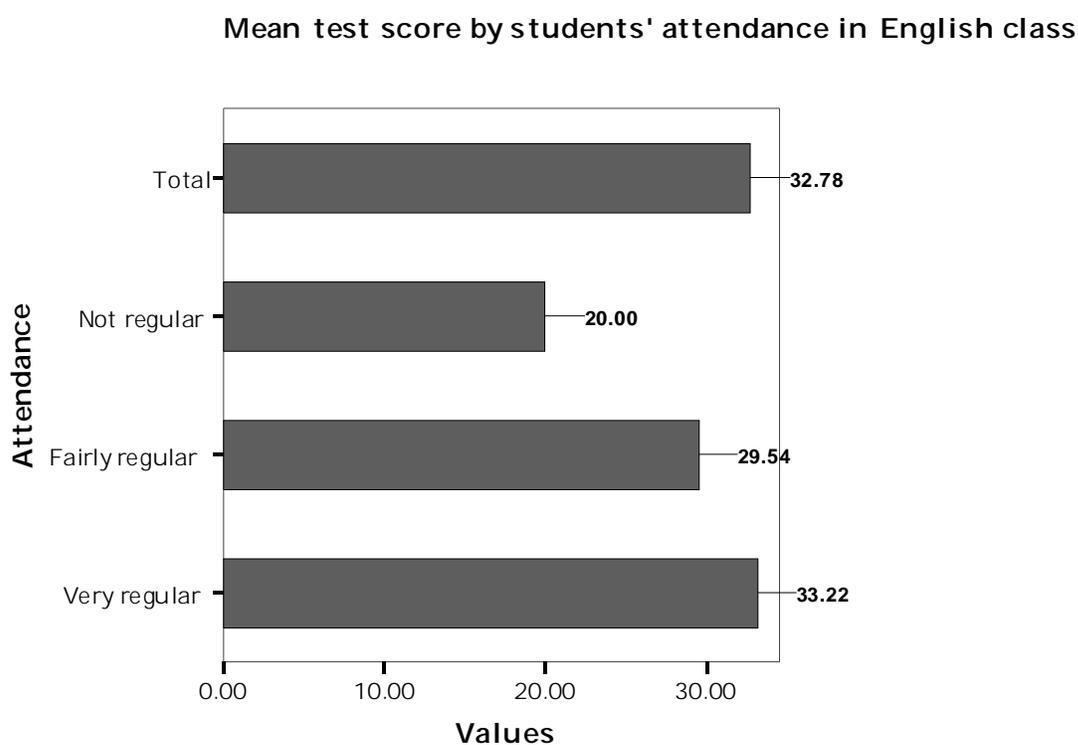


Mean test score by students' frequency of writing on their own: The highest number of students (47.8%) always write on their own, but their mean test score is slightly lower than that of those who rarely write on their own. This might be because the latter constitute only 3.3% of the students or the students' writing without guidance does not help them much. However, the highest test score is from the students who always write on their own and the lowest score from those who rarely write on their own.

Table 20. Mean score by students' attendance in English class

Attendance	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Very regular	33.22	11.893	74	13	88.6%
Fairly regular	29.54	9.525	59	15	11.2%
Not regular	20.00	.	20	20	.2%
Total	32.78	11.702	74	13	100.0%

Figure 18



Mean score by students' attendance in English class: As Table 20 and Figure 18 show, attendance in class is a strong factor determining the students' writing performance in English. The mean test score of the students who are not regular in the class is the lowest and that of those who are very regular, the highest. It is also interesting to see that the highest test score of those who are not regular in the class is only 20. Those who are regular in the class have obtained the highest score of 74. It is reassuring, though, that only .2% of the students are not regular in the class.

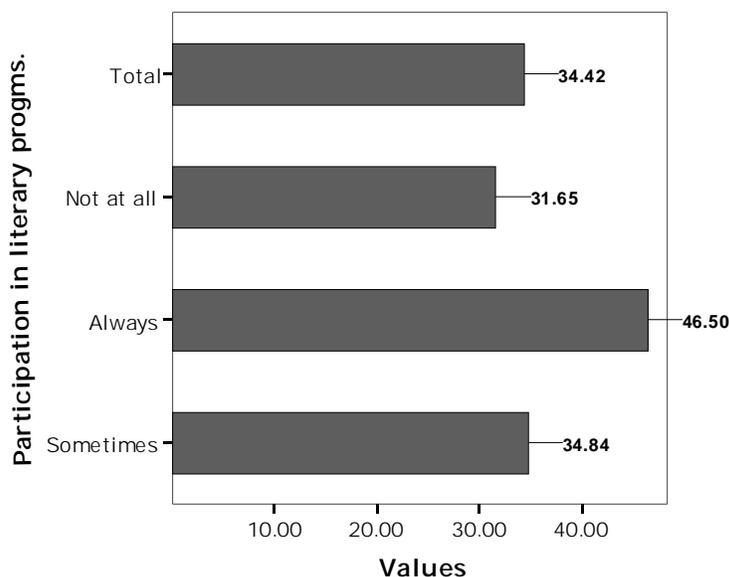
Table 21. Mean test score by frequency of participation in literary programmes

Participation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
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Sometimes	34.84	24.856	62	14	63.3%
Always	46.50	11.587	74	27	5.0%
Not at all	31.65	10.704	63	13	31.7%
Total	34.42	21.044	74	13	100.0%

Figure 19

Mean test score by frequency of participation in literary programmes

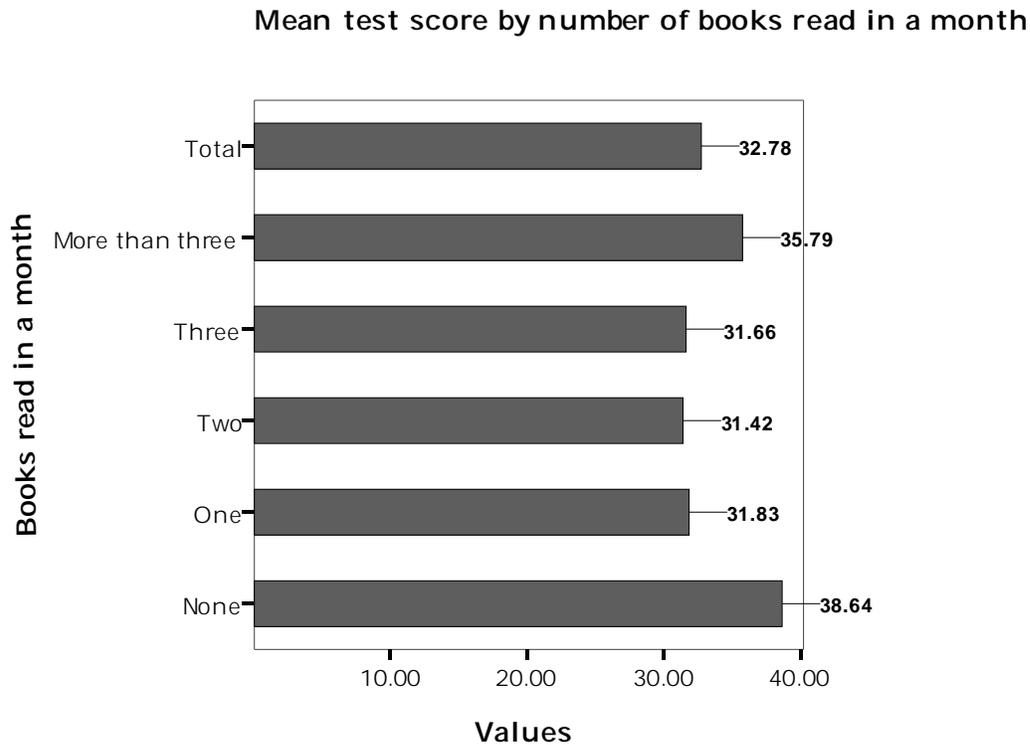


Mean test score by frequency of participation in literary programmes: As Table 21 and Figure 19 show, the more the students take part in literary programmes the better they perform in language and grammar. The mean score of the students who always participate in literary programmes is much higher than that of those who participate sometimes and *not at all*. But, only 5% of the students *always* take part in literary programmes. 95% of them either participate sometimes or never. The students who always participate in literary programmes have obtained the highest score in the test. Even the lowest score in this group is 27 while for the other two groups, the lowest score has fallen as low as 13.

Table 22. Mean test score by number of books read in a month

Books read in a month	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
None	38.64	11.452	65	21	5.8%
One	31.83	11.990	70	14	28.0%
Two	31.42	11.394	64	13	29.4%
Three	31.66	11.256	74	15	19.1%
More than three	35.79	11.471	66	16	17.7%
Total	32.78	11.702	74	13	100.0%

Figure 20



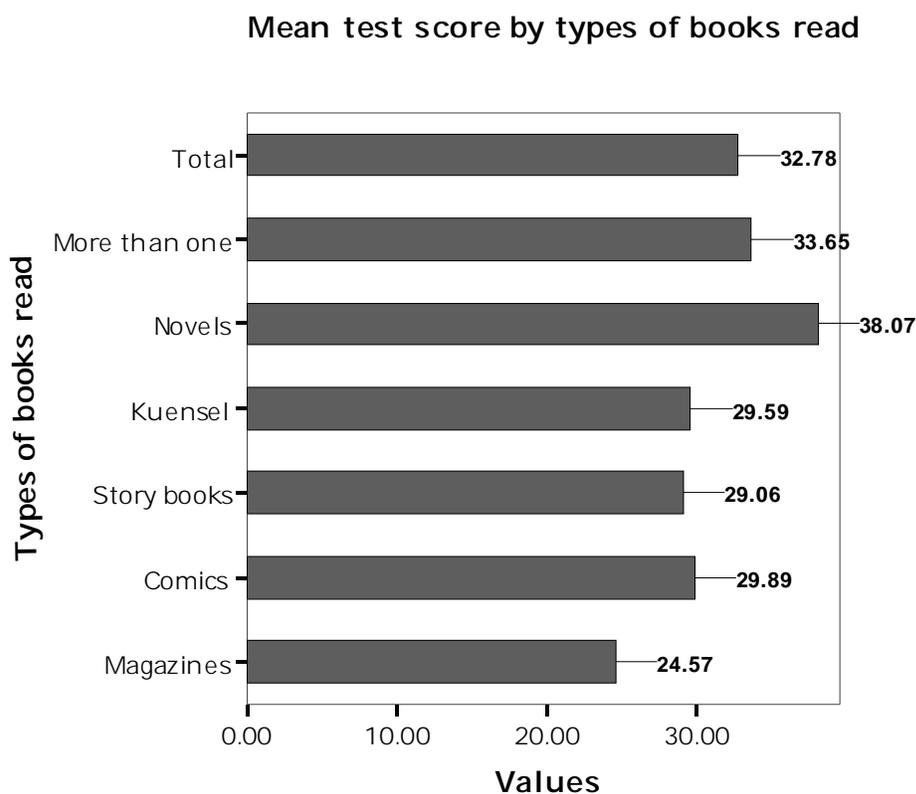
Mean test score by number of books read in a month: Table 22 shows that most of the students read between 1 to 3 books in a month. There is a small percentage (5.8%) of them who do not read even a single book in a month. But, ironically, their mean test score is the highest. While the number of students in this group might have had some effect on the mean score, there are some intervening variables that come into play. The types of books the students read and how they read them could be more important than the number of books they read. Here, it is important to note that the highest test scores are all obtained by those who read one or more books in a month.

Table 23. Mean test score by types of books read

Types of books read	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Magazines	24.57	8.591	41	14	3.3%
Comics	29.89	11.472	47	15	2.0%
Story books	29.06	10.003	63	15	11.7%
Kuensel	29.59	8.326	47	16	6.3%
Novels	38.07	14.309	68	15	6.5%
More than	33.65	11.742	74	13	70.2%

one type					
Total	32.78	11.702	74	13	100.0%

Figure 21

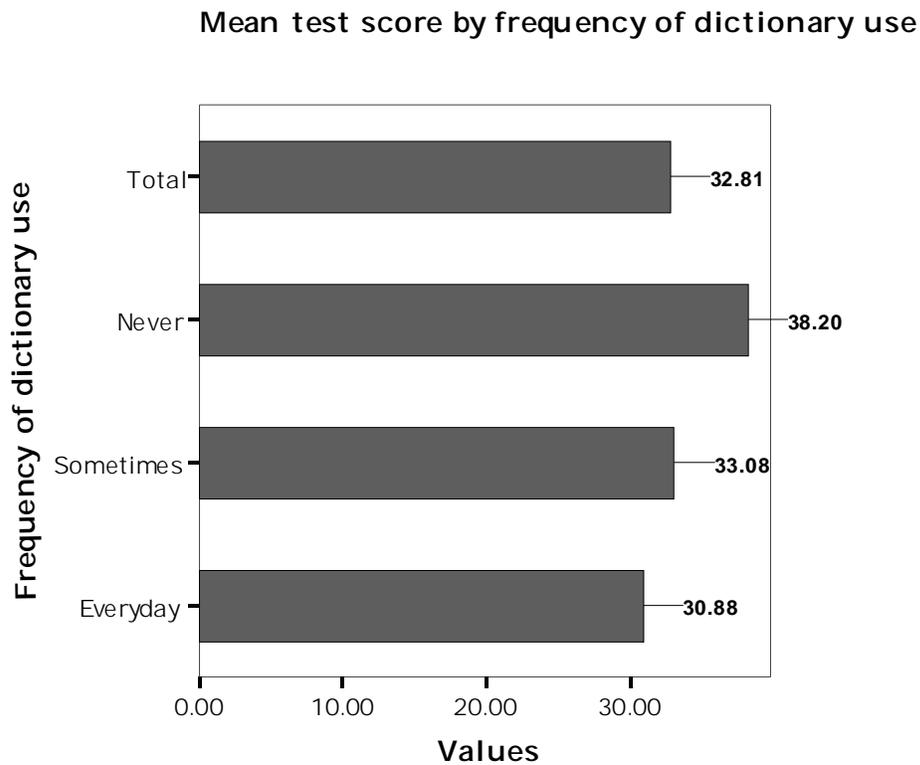


Mean test score by types of books read: Table 23 shows, a little more than 70% of the students read a variety of books (which include novels, story books, comics, newspapers, magazines). 6.5% of the students who read novels have the highest mean test score of 38.07. This is reasonable considering that novels make more serious reading than other books!

Table 24. Mean test score by frequency of dictionary use

Frequency of dictionary use	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Everyday	30.88	11.820	70	13	17.6%
Sometimes	33.08	11.575	74	13	80.1%
Never	38.20	13.340	65	24	2.3%
Total	32.81	11.690	74	13	100.0%

Figure 22

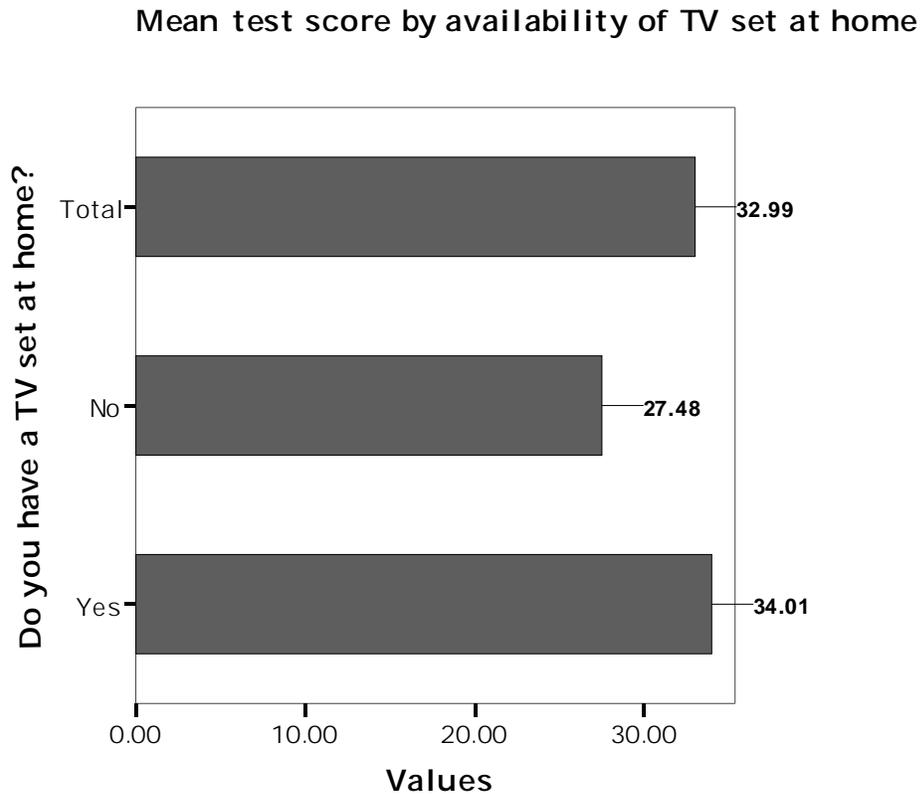


Mean test score by frequency of dictionary use: Only 17.6% of the students use a dictionary everyday. Most of the students use a dictionary sometimes. But the mean test score of those who never use a dictionary is higher than that of those who use a dictionary everyday or sometimes. While the number might have had an effect on the mean test score, there seems to be no apparent intervening or controlling variable that might have come into play. However, the highest scores of those who use a dictionary everyday or sometimes are much better than that of those who never use a dictionary.

Table 25. Mean test score by availability of TV set at home

Do you have a TV set at home?	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Yes	34.01	11.948	74	13	84.3%
No	27.48	8.278	47	13	15.7%
Total	32.99	11.687	74	13	100.0%

Figure 23



Mean test score by availability of TV set at home: As shown in Table 25, 84.3% of the students have a television set at home. This could be because, as we have seen, most of the parents of the students are either government servants or private employees who stay in urban or semi-urban areas where modern facilities like television are more readily available and residents are financially better off.

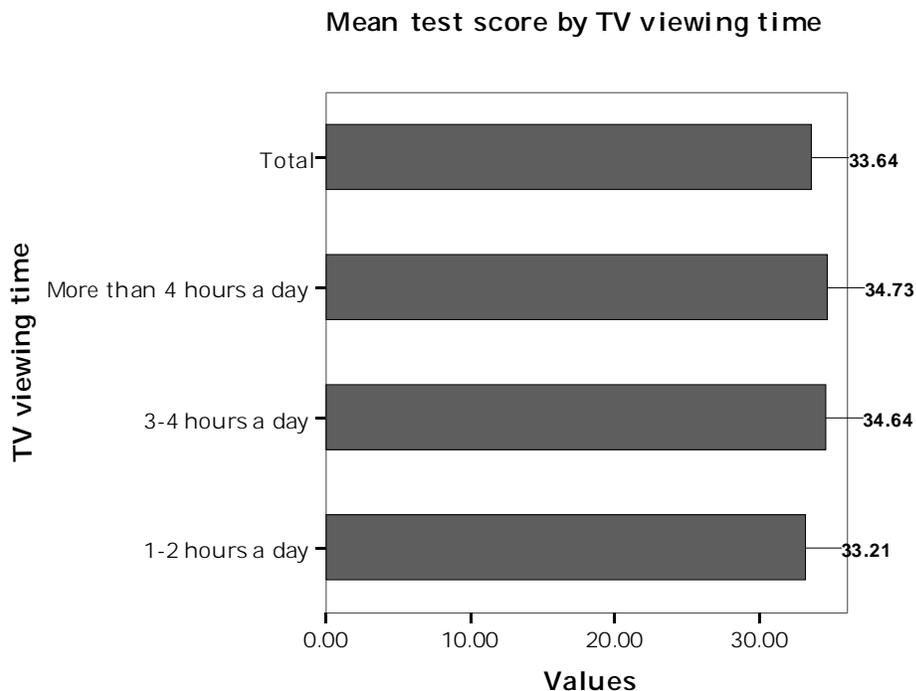
It is clear that those who have a television set at home do better than those who do not have one. This could be one reason why the children of government servants and business people have done far better in the test than the children of farmers (see Table 10 & Table 11) because a television set is less affordable for the last.

Nevertheless, the availability of a television set in itself is not *the* determining factor. The availability of television facility could have a negative impact on students' performance in English considering its viewing time and the choice of channel: two of the most important control variables. So it is important to look at these two variables.

Table 26. Mean test score by TV viewing time

TV viewing time	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
1-2 hours a day	33.21	11.616	74	14	70.6%
3-4 hours a day	34.64	12.289	66	15	21.4%
More than 4 hours a day	34.73	13.256	68	13	8.0%
Total	33.64	11.884	74	13	100.0%

Figure 24



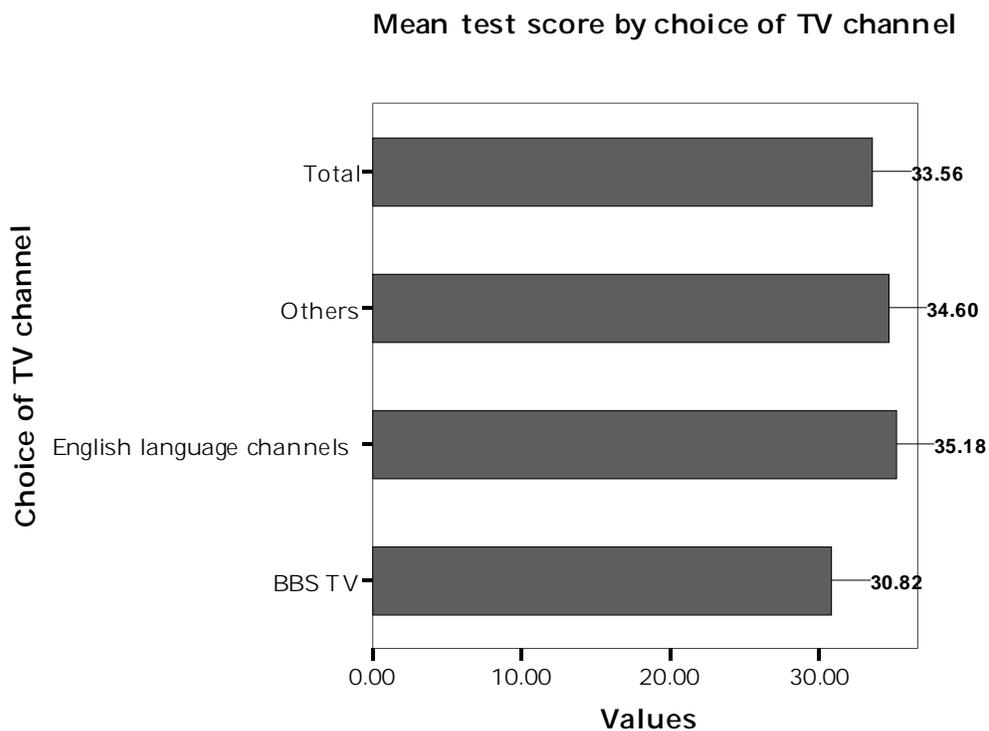
Mean test score by TV viewing time: Now we come to know that out of 84.3% of the students who have a television set at home (see Table 25), 70.6% of them watch it between one to two hours a day. Very few of the students watch television for more than four hours a day. However, in terms of the mean test score, there is only a small difference between the students who watch television more and those who watch it less. The small number of them who watch television for more than four hours a day have scored better by a slight margin.

Television viewing time, though, does not tell the full story. The final determining factor is the choice of television channel. Whether a student has a television set at home, and whether he or she watches it more or less does not count more than what channel he or she watches. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to determine what television channels students watch.

Table 27. Mean test score by choice of TV channel

Choice of TV channel	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
BBS TV	30.82	10.592	65	14	35.0%
English language channels	35.18	12.946	74	13	49%
Others	34.60	9.854	56	16	16.0%
Total	33.56	11.846	74	13	100.0%

Figure 25



Mean test score by choice of TV channel: As Table 27 shows, the highest number of students watch English language channels, and those who watch English language channels have the highest mean test score. Which means that students' choice of television channel has an influence on their writing skills in English. Those who watch BBS TV have the lowest mean test score of 30.82. *Others* here include Hindi channels like Star Plus, Zee channels and Sony.

It will be of interest to see who all watch what channels and how much.

Table 28. TV viewing time and choice of channels

TV	Choice of TV channel

viewing time				
		BBS TV	English language channels	Others
1-2 hrs a day	% of students	78.5%	66.1%	66.7%
3-4 hrs a day	% of students	17.7%	22.8%	25.0%
More than 4 hrs a day	% of students	3.8%	11.1%	8.3%

It is clear from Table 28 that English language channels are watched by students who watch television between 3-4 hour or more than four hours a day. Most of the students who watch BBS TV watch television for 1-2 hours a day. 33.90% of the students who watch English language channels watch television between 3-4 hours or more than four hours a day while 21.50% of the students who watch BBS TV watch television between 3-4 hours or more than four hours a day.

Table 29. TV viewing time and father's occupation

TV viewing time		Father's occupation				
		Farmer	Businessman	Government servant	Lay monks	Others
1-2 hrs a day	% of students	88.0%	68.5%	61.2%	100.0%	100.0%
3-4 hrs a day	% of students	12.0%	20.7%	27.9%	.0%	.0%
More than 4 hrs a day	% of students	.0%	10.8%	10.9%	.0%	.0%

Table 29 makes it clear that the children whose fathers are businessmen or government servants watch television the most. More than 20% of these children watch television between 3-4 hours a day and more than 10% of them watch it more than four hours a day. On the other hand, only 12% of farmer's children watch television between 3-4 hours a day and none of them watches it for more than four hours. None of the children of lay monks and *others* watch television for more than 1-2 hours a day (for *others*, see discussion on Table 10).

Table 30. TV viewing time and mother's occupation

TV viewing time		Mother's occupation				
		Farmer	Housewife	Businesswoman	Government servant	Others
1-2 hrs a day	% of students	83.7%	69.3%	69.2%	64.7%	100.0%
3-4 hrs a day	% of students	16.3%	20.6%	23.1%	29.4%	.0%
More than 4 hrs a day	% of students	.0%	10.1%	7.7%	5.9%	.0%

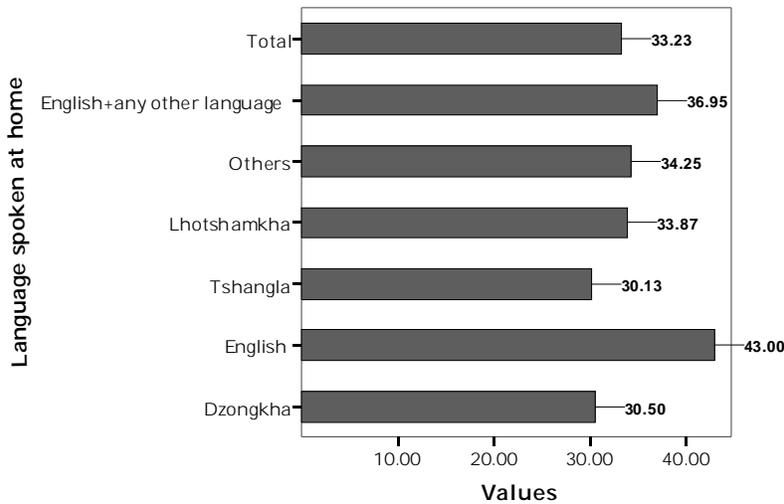
As shown in Table 30, the majority of the children whose mothers are farmers watch television for 1-2 hours a day. None of them have more than four hours of television viewing time. Here too, it is the children of business people and government servants who watch television for more than four hours. The biggest percentage of children whose mothers are housewives watch television for more than four hours a day. All the children of *others* watch television for 1-2 hours a day (for *others*, see discussion on Table 10).

Table 31. Mean test score by language spoken at home

Language spoken at home	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Dzongkha	30.50	10.680	66	13	41.3%
English	43.00	15.540	70	27	3.4%
Tshangla	30.13	10.155	55	16	12.7%
Lhotshamkha	33.87	11.312	62	16	10.3%
Others	34.25	9.440	57	22	3.2%
English+any other language	36.95	12.478	74	14	29.1%
Total	33.23	11.819	74	13	100.0%

Figure 26

Mean test score by language spoken at home



Mean test score by language spoken at home: As is evident in Table 31, there is a strong correlation between the language spoken at home and students' writing performance in English. The mean score of the students who exclusively speak English at home is 43, the highest. But they constitute only 3.4% of the students. The next highest mean score is obtained by the students who speak English on top of other languages. *Others* include any other language not on the list like regional Bhutanese languages like Kengkha, Bumtapkha, Kurtoepikha and some regional Indian languages like Bengali.

It will be interesting to look at the students' language pattern at home.

Table 32. Students' language pattern at home

Mother tongue		Language spoken at home					
		Dzongkha	English	Tshangla	Lhotshamkha	Others	English+any other language
Dzongkha	% of students	85.9%	23.1%	2.1%	.0%	.0%	47.2%
Tshangla	% of students	6.4%	23.1%	89.6%	.0%	.0%	11.8%
Lhotshamkha	% of students	.6%	15.4%	.0%	97.4%	.0%	35.5%
Others	% of students	7.1%	38.4%	8.3%	2.6%	-	5.5%

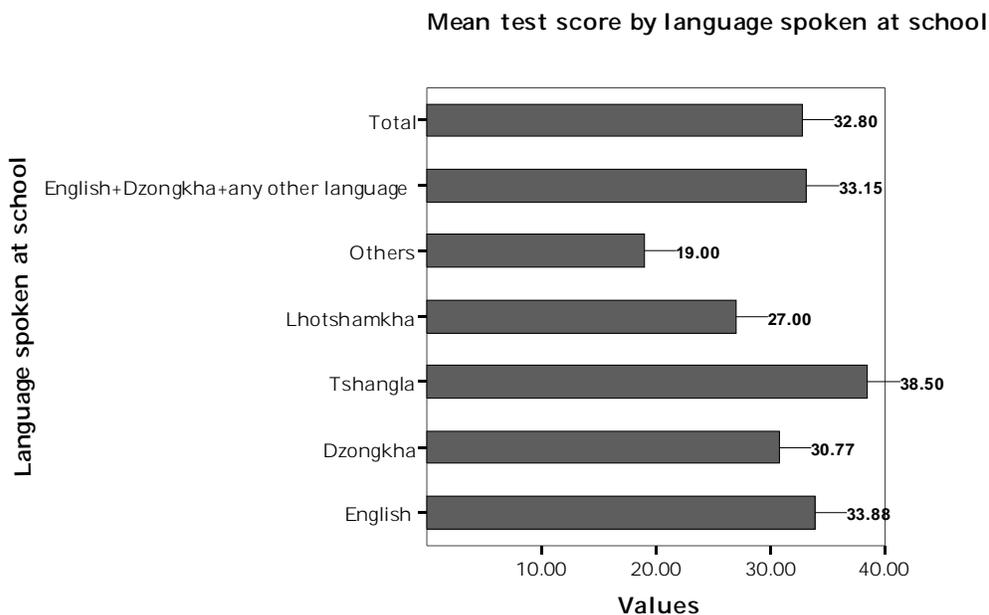
From Table 32, it is clear that more than 85% of the students speak their mother tongue at home. The students whose mother tongue is neither Dzongkha, nor Tshangla or Lhotshamkha speak more English than any other groups. While a small

percentage of Lhotshamkha speaking students speak English exclusively at home, quite a lot of them (35.5%) use English with other languages. For *others*, see the discussion on Table 31.

Table 33. Mean test score by language spoken at school

Language spoken at school	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
English	33.88	12.914	70	13	6.0%
Dzongkha	30.77	10.845	68	14	15.6%
Tshangla	38.50	2.121	40	37	.5%
Lhotshamkha	27.00	.	27	27	.2%
Others	19.00	.	19	19	.2%
English+Dzongkha+any other language	33.15	11.858	74	13	77.5%
Total	32.80	11.751	74	13	100.0%

Figure 27



Mean test score by language spoken at school: As shown in Table 33, 77.5% of the students speak English and Dzongkha mixed with other languages, which means that the bulk of the students do not speak English and Dzongkha exclusively at school. The mean test scores for those who speak exclusively English or English along with other languages are almost the same. However, the mean test score of those who speak Tshangla at school is the highest. This might be because Tshangla speaking students constitute only .5% of the total. For *others*, see the discussion on Table 31.

Table 34. Students' language pattern at school

Mother tongue		Language spoken at school					
		English	Dzongkha	Tshangla	Lhotshamkha	Others	English+Dzongkha+any other language
Dzongkha	% of students	36.0%	41.5%	.0%	.0%	-	49.4%
Tshangla	% of students	24.0%	30.8%	50.0%	.0%	0%	20.7%
Lhotshamkha	% of students	20.0%	12.3%	50.0%	10.0%	.0%	22.2%
Others	% of students	20.0%	15.4%	.0%	.0%	.0%	77.5%

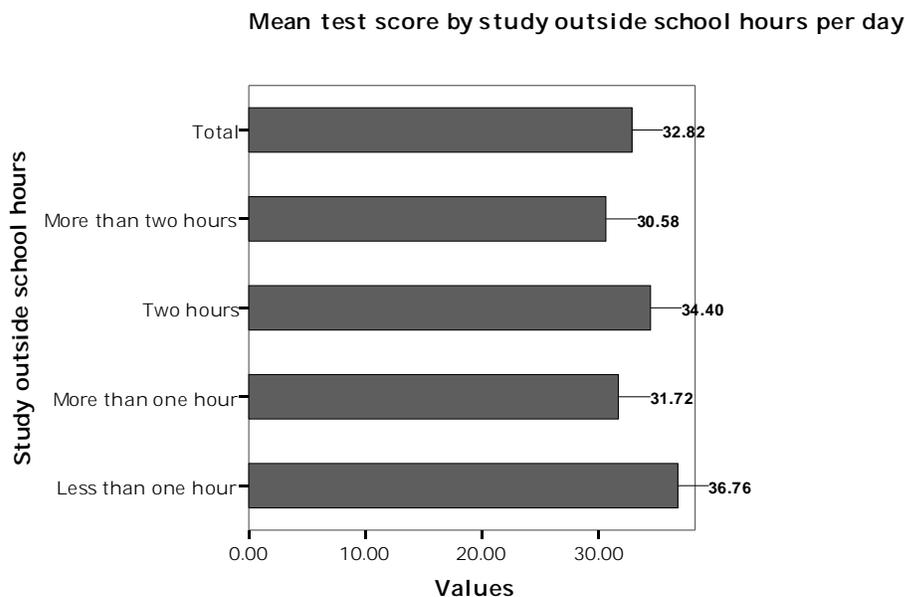
Table 34 shows that besides Lhotshamkha speaking students who speak more Tshangla than their mother tongue at school, the language spoken at school is dominated by their mother tongue. It seems that the students speaking the major languages tend to speak their mother tongue more than any other language. The bulk of the students who speak *others* speak a mix of languages including English and Dzongkha (for *others*, see the discussion on Table 31).

Table 34. Mean test score by study outside school hours per day

Study outside school hours	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Less than 1 hr	36.76	12.787	70	17	12.6%
More than 1 hr	31.72	10.384	66	15	30.8%
2 hrs	34.40	12.703	74	13	29.1%
More than 2 hrs	30.58	11.000	68	13	27.5%

Total	32.82	11.726	74	13	100.0%
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Figure 28



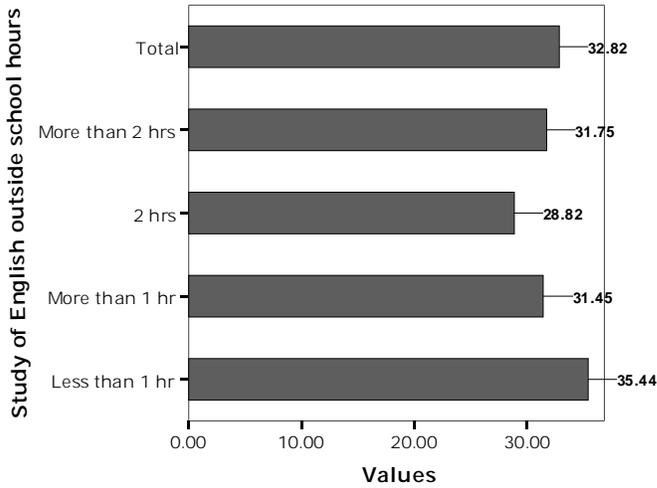
Mean test score by study outside school hours per day: As Table 34 shows, the highest percentage of the students studies for more than one hour outside school hours per day. There are, however, almost equal number of them who study for two hours or more per day. But in terms of the mean test score, the small percentage of them (12.6) who study for less than one hour a day has scored higher than those who study more. This could be because more hours of study outside school hours do not necessarily mean more study in English. English might not be given time at all although more than two hours of study time is set aside each day. The determining factor, therefore, is how much time they give to the study of English.

Table 35. Mean test score by study of English outside school hours per day

Study of English outside school hours	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Less than 1 hr	35.44	11.602	68	15	39.2%
More than 1 hr	31.45	10.695	66	14	47.3%
2 hrs	28.82	12.537	74	13	7.9%
More than 2 hrs	31.75	16.125	70	13	5.6%
Total	32.82	11.726	74	13	100.0%

Figure 29

Mean test score by study of English outside school hours per day



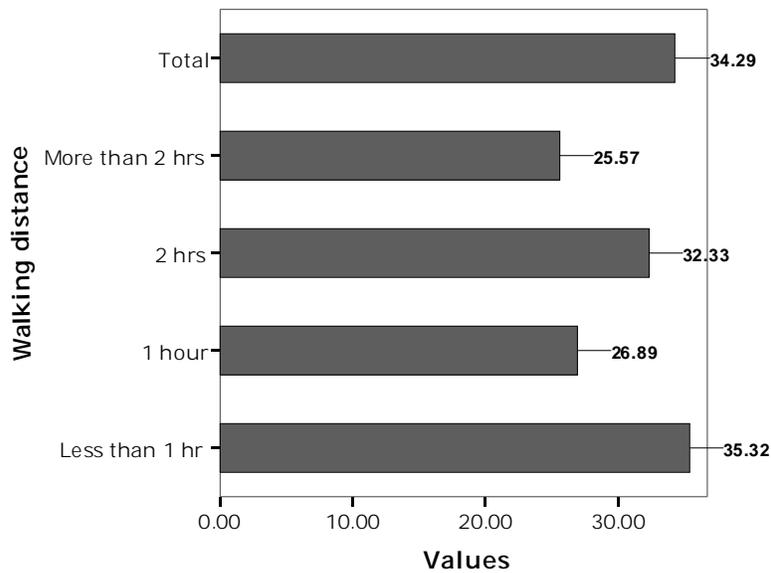
Mean test score by study of English outside school hours per day: As we have seen, more than 27% of the students study for two hours or more per day outside school hours (see Table 34), but only a little more than 5% of them study English for two hours or more per day outside school hours. This means that English is not studied for a longer period like other subjects outside school hours. Nevertheless, the biggest percentage of the students studies English outside school hours for more than one hour. Ironically, the mean test score of the students who study for less than one hour a day is slightly higher than that of those who study more. Therefore, it is important to look at who these students are, and why their mean test score is higher than the others in spite of less time spent in studying English. For this, one needs to consider control variables like the educational background of parents, the language they speak at home and school, students' guardians, students' attendance in the class and so forth.

Table 36. Mean test score by students' walking distance to school

Walking distance	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Less than 1 hr	35.32	11.601	74	13	87.0%
1 hr	26.89	8.394	50	15	9.5%
2 hrs	32.33	4.033	36	25	1.6%
More than 2 hrs	25.57	8.101	35	14	1.9%
Total	34.29	11.510	74	13	100.0%

Figure 30

Mean test score by students' walking distance to school



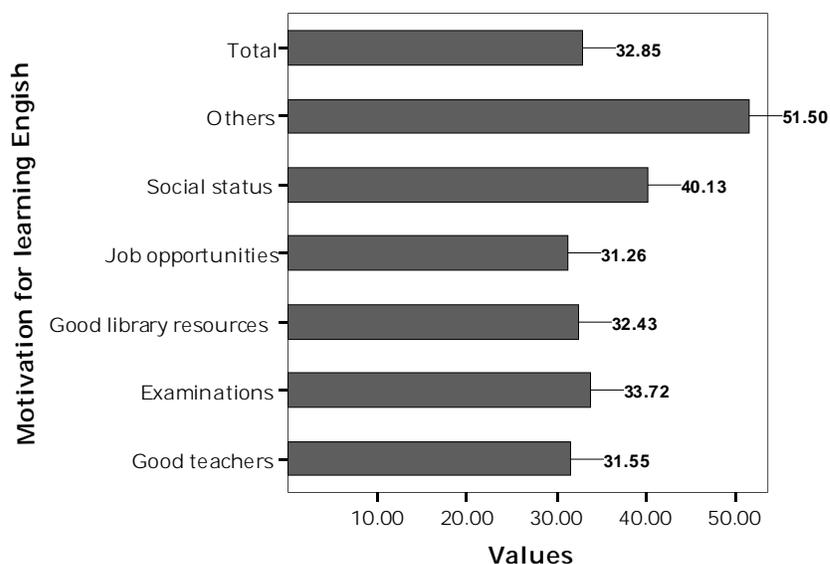
Mean test score by students' walking distance to school: As shown in Table 36, for 87% of the students, the walking distance to school is less than one hour. And as expected, they have the highest mean test score. For the small percentage of the students who walk for more than two hours to school, mean test score as well as maximum test score are low, which suggests that the distance students walk to school has an impact on their academic performance.

Table 37. Mean test score by motivation for learning English

Motivation in learning English	Mean	Std. Deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score	% of total number
Good teachers	31.55	10.807	68	13	58.0%
Examinations	33.72	10.197	51	20	4.3%
Good library resources	32.43	12.445	74	13	16.4%
Job opportunities	31.26	8.492	56	15	11.7%
Social status	40.13	14.424	70	16	7.3%
Others	51.50	12.964	66	30	2.3%
Total	32.85	11.698	74	13	100.0%

Figure 31

Mean test score by motivation for learning English



Mean test score by motivation in learning English: Unlike other discussions, here, the number of students who considers different items as the motivation for learning English is more important than the mean test score. 58% of the students consider that good teachers are a motivation for learning English. The second and third motivations for learning English are good library resources and job opportunities respectively.

Conclusion

By and large, the performance of Class X students in language and grammar is not up to the mark. The mean test score of 32.81 is not a good picture. What is bad is the scores of some of the students which are as low as 13 out of 100. The mean test score is far below what in our system is considered the pass mark: 40 out of 100. This gives us a picture of Class X students' performance in language and grammar as it is now, not in comparison to the standard in the past. This is because there is no benchmark set which the present study can be compared with. Therefore, this study does not answer the question which most of us have been asking for several years now: Has the standard of English declined in Bhutan? Since the present study is the first in a series of studies that will be carried out in less than a decade, it will set the stage for answering the question.

Even as we come to terms with the findings of this study, we are confronted with a myriad of questions. This year, the overall mean test score is poor. How will it be next year, the year after next? This year, urban students and girls have outperformed semi-urban students and boys. How will it be next year, the year after next? This year, the children of educated parents have done better than the children of farmers. How will it be next year, the year after next? And so on. The subsequent studies will answer all these questions.

This study has set a kind of benchmark for Class X students' performance in language and grammar. It will provide an anchorage for subsequent studies. The subsequent studies will keep referring to its findings. This study has found out some patterns in the students' English learning process. The subsequent studies will check whether the

patterns shift or remain static. The confirmation of the patterns is highly significant for they influence and affect the students' performance.

As well as finding out the overall performance of the students, this study has found that parental background, personal interest, teachers' role, participation in literary programmes, television viewing, language pattern at home and school, hard work, attendance in the class, among others, are found to have a strong correlation with the students' writing performance.

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Prevalence of Protein Energy Malnutrition in Pre-School Children of Chubu Gewog

Karma Nidup⁸ & Dorji Wangchuk⁹

ABSTRACT

Anthropometric studies in the past suggest that the majority of pre-school Bhutanese children suffers from protein energy malnutrition (PEM), which is the most common deficiency disease in the world. Children under five years of age have been known to be more vulnerable and susceptible to PEM. The main purpose of this study was to assess the nutritional status (wasting, stunting, and underweight) or prevalence of protein energy malnutrition in pre-school children (under five years of age) of Chubu Gewog under Punakha Dzongkhag. All the children under five years of age in Chubu Gewog were considered in the study. The data on sex of the child, date of birth (complete month), weight (kg), height (cm), and other relevant information from Chubu were collected. The data were organised in MS Excel and analysed using EPI nut EPI INFO computer software.

A total of 92 children was surveyed. Of the 92 children, 37 were males and 55 were females. The study identified 2.17% of children as wasted, 20.65% as underweight, and 54.35% as stunted. There is an alarmingly high incidence of protein energy malnutrition in children of Chubu Gewog. The trend is similar to that of two national nutritional surveys conducted in 1998 and 1999 by the Ministry of Health. Carefully planned nutritional initiatives to combat malnutrition in Chubu either by nearest BHU or hospital, relevant NGOs, or from the central offices of the Ministry of Health would be required.

INTRODUCTION

Gewog Background

Chubu Gewog is the third biggest gewog of Punakha Dzongkhag. It is located between *Pho Chu* on the east and *Mo Chu* on the west. It lies between the altitudes of 1200 m and 3800 m above sea-level with total area of 90.1 sq km. It shares borders with Toewang and Goenshari gewogs in the north. About 10% of the gewog is under agriculture and the remaining 90% is covered with broad leaf and conifer forests. The climate of Chubu Gewog is sub-tropical to temperate with cold winter and warm and humid summer. The land topography is predominantly rugged in nature with the upper slope of the gewog falling under the Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park.

Most people speak Dzongkha but other regional languages such as *Mandekha*, *Kurtoekha*, and *Bumthapkha* are also spoken in some areas. There are 233 households in the gewog with a total population of 1801 people. About 90% of the households own wetland. Road accessibility is limited and there is a well-maintained mule track that facilitates the movement of the people living in remote locations. The gewog is further divided into eight sub-blocks each headed by a Tshogpa (village

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leader). Most farmers live in rural, clustered settlements, except for a few in villages like Nidupchu and Siwala, which are scattered all over the place.

Objectives

The main objective of this study was to assess the extent of stunting, wasting, and under-weight prevalence in pre-school children (under five) at Chubu Gewog under Punakha Dzongkhag.

Protein Energy Malnutrition

According to WHO (2000), Protein Energy Malnutrition (PEM) is defined as an imbalance between the supply of protein and energy and the body's demand for them to ensure optimal growth and function.

PEM is the most common deficiency disease in the world. Children under five years of age have been known to be more vulnerable and susceptible to suffer from PEM (Cameroon & Yugve, 2002; PHD, 2002). About 100 million children are affected to a moderate or severe degree (WHO, 2000). In some developing countries, four out of five young children have some form of PEM (Cameroon & Yugve, 2002). The majority of them becomes under-nourished during the weaning of transitional period. Mal-nourished children have much higher death rate than children who are well-nourished.

The inadequate intake of food or essential micronutrients and diseases and factors that affect digestion, absorption and transportation of nutrients are the immediate causes of mal-nutrition. Poverty, lack of knowledge on nutrient, insufficient household food supply, inadequate maternal and child care and insufficient healthy living environment are some of the underlying causes of mal-nutrition (RGoB & UNICEF, 1990; WHO, 1993; PHD, 2003).

Signs and Symptoms of PEM

The first sign of clinical PEM are associated with wasting. The fat tissues start to feel very soft and the muscles underneath are flabby. This is especially noticeable when the inside of the thigh is felt. Muscle wasting is also easily seen and felt on the upper arm and shoulder. The belly may look prominent. The infant becomes listless and makes little response when his mother smiles or/and he reaches the development 'milestones' later than is normal. PEM may develop into the more severe forms which are marasmus, Kwashiorkor, or a combination of the two called marasmic-kwashiorkor (Figure 1).

Typical marasmus is seen in the infants. The marasmic child is often less than one year old. In case of marasmus, there is little or no subcutaneous fat, so the skin is loose and seems to be too big for the body. Nearly always, the infant looks like an old man or has a monkey face. They are flabby, and this can easily be felt on the thighs and buttocks where the muscles should be thick and strong. There is no oedema and there may be no change in hair colour. There may be associated signs of specific vitamin and mineral deficiencies, depending on the local dietary pattern. The child with



marasmus is usually hungry.

Figure 1: Marasmus (left) and Kwashiorkor child (right). (Source: Nidup, 2004)

Typical Kwashiorkor occurs most often in children aged from one to three years. Growth is retarded, muscles are wasted and flabby. There would be swelling mainly on the feet and lower legs. The child appears 'moon faced' and may look fat. Curly hair grows straight. The skin may be pale and usually the child is anaemic. Children with kwashiorkor are miserable and apathetic, have poor appetite and are difficult to feed. In marasmic-kwashiorkor, children have a combination of symptoms and signs from both the diseases.

MATERIALS and METHODS

Sampling and Study Area

The study was conducted in July 2004, for duration of one month. An anthropometric survey of the entire population of pre-school children (under five) in Chubu Gewog was conducted. All the villages (Lorina, Risina, Somdingkha, Bumtekha, Jeokolu, Yembakha, Dolepchen, Gangkha, Kesikha, Yebesa, Nowakha, Bali, Labesa, and Jungwakha) are included. The villages closer-by with fewer households are merged and given one name.

Anthropometric Indices

The weight, height, and age were recorded to assess the status of protein energy malnutrition. Weight for age ratio indicates if the child is under or over-weight. Low height for the age indicates the extent of stunting, and low weight for age indicates wasting or thinness.

Child Body Measurement

In order to assess the nutritional status of a child, his age, weight, length, or height was taken accurately using the following procedures:

- *Age:* The age of the children was verified from child's Health Card. Many of the children were over five years of age.
- *Weight:* measured with weighing bag and pen (SALTER, England, model 235 6s 25 kg x 100g. The weighing bag and the pen were borrowed from BHU-II, Samdingkha.
- *Height:* Height was measured with a measuring tape (Mc-02230122 STEEL TAPE, GE-309, manufactured by 'The Great Wall' China). The child was made to stand firmly against the wall with his bare feet flat on the floor, heels together, back straight and the eyes looking straight ahead. An exactly horizontal headboard was pressed firmly against his head. With the measuring tape, the exact height was recorded from the marker on the tape.
- *Length:* Placed a child below two years (or 85cm) on a measuring board (or infant meter). Firmly held his head against a vertical board with his eyes looking straight upwards. Pressed his knees straight and moved the sliding board firmly against his heels.

Data Record and Analysis

The data was collected in a format containing village, household number, age (month), sex (variable 1 for male and 2 for female), height (m), weight (kg), and date of data collection. Recordings were then entered into MS Excel software (Table 1). For convenience of analysis, the villages were given variables of 1-10 as follow:

Village1: Jeokolu, Tembakha
Village 2: Dolepchen, Gangkha, Kerikha
Village 3: Habesa, yebisa, Bali
Village 4: Jangwakha
Village 5: Nowakha
Village 6: Siwala, Changchena
Village 7: Chemchina, Paykhati
Village 8: Bumtekha
Village 9: Lorina, Risina

Table 1: An illustration of organised data in MS Excel for analysis in Epi Info Software Package.

SL	VILL	SEX	AGE	WT	HT
1	1	2	15	9.2	71
2	1	1	13	10.4	73
3	1	2	47	10	76
4	1	1	24	15.3	99
5	1	2	16	12	77
6	1	1	43	10	71
7	1	2	37	14.2	91

The data were then exported to standard computer software package called EPI nut EPI INFO software (obtained from Epidemiology Section, Public Health Department, Ministry of Health and Education), which combines with statistical software. Nutritional status is expressed in terms of standard deviation (SD) or Z score of an anthropometric index.

RESULT and DISCUSSION

Children Age Group in Chubu Gewog

The analysis included 92 children under Chubu Gewog of which 40.22% were males and 59.78% were females. The Figure below indicates the age group in months and the number of children under each group.

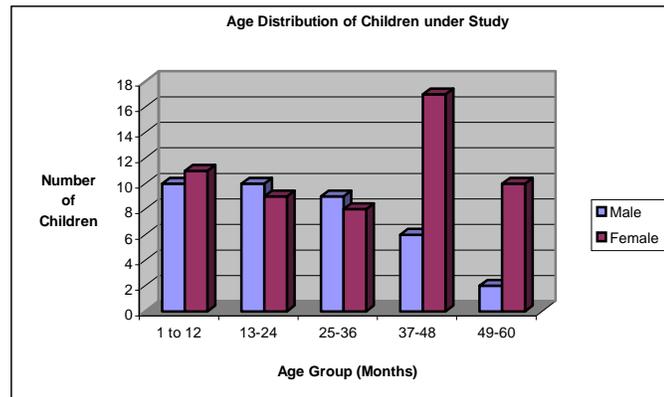


Figure 2: Age Group of Children under study in Chub Gewog

The Z score generated from the data analysis is read as standard deviation (SD). A child is classified as “stunted” if height for age is beneath two standard deviations of the median in the reference population and “wasted” and “underweight” if the same conditions apply to weight for height and weight for age respectively. In other words, all the children with anthropometrics index less than -2SD were considered as wasted, stunted, or underweight. For example, from the *Epi Info* output in Table 2, all the five children in village 7 (Chemchina & Paykhathi) were stunted with anthropometric index less than -2SD.

Table 2: *Epi nut Epi Info* software output for village 7.

HAZ	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
-6.7	1	20.00	20.00
-6.27	1	20.00	40.00
-4.43	1	20.00	60.00
-3.41	1	20.00	80.00
-3.09	1	20.00	100.00
Total	5	100.00	

Weight for Height (Wasting)

Wasting occurs when a child’s weight for height falls significantly below what is expected of a child of the same length or height. Wasting indicates current acute malnutrition resulting from failure to gain weight or actual weight loss. Wasting in individual children and population groups can change rapidly and shows marked seasonal patterns associated with changes in food availability or disease prevalence to which it is very sensitive. The proportion of children with weight for height less than -2SD is 2.17%. This study suggests that not even a single girl under five in Chubu Gewog is found to be wasted (Table 3).

Table 3: Weight for height less than -2SD

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total Percentage (%)
Wasting	2.17	0	2.17

The proportion of wasted children is less than the national figure of 4.1% (WHO, 1993), which was obtained during the national nutritional survey conducted in 1988

and 1999 (Namgyel & Yoezer, 2000) from 3000 children. Although, 2.17% wasted children in Chubu Gewog may not be comparable and cannot be represented as a national figure, there is no big difference in these two figures. The national survey covers children from all the four regions, and most of the children found wasted were from eastern and southern Bhutan with 2.6% and 10.7% respectively (Namgyel & Yoezer, 2000).

Weight for Age (Underweight)

The “underweight” form of mal-nutrition is a composite measure of stunting and wasting and it is measured by low weight for age. But, its interpretation is difficult as it fails to distinguish between tall, thin children from short, well proportioned children. However, it is useful for defining the overall magnitude of the extent of mal-nutrition and its changes over time.

Table 4: Weight for age less than less than -2SD

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total Percentage (%)
Underweight	9.78	10.87	20.65

In this study, the proportion of children with weight for age less than -2SD is 20.65% (Table 4). This proportion is less than the national figure of 37.9% (WHO, 1993). This study suggests that more girls are found to be susceptible to being “underweight” than boys.

Height for Age (Stunting)

Low length or height for age ratio indicates the degree of stunting in children. Stunting results from slow growth of the child and its failure to achieve expected length or height as compared to another child of the same age. Thus, stunting is an indicator of past growth failure. It is associated with a number of long-term factors including chronic insufficient protein energy intake, frequent infection, sustained incorrect feeding practices and low socio-economic family status (Micklewright & Ismail, 2001).

Table 5: Height for age less than less than -2SD

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total Percentage (%)
Stunting	21.74	32.61	54.35

In this study, the proportion of children with height for age less than -2SD is 54.35% (Table 5). More girls are stunted as compared to boys. The figure of 54.35% is close to the national figure of 56.1% (WHO, 1993).

PEM in Chubu Villages

All the children in Chubu Gewog were stunted with 100% stunting observed in village 7 (Chemchina & Paykhati). Least stunting was found in village 9 (Lorina & Risina). Similarly, wasting was detected only in villages 3 & 5 (Habesa + Yebisa + Bbali & Nowakha) with 5.56% & 10% respectively. No child in village 8 (Bumtekha) is underweight but this village has the second highest stunting incidence.

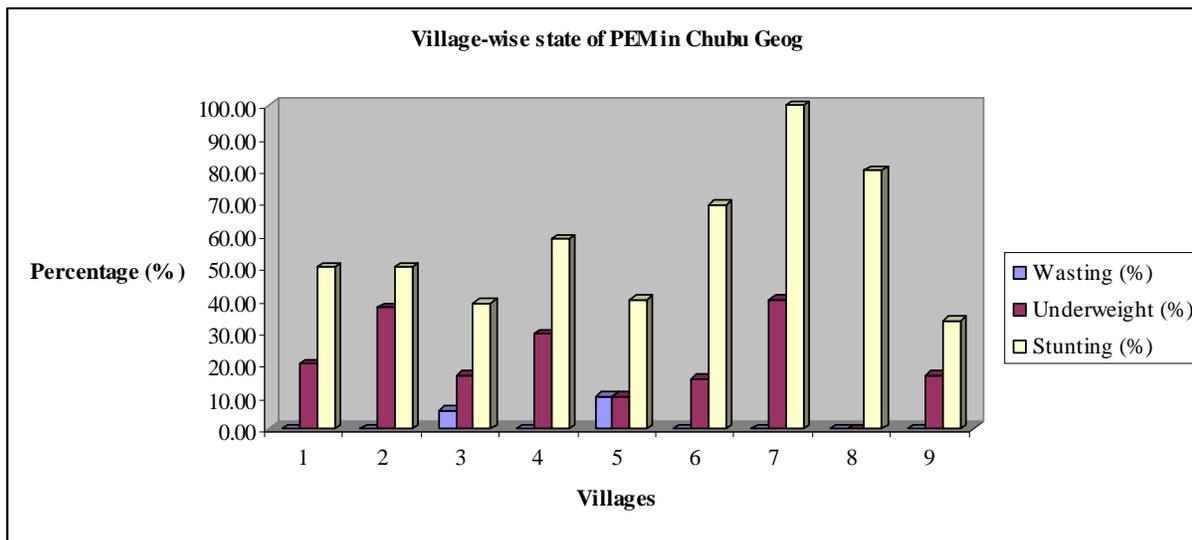


Figure 3: PEM prevalent in villages of Chubu gewog.

The furthest villages in Chubu Gewog are village 6 (Sewala & Changchena) and 7 (Chemchina, Paykhathi and Nidupchen). These villages are far away from gewog amenities such as health centre (BHU), RNR centre, and motor road that connect the gewog. Most villages are located either close to BHU, RNR centre or the road with relatively easy access to Punakha and Khuruthang.

Chubu Child Anthropometry: How serious a concern is it?

The trend of Protein Energy Malnutrition (PEM) observed from this study is very similar to the national nutritional survey conducted in 1988 and 1999 (Table 6). The most prevalent form of PEM in Bhutan is stunting followed by underweight. Wasting is the least significant form of PEM which Bhutanese children are prone to.

Table 6: Comparison of National Nutritional Survey Data (PHD, 2003) with Chubu Gewog.

Protein Energy Malnutrition (PEM)	1998 National Survey (%)	2004 Chubu Gewog (%)	1999 National Survey (%)
Wasting (Weight for height)	4.1	2.17	2.6
Underweight (Weight for age)	37.9	20.65	18.7
Stunting (Height for age)	56.1	54.35	40

Table above indicates the overall comparative figures of this study with the national nutritional study (PHD, 2003). In three studies, alarmingly similar trend of occurrence of PEM was observed among Bhutanese children.

Wasting is rare and virtually absent in three different age groups (Figure 4 & 5). Stunting is the most prominent and is evident in all the age groups. The highest stunting is observed in 13-24 and 37-48 months. Stunting is less common among infants (Figure 4) but then it rises. One of the reasons could be that weaning leads child to be exposed to higher risk of diseases. Weaning age is a period of high

nutritional risk: breast milk nutrient becomes insufficient to support good growth and, as a result, the child is exposed to higher risk of disease. It is said that catch-up growth of height can occur if conditions improve. Intervention at an early age of two or three years of life appears to have positive impact on height (Steckel, 1985; UN, 1990).

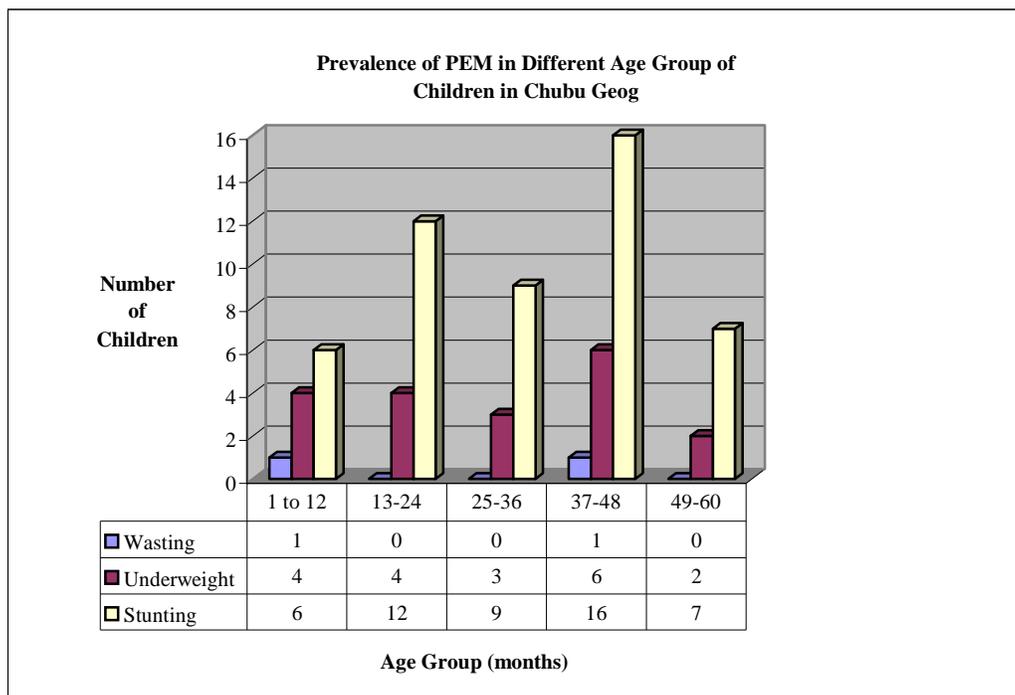


Figure 4: Incidence of PEM in different age groups of children of Chubu gewog.

The prevalence of wasting, underweight and stunting in Chubu Gewog needs to be taken seriously. This study suggests a significant proportion of “chronic mal-nutrition” in Chubu gewog, and it should definitely be deemed as a big health concern. But, what are the contributory factors for this extent of mal-nutrition? Is it the poor socio-economic conditions which most socio-economists blame? Is it due to the high incidence of diseases?

Anthropometry: What does it reveal?

Anthropometry is one way of measuring “net” nutritional status-input of nutrients minus claims made by body maintenance, physical activity (including work), and disease. Mal-nutrition reduces energy and mental concentration, and increases mortality and morbidity risk. Does child anthropometry convey information about current living standards or those over long periods?

Child anthropometry cannot be used as a welfare measure as most economists do (Micklewright & Ismail, 2001). In general, “deviant” anthropometry clearly provides imperfect information on individual living standards. A child with weight or height below two standard deviations of the reference standard for his or her age is more likely to be living in a household where conditions are not conducive to development than is a child with values at the median. Anthropometric status clearly does not provide a welfare ranking in the same sense as would an adequately measured full income variable. Nor would an anthropometric index provide a monotonically increasing measure of welfare, if it were free of genetic factors (Micklewright & Ismail, 2001). For instance, there would be a difference in height among siblings (unless

identical twins) and this could be brought about by the force of genetic factors much more than environmental ones. This also imposes several limitations on the ability of anthropometry to measure intra-household difference in welfare.

Wasting is rare even in countries at low levels of development unless they are undergoing an exceptional crisis (Micklewright & Ismail, 2001). Wasting reflects current household and individual circumstances including seasonality in food supply or the impact of recent sickness. Stunting on the other hand, develops more slowly, with deficits in height increasing throughout a child's growth period if conditions remain unfavourable. However, the impact is most marked during the first two years of life when the rate of growth is at its peak. Hence, height principally reflects failure to grow in very young children and the fact of having failed to grow in older children. The same level of stunting or wasting in two different settings may be associated with different risks of mortality and morbidity on account of a variety of intermediating factors between mal-nutrition and outcome, including epidemiology of certain diseases, access to health care facilities, and behavioural differences in relation to household management of infection (Micklewright & Ismail, 2001).

It was found that over 90% households in Chubu Gewog depend on wet-land (for rice farming) agriculture while some depend on non-wet land crops. Very few villages, particularly Siwala, depend entirely on livestock farming. This form of farming lifestyle may contribute to the low anthropometry indices in Chubu Gewog. Evidence suggests that households with greater involvement in agriculture tend to have children with lower nutritional status (Micklewright & Ismail, 2001). A variety of reasons may explain this: agriculture requires more work of women, resulting in lower birth weights and lower quality of childcare; and households that sell food may do so to buy manufactured goods at the expense of household consumption. Therefore, the ability to produce more food, be it crop or livestock products from agricultural farm, does not necessarily improve child anthropometry indices.

Studies by Marnie & Micklewright (1994) in Uzbekistan found higher calorie and protein intake in collective farm households than in worker-employee households with constant cash income. But *net* nutritional status as revealed by anthropometry may not follow this pattern if there are other factors in rural areas such as sanitation and other living conditions that place more demand on nutrients entering the body. A study by Micklewright & Ismail (2001) in Uzbekistan reveals that simple running water in the household has a positive effect on weight for height, presumably reflecting better cleanliness and less disease.

CONCLUSION

The study indicates high prevalence of mal-nutrition (PEM) among the children under five years of age in Chubu Gewog under Punakha Dzongkhag. Of the 92 children 54.35% were stunted, 20.65% were under-weight, and 2.17% were identified as wasted.

Recommendation

A child anthropometry index gives us good knowledge on the state of nutrition. But it does not give us much idea about the factors involved in causing mal-nutrition. The factors such as sanitation in and outside the households, availability of clean drinking water, availability of proper drainage system, incidence of diseases, food production capacity, income generation, household food consumption and social behaviour patterns, existence of basic education, intra-household genetic variation, and other

factors contributing malnutrition must be studied in depth. Need for such studies was also expressed by Namgyel & Yoezer (2000). But at the same time, the findings of this study should not be ignored. It is evident that mal-nutrition in Chubu Gewog is alarmingly high. Carefully planned nutritional initiatives to combat malnutrition in Chubu either by the nearest BHU or hospital, relevant NGOs, concerned dzongkhag, or from the central offices of the Ministry of Health may be required.

* * *

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Getting published

TW Maxwell¹¹

Introduction

Academics want to 'get published'. There are a number of reasons for this including academic reputation and institutional pressure. However, there is quite a lot to do before submitting a piece of work for publication. Crafting the text takes time and skill. The required skills can develop over time if a sufficiently reflective and reflexive stance is adopted to the writing task. This is a point, amongst many, that Kamler & Thomson (2006) make and I am indebted to them for many of the ideas here. Crucial in the writing process is having something to write that an audience wants to read. Furthermore, there are many potential audiences. Matching the idea to the audience is part of the decision-making that takes place prior to submission in crafting the work for publication.

In Bhutan, submitting work for publication is in its infancy. There are many reasons for this high amongst which is that Bhutan has only recently entered the 'modern' world. Secular education in Bhutan is only fifty years old. Only recently have there been novels published for Bhutanese and international readership (e.g Choden 2006). More specifically, the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) came into existence in 2004 and has embarked upon plans that include taking its place in the world stage of knowledge producing universities. This requires a new role for academics in the federated RUB (RUB 2006, p. 4) where knowledge creation is new. Thus, publishing the result of their knowledge creation efforts is also very new. As a matter of interest, the freshness of Bhutan knowledge creation efforts can create extra interest for some editors. There are, thus, exciting opportunities for Bhutanese academic writers.

The purpose of this short article is to share some hard-won experience about getting published. Already mentioned are the key concepts of a good idea and hinted at was the notion that writing is a process. The writing process, leading to getting published, requires a consideration of the audience for the piece and the potential publishing opportunities. There are differences here including the importance to the authors of the peer-review process.

Motivations

There are increasing pressures on academics world-wide to get their work published. Such pressure is created for a number of reasons and from a number of sources. A key reason is that an academic can gain a reputation by publishing in the right places. Another personalised reason is that the academics may want certain audiences to know what has been created. Publication can also lead to promotion. Academics also want to test their work against the opinions of peers. Publishing is the quintessential way of doing this. In short, academics develop an academic identity through publishing (Kamler & Thomson 2006).

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The institution the academic works in usually encourages publication. It may also provide a financial incentive to the academic which indicates the high priority often given to publication by university administrations. Similarly, the institution also wants academics' work to be published because it gains prestige and recognition from this very academic of activities.

These motivations mirror some of my own in writing this article. The bases of my claims in writing this piece are several and my motivations are consistent with the idea of identity formation. As I have argued above, there is a niche in the Bhutanese academic literature that I hope to fill in writing this article. In so doing, I hope to assist, even influence, colleagues in Bhutan who are about to embark on academic writing and research. I have learned some skills and developed some knowledge of the distinctions and practices that academics who are familiar with publishing advance. I have been moderately successful though I am only now attempting to write my first sole-authored book. So, I think that I have something to offer.

There are other personal qualities required of writers. I am not a natural writer. Even after 20 years as an academic, a colleague and I went through a process of more than a dozen drafts before the second publisher accepted our manuscript (Maxwell and Kupczyk-Romanchuck 2007). I've found that there is a tenacity required in getting published and a confidence that what is written is worthwhile. Motivations of wanting to achieve the benefits of publication identified above assist in maintaining that tenacity against all kinds of pressures, especially including one's teaching role. Time has to be given to crafting the published piece, and, of course, time for the research that goes along with writing. In essence, what is implied is the creation of an academic identity (Kamler & Thomson 2006) by virtue of the created works and where they are published.

Because I am not a researcher in the area of crafting academic texts, I cannot reasonably give advice on crafting the text itself. I can leave such advice to others such as in the excellent hands of Kamler and Thomson (2006) whose book I thoroughly recommend although its primary audience is the supervisors of (doctoral) dissertations. Many of the excellent ideas in their book are readily accessible to new writers. Furthermore, my field is education and so my experience is limited to that area, but I believe that the ideas presented here can be translated, with some care, to other fields.

The idea

The idea itself is crucial. The idea feeds the research and the writing. For example, the idea for this short piece came from a request from academics at Samtse College of Education (SCoE) in August 2006 for me to talk about 'Getting published'. This request came as SCoE academics began to come to grips with their new academic role replacing their previous teaching role. I was encouraged to write this article by the response that I received in Samtse. Increasingly, these days, as my time becomes more and more concentrated, I take opportunities to convert thinking (research of kind) into some tangible outcome.

Generally, the writer(s) needs to know something of the field in which publication is to take place. Using this knowledge, the contribution can be shown to be useful and indeed worthwhile. The case can then be made as part of the article itself. An idea needs to be tested against 'the literature'. In the case of this article, I am reasonably confident that nothing of this kind exists yet for academics in Bhutan and I know that *Rabsel* is presented in multiple copies to all of RUB's institutions. To this extent, the

present piece is unusual in that it represents an attempt to fulfil a perceived need rather than to create something new.

Back to the idea. As I have implied above, a writer needs to identify a gap, that is, to position the submitted text in such a way that the editor/audience can see where that new text fits. In so doing, it also positions itself in relation to 'the literature'. This is part of the academic's job in academic writing. The positioning might be conceptual, methodological or contextual, or a mixture of these. In this case, it is contextual.

Positioning the text is not as straight forward as it might seem. The central act of text production needs to be understood as being embedded in particular socio-cultural practices of the field of study mediated by processes of production and interpretation (Fairclough 1992, in Kamler & Thomson 2006, p 20ff). This means that there are certain ways of writing/talking that are understood as signalling text/talk of a particular field. What is included, indeed left out, is part of the positioning process that the academic uses in this signalling process. For example, which writers/ideas are referenced is an important way of positioning the text.

With respect to ideas, Bhutan has a special place. Its special place is due to its newness on the international research scene. So little has been researched in Bhutan and this is the case across almost all areas. In fact, the particular cultural and ethnic traditions of Bhutan mean that social science research is in its infancy and Bhutan's spectacular ecological variation and remoteness of many of its regions mean that much work has yet to be done. Perhaps, it has a very special place too in terms of its Tibetology research and the excellent sources of texts that exist at the National Library of Bhutan.

There are two rather obvious difficulties that many Bhutanese academics face. Relevant literature is not easily found in Bhutan (Reid & Cano 2005). This is a major drawback for academics who need to position their research writing and so make a case for its publication. No doubt, Bhutanese academics will need to take advantage, where they can, to connect with international sources via the internet. Secondly, few Bhutanese academics have doctoral qualifications. They have thus not been introduced to the genre of academic writing or to models of scholarly support in creating manuscripts. This is not easily overcome in the short term but there are beginnings such as the newly formed Research Self Help Group at ScoE and the establishment of journals such as *Rabsel*. Additionally, the *Journal of Bhutan Studies* (see <http://www.bhutanstudies.org.bt/journal/journal.htm>) has been published for some years.

Efforts will be needed by leaders in federated RUB institutions to support those academics who wish to be amongst the first Bhutanese to successfully publish their work (see Kamler and Thomson 2006, pp. 144-159). Relationships can be developed with successful writers including those outside the RUB. However, while an environment of supporting academics in institutions helps, there is no substitute for writing, getting the text down. This is the focus of the next section.

Writing is a process

The phrase 'don't get it right, get it written' is often quoted. It contains the wisdom of writers who know that writing is a process and there can be no substitute for getting text onto a blank page. Then working on the text to shape it so that it better portrays what needs to be said takes place and this constitutes the craft of writing. Kamler & Thomson (2006, p. 125ff) make a case for academic writing (and indeed talking such

as in a conference presentation) that is writerly, meaning that academic writing should be interesting, not turgid. Interesting text focuses upon meaning (not who said what) and has the audience clearly in mind. In a similar manner to good fiction, good academic writing engages and invites the academic reader to think and to imagine. More on this later.

There is another reason for thinking of writing as a process, not an event. The first idea is that writing requires practice to become good at it. Very few are 'naturals'. Writing is crafted, meaning that it can be improved, a fact that is usually self-evident when a writer adopts the strategy of 'getting it written'. Furthermore, in writing ideas come as the words are put down on the page. In writing this piece, I have learned about the publication process itself, for example, in the marginalisation of 'audience' (see below) and have stimulated my interest in academic writing as a genre. 'Learn to write, write to learn' is another phrase that comes to mind to summarise these ideas.

Others can assist by providing feedback. The 'others' critique in the academic rather than the commonsense meaning of that term. Commonly, senior academics will provide critical feedback as part of their role. This goes well beyond the technical side of writing. Key ideas include: what is the meaning here? How can this text engage the reader more? Is the author present in this text? Does this text conform to the academic tradition of the field? Who is the audience for this text? Is this text appropriate for the publication in mind? It is to this question and related issues that we now turn.

Publication and peer review

It came as something of a surprise to my Samtse colleagues that there are audiences of different status from an academic writer's point of view. More precisely, publishers achieve differential status. In effect, the notion of audience has for many academics become marginalised as a prior question for writing though the notion of publisher and audience somewhat coalesce in the journal field

Academics' socio-cultural practices have become captured to some extent in many countries by institutional practices. Specifically, there is an institutional press to publish but to publish in certain places rather than others. For example, in Australia in recent times, payments are made to universities based upon the federal Government's Department of Education, Science and Training's publishing hierarchy. There is a considerable technology about capturing these publications accurately and it has become a serious business. Understandably, universities encourage their academics to publish in some rather than other publications.

Some publications are peer-reviewed. The publications that count, in Australia at least and most likely elsewhere also, are those that are peer-reviewed. Peer-reviewed journals and books have higher status in the academic arena. It will not be surprising that publication in some rather than other outlets are recognised in promotion and will add to or detract from recognition in the field. Similarly, academic identity formation is created.

The basic idea in peer-review is that peers make judgments about the value of the piece. Usually, these peers are selected by editors. Selection is based upon editors' knowledge of that particular field. Usually, too, there are at least two for journals and possibly more for books. There have been some criticisms of this process in recent times (Schatz 2004: Arms 2002). Often peers review the piece 'blind'. Blind peer-review means that the author's name is taken off the piece so that this does not influence the

judgment of the peers. Implied too is the idea that the work is the author's and that it has been created in an ethical manner. Again, there have been celebrated cases of the latter not being the case. Peer-review hopes to identify such impropriety and at the same time is a guarantee of quality.

Some publishers have an audience in mind but do not peer-review. For example, some educational professional journals encourage a non-academic audience. Here, the writing is in the academic genre and should be accessible to non-academics. Often, these are the journals that are not peer-reviewed. This means that academics make a decision about whether to publish in such journals.

However, in Australia at least, this situation may change as universities are about to be judged not only by 'intrinsic merit and academic impact' (Roberts 2005, p. 12) but also by

the impact or use of original research outside of the peer community that will typically not be reported in traditional peer review literature, i.e. the extent to which research is successfully applied during the assessment period for the RQF. Broader impact or usefulness relates to the recognition by qualified end-users that quality research has been successfully applied to achieve social, cultural, economic and/or environmental outcomes (Roberts 2005, p. 12).

Thus, the idea of 'impact' may extend academic authorship perhaps into professional journals often not previously considered of sufficient status or worth the effort.

The extended discussion of this section implies that Bhutanese academics need to be aware of the socio-cultural practices of their particular field. Peer-review may or may not be important to them at this point in time in the creation of their academic identity. However, RUB desires to be an internationally recognised university (RUB 2005). This implies, in turn, that peer-review matters to RUB just as it does elsewhere.

Audiences

Publishers do have, and must have, an audience in mind just as writers have an audience in mind. Most publishers, in the form of editorial notes, identify their audience. The audience of a journal is usually established by the editor and the editorial team. They post the nature of their audience in the journal itself and commonly in recent times also on the journal website. This is usually achieved by setting out the aims and often objectives of the journal. At the same time, a writer will normally get a sense of it, if this is not explicitly stated. In the case of authoring for conferences, the conference organisers take the place of the editorial team.

The book is a special case. Normally, a book publisher requires the writer to identify the book's audience especially in terms of the book's position compared to others in that field. This is made readily apparent by advice for authors on many publishers' websites and normally requires the completion of a pro forma(s) and addition of an example of text.

Since the author writes for an audience, it is essential that the audience is known reasonably early in the writing process. This is so that the text can be crafted for that audience. In the case of journals, seeing what else has been published in the targeted journal gives an author an additional sense of audience and also a good 'feel' of the socio-cultural practices adopted in that journal. Conferences are a bit trickier but asking one's colleagues can assist here. Many conferences publish proceedings and these also provide insights of these kinds.

Places to publish

This is a choice that each academic makes. Status is not only determined by peer-review but rather by the quality of the work published over a period of time. High prestige places create different identities. Indeed, some very prestigious sites can make a career. *Nature* may well be a case in point. So, where the work gets published depends upon individual purposes. There are three main sites.

Conferences. Conferences are places to publish. They are not only places for networking but also where new ideas can be tried out and identities created and maintained, or, diminished (Kamler & Thomson 2006, p. 23ff). Papers are sometimes peer-reviewed, especially in Australia, but less so in Europe. Thus, a presentation that is not peer-reviewed implies other purposes have been foremost in the author's mind, especially given the costs of many conferences and associated travel. In any case, conferences need to be thought of as spoken presentations and as such performativity takes centre stage. Conferences also vary in status.

These days a non-peer-reviewed piece is often the precursor to a journal submission. The presentation is not enough amidst the pressures to create records of achievement for oneself and for one's university. But even then, an international conference presentation is often presumed to be more prestigious than a local one. The reason for this is not certain (cultural cringe in Australian cases?) given that what is usually on conference organisers' minds is getting people to attend without great attention to the quality.

Journals. Journals are the traditional form of publication for most academics. There are e-journals and paper journals. The former are much more recent and distinguished by the fact they are not produced in paper form unless printed by a user from the internet. Journals are often more up-to-date than books but less so than conference presentations.

As indicated above, journals vary in status. Status varies depending upon who is making the decision. For example: Is it peer reviewed? Is it a professional or academic journal/audience? Choice of journal level of status is often quite difficult. Some journals reject many more articles than they receive. Rejection rates amongst top journals can be as high as 90%. This is a good reason for trying to publish in journals such as these. One's professional identity is certainly enhanced by getting a publication in one of the prestigious journals. Another reason for submitting to journals is to achieve feedback. Feedback can be very useful indeed where the feedback is not taken slavishly but is peer-critique on the work.

Journals each have their own ways of presenting. Sometimes, to assist authors, the journal has a template that the author is requested to use. Certainly, the author is required to submit in the correct format and referencing system both of which can be found at the website and/or inside the cover of the journal itself. Follow the requirements as set out. The editor is most usually a hard-working academic.

Books. I have less experience with books. Usually, a book proposal is required or, less commonly, an author is approached. The proposal for a book has to be done carefully. A key idea, less obvious at other places, is that the book publisher is interested in making a profit. That means that some research is necessary and positioning the book in relation to the competition is important. Again, peer-review will be required.

Some publishing houses are more prestigious than others. Usually, 'prestigious' means multi-national but not always. However, the publishing scene in India is quite idiosyncratic and so particular research into India publishers may be necessary. The vanity press, the term given to self-funded publication, is not considered at all prestigious though this view might be countered by quality reviews.

After submitting

There is a wait. A few months is normal. A gentle email after this time could be considered. Most articles, in my experience, require some re-working following the editor's suggestions but not slavishly so. Your readers will give advice overseen by the editor. Re-submission might best be done with a short parallel piece in which the key suggestions are addressed by changes or arguments for no change. Rejection, from time to time, is normal for most academics. Perhaps, the new re-worked piece can be submitted to a less prestigious journal? Perhaps, it needs a re-think? Re-working for a conference is seldom required, except for refereed conference proceedings or a book from invited presentations from a conference. Often, these papers benefit from the feedback at the conference itself. The work is in draft until it leaves your hands for good.

Conclusion

Bhutan is just beginning its secular academic publication record. There are clearly opportunities there for academics who can carve out time from their previous roles as teachers. Choices need to be made about audience and sites for publication. Publication will have an impact upon researcher identity. Creating publishable text is demanding, but although not mentioned above, rewarding. However, creating opportunities may mean forming new relationships within institutions and also partnerships between institutions, that is, research partnerships of mutual benefit between researchers inside and outside of Bhutan.

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Eureka!

Devi Charan Baraily

That was Sunday, June 25, 2006. I was practising mathematics for my examinations scheduled for the next day. When I was practising some problems on the chapter on Height and Distance, the assignment which my teacher, Mr Kenny Raj Peter, gave me struck my mind. Thereafter, my mind was totally agitated and carried away by the project.

On June 26, 2006 when I spoilt my mid-term maths examination which is one of my favourite subjects, I was apprehensive thinking that I might have disappointed my maths teacher. Thinking about the same, I remembered my project work in which I could do something better. There were seven thrilling topics given as maths project. Among them the topic which I liked was: "How to measure the height of the prayer-flag of our Tsirang Dratshang". Our Principal is so good that when a student does something, she appreciates it, encourages and congratulates that student. She too helps him/her by motivating them to reach greater heights.

When we got the project, a group of friends jokingly kept a bet for coming up with the device which can measure the height of the prayer-flag of our Tsirang Dratshang. 'Whoever wins the bet should be served with a treat in the canteen' was the bet kept before leaving the school for our mid-term break.

The love and concern from my parents and friends encouraged me to do well and to be a sincere student. My humble desire to contribute something to my school and the support that I got from the school and the teachers inspired me to come up with this device. Thus, I pondered the whole night and finally got a rough idea in my mind. I had no previous knowledge about designing the device. I worked a great deal in bringing out my device successfully. When my teacher saw my task, he was so exhilarated and gave me good marks in my project column.

But the measurement was not that accurate, so it made me think again. Then on July 19, the following Sunday, I made it again with some alterations. "The accuracy of my device has improved this time, Sir", I said. My work was considered impeccable with great accuracy. Thus, on Wednesday, July 12, my device was demonstrated in the assembly. The same day, my device was taken in physics laboratory for further verification and demonstrated to all science club members.

My device involves a protractor and a laser beam. It is simple: First, put this device in plane (spirit level shows a change, if any), raise the laser-beam handle till the light reaches the top of the object whose height is to be measured. See the angle which the pointer makes and the distance of the device from the object (say SAB). Once the distance is measured, we can use the formula:

$$\text{Distance} = \tan O \times AB.$$

The value of the O is the angle measured on the protractor. So the simple calculation gives the height of the object.

Hence, my device can be very useful for the engineers, surveyors and teachers for practical use in teaching mathematics on Height and Distance.

My device was thoroughly investigated by the school head and different teachers with a great deal of appreciation and congratulations for me. My device was also warmly appreciated by Bhutan Times in their issue of August 27, 2006. .

The time my device was announced and published, I got many messages from well-wishers, letters, calls and gifts from different staff and friends from within and outside the Dzongkhag. The feelings in me had no words to express - whether I discovered or invented a device, but what I would like to tell all my friends is "We too can do good in discoveries and inventions as we too have potentials, but just wait for the right time to expose out talents as Napoleon said: "What the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve.". My maths teacher, Mr Kenny Raj Peter, too says in Bhutan Times: "Bhutanese have the caliber but they need attention and opportunity to display their talent".

THEODOLITE.

After my device was explained in the assembly, my teacher told me about the inventions and great people. He too told the story of Archimedes and used the word "Eureka". We enjoyed it but I wanted to know more about it and finally in the library I found in one of the science Encyclopaedia a device like mine device but with all complex scientific machines used. So now I would like to share something about the device theodolite.

A theodolite is an instrument that measures vertical and horizontal angles and which is used to survey accurately a large area of land. A theodolite is used in the original surveys from which maps are drawn. Traditional theodolites have a kind of telescope mounted on a tripod in such a way that it can be rotated or tilts are indicated by means of accurate angular scales on the instrument. Theodolite is used to work out the precise position of different points in the area. Nowadays, even more accurate instruments with laser beams are used to measure angles and distances. A modern laser theodolite can measure angles and distances with great accuracy using a concentrated light. By knowing the precise length of a baseline, a surveyor can use a theodolite to measure the angles of a triangle and then calculate the lengths of its side.

I am interested in working with electronics, carpentry tools and mechanical devices. My dream is to become a scientist and serve my country in the best possible way. My hobby is to do research in any new thing related to modern science and technology. Till date, I have a good academic profile which could be one of the factors which helped me in my invention.

Portrait of an Institute: National Institute for the Disabled, Khaling

Kuenga Chhogyel, Teacher, NID¹²

In the month of February 1973, the National Institute for the Disabled began as the School for the Blind with three students that were directly picked up from their homes (1 from Trashigang and 2 from Pemagatshel Dzongkhags). Mr. Einar Kippenes, a Norwegian, was designated as the first principal of the school. With his wife and a Bhutanese teacher, the school was established at Khaling in 1973.

The records available in the institute clearly reveal that it was purely with the personal initiative of His Royal Highness Prince Namgyel Wangchuck, the then honorable Minister of Trade, Industry and Forests, that the School for the Blind was established. With the royal patronage and personal care of His Royal Highness, the school remained under the administrative guidance of the ministry. There are numerous evidences that His Royal Highness spared his precious time to visit the institute a number of times and that Dasho Tshering Wangda, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, the then P.A. and later P.S. to H.R.H. had constant contact with the school about its establishment and development during 1973 to 1983.

The initial expense of the school was financed by a Women's Mission of Sweden, KMA, (Kwinnliga Missions Arbetare) and CBM, (Christoffel Blindenmission) now known as the Christian Blind Mission, a worldwide German Mission. The institute's building and a few teachers' quarters are living testimonies of their generous contributions. The special equipment and materials required for the education of the blind were also procured with their financial assistance.

In the September of 1980, HRH Prince Namgyel Wangchuck formally named the school as Zangley Muenselling School for the Blind. In 1981, the school was officially placed under the Department of Education and the salaries of the few Bhutanese teachers were offered by the Royal Government of Bhutan. While the world commemorated the Year for the Disabled in 1981, Bhutan too joined with a team of two students and a teacher in Japan and the rest in Thimphu. By then, there were 10 boys and 2 girls.

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Mr. Einar Kippenes worked till 1981 and he was succeeded by Mr. Philip Holmberg, a Swedish, till 1986. In line with the Royal Government's policy of nationalizing of all the heads of schools and institutions, Late Nawang Namgyel had been entrusted with the responsibility of the 3rd principal of the institute. He worked from July 1986 till December 1998. In March 1999, Mr. Karma Tshering became the 4th principal of the institute. In August, 2002, the Assistant Principal, Mrs. Tshering Lhamo, officiated till the present principal, Mr. Tshongpen Wangdi, took charge in December 2003.

By July 1989, the Royal Government of Bhutan began to allocate the annual budget covering every aspect of the institute's expenditure. For the first time, the institute was provided with a complete set of Bhutanese staff.

In 1995, the erstwhile Zangley Muenselling School for the Blind was renamed as the National Institute for the Disabled with a definite objective of expanding the opportunities and facilities to other categories of disabilities.

In addition to the numerous developmental projects being carried out throughout the nation, the Royal Government has shown great concern for the welfare of the people with disabilities. Through the UNICEF, a consultant on Special Education was invited and feasibility studies were explored.

A pilot project on the feasibility of mixing the physically disabled in the mainstream school was launched at Changangkha Lower Secondary School in 2001. In September, 2003, education for the hearing-impaired began in Drukgyel Lower Secondary School, Paro.

Funding from the Christian Blind Mission International had been granted which led to the development of the existing facilities and the construction of the dining hall and kitchen. The Bhutan-German Friendship Association has funded for the construction of the girls' hostel while the U.S. Save the Children through the Youth Development Fund, funded the construction of hostel for boys. The kitchen, dining hall and the two hostel buildings were inaugurated by Her Majesty the Queen Azhi Tshering Pem Wangchuck on 19th November 2004.

A Braille Production Unit attached to the CAPSD was set up in 2002 to cater to the needs of the visually disabled children and the teachers. This unit is providing facilities for the translation of materials into Braille ranging from textbooks to teaching manuals through the assistance of the JICA, and a similar, but a smaller unit has been set up in NID to cater to the local needs. The production unit translates questions papers into Braille for those NID students who study in the regular schools.

In 2005, a Resource Centre funded by the Danish Association of the Blind was set up in NID to facilitate the needs of the visually impaired children of the institute and those who study in the regular schools through integration programme.

For the first time, the Day of the Disabled was celebrated in Thimphu. Thanks to YDF, ten students were selected to participate for the Bhutan Paralympics.

Timeline

Spring 1973: NID started with three students as School for the Blind.

- June 1974: NID participated in the coronation of His Majesty the King Druk Gyalpo Jigme Singye Wangchuck (the principal and one visually impaired student attended)
- December 1980: HRH Prince Namgyel Wangchuck formally named the school as Zanley Muenselling School for the Blind. Two blind students joined the Youth Camp organized by NCSCP at Mongar.
- 1981 April: The School was formally placed under the Department of Education.
Two students and teacher attended the commemoration of World Disabled Year in Japan while the rest celebrated in Thimphu.
The 2nd principal Mr. Philip Holmburg took over the charge of school administration from Mr. Einar Kippenes.
- 1986 : Late Lupon Nawang Namgyel became the 3rd principal.
- 1989 : RGOB began allocating annual budget.
- 1995: Erstwhile Zangley Muenselling School for the Blind was renamed the National Institute for the Disabled.
- March 1999: Mr Karma Tshering took over the charge of the School as 4th principal.
- August 2002: Mrs. Tshering Lhamo, the Assistant Principal officiated.
- December 2003: Mr. Tshongpen Wangdi became the principal of the school.
- 19th November 2004: The hostel complex, kitchen and the dining-hall were inaugurated by Her Majesty the Queen Azhi Tshering Pem Wangchuck.

Achievements of the Institute

Within the 33 years of its existence, the institute has come a long way and has achieved quite a lot in various fields. One of the most remarkable achievements worth mentioning could be the successful introduction of Dzongkha Language into Braille. Mr. Tashi Phuntsho, a teacher, and Mr. Singye Namgyel, the Academic principal of NIE, Paro, the then teachers of N.I.D jointly devised a Braille system for Dzongkha in 1985-86. In 1998, the two highly talented persons were awarded the “Druk Thuksey” medal, the highest award one could achieve in the land, from His Majesty the King of Bhutan. Their innovative efforts and extraordinary talents enabled them to come up with a unique combination of Braille characters for appropriate adoption of Dzongkha alphabet into regular Braille. This achievement was further developed and regularized by the previous Dzongkha teacher, Mr. Kelzang Chhoegyel. In 1987, the first batch of prayer and Dzongkha books in Braille were available to the blind students. The Dzongkha Development Commission has officially approved the regular application of

the Dzongkha Braille by the blind. This enable the visually impaired students to read and write Dzongkha in Braille.

In 1978, the first batch of the visually impaired students appeared at the Class V All Bhutan Common Examination. By 1979, the first integration in a regular school began. In 1982, Mr. Sonam Tobgyal, first visually impaired, got employed.

Some of the students won prizes in essay competition at the national level, both in English and Dzongkha. A few students have won medals in the FESPIC (Far East South Pacific) games for the disabled held in Japan, Hongkong, Indonesia, and China. The last medal, a silver medal in 100 meters race, was won in 1999 at Bangkok during the 7th FESPIC games.

In 1998, on the commemoration of the institute's 25th anniversary, an audio album cassette and CD were released for the first time in the country through the generous contribution of UNICEF, which was a great success.

Many a time, one can come across a blind student equally competing and even out-doing their sighted peers in the B.C.S.E and I.S.C. and other external examinations despite their limited textbooks. In 1998, Mr. Pema Choegyel, a blind student, was admitted to Sherubtse College for the regular B.A English honours course after he excelled in I.S.C with 70% average marks and graduated in 2001. Mr. Pema Gyeltshen, the first Bed graduate, passed out from NIE in July 2001 and was posted at NID, Khaling as a teacher.

Kuenga Dorji and Amrith Bahadur excelled in their I.S.C. examinations both securing over 72%. They were both qualified for scholarship abroad. Having completed their studies in Coimbatore, South India, they are now back to Bhutan serving the Royal Government. Ms. Duptho Zangmo was the first blind girl to be admitted to Sherubtse College in 2002. In 2005, Mr. Amrith Bahdur Subba graduated from Coimbatore University, India, and was awarded Gold Medal. In the R.C.S.C. Common Examinations he excelled among sighted contemporaries and achieved the fourth position.

In addition, we have visually disabled working in different fields in different parts of the Kingdom holding crucial posts who are stated here under:

- Physiotherapist 1
- Teachers (trained from N.I.E.) 10
- (8 male and 2 female)
- Computer operator 1
- Stenographer 1
- Steno typist 2
- Telephone receptionists 7
- (4 male 3 female)
- Office peon 1
- Music instructor 1
- Private entrepreneur 1
- Scholarship 1
- English Hons. 3rd year (completed) 1
- Curriculum Officer 1
- Teacher apprentice 1
- Under training in R.I.M. 1

• Teacher under training	1
Total:	31

Achievements in Brief

1978: The first batch of visually impaired students appeared at All Bhutan Class V Common Examinations.

1979: The introduction of Integrated Education.

1982: The first visually impaired, Mr. Sonam Tobgyal, got employed. A bronze medal was won on Triple Jump in the 2nd FESPIC Games in Hong Kong. The first visually impaired student appeared at the Class VIII Common Examinations.

1985: Braille Dzongkha introduced by Mr. Singye Namgyal and Mr. Tashi Phuntsho, teachers of NID.

1987: The first visually impaired students to appear at the ICSE. Dzongkha Braille books and prayer books were available to the blind students. The first visually impaired, Mr. Kuenga Choegyel, trained as a teacher.

1998: Mr. Tashi Phuntsho and Mr. Singye Namgyel, the former teachers of NID, were awarded "Druk Thuksay" medal for developing Dzongkha Braille. On the commemoration of NID's 25th anniversary, an audio album cassette and CD were released for the first time in Bhutan. Mr. Pema Choegyel, a blind student was admitted to Sherubtse College who later became the first blind teacher with PGCE qualification.

1999: A silver medal in 100 meters was won in 7th FESPIC games at Bangkok.

In 2000: Special Education Programme was launched.

2001: Introduction of Low Vision programme (Provision of large print) began. By July, the first student with B.Ed. degree graduated from NIE, Samtse.

2002: Orientation and Mobility was introduced.

Mr. Kuenga Dorji and Amrith Bahadur excelled and qualified for scholarships abroad.

In 2003, Mr. Sangay Tshering excelled in the ISC examinations and secured scholarships. Druptho Zangmo became the second blind student and the first lady to pursue higher studies in Sherubtse College. NID trained the first visually impaired computer teacher and computer classes for the visually impaired children began.

In 2005, the Resource Centre funded by the Danish Association for the Blind was launched. Mr. Amrith Bahdur Subba graduated and was awarded Gold Medal by the University. In the R.C.S.C. Common Examinations, he excelled among sighted contemporaries and achieved the fourth position.

NID Today

The blind students learn all the subjects that constitute the regular school curriculum and write all the external examinations at Class VIII, X and XII with the sighted peers.

The students of Class PP to VI attend regular lessons in the institute. For Class VII onwards, the students attend the regular academic lessons either in the Lower Secondary School or Higher Secondary School. This practice is known as the Integrated Education Programme or Inclusive Education for the disabled whereby the blind students study in the normal school.

The blind students follow English Braille and use Perkins Braille for writing. The younger students use writing frame and stylus.

All the students are boarders. In addition to the regular classes, we also train conventional music and songs, typing training to the senior students, cooking lessons once a week, track and field events and other games and sports. Just like the sighted students, we try to provide them opportunities for competitions in the literary activities, such as: essay writing, quiz, extempore speeches both in Dzongkha and English. Daily living skills: Training in social grace and etiquettes, independent living and personal hygiene, such as washing clothes, vessels, folding and wearing clothes, making beds and sweeping, brushing teeth, and shoe shining, etc.

Recently, we introduced the use of white cane and Orientation and Mobility Skills, activities of Daily Living, (ADL) and Computer classes.

NID STUDENTS 2006

Class	Boys	Girls	Total
XII	3	0	3
XI	0	1	1
X	0	0	0
IX	6	1	7
VIII	0	0	0
VII	7	0	7
VI	2	4	6
V	3	0	2
IV	4	1	5
III	4	0	4
II	2	2	4
I	5	2	7
PP	3	3	6
Others	0	0	1
Total	39	14	53

YEAR AND REGIONWISE ADMISSION DETAILS OF THE INSTITUTE

Sl. No.	Academic year	Students details			REGIONAL ADMISSION DETAILS								Total
		M	F	Total	East		Central		South		West		
					M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
1	1973	3	0	3	3	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
2	1974	3	0	3	1	0	-	-	-	-	2	-	3
3	1975	5	0	5	4	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	5
4	1976	1	1	2	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
5	1977	2	3	5	0	3	-	-	1	-	1	-	5
6	1978	1	0	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
7	1979	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
8	1980	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
9	1981	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
10	1982	1	1	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
11	1983	5	2	7	1	1	-	-	4	1	-	-	7
12	1984	5	-	5	2	0	-	-	3	-	-	-	5
13	1985	3	-	3	1	0	-	-	2	-	-	-	3
14	1986	3	-	3	1	0	-	-	2	-	-	-	3
15	1987	4	1	5	2	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	5
16	1988	1	1	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
17	1989	2	1	3	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
18	1990	2	1	3	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	3
19	1991	3	-	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3
20	1992	5	1	6	4	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	6
21	1993	4	1	5	3	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	5
22	1994	2	1	3	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
23	1995	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	2
24	1996	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
25	1997	4	2	6	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
26	1998	-	3	3	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
27	1999	4	2	6	2	2	1	-	-	-	1	-	2
28	2000	5	2	7	1	1	-	-	2	-	2	1	7
29	2001	3	1	4	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
30	2002	3	-	3	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	3
31	2003	3	-	3	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
32	2004	1	3	4	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
33	2005	10	1	11	6	-	2	1	1	-	1	-	11
34	2006	4	3	7	4	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	7
Total		95	32	127	55	22	10	2	21	3	11	3	127
Regional admission total					77		12		24		14		

NB: Eastern region: (T/gang, T/yantse, Lhuentse, Mongar, P/gatshel and S/Jongkhar).

Central region: (Bumthang, Trongsa, Zhemgang)

Southern region: (Sarpang, Tsirang, Dagana, and Samtse).

Western region: (Haa, Paro, Thimphu, Punakha, Gasa, Wangdi, and Chukha).

(Source: Admission register of NID).

Total number of staff at NID in 2006

Principal	-	01
Asst. Principal:	-	01
Teachers:	-	10
Music Instructor	-	01
Lib. Assistant	-	01
Reprographic Asst.	-	01
Office Asst.	-	01
Driver	-	01
Cooks:	-	02
Wet Sweeper	-	01
Gardener	-	01
Night Guard	-	01
No. Of Teaching Staff:	-	12
No. Of Non-Teaching Staff:	-	10 (including Music Instructor)
Grand Total	-	22 staff members

Our Vision

"We will strive to produce independent, productive and worthy value-laden students with wholesome academic excellence".

MISSION

- Respond to the expectations of the Royal Government's overall policy on special education needs.
- Provide integrated education to the visually impaired students into the mainstream school where they will receive quality education alongside their non-disabled peers.
- Provide advice and support to the teachers in the mainstream schools.
- Provide orientation and mobility training and training in activities of daily living.
- Provide education and specialist support to visually impaired pupils so that they can access and benefit from basic education.
- Provide support to the individual child's need.
- Provide policy issues arising pertaining to special education needs.
- Provide vocational skills through music & songs, computer, typing, and social work.
- Provide co-curricular activities like debate, quiz, essay competitions, speeches, games and sports, field trips, value education, career counseling, physical education, health and hygiene.

Criteria for admission

- 1) An individual should produce relevant documents at par with regular schools.
- 2) The age limit for admission is between 7 to 13 years irrespective of blindness and low vision.
- 3) The low vision student who has vision acuity of both the eyes below 3/60 is admitted.
- 4) The individual should produce a medical certificate stating his/her vision of both the eyes from an authorized ophthalmologist/eye specialist.
- 5) Dropouts/newly blinded may require to produce progress report and the transfer certificate of his/her last school attended. (A candidate who belongs to

lower classes, is admitted in a lower grade and a student of upper classes is admitted for a year to learn Braille skills. The latter is then admitted in the mainstream schools in the next grade to continue his/her education).

Integrated Education

Experiences have proved that education and training of the disabled in institutionalized setting have caused further segregation, isolation and insecurity from the regular society and thus fails to prepare the disabled to attain harmonious adjustment in normal society later. Besides, special institutions and training centres exclusively for the disabled are extremely costly. Above all, the disabled trained in special centres face apparent difficulty in securing employment in regular organizations. Therefore, the blind are encouraged to attend regular schools and institutions as far as possible.

The integrated education provides ample opportunities for interaction, socialisation, competition and active participation in all the regular activities of normal school. Therefore, the visually disabled students are encouraged to take part actively in the regular events and programmes in the regular school where they study. The integration enables the visually disabled students to familiarize themselves with the normal school situation whereby they are ultimately trained for the orientation and mobility required in the later part of their lives.

Furthermore, our students gain self-confidence and acceptance among the normal students. Nevertheless, the special assistance has to be considered by providing special equipment and materials which are not available in regular organizations.

Perhaps, it is worth noting that on several occasions, our institute has had the honour of being visited by His Majesty. And, it was for His Majesty's immeasurable wisdom that he commanded that the blind students be integrated into the regular schools for better interaction and overall healthy growth of the blind students.

In conclusion, it has been realised that educating through integration benefits a lot and prepares the children for the real-life situations likely to be faced in the later part of their lives.

N.I.D Tomorrow

N.I.D. started with a humble beginning; and as it marched down the road, numerous milestones had been set for the welfare of the disabled people. The royal government has felt the necessity of providing equal access to education and thereby, rehabilitate the blind students to cope with the system.

In 2006, there is a plan of a project on the establishment of a Computer training centre for the visually impaired in NID. The project will be financed by NORAD and Normission while the training of the IT teachers will be assisted by Media LT. The formal signing of the project document is under process.

In conclusion, the Royal Government strongly believes that the disabled children's lives have value. Proper education is the key to give disabled children the same opportunities in jobs and participate equally and fully in the communities in which the disabled children live. In addition, the disabled people, on their part, have a dream to stand on their own feet, contribute to their motherland in his or her own capacity, and be the worthy citizens of the kingdom.

Centre for Educational Research & Development

Goals

- To support and undertake comprehensive and systematic curriculum development activities aimed at bringing about improvements in our education programmes;
- To foster a culture of enquiry and analysis in the continuous search of knowledge through regular interaction with research centres and institutes of repute;
- To study the current educational practices and developments in relevant fields and provide findings to the concerned agencies in education for consideration of policy options in relation to relevant educational goals, content, and methodology;
- Provide a forum for educators and researchers to support action research and professional development for enhanced performance by our education stakeholders.
- Promote a national pool of scholarship and professionalism in the best traditions of research and development, for the flowering of the Bhutanese mind.

The major thrust areas of the Centre are research, publications and the professional support. To date, the Centre has developed a set of national standards for English for schools in Bhutan called *The Silken Knot*.

It has carried out a study on and made recommendations for the improvement of primary education and initiated modest programmes like the *Rinpung Experiment* and professional development activities, apart from participating in the *National Educational Assessment*, among others.

CERD has been working closely with CAPSD especially in the review and revision of the English curriculum- PP-XII, and supporting the Dzongkha Development Authority in the production of bilingual dictionaries.

The Centre has followed the evolution of our education system and published *The Call: Stories of Yesteryears*, and begun an educational journal called *Rabsel*. CERD has launched the publication of *Yontoen: the CERD Occasional Papers* recently.

Encouraging and initiating action research being one of its thrust areas, CERD invites contributions from our fellow-teachers, scholars, parents, students, and indeed, from anybody who has a stake in education, highlighting issues which have a bearing on the education of our children and the system as a whole.

Please send in your research papers, both hard and soft copies, to:

The Director
Centre for Educational Research & Development
NIE, Rinpung, Paro: BHUTAN

Or email them to cerdir@druknet.bt

