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Notes for an Editorial

Many years ago, during my teaching practice days at Stepney Green in London, I met a most wonderful music teacher. After school, he would sit close to his wife with his guitar and play it. She was expecting. "Our child will hear my music inside my wife's stomach. Even before stepping out into the world, the child will know that it must be a beautiful place to come to. Our baby will be happy and reassured inside. We are preparing our world for our baby".

When we meet our children in our schools, they will already have come out into the world. Not many would have heard the music when they were inside! But the need for music is the same for all children in all places at all times. Music integrates, harmonizes and elevates.

For young children, each object that they see around stands all by itself. Each person is himself or herself, or itself. Each word or sound is independent. Making this universe intelligible is one of the toughest challenges that the child faces. But the child is trying, all the same.

Nursery rhymes as a function of music are a response to the need in children to form patterns and relations. The very nature and structure of nursery rhymes is integrative, unifying and reinforcing. The moment there is Jill, there has got to be a hill, and as soon as we have the black sheep to give us wool, three bags, or thereabouts, must be full.

What Jill and Hill or wool and full, or, for that matter, any other countless rhyming pairs, do is that they reinforce each other and remind the child that they are together, that they make sense, that the surrounding is intelligible. They are able to find links. There is unity. They gain confidence. They develop faith. They succeed.

Children need constantly to be reassured, supported as they try to make sense of their fast-expanding world, as they try to put together pieces of wood and call it home. Songs and nursery rhymes invite the children to a celebration of the unity of sounds, the beauty of words and the goodness of people. It is in this scheme of the profound human and educational significance that Mrs. Sangay Bidha looks at the value of nursery rhymes and bemoans their slow disappearance from our school system. Nursery Rhymes: Out the Window? Is a plea to reinstate and engage the essential power of this treasure.

This Autumn Issue of Rabsel is a bountiful harvest of equally significant and compelling arguments that concern education in our country today. Readers will be able to engage in rewarding experiences as they go through the rest of the papers included in this volume. All integrated thematically. As nursery rhymes. All inclusive as education. Happy reading!

Thakur S Powdyel

CONTENTS

Experience of Beginning Elementary School Teachers in Dealing with Classroom Disruptive Behaviour.

- Rinchen Dorji, Lecturer, NIE, Paro.

Abstract

Classroom disruptive behaviour has not been a serious issue in Bhutanese schools, unlike in some other countries. However, every teacher is aware of the adverse effects of children's disruptive classroom behaviour. Disruptive behaviour influences the quality of teacher's teaching and children's learning. Study is needed to provide insight into the experiences of beginning teachers to understand how they deal with disruptive behaviour with the view to minimizing the adverse effects of classroom disruptive behaviour.

The objective of this study was to explore and portray the experiences of beginning elementary school teachers in dealing with classroom disruptive behaviour. Eight beginning elementary school teachers with teaching experience of three or less years volunteered for this study. An in-depth conversational interview was used to gather data. All interviews were audio-taped, transcribed, and analyzed to uncover the themes from the participants' experiences in dealing with classroom disruptive behaviour.

While each individual participant's experience was unique, there were similarities across their experiences. Five themes emerged: 1) perceptions of classroom disruptive behaviour; 2) types of classroom disruptive behaviour; 3) factors influencing classroom disruptive behaviour; 4) challenges faced when dealing with classroom disruptive behaviour; and, 5) impact of classroom disruptive behaviour on beginning teacher's teaching.

The results of this study have significant implications on the professional support needed by beginning teachers when dealing with classroom disruptive behaviours. Teacher educators, school authorities and dzongkhag education officers could devote more attention to effective classroom management and the development of skills required for solving daily classroom mis-behaviours. Further, the Education Division needs to provide national in-service programmes on classroom management for elementary teachers.

Background

Stories of beginning classroom experiences are part of the teaching lore. Although some are heart-warming, many are heart-wrenching and filled with humiliation and frustration. Many teachers have frustrating tales to tell about their first few years on the job. Of course, the beginner's experience is common to every profession: new physicians, lawyers, engineers and others. All must learn to apply and transfer what they have learned in their chosen profession. Some of the most painful stories of beginning teachers result from their work environment. Many educators believe that the profession has hindered the development of new teachers and has lost many of those with high potential (Jonson, 1997).

Gold, Roth, Wright, and Michael (1991) state that being a first-year teacher is difficult, stressful, and a whole lot more work than anyone ever imagined. Most often, beginning teachers perceive mismatches between their preparation programmes and the realities of real schools and classrooms (Veenman, 1984). In relation, Brock and Grady (1997) suggest that although other professions ordinarily increase the amount and difficulty of the work assigned in gradual progression, this is not the case in teaching. Beginners often start out with more responsibilities than veterans and often with the same expectations of expertise. Schlecty and Vance's (1983) findings indicated that about 30% of beginning teachers leave the profession during the first two years. Another 10% to 20% leave during the next five years. Approximately 50% of all beginning teachers leave the profession within seven years. One can only wonder about the cost of this situation in terms of educational efforts and expenses, shortages of teachers, and the number of potentially successful teachers who prematurely end their career with feelings of frustration, inadequacy, and failure (Urzua, 1999).

Canter (1989) said that the lack of ability to manage student behaviour is one of the key reasons why both beginning teachers and veteran teachers drop out of education. Gold et al. (1991) explain that the reason why discipline concerns most beginning teachers is because 30 students can break a teacher and because most classes contain enough masters of disobedience and defiance to make any teacher's life unpleasant. In addition, Ferguson and Houghton (1992) point out that *the amount of time a teacher spends dealing with children who are disruptive and the stress that results from discipline problems in the classroom constitute a major area of concern for many educators* (p. 24). Disruptive behaviour may not be a new problem but rather one that might have been around since teachers have opened up their doors to educate students.

For beginning teachers, effective management of student behaviour is most crucial for their professional growth. Learning to manage students' unruly classroom behaviour is in fact the first important and difficult undertaking of beginning teachers and a skill that is widely used as a measure of their potential for becoming a successful professional teacher. Descombe (1985) states that the first teaching year is the key to the future of teachers. The feeling of inadequacy and incompetency experienced by beginning teachers is one reason why many beginning teachers abandon their career.
In relation to the beginning teacher attrition rate, Thiele-Betts (1994) reported that 16% of beginning teachers in New Brunswick, who graduated from the Bachelor of Education Programme in 1991, from Mount Allison and Saint Thomas Universities, had left teaching after their second year. According to Veenman (1984), *reality shock* is the reason why many beginning teachers leave teaching shortly after beginning their career. He explained *reality shock* as the severe disillusionment experienced by beginning teachers when their ideals and expectations developed during teacher training collapse due to the harsh and hard reality of everyday classroom life. Veenman (1984) believed that *reality shock* can be caused by numerous job conditions which could be broadly classified either into personal causes such as *a wrong choice of profession, improper attitudes and unsuitable personality characteristics* (p.147), or situational causes such as "...inadequate professional training, inadequate staffing and shortage of materials and supplies, the absence of explicitly stated educational goals" (p.143). The reality shock becomes more intense in schools where beginning teachers are sometimes, given more difficult classes, or when they have to teach subjects in which they are not trained (Taylor & Dale, 1971).

Ryan (1974) attributed beginning teachers' problems to (a) inadequate training for the demands of their work, (b) lack of standard selection criteria in teacher training, and (c) lack of specialized training for specific jobs in schools. Moreover, besides being an initiation into the profession, the first year of teaching for many is also an initiation into the adult world with its responsibilities. From the freedom of student life, the beginning teacher is moved to the restrictions and responsibilities of professional life and it is quite natural to feel out of place and incompetent if one fails to make a successful transition.

Of all the problems contributing to reality shock in beginning teachers, Veenman (1984) reported that classroom discipline is one of the most serious problems contributing to reality shock in beginning teachers. If such a situation creeps into the schools in Bhutan, it would not take much time for Bhutanese schools to be robbed of its teachers completely. In reality, every beginning teacher in Bhutan may be experiencing the "reality shock" as suggested by Veenman (1984) because problems such as wrong choice of profession, improper attitudes, unsuitable personality characteristics, inadequate staffing, and shortage of materials and supplies are a common phenomenon, especially in the rural schools.

The professional disillusionment and frustration experienced by beginning teachers seems higher among beginning elementary school teachers because of the large number of students in class, immature students, and teachers' lack of knowledge and skills in dealing specifically with student discipline problems in the classroom. Although beginning teachers in Bhutan may face job related stress similar to beginning teachers in other countries, they do not leave teaching because of the lack of employment opportunities in other fields. Unlike in the past, employment has now become very competitive in Bhutan.

To ensure that teachers dispense their service to schools in the best possible manner, it is imperative to develop the professional competence and a positive attitude in beginning teachers toward teaching. This would not only enhance the beginning teachers' professional competence but would also have an equally important influence on students learning, right from the elementary level. However, not much research has been done in Bhutan to study the experiences of beginning teachers and their handling of discipline problems.

National Context of the Problem

In Bhutan, education is still in its bourgeoning stage. The challenges and difficulties faced by teachers in general and beginning teachers in particular with regard to classroom discipline problems is a daily phenomenon encountered by teachers. In addition to some other school discipline issues, Bhutanese classrooms are frequently plagued by minor student disruptive behaviours such as talking out of turn, unnecessary movement in the class, looking out through the window when teaching is in progress, exhibiting disrespect (e.g. chewing gum), sleeping, doing something else (e.g. writing assignments on other subjects), and coming late and making noisy entrances to the class which disrupt the flow of classroom activities and interfere with teachers' teaching and students' learning.

Having been a teacher myself, I have observed that teachers, particularly in the primary schools, spend half of their time restoring students' attention and maintaining discipline, time that otherwise could be fruitfully used in meaningful instructions. Though not a very serious issue in Bhutan, discipline problems in the classroom could interfere with the national goal of providing *wholesome and holistic education* to all young children.

Traditionally, teachers have dealt with student behaviour that interferes with classroom instruction by using various kinds of negative consequences (e.g., verbal reprimands, time-out, suspension and even corporal punishment). The goal, of course, has been to reduce, if not eliminate, the immediate problem. But having been a student and a teacher myself, I have observed that such *reactive* approaches to disciplining children are not only time consuming but fail to teach students acceptable replacement behaviours. Further, for students to grow educationally, socially, and emotionally, they need to be in an environment where there is a teacher who will set firm, consistent, positive limits while providing warmth and support for their appropriate behaviour.

Canter (1979) supports this idea and suggests that *the child has the right to have a teacher who is in a position to help the child limit his inappropriate self-disruptive behaviour, have a teacher who is in a position to provide the child with positive support for his appropriate behaviour, and can choose how to behave and know the consequences that will follow* (p. 8).

In Bhutan, the government is emphasizing on the development of *a highly motivated and competent teaching cadre which supports a holistic approach to education and learning* (Education Division, 2001, p. 1). In line with this national goal, I intend to study the experiences of beginning elementary school teachers in dealing with classroom disruptive behaviour.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

Classroom discipline has not been a serious issue or concern in Bhutanese schools so far. However, every Bhutanese teacher is aware of the existence of student disruptive behaviour that disrupts both teachers' teaching and students' learning. Stories of teachers being frustrated and angered by children's classroom behaviour are now becoming more common in schools. In the past, parents of school children remained complacent about what teachers did to their children while educating them. Teachers were held with respect and people hardly questioned their authority in terms of educating children. But this is no longer the case. Of late, parents have started questioning the professional conduct of teachers with respect to teachers' responses to student misbehaviour. One parent wrote

> *All parents are committed to nurturing our children into healthy, socially responsible and creative citizens for tomorrow and if this vital objective is barred by a system that exists, we all must exert enough pressure to remove this barrier from the faces of our children. We must then break away from our age old tradition of discipline through fear, because we want our children to move into the 21st century as mentally sound intellectuals. Especially so, as today's students are faced with unforeseen*

challenges and opportunities which require them to make critical judgments. The students of today (citizens of tomorrow) must be able to think more critically and selectively, learn how to learn; solve authentic problems; work as a member of a team; apply knowledge learned from the several disciplines to present and projected problems; develop higher skills in reading, writing and mathematics; and develop a sense of self-reliance and motivation. All of these skills demand some changes in education methodology. Before students can change to meet these initiatives, teachers must change. Emphasis must be placed on our teachers as facilitators as opposed to the dispenser of information through discipline (Kuensel, December, 2000, p. 6).

This indicates the concern that parents have for their children's education and at the same time reminds the reader about the existence of disciplinary problems in the schools and the need for teachers to be professional in dealing with students. Parents complaining about the treatment their children receive in school from teachers are now becoming more open and forthright. Attending to concerns that affect the quality of children's overall education at an early stage will not only help to ensure successful teaching and learning, but also will be useful in checking the adverse effects of such classroom behaviour problems. Bhutan's education system is still at a developing stage, and care and concern need to be given to such problems before they become too damaging.

The American National Education Association poll suggests that disruptive behaviour interfered more with teaching in the elementary schools than in the high schools (Greenlee & Ogletree, 1993, p. 6). Levin and Nolan (2000) explained that elementary school teachers encounter more disruptive classroom behaviour because students in the elementary classes are egocentric, have a limited sense of time and space, have poor perspective-taking skills, and have short attention spans. Levin et al. (2000) assert that children at this level, *become frustrated easily, have difficulty sharing, argue frequently, believe that they are right and their classmates wrong, and tattle a lot* (p. 63). This depicts a very dismal picture of the experience of elementary school teachers and some beginning elementary school teachers in Bhutan could be experiencing such problems. The initial years of teaching are assumed to be a very sensitive stage in the development of their teaching careers but the quality of education that children receive in the early years of schooling is more important.

In fact, the challenge for beginning elementary school teachers in Bhutan may be more daunting due to the large classroom size and limited teaching resources. Being a teacher educator, knowing the challenges faced by beginning teachers in their initial years of their teaching career will be of great help in designing teacher education programmes based on the actual needs of teachers in the field. As a teacher educator, I am particularly interested in studying the experiences of beginning elementary school teachers in dealing with classroom disruptive behaviour.

The major question I plan to research is: *What are the experiences of beginning elementary school teachers in dealing with classroom disruptive behaviour?* This question is further broken into sub-questions: (a) What is the beginning teacher's perception of student disruptive behaviours? (b) What are the classroom disruptive behaviours encountered by beginning elementary school teachers? (c) What are the

teacher's perceptions of the causes of student disruptive behaviour in the classroom? (d) How do teachers perceive the challenge of dealing effectively with classroom disruptive behaviour? (e) How do beginning teachers perceive classroom disruptive behaviour to influence their teaching?

This study hopes to provide school administrators, teacher educators, beginning and experienced teachers, and school counsellors with an insight into the experiences encountered by beginning elementary school teachers in dealing with student disruptive behaviour. The result of the study will be helpful to teacher educators in designing teacher education programmes that are based on the actual field experiences of teachers. They will apprise future teachers of student disruptive behaviour that they are likely to encounter in their teaching at the primary level. The results also will be useful to guidance counsellors in helping children develop positive attitudes toward school, and thus, save children from leaving school at a very young age.

Dolkar (2000) found that discipline problems in school and misunderstanding with teachers are some of the contributing factors in school drop outs. Apprising future teachers of student disruptive behaviour well in advance is expected to prepare teachers to deal positively with student misbehaviours, thus preventing problems that hamper students' education. School counsellors could even help teachers in overcoming discipline problems they encounter with children and assist beginning teachers start on a positive note their career.

Understanding the general background about the development of the modern education system in Bhutan will help in developing a better understanding of this study.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section presents a brief discussion of classroom disruptive behaviour as a problem for teachers and the concern that disruptive behaviour raises for educators, parents, and students. The meaning of classroom disruptive behaviour, types of disruptive behaviour encountered by teachers, factors that influence disruptive behaviour, and the challenges faced by beginning teachers in dealing with classroom disruptive behaviours are presented to help the readers understand the phenomenon under study. Since no literature of classroom disruptive behaviour in the Bhutanese context is available due to lack of research in this area, the researcher's perceptions of the Bhutanese context is presented based on the personal experience and observations gained from being a teacher in the system.

Disruptive Behaviour: A Problem

Student disruptive behaviour in the classroom cannot be isolated as a concern just for the teachers and the school administrators. With the ever increasing incidents of student misbehaviour in schools and classroom alike, disruptive behaviour also has become a matter of great concern for parents and even for the students themselves. American Gallup polls continually suggest that discipline problems are of great concern to a large number of the population, and often within public discussion of

issues in education, school discipline has emerged as a cause for great concern (Duke & Jones, 1984).

Wragg (1995) shared that the Elton Report (1989) in Britain was instigated as a result of what was said to be public concern about the problems of discipline in school. The report noted the nature of the problem as… *A school's central purpose is that children should learn. Good behaviour makes effective teaching and learning possible. Bad behaviour disrupts these processes* (p. 54).

Indeed, classroom disruptions are debilitating to both teacher and student. Teachers worry about disruption because it stops them from doing their job. Pupils worry because it stops them from learning or because they find themselves in threatening and uncontrolled situations. Mishra's (1992) study also suggests that misbehaviour in the classroom is a concern for both teachers and students. Effectiveness of learning can be enhanced if misbehaviours are identified and strategies devised to counteract them. It can be argued that disruptive behaviour reduces the time that children spend on a task, and that it also exerts a negative effect on the classroom climate. Deutsch (1960) found that some teachers in inner city schools spent as much as 75% of their time trying to keep order, thereby reducing the time available for teaching.

According to Rose, Gallup, and Elam (1997), discipline problems were ranked as the biggest problem faced by public schools. The National Education Association (NEA, 1997) reported that 66% of responding teachers viewed managing student behaviour as the main problem faced in teaching. Many teachers have expressed their inability to cope with and resolve discipline problems they faced each day of their teaching life. According to the American Gallup poll of 1982, student discipline was the most frequently cited reason for teachers to leave teaching. Duke (1980) reported acquiring skills necessary to deal with behaviour disorders is the most pressing contemporary concern for teachers. He says that new teachers not only have clamoured for the need of skills to deal effectively with classroom behavioural problems, but more experienced teachers are also asking for additional training to cope with students' behavioural problems. Duke (1980) asserted that teachers in the Soviet Union also are concerned about classroom control. There is no empirical evidence to prove the increase of school discipline problems in Bhutan over the years. However, no teacher would deny the fact that there is a significant increase in the frequency and intensity of school discipline problems and disruptive classroom behaviours.

Teachers are concerned about classroom discipline in schools. Harris (1984), in a nationwide sampling of teachers in 1984, reports that 95 percent of the teachers believed that efforts to improve school discipline should have a higher priority than they had. A more recent national poll, conducted in 1997, states that 58 percent of the teachers surveyed noted that disruptive classroom behaviour occurred most of the time or fairly often in their schools (Langdon, 1997). Duke and Jones (1984) reported that teacher educators were being called on to provide their student teachers with specific skills for handling classroom behavioural problems. Currently, the Teacher Corps, one of the most powerful forces working for educational improvement in the United States, requires each of its funded projects to provide special teacher training in how to deal with behaviour problems.

The University of Houston has an exemplary competency-based classroom management training programme. The Instructional Leadership Program at Stanford University has as one of its objectives the training of experienced teachers to assume leadership for local staff development in school discipline (Duke, 1980) . However, it is still rare to find courses in schools of education that are devoted specifically to student behavioural problems and school discipline.

The problem of disruptive behaviour is of a great concern especially to beginning teachers. It has been found that the challenge posed by disruptive behaviour has thwarted the career of many potential teachers. Studies have revealed that the major concerns of beginning teachers are those of discipline and classroom management (Dropkin & Taylor, 1963). In addition, discipline has been identified in two major reviews of the literature as the problem most frequently experienced by beginning teachers (Elias, Fisher, and Simon, 1980; Veenman, 1984). This finding is further supported by Lagana's (1970) study where 83% of the elementary and secondary beginning teachers experienced problems with class discipline.

On a similar note, Cains and Brown (1998) share that "new primary teachers find general classroom teaching issues significantly more demanding than secondary teachers in their first term of the job" (p.5). Many other studies have also shown disruptive behaviour in the classroom as the most serious problem for beginning instructors (Covert, Williams & Kennedy, 1991; Felder, Hollis, Piper & Houston, 1979; Varah, Theune & Parker, 1986). Ryan concluded, as early as 1974, that "there is probably no single thing that causes beginning teachers more trouble and more anxiety than discipline problems" (p.11). Thiele-Betts (1994) in her study found disruptive classroom behaviour as the major cause of beginning teacher attrition in New Brunswick schools.

Other researches indicated that the more problem beginning teachers encountered, the more likely they were to leave teaching (Taylor & Dale, 1971). Turner (1966) suggested that beginning teachers who experience classroom discipline problems have less favourable attitudes toward teaching than those teachers who reported no problems with discipline issues. This does not present a healthy picture about the effect of classroom misbehaviour on beginning teachers.

In Bhutan, many students, after their studies, choose to join teaching only when they fail to get in any other professions. Where a large percentage of people join the teaching profession with a very minimal interest in the profession, the harsh realities and challenges faced by beginning teachers in the initial years of teaching could result in the erosion of beginning teachers' interest and commitment to the teaching job. In addition to the challenges posed by classroom disruptive behaviours, the heavy teaching load with an average of five to six lessons in a day is a professional challenge that every beginning teacher has to go through.

But the problem of disruptive behaviour should not be left for beginning teachers to resolve. Such a problem calls for a united action on the part of parents, students, and educators including both beginning and experienced teachers. The ability to respond to this need unitedly will directly affect the excellence and productivity of Bhutan's classrooms and will ultimately affect the nation's future in realizing the educational goal of providing wholesome education.

Thus, it is clear that the first years of a teacher's career are crucial to his or her success in the teaching profession. The attrition rate of beginning teachers has been reported to be alarmingly high. Schlechty and Vance (1983) report the dropout rate of first and second year teachers as 15%, and that of third year teachers to be 10% in American schools. McLaughlin, Pfeifer, Swanson-Owens, and Yee (1986) pointed out that if this trend continued, more than one million public school teachers would leave the profession in less than a decade in the United States alone. To make matters worse, McLaughlin et al. suggested that the majority of these teachers were likely to be among those who were sincerely dedicated to teaching. I feel that such a situation, if not checked, would prove to be a blow to nationalizing the teaching force in Bhutan's schools, and to Bhutan's aim of providing quality education. Griffin (1989) suggested that a thoughtful investment in those initial years of teaching should be given a high priority to ensure that teachers are motivated right from the start to be professionally competent. Schubert (1954) acknowledged that, "one of the most perplexing problems facing many teachers in our schools today – particularly beginning teachers – is maintaining control in the classroom"(p. 4). In support to this, Charles (1989) says that "discipline is so crucial, so basic to everything else in the classroom, that most educators agree: it is the one thing that makes or breaks teachers" (p. 4). Although discipline has been, and continues to be, a problem for many teachers, it does not have to be such a huge problem that it discourages people from teaching.

Furthermore, Tauber (1999) believes that courses for classroom management in teacher education programmes are not given the importance that they actually deserve. Hyman and D'Alessandro (1984) report that "Few U.S educators have received formal training in the theory, research, and practice of school discipline" (p.42). McDaniel (1984) offers further support to this view:

> *Most teachers enter the profession, and persevere in it, with little or no training in school discipline techniques. This is indeed strange when discipline problems are so frequently cited as the greatest dilemma facing public schools....Few states maintain behaviour management in certification regulations....Few colleges or universities require (or even provide) courses in classroom discipline for regular classroom teachers (p. 72).*

The situation depicted by McDaniel (1984) is not so different from the teacher training institutes in Bhutan. Although classroom management is discussed during the teacher training programme, yet the teacher education programmes at the two national Institutes of Education in Bhutan do not have a specific course which is geared towards fully equipping the student teachers with the competencies to deal with classroom management problems confidently and effectively. It may not be realistic to aim at eliminating classroom misbehaviour but they could at least be reduced by making teachers effective classroom managers through the provision of comprehensive classroom management courses in teacher training institutes.

What is a disruptive behaviour?

Having a clear understanding of what constitutes disruptive behaviour is a pre-requisite for effective classroom management for teachers. Further, this understanding enables students to differentiate disruptive behaviours from non-disruptive behaviours

and thus learn to behave appropriately in the classroom. Since so many types of behaviour can be labelled inappropriate depending on the specific situation, it is difficult to give one good and precise definition of disruptive behaviour (also used synonymously as "misbehaviour", "discipline problems", or "deviant behaviour"). Several definitions have been used to define disruptive behaviour. Jerry (1990) defines disruptive behaviour as any behaviour in the classroom that interferes with the process of teaching and learning.

On a similar note, Feldhusen (1978) explains disruptive behaviour as a violation of school expectations interfering with the orderly conduct of teaching. According to Feldhusen, any behaviour that obstructs the teacher in teaching is a disruptive behaviour, while any behaviour that does not interrupt the teaching process is not a disruptive behaviour. Charles (1989) offers a more comprehensive view by saying that for most teachers, disruptive behaviour means student actions that disrupt, destroy, defy, hurt, or infringe on others' rights including acts such as cruelty, disrespect, boisterousness, cheating, fighting, name calling, sarcasm, defiance, and apathy, all of which challenges the success of teaching and learning.

Generally, disruptive behaviour can be described as an action of the child which interferes with his or her learning of either academic material or appropriate social behaviour (Burden, 1995). Further, Deitz and Hummel (1978) suggest that "misbehaviour might not necessarily be an action, it could be an omission of an action too" (p. 9). For example, not engaging in an activity assigned in the classroom may also be labelled as misbehaviour. Another type of behaviour which may neither interfere with the child nor other children, but is often labelled misbehaviour, is an action which interrupts the teacher's flow of instruction. Then, the best that can be said about disruptive behaviour is that if a behaviour of a student has a measurable adverse effect on classroom learning, or has a measurable adverse effect on an individual's appropriate behaviour, it can be defined as disruptive behaviour.

Charles (1989) stated that discipline is closely tied to misbehaviour and argued that "where there is no misbehaviour, no discipline is required" (p. vi). In other words, misbehaviour to Charles is absence of discipline and order in the classroom. In short, disruptive behaviour is any observable behaviour that produces a measurable adverse effect on the general classroom atmosphere thereby adversely affecting the teacher's instructions and learning outcomes of other children.

Thus, as said earlier, it is difficult to give one concise and correct definition of disruptive behaviour because behaviour is perceived and tolerated differently by different individuals. However for the purpose of this study, disruptive behaviour is defined as any *observable classroom behaviour that adversely upsets the general classroom atmosphere thereby bringing a negative effect on the learning outcomes of other children and teacher's instructions."*

Types of Disruptive Behaviour

Seeman (1988) states that there are many truly disruptive problems or misbehaviours in the classroom: students who call out; who talk during the lesson and cause interruptions in the teacher's teaching; students who bother others students' learning, who throw things, pass notes, walk in front of the room, and make noise that disrupts

the lesson. Besides these minor behaviour problems, teachers encounter some disruptive behaviour of a serious nature but the frequency of such misbehaviour is very low. These behaviours include verbal abuse and physical aggression towards teachers, violence such as stabbing, physical aggression towards other pupils, and physical destructiveness. Based on the severity and frequency with which the disruptive behaviour occurs, Merrett and Wheldall (1988, 1992) argue that behaviour problems or misbehaviours can be classified as either high intensity/low frequency behaviours or low intensity/high frequency behaviours.

The Department of Education and Science and Welsh Office (1989) reports that the most 'disturbing' misbehaviour encountered by teachers in British schools are not physical or verbal abuse but a variety of minor – but nevertheless 'disruptive'– incidents including: talking out of turn, hindering other pupils, making unnecessary noise, calculated idleness or work avoidance, not being punctual, and getting out of one's seat without permission. However, though the occurrence of high intensity/low frequency behaviours is far less compared to the low intensity/high frequency behaviours, they are still a problem for teachers.

Houghton et al. (1988) report that in their study of 4000 British teachers, 66% had encountered or experienced verbal abuse or derogatory comments from students during their career; 20% had experienced student to student violence; 25% had been threatened with violence; 10% had been a victim of an attempted attack; and 4% had suffered physical violence from students. Similarly, in a 1993 survey in New Brunswick, teachers had experienced one or more incidents of personal attack or abuse from students (N.B.T.A., 1994).

According to Raffini (1980), there are two distinct divisions of misbehaviour or disruptive behaviour: "Need-Satisfaction Disruptive Behaviour"and "Tension-Reduction Disruptive Behaviour" (p.30). He says that need-satisfaction disruptive behaviour results when an individual uses the schools environment to satisfy a personal need. Unlike tension-reduction disruptions, which have their origins within the school environment, need-satisfaction disruptions originate from within the individual. In contrast, tension-reduction disruptive behaviour is "motivated by an emotional tension that is caused by the school environment" (p.30), of which many of the causes are beyond the direct control of the teacher such as crowded classrooms and children's relationships with their peers. Beside the other factors such as the administrative pressures or peer pressure, sometimes teachers create their own problems.

As a teacher, I have also observed and noticed that a sizeable percentage of tension-reduction discipline problems are inadvertently caused by the teachers themselves. Nagging, sarcasm, ridicule, unrealistic tolerance limits, and a host of other unpleasant teacher behaviours can create an environment that produces frustration, anxiety, fear, and boredom for students. Raffini (1980) says that very often teachers try to put the blame on the students, on the parents, on the administration, curriculum, or for that matter, on other teachers. In addition, Barr-Johnson and Lee (1978) report that out of 373 teacher-participants that they interviewed, nearly 90% considered the attitudes of parents and families to be a leading cause of discipline problems in schools.

Students' self-concept and learning problems were also considered leading causes of problems by both secondary and primary teachers. Raffini (1980) suggested that

teachers can prevent misbehaviours caused by their own behaviour by consistently asking the following questions to themselves:

> *Are our rules reasonable? Do students have input in their development? Do they understand the purposes for them (of what we are teaching)? Are our tolerance limits too rigid or too inconsistent? Do our voice and nonverbal expressions convey one message while they try to send another? Do we accept the needs and feelings of our students? Do we allow our egos to get in the way of the goal of helping? Do we help students discover the value of what we are teaching?* (p. 38).

These cues if used consistently by teachers in schools, will not only be helpful in curtailing a good deal of misbehaviours but will also help teachers to reflect on their own behaviours after every teaching session thus determining the extent to which their own behaviours contribute to the problems they hope to avoid.

Why Do Students Show Disruptive Behaviour?

Students disrupt the classroom for various reasons. In fact, there could be different reasons for every single disruption. In some cases, the behaviour might be motivated to reduce the tension caused by the immediate environment. In others, it might be motivated to satisfy personal needs. When people talk about the causes of behaviour/misbehaviour, they are talking of motives – the drive that triggers the performance of an act. Dreikers (1968) agrees with Alfred Adler that "all behaviour – including misbehaviour – is orderly and purposeful and directed toward achieving social recognition" (p. 96). He believes that when children fail to attain the recognition and attention they seek, they misbehave hoping to attain that attention. This mistaken belief causes children to misbehave. Based on this premise, he identified four goals that describe the purpose of children's misbehaviour. They include gaining attention, exercising power, exacting revenge, and displaying inadequacy.

Dreikers (1968) and Dreikers, Grunwald, and Pepper (1982) argued that attention-seeking children are a nuisance in the class and they distract teachers by showing off, being lazy and disruptive, seeking special favours, needing extra help on assignments, asking irrelevant questions, throwing things around the room, crying, refusing to work unless the teacher is right there, or being overly eager to please. Second, Dreikers (1968; 1982) believed that children often engage in power struggles with teachers when they fail to gain the attention they seek. Such children, in a bid for power, argue, cry, contradict, throw temper-tantrums, lie, and are stubborn and disobedient. Third, Dreikers explains that children whose efforts at control are thwarted become revengeful and they take out their revenge on anyone around them including both friends and teachers. They feel betrayed and try to show their dislike by provoking others to retaliate. These vengeful children lash out by tripping, hitting, kicking, or scratching others or by destroying others' property. They may also knock books and supplies on the floor or scribble on classmates' papers and seek revenge against the teacher by marking the teacher's desk, ripping pages from books, insulting the teacher publicly or deliberately breaking equipment in the classroom. Revenge-seeking children are very difficult to help. Fourth, they believed that children failing to achieve a sense of self-worth through attention, power, or revenge often feel inadequate and

become disgruntled and isolate themselves. They strive to be left alone and try to retain what little self-esteem they have left by avoiding any form of participation. Misbehaving or disruptive children according to Dreikers (1982), will engage in purposeful behaviour – behaviour designed to achieve one or more of the goals mentioned in the previous paragraph. In addition to the reasons for disruptive behaviours expressed by Dreikers, many other explanations have been put forward as the primary causes of misbehaviour: children wanting attention, being bored, feeling unfairly treated, not trusting adults or other children, experiencing school failure, being treated as problem children, wanting power or control or power over others, having to prove something to friends, feeling rejected or frustrated, having poor nutritional habits and biological or neurological disorders (Charles, 1992).

Evans, Evans, and Schmid (1989) believe that behaviour is neither entirely internally nor externally caused, but is the result of the interaction between the individual and the environment. These authors claim that the physiological, physical, and psycho-social environments combine to affect behaviour. They suggest that children's classroom behaviour can be influenced by the *physiological environment* that includes those *bio-physical variables* such as illness, nutritional factors, neurological functioning, temperament, genetic abnormalities, physical disabilities, and drugs or medication (p. 17).

The influence of the *physical environment* that includes *elements of the setting* is explained in four categories: (a) conditions at home such as lack of adequate clothing or housing; parental supervision and types of discipline; home routines; significant events such as divorce or the death of a friend or relative; and the community resources associated to children's behavioural problem in school, (b) school factors such as the curriculum; effectiveness of teachers, administrators, and staff; school routines; adequacy of facilities; and even other students in the classroom, (c) classroom arrangements such as the way the children are seated, temperature, noise, and lighting are also thought to affect children's behaviour, and (d) instructional factors including the learning climate, the appropriateness of the curriculum and instructional materials, and the effectiveness of the instructional delivery are regarded as very important factors that directly affect student behaviour.

Burden (1995) and Evans et al. (1989) state that many elements of the physical environment such as the classroom arrangement and the instructional programme affect student behaviour and are directly under the immediate control of the teacher. Teachers then are viewed as very influential in determining children's classroom behaviour.

The *psycho-social environment* includes the *intra-personal* and *inter-personal* factors that determine children's behaviour. The personal factors such as children's interests, values, and motivation determine the types of activities children are interested in and thus influence their behaviour. Burden (1995) asserts that the quantity and quality of interpersonal interactions of parents, teachers, and peers often affect children's behaviour. He maintains that although much of what we do is dictated by the reactions of others, not all reactions are equally valued. For instance, praise from a close and trusted friend or someone who is admired may be more reinforcing than praise offered by someone whose opinion the child does not highly value.

Teachers should determine whose opinions are most valued and respected by the children they teach. Encouraging children to praise and reinforce one another's work or making them compliment each other when they see a noteworthy activity performed by others can prove very useful in promoting a very cooperative learning atmosphere. The teacher's classroom management and the way he or she conducts his/her teaching in the class is considered to be the single most potent factor determining children's classroom behaviour. Teachers have to be cautious and prudent in dealing with children's discipline as they sometimes needlessly create disciplinary problems by the way they manage and conduct their classes (Emmer, Evertson, Clement, & Worsham, 1994; Emmer, Evertson, & Anderson, 1980; Moskowitz & Hayman, 1976).

Teachers being overly negative, maintaining an authoritarian climate, over-reacting to situations, using mass punishment, blaming students, lacking a clear instructional goal, repeating or reviewing already learned material, pausing too long during instruction, dealing with one student at length, and failing to recognize student ability levels are regarded as some inappropriate behaviours that teachers should avoid in their teaching. Being aware of these characteristics and periodically reflecting upon one's own teaching behaviour can be a useful practice in determining if one's actions contribute to inattention or disruptive behaviour. A teacher who is overly stern, gives little praise, and creates an oppressive climate does little to motivate or foster appropriate student behaviour.

In fact, teachers are very often fond of precipitating children's inappropriate behaviour by shouting, handling students physically, and imposing arbitrary and authoritarian rules (Bullock, Reilly, & Donalhue, 1983). A good learning environment results from praise, an organized implementation of the instructional programme, and fair disciplinary practices (Smith, Neisworth, & Greer, 1978), where the teacher's responses to children's behaviour are firm and consistent at all times. Teachers who are able to create a climate in which children feel free and comfortable in expressing their views and opinions are looked upon positively by children, and children are motivated to work cooperatively and be more attentive to seek praise and recognition from their teacher.

Levin and Nolan (2000) explain the causes of disruptive behaviours based on Abraham Maslow's theory of basic human needs: (a) physiological needs, (b) safety and security needs, (c) belonging and affection needs, (d) esteem and self-respect, and (e) self-actualization needs. According to Levin and Nolan, children are more likely to behave appropriately and perform well academically when their home environment has met their physiological, safety, and belonging needs. The realization of the lower-level needs enable children to work on meeting the higher order needs such as self-esteem and self-actualization both at home and at school. However, if their home environment fails to meet their lower-level needs, children are likely to experience difficulty, frustration, and a lack of motivation in attempting to meet the higher order needs, the result of which leads children to misbehave or continue exhibiting behaviour problems or, sometimes, even quit school at an early age.

Challenges Faced by Beginning Teachers in Dealing with Disruptive Behaviour

Many teachers are overwhelmed by disruptive classroom behaviour and as a result report that classroom misbehaviour is one of the greatest concerns facing them

(Tenoschok, 1985; Wheldall, 1991). It is an accepted fact that disruptive classroom behaviour is seen as a serious problem troubling every teacher. Despite the enormity of disruptive classroom behaviours encountered by experienced and novice teachers alike, it is unfortunate to hear that teachers feel inadequately equipped to deal with misbehaviour (Merrett & Wheldall, 1992). It may not be the disruptive behaviour alone that traumatizes teachers but the inadequacy and incompetence to deal with misbehaviours may lead to an increase in the incidence of teacher stress, especially for beginning teachers.

In an attempt to mitigate the occurrence of disruptive classroom behaviour, the teachers' incompetence and inability to deal effectively with misbehaviour may actually exacerbate the misbehaviour (Pettit, Bates, & Dodge, 1992). Walker, Steiber, Ramsey, and O'Neill (1991) believe that frequent harshness, ignoring positive behaviour, and taking punitive measures to deal with student misbehaviour can perpetuate misbehaviour in the classroom. Merrett and Wheldall (1984) emphasize the importance of positive responses to poor classroom behaviour. Gable, Hendrickson, Young, Shores, and Stowitschek (1983) state that teachers more frequently use disapproval and reprimand than praise in dealing with children. For beginning teachers, apart from the initial difficulty that they face in making the transition from a student to teacher, the ordeal of having to face and deal with disruptive classroom behaviour without adequate knowledge and skills would be a daunting task.

Martin, Linfoot, and Stephenson (1999) state that student misbehaviour is associated with lower teacher confidence in managing student's behaviour. They report that teachers' lack of confidence in managing students' behaviour resulted in greater teachers' concern about misbehaviour in the classroom which lead to teacher stress and burn-out. Martin et al. (1999) noted that teachers seem to want information specifically designed to deal with misbehaviour and encourage positive behaviour. Featherstone (1993) states that beginning teachers face major difficulties managing student behaviour and respond by becoming more authoritarian, more conservative, and less child-centered.

In Bhutan, where teachers have to deal on an average with 35 to 50 children in a classroom, it would be more tedious to deal with student misbehaviour. In spite of the inadequacy of knowledge and skill, an appreciable percentage of teachers are able to deal effectively and cope well with disruptive behaviour. There are teachers who put their heart and soul in teaching and work with undying zest and vigour. Amidst the limitations and professional handicaps this group of teachers makes their teaching meaningful to their students by exploring all the possible means and alternatives available. This is the type of teachers our Government is looking for in upgrading the quality of education in the kingdom.

But at the same time, there are teachers who need to be re-educated in dealing positively with student misbehaviour in the classroom. Choeda (2000) claimed *while the overwhelming majority of teachers are doing their duty in the best of standards, there are always few who overstep themselves, and sometimes, conduct themselves in disgraceful ways* (Kuensel, 2000, p. 4). This is the group that requires immediate attention and guidance in dealing positively and effectively with student misbehaviour so that children are inspired and motivated to learn. Given the importance allotted to education by the government and the amount of trust and confidence placed in

teachers, enhancing the professional competence of teachers is a prerogative that has to be achieved in improving the quality of education that children receive. I hope that this study will, in some way, contribute to making teachers more professional and positive in dealing with disruptive classroom behaviour.

RESEARCH METHOD

This section outlines the research method that was employed in carrying out this study. The research approach, instrumentation, participant selection, research procedures, data collection, ethical issues and data analysis are all discussed separately.

Research Approach

Since this study involved an in-depth knowledge about the lives of beginning elementary school teachers with respect to the classroom disruptive behaviours encountered in their teaching, the qualitative approach suited the descriptive and explorative nature of my study. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) suggest that a descriptive study could be conducted using a qualitative research method because it is *multi-method* in focus enabling the researcher to *study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them* (p. 2).

This study was carried out from a phenomenological standpoint because *phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences* (van Manen, 1990, p. 9). This approach suited the phenomenon under study and offered the opportunity to conduct the study in a natural setting, with free discussion and expression of ideas to obtain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of beginning elementary school teachers in dealing with classroom disruptive behaviour. With the focus of the study on the experienced meanings of the subjects' life-world in its true and genuine form, a phenomenological approach seemed appropriate and relevant in answering the research question, *What are the experiences of beginning elementary school teachers in dealing with classroom disruptive behaviour?* Given the phenomenological nature of the study, which aims at investigating the lived experiences of the teachers, qualitative interviewing was used as the research tool for gathering the data. *Qualitative Interviewing* which is a *purposeful conversation* (Bogdan and Biklen 1982, p.135) helped me in gaining access to the research participants' perception and in capturing the experiences and lived meanings of the subjects' everyday world.

Research Participants

Nine beginning elementary school teachers with a teaching experience of three years or less volunteered for this study. However, only eight teachers were able to participate as the ninth teacher withdrew from the study due to domestic reasons. With regard to the classroom enrolment, all teachers who participated in this study had, on an average, 40-45 students in their classes. Only Bhutanese national teachers were selected for the study.

Data Collection

The interview schedule including the time and place were set according to the convenience of the participants in our first meeting and measures were taken not to disturb the participants' work in the school. A quiet place, free from noise and other distracting stimuli was chosen for the interview so that the interviews could be clearly tape-recorded. Measures were taken to ensure that every interview was tape-recorded properly and a good tape-recorder was used to make certain that the conversation recorded was clearly audible and of high acoustic quality. Most of the interview took place away from the school, after school hours as that was the time at which most participants were free and comfortable with.

Validity

Validity in this study was established by triangulating the data collection strategies and responses from the participants. The data gathered through interviews were validated from other sources like the field and process notes maintained during the interviews and classroom observations. Triangulating the data gathered from different sources helped in eliminating bias and detecting anomalies in findings (Anderson, 1998). After every transcription, the interview transcripts were given to the individual interviewee to see if the interpretations and the information transcribed "ring true" to him/her. Member checking helped to build the validity of the study by letting the participants check that the interpretation of the data was accurate.

Ethical Concerns

Any research involving human participants requires the researchers to observe some essential ethical guidelines to safeguard the interest and security of the subjects under study. Ethical approval was granted by the ethics committee of the University of New Brunswick. In this study, before the participants were selected, the participants were introduced to the study by informing them about the overall purpose and the main features of the study, as well as any possible risks and benefits that would accrue from participation in the study. Informed consent was taken from the participants only after they had clear insight into the research design and their role in the study. Their participation was voluntary and the participants were given the right and freedom to withdraw from the study any time at their own will. Participants' anonymity was ensured by using pseudonyms to represent them and even the name of the school where they taught was not disclosed in the final report. No other people had access to the research documents besides the researcher and the individual research participants. All research documents, consisting mainly of recorded tapes and process notes were destroyed upon the completion of the research.

Data Analysis

Analyzing the data was an on-going process. As I read the transcribed interviews, the relevant statements and phrases were marked and sifted from the irrelevant ones. *Color-coded brackets or symbols* (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990) were used to mark and highlight the key words and statements. The key statements relevant to the phenomenon under study were categorized into different *themes* and paraphrased to get a clearer picture of the participants' experiences. Once the themes were identified,

I looked for similarities and differences and tried to further cluster similar themes into one category.

In the analysis, the other sources of information such as the observation notes recorded during the interviews on the non-verbal cues were also referred to carefully to get a complete picture of the participants' experiences. The process notes maintained during the interviews were used to further authenticate the data.

Limitations

There are a number of limitations that have to be considered in this study. I found it very difficult to bracket my preconceived notions throughout the study. I constantly reminded myself to suspend my own beliefs and perspectives from influencing the participants in describing their experiences and in interpreting the data.
Secondly, some participants had to insert words in their own dialects when they could not express themselves well in English. Therefore, some meanings might have been lost or diluted while translating into English. The time constraint was another limitation that hindered the progress of this study. The school remained closed for more than a week in the middle of this study and it took me sometime to brief the participants about what we talked about in the earlier meetings.
Thirdly, since the schools were scattered far away from each other, mobility was another limitation. I had to personally take the interview transcripts to the participants to verify and validate the interpretation of the data. I had to spend a lot of time in travelling.

RESULTS

This section provides a description of the experience of beginning elementary school teachers in dealing with classroom disruptive behaviour in Bhutanese schools. The teachers' perceptions of the different factors influencing classroom disruptive behaviour and its consequent influence on teaching and learning are presented with the evidences gathered from the research participants. In citing the statements of the participants, attempts have been made to reproduce the verbatim statements of the informants to protect the originality and authenticity of the participant's subjective experiences.

Interviewing these eight elementary school teachers has enabled me to delve deeper into the experiences of being an elementary school teacher. The unravelling of different experiences unique to each individual teacher interviewed for this study helped me to gain a better perspective and a clearer understanding of the challenges faced by beginning elementary teachers. Interviewing these eight teachers was for me the opening of the shell which until then had been cocooned and limited by my personal perceptions and professional teaching experience.

The eight teachers, though unique in their experiences, shared many similarities in terms of their perceptions and their overall experiences of dealing with such behaviours.

Perceptions of classroom disruptive behaviours

Many participants perceived and understood classroom disruptive behaviour on a similar note. None of them deviated from or differed widely in their perception of classroom disruptive behaviour from one another. Each participant tried to explain their concept of classroom disruptive behaviour by focussing on one or two elements of classroom learning and instruction. Euphelma, Seydon, Youngden, and Tshogyalma explained classroom disruptive behaviour as any behaviour that interrupted and disrupted the smooth conduct of the overall lesson, adversely affecting the quality of teaching and learning in a class. They emphasized the smooth conduct and sequential flow of the lesson in explaining their concept of classroom disruptive behaviour while Taktsang stressed the classroom environment and said that *Disruptive behaviour is a behaviour that hindered teacher's teaching and children's learning by spoiling and disorganizing the environment conducive for effective teaching and learning.* The other three participants placed more emphasis on attention in explaining their understanding of classroom disruptive behaviour. Following is how Sengdhong, Rangdoel and Sangyum perceived classroom disruptive behaviour:

> *Disruptive behaviour is any behaviour that interrupted the teacher's teaching and learning of children in the class. It not only distracted the attention of children from the lesson but also distracted the teacher from his/her teaching adversely affecting the quality of teaching and learning in general (*Sengdhong, personal interview*).*
> *Disruptive behaviour is any student behaviour such as fighting, talking out-of-turn, and being inattentive, which distracted and disturbed the teacher's teaching (*Rangdoel, personal interview*).*
> *Disruptive behaviour is any behaviour, both intentional or unintentional behaviour shown by children in the classroom that distracts the attention of both the teacher and children from the lesson (*Sangyum, personal interview*).*

Though similar in meaning, each participant worded their explanations slightly differently. All participants perceived classroom disruptive behaviour as a behaviour that adversely affected children's learning outcome and the teacher's classroom instruction.

Types of classroom disruptive behaviour

There are a multitude of behaviour that can be counted as disruptive if that behaviour causes any form of disruption in the classroom teaching and learning. Likewise, the participants of this study expressed having encountered disruptive behaviour of diverse nature in their teaching. Following are some of the classroom behaviours that the participants cited as disruptive:

> *Children do not write their homework, are not punctual, tear pages from their books, complain about their friends, do not bring books, fight in the class, sleep, talk and do not listen to the teacher's teaching (*Sengdhong, personal interview*).*
> *Most of the time, children complain about their friends, fight and quarrel over their belongings, eat in the class, take permission to go out for toilet*

> *very often one after another when they see other children going out* (Sangyum, personal interview).
> *The most common disruptive behaviours that I come across in my teaching are: children shouting and telling answers without following the teacher's instructions, misuse in handling the teaching learning materials, quarrelling and fighting over stationery, reading comic strips and writing other subject work, talking among themselves, fiddling things, sleeping, eating during the lesson time, and giggling* (Euphelma, personal interview).

It is clear that the most common classroom disruptive behaviours that these beginning teachers encountered in their daily teaching are children talking out of turn, unnecessary complaints about other children, sleeping, not bringing required learning materials such as textbooks and notes, making unnecessary noises, giggling and making fun of their friends, eating, fiddling with things, doing other subject work, children wanting to go out very often, and not being punctual. It appears that the classroom disruptive behaviours encountered by the participants are similar and common to all the participants with very little variations.

Factors influencing classroom disruptive behaviour

The lived experiences of the eight elementary school teachers in dealing with classroom disruptive behaviour, provided me with an insight into the different factors that are thought to be responsible for such behaviours. These factors include the following: child-related factors such as age of children taught, lack of proper parental support and guidance at home, attention-seeking nature of children; and teacher-related factors such as the level of preparation for a lesson, teaching style and method, sensitivity to children's learning needs, nature of the lesson taught, and inadequate professional support and training. The participants shared similarities and at the same time displayed differing ideas with regard to the factors responsible for classroom disruptive behaviour. The different factors cited above do not exist independently but are interdependent and hence must not be looked at as separate entities.

1. Child-related factors

The general characteristics of children that a teacher teaches in a class could determine classroom disruptive behaviours. In order to be responsible and accountable for one's own classroom behaviours, a child needs to attain some maturity and be able to think of the consequences of his or her behaviour. A class where children are more mature and feel more responsible and accountable for how they behave in the class is likely to experience fewer disruptions. Some of the child-related factors assumed to be responsible for classroom disruptive behaviours were the age of children, lack of proper parental support and guidance at home, and attention-seeking nature of children.

Children's inability to understand the consequences of their behaviour
The age of children taught was identified as one of the factors determining classroom disruptive behaviours by some of the teachers participating in this study. The participants attributed the high level of classroom disruptive behaviour to the naivete

and the inability of children to understand the consequences of their disruptive behaviour. They felt that the children were too young to be able to understand the consequences of their behaviour and its effects on the whole teaching-learning environment. This was what Sengdhong stated:

> *Considering the age of children that I teach, children's disruptive behaviour in the class is something that cannot be done away completely as the children are quite innocent and ignorant (naive) of the consequences of their classroom behaviour. Children of this age are restless and are easily distracted by the things around them. The irresistible temptations that they see around them could easily distract children's attention from the class and make them to be disruptive in their behaviour (*Sengdhong, personal interview*).*

On a similar note, Sangyum also explained that *Some children in my class are underage and not mature enough to really understand the right forms of classroom behaviour and they are restless and get easily distracted.* Youngden and Seydon shared the same opinion and said that being very young in age, children easily forget the instructions they are given at the beginning of the lesson regarding classroom discipline and behaviour. They reported that they have to remind children about the classroom rules again and again. These teachers partly attributed the occurrence of classroom disruptive behaviours in their teaching to the naiveté and innocence of children which was a result of their being young in age. They believed and presumed that children would learn to behave appropriately with growth and maturity.

Lack of proper parental support and guidance

The parental support and guidance that children receive at home were also regarded as key factors that could have a strong influence on children's classroom behaviours. Children coming from families where they receive proper care and attention from their elders as well as adequate support and guidance in their school work were assumed to be more active and cooperative during learning activities. Following was how Youngden and Sangyum explained the case:

> *Some children may be showing disruptive behaviour in the class in order to make up (compensate) for the parental attention they are deprived at home. Many children come from farming homes (background) where their parents are farmers and their parents do not get the time to attend to the needs of their children's school work at home. Moreover, their (parents') inability to read and write adds to the problem of helping their school going children in their academic as a well as their development of appropriate social skills. There are parents who do not even get the time to feed their children well before sending them to school and these children bring whatever they could from home and eat in the school during the class time (*Youngden, personal interview*).*
> *For some children, they could be showing disruptive behaviours in the classroom because of the lack of proper guidance from their elders, especially their parents. Parents who have a strong concern in their children's behaviour and progress in school are able to guide their children and tell them the importance of behaving well in school. In contrast,*

*children coming from problem ridden families are unlikely to get such directions from their parents and these children come to school lacking clear goals and purposes (*Sangyum, personal interview*).*

The lack of parental care and guidance was believed to not only influence children's behaviour in school but also children's social skills in interacting with others in school and in knowing the goals and purposes of attending school. Youngden even feels that the parents' lack of time to attend to their children's physiological needs such as feeding their children well before leaving home for school as a variable that could influence children's classroom behaviour.

Euphelma described her problem in dealing with children's disruptive behaviour when the cause was problems at home. She declared that

> *One difficulty that I face in handling children's disruptive classroom behaviour is, when the cause of such behaviour is not related to the classroom context. For instance, children's problems at home are something that is beyond a teacher's control although we may be able to provide them with some moral support and encouragement to overcome such problems at home (*Euphelma, personal interview*).*

Attention-seeking nature of children

Seydon mentioned that some children show disruptive behaviours because they want to draw the attention of the teacher and other children toward them. Some teachers felt that children behave disruptively in the class in order to compensate for the lack of attention at home or by their friends and teachers in school. Youngden and Sangyum contended:
> *Some children complain over very small matters in the class just to seek attention from their friends and from me in order to compensate the attention that they are deprived of at home by the their parents (*Youngden, personal interview*).*
> *Some children show disruptive behaviours because they are habituated in showing such disruptions in the class. They seem to derive satisfaction in showing such behaviours which invites attention to them from their friends in the class (*Sangyum, personal interview*).*

The participants also felt that giving attention to all types of children's disruptive behaviours does not always help in improving children's behaviour but rather, reinforces and increases children's desire for more attention and raises the level of their disruptive behaviour. Seydon thought that attending to minor disruptive behaviours that are not noticed by other children and which do not produce much negative impact on teaching and learning should be ignored. She explained:

> *Sometimes they (disruptive children) do this (behave disruptively) just to gain my attention and other children's attention in the class. For example, one of the attention seeking behaviours that children show in my class is children complain a lot about other children's behaviour over very silly matters. And when teachers attend to such complaints without much study (scrutiny) the complaining children gets encouraged to complain all*

26

*the time distracting the whole class even when the disruptive behaviour of the other children are not so significant enough to be noticed by other children (*Seydon, personal interview*).*

Seydon believed that teachers should be very selective in attending to children's complaints in the classroom. She also expressed that teachers may not get sufficient time for teaching if they are constantly attending to all forms of disruptive behaviours in the class. She asserted that attending to minor disruptions in fact would be a waste of time for the teacher and an additional distraction for the children in the class.

2. Teacher-related factors

Teachers are the most decisive and potent element in the classroom. They are responsible for the creation of an ideal classroom environment to ensure optimal classroom learning for children. The teacher participants in this study shared this view and admitted that teachers are to a large extent responsible for children's classroom disruptive behaviour. They brought out the various aspects of teacher characteristics that could trigger classroom disruptive behaviour. These characteristics include teachers' lesson planning and preparation, sensitivity to children's interests and learning needs, teaching style and method, teacher behaviour and personality, and teacher-student relationship.
Lesson planning and preparation

The participants expressed that good planning and preparation by the teacher would strongly influence the level of children's classroom disruptive behaviour. Taktsang maintained that there will be less classroom disruptions if teachers planned their lesson and expressed this concern when he stated

> *Again, if the teacher does not plan and prepare for the lesson in advance, the teacher may not be able to deliver an effective lesson, which would make children feel bored and thus dissuade children from the lesson and be disruptive in their behaviour (*Taktsang, personal interview).

Taktsang was not the only teacher who felt that teachers were equally, or even more responsible for children's classroom disruptive behaviour. Tshogyalma also shared the same opinion and admitted, *I also see more disruptions from children when I am not very well prepared in my teaching because the lesson lacks proper organization and sequence when it is not planned before the actual teaching.* So, the efforts that teachers put in their lesson preparation and planning before the actual teaching of a particular lesson was thought to make a difference in the level of children's classroom behaviour. The participants believed that a well prepared and well planned lesson with logical organization and sequential flow will lessen the number of classroom disruptions.
Sensitiveness to children's interests and learning needs

Children's interests and learning needs were deemed important by some participants in considering the factors determining classroom disruptive behaviour. Taktsang, Sangyum, and Rangdoel remarked:

> *If the teacher does not think of and consider children's interest and individual learning needs, children may not be motivated to be attentive*

*and take the lesson seriously when the teacher is teaching. A lesson that is planned taking into consideration the interests and learning needs of children will help in motivating children to be more attentive and thus be less disruptive (*Taktsang, personal interview).

*I think teachers are also to be blamed for the occurrence of disruptive behaviour in their teaching. When teachers are not sensitive to the learning ability and interests of children they teach, children are bound to show disruptive behaviour. If teachers are not aware of the individual differences in their children and fail to balance their attention between high achievers and low achievers, the low achievers would feel neglected and show disruptive behaviours (*Sangyum, personal interview)*.

If a teacher does not prepare his/her lesson, does not organize appropriate learning activities that suits the interests of children, and is not sensitive to the ability and the level of children being taught, then children are more likely to show some forms of disruptive behaviours in that particular class (Rangdoel, personal interview).

So, these teachers felt that children will be less likely to behave disruptively when teachers plan and teach their lesson based on children's interests, abilities and individual needs. Sangyum also mentions one other critical element that teachers should be conscious of during their teaching. She points out the need to distribute and balance the teacher's attention to the different groups of children in the class based on their learning abilities and thus ensure that nobody is slighted in the process of teaching.

Teaching style and method

The teaching styles and methods that teachers used were viewed as one of the significant factors determining classroom disruptive behaviours. Rangdoel stated that *when teaching-learning is teacher-centered and when children have nothing to do other than listening to the teacher's lectures, children tend to behave undesirably.* The participants also thought that the amount of classroom disruptive behaviours depend on the ability of the teacher to gain children's attention and keep them interested and motivated. This was how Tshogyalma, Sengdhong, and Sangyum explained:

> *I feel that my own teaching style or way of teaching could also be a reason for children's disruptive behaviour. When I prepare good teaching learning materials with interesting and relevant learning activities, children tend to be more interested and attentive thus reducing the number of disruptions in the class (*Tshogyalma, personal interview).
> *The teacher also is largely responsible for children's disruptive classroom behaviour. If the teacher's teaching methodology does not suit the interest of the children and if the teacher fails to consider children's learning ability while teaching, children are more likely to show disruptions (*Sengdhong, personal interview*).
> *One of the most likely reason for disruptive behaviour in my class can also be because of my teaching style and how prepared and confident I am in teaching. I always prepare for my lesson in advance and try to make my teaching lively and interesting so that it captures children's interest and attention in the class (*Sangyum, personal interview).

28

Tshogyalma, Sengdhong, and Sangyum believe that a teacher who follows a teaching style and method, which is able to capture and maintain children's interests and attention will see lesser disruptions. They emphasized the synchrony of teacher's teaching method to that of children's interests.

Seydon and Youngden, when talking about how teacher's teaching style and method influenced classroom disruptive behaviour, emphasized the teacher's ability to organize learning activities and how they are able to involve and engage children in learning tasks. Seydon affirmed that *the teacher's way of teaching and his/her ability to engage children in meaningful and interesting learning activities can also determine the frequency of disruptive classroom behaviour.* Following was how Youngden worded her explanation:

> *The teacher is in many ways responsible for disruptive classroom behaviour. The way the teacher teaches and his/her efficiency to effectively engage the children in meaningful and interesting learning activities will also influence disruptive classroom behaviour. For instance, there will be very less disruptions in a class where the teacher has a planned lesson and is able to engage the children in a variety of learning activities. However, on the other hand, a teacher that is devoid of any learning activities that involve effective participation of children is bound to have more disruptive classroom behaviour (Youngden, personal interview).*

Therefore, Seydon and Youngden think that a teacher who follows a teaching method, which does not consider the effective participation and involvement of children in a variety of learning tasks is likely to see more disruptions from children. In other words, the level of classroom disruptive behaviour is inversely proportional to the ability of the teacher to keep the children on-task and busy with learning activities.
Teacher behaviour and personality

Teacher behaviour and personality were also described as variables determining classroom disruptive behaviour. In Seydon's words,

> *It (disruptive behaviour) also can depend on teacher's classroom behaviour, especially the teacher's way of interacting with children could contribute a great deal in the level of disruptive classroom behaviour. If a teacher is friendly and approachable to the children, children will feel free to talk to the teacher and bring their problems seeking help.*

Seydon feels that the teacher's level of interaction with children and how he/she interacts with children in the class will also determine the frequency of classroom disruptive behaviours. She seemed to suggest that a teacher should be gentle and friendly in dealing with children in the class in order to ensure effective and positive interaction. Euphelma had a different view on this and explained:

> *Our children tend to be more disciplined and well-mannered when a teacher is serious and strict in dealing with children. I am a teacher who cannot be such a teacher where children get scared (of me) but instead, I want to be close to the children so that I can know more about every individual child although this is almost impossible in a Bhutanese*

classroom context where we have a large number of children. I think one of the reasons why children in my class show disruptive behaviours is that some of them must be taking advantage of my being friendly and close to them (Euphelma, personal interview).

Euphelma knows that children are more disciplined and well mannered when a teacher is strict and is aware that children behave disruptively in her class taking advantage of her friendly nature, but she contended that *children participated and interacted more effectively* when teachers assume more approachable and friendly attitudes toward children. Both Seydon and Euphelma emphasized the importance of being a role model to children in terms of their behaviour in front of the children they taught. This was further supported by Sangyum when she said,

> *We (teachers) have to be very careful and keep a close watch on our own behaviours in the classroom and in front of the children that we teach. Sometimes, when what we say do not match with our own actions, this confuses the children. For instance, we do not allow the children to eat anything in the class during the teaching time but we have teachers who chew "Doma" in the class while teaching. This is very unbecoming of a teacher and such teacher behaviour makes the children to question their faith and confidence in us.* (Sangyum, personal interview)

Sangyum believes that teachers should reflect on their own classroom behaviours when trying to overcome and deal effectively with classroom disruptive behaviours. She admits that teacher's behaviour in the classroom can also be a causal factor that could trigger disruptive behaviour in children.

Teacher-student relationship

Taktsang regarded the teacher-student relationship to be one of the factors determining classroom disruptive behaviour. He believed a good professional teacher-student relationship based on mutual understanding from both the teacher and student to be a key element for successful teaching and learning. Taktsang claimed:

> *Even the relationship that the teacher maintains with children can also influence the level of classroom disruptive behaviour in a particular teacher's teaching. For instance, if a teacher is open and receptive to children's ideas and allows them (children) to express their opinion, children will have faith and trust in that particular teacher and will be internally motivated to be attentive and take the lesson seriously in that particular teacher's teaching. Keeping this in mind, I always try to bridge the gap between me and my children in the class by being very close and friendly to make them feel comfortable but at the same time being very firm in taking decisions with regard to my teaching in the class and their behaviour* (Taktsang, personal interview).

Sengdhong also had the same feeling about the role that the teacher-student relationship could play in influencing children's classroom behaviour and in ensuring successful teaching and learning. He said, *I also maintain a very friendly relation with my children in school and this makes me feel more confident in dealing with their*

behavioural problems in the class. Both Taktsang and Sengdhong expressed their concern over being close to children they teach but also emphasized the importance of being very firm and not letting children take things for granted.

In addition to the factors discussed above, Euphelma pointed out that the class teacher system her school followed was one of the probable causes of classroom disruptive behaviour in her teaching. She stated:

> *Since teaching in my school is a class teacher system, I teach all the subjects excepting Dzongkha. So, children spend almost all of their whole day with me in the same class listening and interacting with me the most of the time. I think children could be getting bored and monotonous having to listen to the same teacher everyday. In such a teaching, children can easily get restless and show disruptive behaviour* (Euphelma, personal interview).

Euphelma had mixed feelings about having to teach the same group of children every day. She felt that being with the same group of children helped her in *understanding the nature of each individual child more in depth* but also expressed the lack of opportunity in teaching children in other classes.

Challenges faced in dealing with classroom disruptive behaviour

Although many participants of this study professed and claimed to be confident in dealing with classroom disruptive behaviours, many admitted having undergone a gruelling and stressful time in dealing with such behaviours in the first few months of their teaching. Many participants judged their current confidence in dealing with classroom disruptive behaviour in relation to their experience in the first year of teaching. They expressed having gained more confidence and being more comfortable in dealing with classroom disruptive behaviour in their second year of teaching. For instance, Sangyum stated,

> *I now feel more confident in dealing with children's disruptive behaviour as compared to my initial teaching experience. Now, instead of reacting instantly with repressive measures, I take time in studying the nature of the problem underlying their disruptive behaviour and then deal accordingly* (Sangyum, personal interview).

Despite the increasing confidence that participants professed in dealing with classroom disruptive behaviour with an increase in their teaching experience, they communicated some of the potentially deleterious challenges and difficulties which needed to be addressed in order to help them resolve their classroom disruptions in a professional manner. The participants mentioned that the lack of adequate knowledge and training in dealing with specific classroom problems, large and crowded classrooms, and unavailability of resources for updating one's professional knowledge as some of the bottlenecks that they had to struggle with when dealing with classroom disruptive behaviours.

Lack of adequate knowledge and training

Rangdoel attributed his inability in dealing with children's disruptive behaviour to his limited knowledge and training and explained such inadequacies as a severe *handicap* in his attempt to deal with such classroom problems effectively. Like Rangdoel, Seydon also felt ill-equipped in handling children's disruptive behaviours and stated that her limited knowledge and inadequate training in dealing with *specific classroom problems* as a serious problem and a challenge. Seydon said, *I wish I had more training and knowledge in dealing with such (disruptive) classroom problems.* She had a feeling that she would be better off in dealing with children's classroom disruptive behaviours if she had more knowledge and better professional training.

Sengdhong, a highly motivated and an enthusiastic teacher, displayed a great deal of confidence and professionalism in his teaching but he too felt his competence in teaching challenged by his *limited professional training and the lack of professional support.* Though useful, the knowledge acquired during the training period was found to be inadequate in confronting the challenges encountered in the real teaching field. Seydon mentioned the *large number of children in a class and her limited knowledge* as the most formidable challenge and difficulty that she faced in this regard.

Taktsang believed that the inadequacy of knowledge and training in dealing with children's disruptive behaviour as a problem and a difficulty that many other teachers in his school experienced in making their teaching meaningful and effective. He explained:

> *Working in a school where all the teachers do not have a special professional training in dealing with specific classroom problems is something very difficult for beginners like me. When many other teacher colleagues have the same professional and academic background and limited training, I do not know where to turn on for assistance. It is very difficult to get professional support and develop one's professional competency* (Taktsang, personal interview).

Taktsang also wished for closer professional interaction among the teachers both within the school and within the community to share expertise in dealing with daily classroom problems. He suggested a closer professional interaction when he stated,

> *We are all the time busy with our own teaching work and do not get much time to sit together and discuss the individual problems teachers face in their teaching. Though limited in knowledge and training, discussing our problems collectively in group where all the teachers can share their views and opinions can be of help to some teachers* (Taktsang, personal interview).

Taktsang felt that discussing the classroom challenges faced by individual teachers can be lessened by discussing them in a panel with other teachers, however limited and inadequate the teachers are.

Large and crowded classrooms

Many of the participants interviewed for this study cited large class enrolment as a serious obstacle in their efforts to deal effectively with children's classroom disruptive behaviour. They expressed that the large number of children in a very congested classroom prevented them from carrying out their learning activities smoothly and also noted the lack of free movement for both children and teacher due to a congested classroom. Rangdoel and Tshogyalma state:

> *Like in any other schools in Bhutan, the large number of children in a small ill-equipped classroom is a big problem in dealing appropriately to control classroom disruptive behaviour. I find it very difficult to manage 40-45 children in a classroom* (Rangdoel, personal interview).
> *The large number of children in my class is an obstacle in dealing effectively with children's disruptive behaviour. For instance, in a class of 39 children, when I attend to one child for showing disruptive behaviour, another child on the other side of the classroom would be showing disruptive behaviour and this cycle goes on throughout the class. Sometimes, it is so disheartening that I have to spend a lot of time attending to such disruptive problems in the class instead of teaching my lesson* (Tshogyalma, personal interview).

The large number of children in a small classroom is not just a problem in dealing with children's disruptive behaviours, but it seems to bother Rangdoel and Tshogyalma in the effective organization and management of their classroom activities and monitoring of children's participation in learning tasks. Sangyum explained her feelings about the challenge posed by large class enrolment in this way:

> *I find it very difficult in applying the knowledge that I have gained during the training period. I wish I could apply and use them especially in dealing with children's disruptive behaviour but then, the possibility of using such skills and knowledge in the actual classroom situation is just not possible given the large number of children in the class* (Sangyum, personal interview).

Sangyum looked at large class enrolment as a problem not only in resolving classroom disruptive behaviours but also in the effective application and practice of the knowledge and skills that she had gained from her training. Taktsang, Euphelma, Youngden, Sengdhong, and Seydon shared the same concern that the large class enrolment posed for teachers in dealing effectively with children's disruptive behaviour.

Unavailability of resources for updating professional knowledge

The lack of resources required in developing learning materials for effective teaching was also cited as one difficulty faced by the participants. Sengdhong, though very hard working and committed in his job of teaching, stated his difficulty as:

> *I work hard and try my best to make my teaching very interesting and lively for them (children). I want to give new experiences to the children by*

involving them in new learning experiences and learning activities in my class but most of the time, my goal and objective of delivering such a lesson is destroyed (spoiled) by the lack of adequate materials and resources in the school. We do have a library but many of the books are very old and the few new ones that we have are not enough for a such a large class. We not only need to have more variety of reading materials for children, but I think all schools should have a good set of professional reading materials that teachers can read for keeping ourselves updated (Sengdhong, personal interview).

Sengdhong not only shared his concern regarding the lack of resources in developing relevant teaching/learning materials but also expressed the need to equip the school with adequate resources for teachers to help them enhance their professional competence and knowledge in dealing with classroom problems. His explanation is indicative of the difficulty that he experiences in realizing his objective of teaching to the best of his ability. Youngden also expressed the need for adequate teaching/learning resources in her school, and felt that *the easy availability and access to adequate resources* would be helpful in making her teaching more interesting for children and thus help in reducing children's disruptive behaviour.

Impact of disruptive behaviour on beginning teacher's teaching

Although the classroom disruptive behaviours encountered by the participants in their teaching are not so intense in nature and physically threatening to both children and teacher, the influence that it has on teacher's teaching and children's learning deserves attention. Many of the participants interviewed for this study expressed their frustration and disappointment in having to undergo the ordeal of dealing with classroom disruptive behaviours which most of the time foiled their attempts in making their lesson a successful one. They admitted that classroom disruptive behaviour, though not a serious issue in Bhutanese schools at the moment, had significant adverse effects on teachers' teaching and children's learning, and the teachers' interest and commitment to teaching.

Influence on teaching and learning

Describing the adverse consequences that classroom disruptive behaviour had on their teaching and children's learning, Taktsang and Euphelma explained:

> *Children's disruptive behaviour makes it difficult for me in gaining children's attention and an effective class control. I find it very difficult to manage my lesson properly and the occurrence of disruptive behaviour in the middle of teaching seriously affects the progress of the lesson and makes my teaching ineffective. I lose track of my lesson when disturbed in between and take a lot of time in coming back to the usual flow of the lesson. Most of the time, I am not able to finish the lesson that I have planned for that particular period. A good amount of time is wasted in attending to children's disruptive behaviour in the process of teaching. I feel incompetent and frustrated when such things happen in my class* (Taktsang, personal interview).

> *I spend a great deal of time dealing with disruptive classroom behaviour and this takes almost half of my lesson time. Due to this, I am not able to finish my lesson in time and this lowers the effectiveness and quality of my teaching and other children's (well-behaving) learning as well* (Euphelma, personal interview).

Taktsang and Euphelma felt that children's classroom disruptive behaviour robbed them of their teaching time, which affected the completion of their planned lesson within the stipulated time-frame for that particular lesson. They said that very often they had to leave their lessons incomplete due to children's disruptive behaviour and were also concerned about the adverse effects that disruptive behaviours had on their teaching and children's learning. Seydon also thought that she wasted her time attending to children's disruptive behaviour and expressed that *I find it difficult to get back to the normal course of teaching and get children's attention back to the lesson all over again.* She even expressed her frustrations saying, *It upsets my teaching mood and I do not feel like teaching the class.* Sangyum stated that she is *not able to follow her lesson plan effectively* in her teaching due to disruptive behaviours. In addition to the time wasted attending to children's disruptive behaviours, Sengdhong and Rangdoel remarked that they were not able to achieve their lesson objectives when they had to leave their lesson incomplete due to children's disruptive behaviour.

Influence on teacher's interest and commitment to teaching

Some participants pointed out the negative impact that children's disruptive behaviour had on their interest and commitment to teaching. Following was how Youngden and Tshogyalma described the impact of disruptive behaviour on their teaching:

> *I feel disgusted and do not feel like teaching and such feelings negatively influence my interest in teaching, also affecting my effort and input put in teaching wholeheartedly. I do not see the need to work hard for making my teaching more interesting and I feel betrayed when children behave disruptively in the class* (Youngden, personal interview).
> *The experience of having to deal with such behavioural problems (disruptive behaviour) every day in the class lowers the level of my interest in teaching and sometimes, I do not even feel like going back to the class. I do not feel like preparing for the lesson and do not even feel like taking care to make my teaching a success* (Tshogyalma, personal interview).

According to Youngden and Tshogyalma, children's classroom disruptive behaviour is not only a hindrance to the success of their teaching but is also a problem that affects their interest and commitment to teaching whole-heartedly. By the same token, Sengdhong said that he feels *disappointed, annoyed, frustrated, and [I] lose interest in teaching* because of classroom disruptive behaviour that he encounters in his teaching. Rangdoel lamented saying, *Sometimes, I feel overly (intensely) frustrated due to children's disruptive behaviour and wonder why I have chosen to be a teacher.* For Rangdoel, the influence sometimes seems to be so intense that he even confessed his feelings of regret over choosing to be a teacher.

However, the impact of classroom disruptive behaviour was not all adverse and negative. The participants also had some positive experiences to narrate. Many

participants looked at children's disruptive behaviour as a cue to reflect on their own weaknesses in teaching and to explore ways of making the class environment conducive for meaningful learning. For instance, Sengdhong was disheartened and upset in having to deal with classroom disruptive behaviour but at the same time he accepted children's disruptive behaviour as an *opportunity to reflect on his own teaching* and thus look for newer ways to make his teaching more effective. Sangyum, though distressed and despondent over the experience of dealing with classroom disruptive behaviour, also had learned to view children's disruptive behaviour from a positive angle. She contended that disruptive behaviour had prompted her to question her own *teaching competence* and had learned to view it as a *window* through which she can delve deeper and explore ways to improve her own teaching. She said that such classroom behavioural problems had served as a *stepping stone* for enriching her teaching experience and developing her competence in teaching.

To summarize, classroom disruptive behaviours encountered by these elementary teachers were low intensity disruptive behaviours such as talking out of turn, unnecessary complaints about other children, sleeping, not bringing required materials, making unnecessary noise, giggling and making fun of friends, eating, fiddling with things, doing other subject work, taking permission to go out for toilet very often, and not being punctual. Children's inability to understand the consequences of their behaviour, lack of parental support and guidance, and attention-seeking nature of children were cited as some of the child-related factors determining classroom disruptive behaviours.

However, teacher-related factors such as teacher's lesson preparation, sensitivity to children's learning needs, teaching style and method, teacher behaviour and personality, and teacher-student relationship were considered to influence children's disruptive behaviour. Lack of adequate knowledge and training to deal with classroom disruptive behaviours, congested classrooms, and inadequate resources for updating professional skills appear to trouble beginning elementary school teachers in their efforts to deal effectively with classroom disruptive behaviours. Although, classroom disruptive behaviours encountered by these elementary teachers were of low intensity/high frequency disruptions, the effect on the quality of their teaching and students' learning was an area of concern to them. However, some participants view these behaviours as a challenge which motivates them to improve their teaching.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore and ascertain the experiences of beginning elementary school teachers with respect to their perception of classroom disruptive behaviour. From these perceptions, a number of themes emerged. These themes included (a) types of classroom disruptive behaviours encountered, (b) causes of classroom disruptive behaviours deemed responsible, (c) challenges and difficulties faced in dealing with children's classroom disruptive behaviour, and (d) impact of classroom disruptive behaviour in their teaching. The act of unveiling the lived experiences of these elementary school teachers made me realize how my own personal experiences and observations were limited how they circumscribed my understanding of beginning teachers teaching elementary school children in Bhutan. The process of interacting closely with these teachers in the course of this study has

helped me to unmask my narrow understanding and to achieve a much broader and richer understanding of the experiences of beginning elementary school teachers.

Jerry (1990) in his study of classroom discipline described disruptive behaviour as any behaviour in the classroom that interfered with the process of teaching and learning. Charles (1981) explained disruptive behaviour as student actions that disrupt, destroy, defy, hurt, or infringe on others' rights including acts such as cruelty, disrespect, boisterousness, cheating, fighting, name calling, sarcasm, and apathy, all of which challenge the success of teaching and learning. Disrupting the process of teaching and learning was the central idea that ran through all the explanations put forth by the participants of this study in expressing their perception of classroom disruptive behaviour. It is evident that the participants shared a common concept of classroom disruptive behaviour. Many participants explained classroom disruptive behaviour not just in terms of its effect on the teacher's teaching but also mentioned the effect on children's learning. Thus, the participants' perception of classroom disruptive behaviour was equally inclusive and confirmed the explanations suggested by earlier researchers.

Bernard-Bourgeois (1997), in her study of disruptive behaviour, encountered by beginning teachers in New Brunswick schools indicated that 96.1% of her research participants encountered "talking out of turn" as a disruptive behaviour very often experienced in school. Talking out of turn and unnecessary complaints by children was cited as the most frequently encountered disruptive behaviour by all the participants of this study. Though dissimilar in terms of educational development and culture, the classroom disruptive behaviours encountered by these teachers in Bhutan's elementary classes are very similar to the findings in the North American schools.

Some of the most frequently encountered classroom disruptive behaviours were talking out of turn, unnecessary complaints about other children, sleeping, not bringing required materials such as textbooks and class-notes, making unnecessary noise, giggling and making fun of friends, eating, fiddling things, doing other subject work, taking permission to go out to toilet very often, and not being punctual in coming back to class especially after the recess time.

Similar findings were reported in British schools where disruptive behaviours were not physical or verbal abuse but of a minor variety – but nevertheless 'disruptive' incidents – including talking out of turn, hindering other pupils, making unnecessary noise, work avoidance, not being punctual, and getting out of seat without permission (Department of Education and Science, and Welsh Office, 1989).

Although quarrelling and fighting were identified by many participants as one of the disruptive behaviours encountered in their classes, such behaviours were encountered very rarely. Classroom disruptive behaviours involving intense physical violence was never encountered by any of the participants and disruptions of such intensity have not been reported so far in the schools in Bhutan. It appears that most of the classroom disruptive behaviours encountered by beginning elementary teachers in Bhutan are mainly of low intensity/high frequency behaviours (Merrett & Wheldall, 1992), which does not pose any physical threat to the teacher and students per se. The incidences of low intensity/high frequency behaviours in the elementary classes

could be attributed to the age of children and more importantly to the culture and a Buddhist belief that deprecates any violence - be it mental or physical!

Children are expected to be disciplined, respectful and obedient to elders at all times and this expectation plays an integral role in disciplining children in Bhutan's schools. Many children are brought up in a family where they are not expected to challenge authority and more particularly that of teachers in school. Discipline and propriety of behaviours are something that is stressed from a very young age in Bhutanese children. In schools, the importance of behaving well and developing a good sense of personal discipline is a virtue that is encouraged every day both at home and in school. Dolkar (2000) also mentions that discipline and respect of authority form an integral part of growing up in Bhutanese society and this respect and reverence for elders is reflected in the school atmosphere.

The age of children, and their consequent inability to understand the result and effect of their behaviour on general classroom learning was named as one factor that led to the frequent occurrence of disruptive behaviour in the classroom. Sengdhong and Sangyum expressed difficulty in having children take responsibility, and account for their classroom behaviour. Making children responsible and accountable for their behaviour can be a problem to many elementary school teachers. Currently in Bhutan, parents try to enroll their children in school at a very young age. Although children are formally admitted to school at the age of six years, it is difficult for school authorities to scrutinize and get the correct age of children merely by checking the birth certificates of a child.

When schools were first opened in Bhutan in the early fifties and sixties, parents hid their children for fear that they would be taken away to school. But the scenario is entirely different now. Nowadays, Bhutanese parents have realized the pace of development that the country has taken over the past few decades, and are clearly cognizant of the competition that exists especially in the job market. Recognizing the value of education in the life of their children, and in a rush to put their children in school at an early age, some parents make every attempt to manipulate and tamper with children's birth certificate to get them admitted to school. The presence of these underage children makes things more difficult and burdensome for elementary school teachers because some of these underage children are not assertive enough even to ask the teacher to go to toilet. It is not surprising to hear an elementary school teacher in Bhutan narrate his/her story of having children who defecated or urinated in their pants in class.

Seydon and Youngden complained about children's inability to remember the instructions regarding classroom rules making it challenging when dealing with their behaviour. They stated that they have to constantly remind children about the classroom rules. This need to be constantly reminded may be due to the limited memory of children because their cognitive skills are still at a developing stage. The immature memory capacity of young children limits their power to retain information for a longer time; and further, the lack of effective encoding strategies could make it harder for them to remember everything their teachers say in class (Bruning et al., 1999).

Levin and Nolan (2000) have explained the causes of children's classroom disruptive behaviour using Maslow's theory of basic human needs. They argue that children are more likely to behave appropriately and perform well academically when the lower level needs such as the physiological, safety, and belonging are met at home and school. Children's conditions at home and the support they receive from their parents and elders were also raised by participants as variables influencing children's disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

Sangyum maintained that children coming from problem-ridden families are more disruptive because of the lack support from their parents and elders at home. Youngden believed that parents of some children do not get the time to feed their children properly before sending them to school because they have to attend to their own chores at home. In like manner, Evans et al. (1989) have assert that conditions at home such as lack of adequate clothing or housing, parental supervision and types of discipline used, home routine, events such as divorce or death of a friend or relative are associated with children's behavioural problems in school.

The disruptive behaviour of children eating in the class during teaching may be an indication of the lack of proper meals at home; or in some cases, it may be due to parents being overly generous by giving their children money for behaving well at school. Though many Bhutanese parents are keen on their children's academic performance, many do not possess formal education and are not able to read and write themselves. These inabilities are serious obstacles to providing the necessary support and help for their children's school work. With such parental handicaps and the lack of role models, children fail to find any inspiration and motivation to behave appropriately and perform well in school.

Furthermore, when children seek attention by unnecessarily complaining about other children, and shouting and making noise in class, they draw attention from the teacher and other children to make up for the attention they are deprived at home. Some children do come from homes where they are not provided the love and attention that all children deserve from their parents.

However, it is not only the children from problem-ridden families that show disruptive behaviour in the classroom. There are children of economically well-off parents who are equally or even more disruptive in their behaviour. Children from economically well-off families are given money to spend most of the time and they are the ones who are seen eating most of the time in class. Such eating behaviours not only distract the teacher and other children from the lesson but create a rift between the "haves" and "have-nots." Some children try to act like their counterparts and make desperate attempts such as stealing their parents' money.

Dreikers (1968) explained that children often engage in power struggles when they fail to gain the attention they seek and in a bid for power, act more stubborn, disobedient and become more disruptive in their behaviour. Seydon mentioned that some children show disruptive behaviour by taking advantage of her leniency. Further, she asserted that teachers have to be selective in attending to children's disruptive behaviour and ignore it if the disruption is minor. However, if a child's disruptive behaviour is aimed at seeking the teacher's attention and teachers ignore such behaviours, they run the risk of having the child demonstrate more disruptive behaviours. Teachers should

distinguish between behaviours which are attention-seeking and those that are not. They should try to meet the need for attention by other measures such as recognizing students' attempts to behave well, reinforcing their good work, and talking to them and understanding their problems away from the class.

Earlier studies on classroom disruptive behaviour have demonstrated that the teacher's classroom management and the way he or she conducts his/her teaching is the single most potent factor determining children's classroom behaviour (Emmer, Evertson, Clement, & Worsham, 1994; Emmer, Evertson, & Anderson, 1980; Moskowitz & Hayman, 1976). Teachers have to be cautious and prudent in dealing with children's discipline as they sometimes needlessly create disciplinary problems by the way they manage and conduct their classes. In an attempt to teach children to behave less disruptively in class, teachers should be consistent in reinforcing the behaviours they expect from students. Being lenient and giving conflicting messages to children may in fact lead them to show more disruptive classroom behaviour.

The participants of this study were aware that their teaching behaviours could provoke children to be disruptive in the classroom. Many participants did not blame the children for their disruptive behaviour but were willing to accept that teachers are largely responsible and answerable for many classroom disruptive behaviours shown by children.

Taktsang and Tshogyalma explained that the teacher's preparation and planning for a particular lesson is an influential factor in the children's level of classroom disruptive behaviour. They felt that better preparation and planning and more effective and systematic organization of the lesson reduced the level of children's disruptive behaviour. Teacher's sensitivity to children's interests and learning needs, the teacher's teaching style and teaching method were indicated as some other teacher-associated factors responsible for children's classroom disruptive behaviour. Evans et al. (1986) in their study of classroom discipline, described these factors under the *physical environment* as "instructional factors," and found the effectiveness of instructional delivery very important.

A teacher who is overly stern, gives little praise, and creates an oppressive climate does little to motivate or foster appropriate student behaviour. In fact, teachers very often precipitate children's inappropriate behaviour by shouting, handling students physically, and imposing arbitrary and authoritarian rules (Bullock, Reilly, & Donalhue, 1983). This was mentioned by the participants of this study too.

Seydon, Sangyum, and Euphelma referred to the teacher's classroom behaviour and personality, and teacher-student relationship as factors influencing children's classroom disruptive behaviour in their teaching. Seydon and Euphelma valued the importance of assuming a more friendly and gentle attitude when dealing with children's behaviour to ensure effective and meaningful classroom interaction. Taktsang also shared the same opinion of being friendly and approachable to children. Sangyum stated the importance of modelling exemplary classroom behaviours to children. She felt that teachers have to be watchful of their own classroom behaviours to gain children's trust and confidence in their teaching. The teacher's code of conduct and ethics, circulated by the Education Division emphasizes the importance of teachers being exemplary in their conduct at all times when teaching children.

However, Sengdhong had a different view concerning teacher's behaviour in the classroom. He acknowledged the importance of being friendly and approachable to children while teaching, but then, he mentioned that some children become more disruptive, taking advantage of the teacher's friendly and gentle attitude. Sengdhong felt that teachers should be firm and consistent in their responses to children's classroom behaviour so that the children realize that they will be disciplined if they behave disruptively. Sengdhong's belief and practice of maintaining children's classroom discipline and ensuring effective learning relate closely to the findings of Smith et al. (1978), who submitted that a good learning environment results from an organized implementation of the instructional programme, fair disciplinary practices, and teacher's responses to children's behaviour being firm and consistent at all times. Sengdhong said that he is friendly and close to children once he is out of the class, but he felt it not so important to be gentle in the classroom. He believed that preparing the lesson well ahead of time, and teaching according to the interests and abilities of children will assure a lesson where children pay attention to the instruction.

Instead of being very close and approachable to children in the class, Sengdhong suggested the need to maintain some distance between the teacher and students in their interaction so that children realize the difference between the two and thus behave appropriately. This perception concurs with Dolkar's (2000) findings that the cultural values of showing respect and reverence for authority promoted a certain degree of distance between the student and teacher.

The participants of this study expressed their confidence in dealing with children's classroom disruptive behaviours. However, the difficulties and challenges they experience in dealing with classroom disruptive behaviour deserve more attention. Many participants narrated their experiences of getting frustrated, irritated, and inflamed with anger when the success of their lesson had been thwarted and stymied by children's disruptive behaviour. For example, Seydon said that she felt like crying when the children disrupted her teaching in the middle of her lesson.

Participants cited their limited knowledge and training as a problem that makes it difficult for them to deal effectively with children's classroom disruptive behaviour. The lack of courses specific to classroom behaviours in the teacher training institutes and the want of adequate training and practice that the trainees are exposed to during the training time could be a factor that makes it difficult for these beginning elementary teachers. These participants recounted the information they received during the one and a half class hours they had during their training time.

Furthermore, none of the participants had attended any in-service or refresher courses to update their professional knowledge and some even expressed that they do not get the opportunity to attend the in-service training and workshops because the senior teachers are given priority and preference. Taktsang and Sengdhong shared their concerns about the school's lack of resources not just for classroom teaching but to update their professional knowledge. They thought that the lack of such school resources exacerbated the professional inadequacies they experienced.

Classroom arrangements such as the way the children are seated, temperature, noise, and lighting are also thought to affect children's behaviour (Evans, Evans, & Mercer, 1986). The physical environment was a recurring issue for the participants in this

study. Large and crowded classrooms, where children are seated very close to each other was cited as a major problem by many participants interviewed for this study. The overcrowded classroom is indeed a problem for carrying out the learning activities effectively, but also for monitoring children's learning tasks and managing their behaviours. The question of meeting each individual child's learning needs and teaching according to the interest of such a big group in such a setting is difficult. Earlier studies by Bernard-Bourgeois (1997) and Dierenfield (1982) confirm that a high student to teacher ratio is positively related to classroom disruptive behaviour. In Bhutan, teaching a classes of more than 35 children would be more challenging to check children's disruptive behaviour. The problem of a high student-teacher ratio can be attributed to the increase in the student population.

Over the past few years, all schools throughout the country have been experiencing mounting pressures due to the increase in the student population. Many additional schools have been opened to accommodate these students but the increase in the number of schools has been offset by the ever increasing number of school going children. The difficulty that teachers face in dealing with classroom disruptive behaviour due to crowded classrooms will continue to challenge Bhutanese teachers for still some years ahead. However, this does not mean that they are helpless and without solutions. Teachers have to learn to take this as a challenge and devise alternative ways to cope with this problem. One probable solution could be to better train and equip teachers with the knowledge and skills that is appropriate to such a teaching context.

Though classroom disruptive behaviours encountered by the participants were not so serious, the damage they caused to the quality of teaching and learning of children is worthy of concern. The participants found it mentally and physically fatiguing in having to deal with classroom disruptive behaviour every day. Many felt frustrated, disappointed, disheartened, cast down, and betrayed due to children's classroom disruptive behaviour. They talked about the difficulty they faced in gaining children's attention and for effective organization of different learning activities. Taktsang and Euphelma felt that classroom disruptive behaviour deprived them of their actual teaching time and affected the completion of their planned lesson within a specified time. They complained of their inability to teach according to their planning and preparation and expressed their failure to achieve the goals and objectives planned for that particular lesson. Youngden and Tshogyalma expressed their ordeal of dealing with classroom disruptive behaviour as it lowered their interest in teaching, and adversely affected the quality of their teaching.

The participants' experience of feeling mentally and physically enervated, disappointed and frustrated could be attributed to the amount of workload that teachers get in school. Teachers in Bhutan are expected to be versatile and play multiple roles other than merely taking the task of classroom teaching. On an average, teachers in Bhutan teach five to six 35 to 40 minutes lesson in a day besides the other additional administrative and secretarial commitments. Furthermore, the lack of adequate knowledge and training for dealing with classroom disruptive behaviour, coupled with the large number of children in a congested classroom, make their problems all the more daunting.

Teacher behaviours, such as being overly negative, maintaining an authoritarian climate, overreacting to situations, using mass punishment, blaming students, lacking clear instructional goals, repeating or reviewing already learned material, pausing too long during instruction, dealing with one student at length, and failing to recognize student ability levels are regarded as inappropriate and ones that teachers should avoid at all times (Burden, 1995). The interventions that teachers use in response to classroom disruptive behaviours do seem to make a difference in children's classroom behaviour.

Although I have not seen any of the participants using such overly negative behaviours that would escalate children's classroom disruptive behaviours, there were several incidences where teachers tried to prevent children's disruptive behaviour by shouting at the top of their voice from one end of the class to the other saying, "Sonam, stop talking!" Such responses not only disturb the whole class by drawing everybody's attention but could be embarrassing or psychologically damaging moment for that disruptive child, if his/her disruption had been unintentional. Some of the teachers sent children out of the class for behaving disruptively, but I wonder if suspending children from class would do any good in changing children's behaviour. Some children might fail to see the suspension as punishment and would welcome it as a time off from class and ultimately having the child continue to be disruptive (Burden, 1995).

The participants of this study strongly opposed the use of physical punishment, which has the risk of inflicting physical injury and severe psychological stigma in children's lives. However, a few expressed the need to administer reasonable amounts of punishments such as pulling children's ears in response to classroom disruptive behaviours, and said that it should be taken as a final alternative, only when all measures fail to improve children's behaviour. Usually many young teachers are not normally seen using corporal punishment in response to classroom disruptive behaviours as they are beginning to test their teaching skills in the classroom. I feel that many teachers use punishments such as slapping and canning when they are in their mid-life career, a time when they may be experiencing professional stagnation. At this stage of their career, I think many teachers find their existing knowledge and skills obsolete and they do not find themselves prepared and ready to pursue further learning to update their knowledge and skills. As such, they become professionally stagnated. Whenever they encounter disruptive behaviour in their classroom, they easily take refuge in using punishment without looking for other alternative measures. However, in spite of the difficulties that these teachers had in dealing with classroom disruptive behaviour, one very encouraging thing worth noting is the way they viewed classroom disruptive behaviour. Raffini (1980) said that teachers very often try to play safe by putting the blame for disruptive behaviour on the student, on the parents, on the administration, curriculum, or on other teachers. However, unlike Raffini's findings, many participants accepted and assumed their responsibility for classroom disruptive behaviour and viewed it as an opportunity to discover their own weaknesses in teaching. For many, they accepted it as a part of teaching. they view it as a challenge to strengthen their skills, become proficient just not in teaching, but capable of inspiring children to behave appropriately and perform well in life. Evans et al. (1989) stated that periodically reflecting upon one's own teaching behaviour can be a useful practice in determining if one's actions contribute to inattention or disruptive behaviour. This was exactly how the participants of this study looked at classroom

disruptive behaviours. They even professed their neutral attitude toward disruptive children and explained that they are very impartial in their treatment of them. Not a single participant labelled disruptive children as academically inferior and many considered the behaviour of disruptive children as corrigible, given they receive proper support from their elders and parents at home, and provided teachers have the right antidote in dealing with their behaviours in the most professional manner. This perception may be because all these participants were young, energetic, and have just begun their teaching lives, and the knowledge and the enthusiasm they developed during the training period, however little it may be, are still fresh and yet to be applied in their teaching.

Canter (1989) argued that one of the reasons why both beginning and veteran teachers drop out of education is their inability to manage student behaviour. Ryan (1974) attributes beginning teachers' problems to, (a) inadequate training for the demands of their work, (b) lack of standard selection criteria in teacher training, and (c) beginning teachers have a general training and are not trained for specific jobs in schools. This seem true in the case of teachers who were interviewed for this study. They felt inadequate in knowledge and training for dealing with specific classroom problems and all were general teachers, who had received general training. Though there is a standard selection criteria for teacher training, sometimes, this standard is overlooked especially when students who fail to qualify for higher studies are inducted into teacher training program. The feeling of inadequacy and incompetency experienced by beginning teachers is one of the reasons why many abandon their teaching career (Descombe, 1985).

Of all the problems among beginning teachers, Veenman (1984) reports that classroom discipline is one of the most serious problems, contributing to *reality shock* and high teacher attrition rate. Though the participants of this study had feelings of inadequacy in dealing effectively with classroom disruptive behaviours and had experienced stress and frustration like any other beginning teachers, none of them had thought of leaving or changing their profession. This may be due to the civil service grades where teachers are placed and the 30% raise in teacher's salary given as a teaching incentive which started since the beginning of 1999. Furthermore, for class twelve and ten graduates who had failed to qualify for higher college or university education, teaching is one of the best jobs they can opt for in Bhutan for the reasons stated above. The social prestige that is attached to teaching and more importantly, the limited availability of jobs in the country could be an important factor that keeps teachers holding on to their careers despite the stress and frustration they experience. Teachers in Bhutan are highly respected and the government gives a high priority in strengthening and improving the quality of teacher education and considers the role of teachers in nation building to be an important one.

Implications of the Study

The results of this study are not representative of the entire population of beginning elementary school teachers in Bhutan and thus, are not transferable to other teachers. Yet, they provide significant implications in executing the policy of enhancing the professional development of teachers, with a particular emphasis on beginning elementary school teachers. Wholesome and quality education have become popular catchwords for every educationist in Bhutan. Recently, the Education Division

in Bhutan embarked on a new policy of "Teacher-Centred" education, which is geared toward enhancing the professional development of teachers. The policy of stressing the importance of developing teachers' professional competence may work toward meeting the professional handicaps that the participants of this study mentioned.

The education system in Bhutan has made monumental progress over the past few decades, such as nationalizing the teaching force and opening new schools at all levels to accommodate the ever increasing student population. Yet, much remains to be done. While there is a need for more teachers to provide for higher student enrollment, the quality of teacher preparation is important as well. The findings of this study indicate the need to examine the support beginning elementary school teachers need in ensuring "quality" and "wholesome" education. Given the importance of early school education that children receive, initiatives to strengthen elementary education may be re-emphasized so that children form positive attitudes toward school.

Although the findings of this study demonstrate the tolerance and patience that beginning elementary school teachers show when dealing with classroom disruptive behaviours, the adverse effects of classroom disruptive behaviour on beginning teachers' teaching cannot be overlooked. Classroom disruptive behaviour, though not a serious issue in Bhutan, is still a problem that greatly influences the quality of teaching and learning, especially for beginning elementary teachers. Given the similarity in the teacher training programs, many other beginning elementary school teachers in Bhutan could be facing similar difficulties and challenges. Differences may exist among beginning elementary school teachers' experiences depending on the location of the school, personal ability and interests in teaching. Classroom disruptive behaviour, if left unchecked has the danger of diminishing the interests and commitment of beginning teachers thereby changing the goal of providing wholesome and quality education. The problem of classroom disruptive behaviours experienced by beginning elementary school teachers is not beyond solutions. In fact, the problems that the participants cited in this study are manageable and controllable.

Many participants in this study mentioned their feelings of frustration and disappointment in having to deal with classroom disruptive behaviours. Bhutan cannot afford to have disgruntled teachers, whose interests and commitments in teaching are deteriorated by daily classroom disruptions. There is a need for need teachers who are able to inspire children to be better citizens. Experienced teachers proficient in teaching should be willing to mentor beginning teachers and help them overcome their teaching obstacles. School authorities should try to discuss professional difficulties that teachers face and organize seminars, in which classroom management skills are discussed. Such professional interaction and collective effort from all teachers will help to strengthen teachers to deal with classroom disruptive behaviour.

Additionally, District Education Officers could create opportunities for teachers to assess local discipline problems and help them exchange ideas and acquire skills necessary for effective classroom management. Such exchange of professional ideas could be the subject of debate during the School Based In-service Programs (SBIP) and Cluster Based In-service Programs(CBIP). Furthermore, school authorities in consultation with Dzongkhag Education Officers can organize inspirational talks to inform children about the importance of showing appropriate classroom behaviours.

Dzongkhag Education Officers, with a new educational mandate can assist teachers' professional needs (Ministry of Health and Education, 2001) helping them deal with classroom disruptive behaviours, more particularly in the elementary classes. "Intervision," the practice where teachers observe each other's teaching with a view to promoting the exchange of teaching skills and ideas, needs to be emphasized in all schools with added vigour and strength.

Many participants in this study expressed the need for more training and knowledge in dealing with specific classroom behaviours. The teacher education programs need to be reviewed on a constant basis and the training should be geared toward meeting the needs of beginning teachers. Teacher educators need to devote more attention to preparing teachers in areas of effective classroom management and development of skills required for solving daily classroom behaviour problems. Student teachers may be introduced to the different models of discipline (Burden, 1995) such as, The Redl and Wattenberg Model: Dealing with the Group; The Kounin Model: Withitness, Alerting, and Group Management; The Neo-Skinnerian Model: Shaping desired Behaviour; The Ginott Model: Addressing the Situation with Sane Messages; The Dreikers Model: Confronting Mistaken Goals; The Jones Model: Body Language, Incentive Systems, and Providing Efficient Help; The Canter Model: Assertively Taking Charge; and The Glasser Model: Good Behaviour Comes in Meeting Needs without Coercion. Getting acquainted with such models in teacher training programs would give student teachers information about the skills required for dealing effectively with classroom disruptive behaviours.

Furthermore, student teachers could study these different models and identify the ones with which they feel most comfortable. A great deal of hands-on practice in the use of these discipline models should be emphasized during the training program. The student teachers may even design an eclectic model of discipline adapting skills from the different models mentioned above. One of the educational objectives envisioned by year 2020 is to develop a highly motivated and competent teaching cadre which supports a holistic approach to education and learning (Education sector strategy: Realising the Vision 2020). With such initiative from the government to strengthen and develop teacher education programs, the classroom management challenges faced by teachers is expected to be ameliorated.

The large and crowded classroom may still continue to be a problem for years to come because of expected increase in student enrolment. However, the educational policy, emphasizing the professional development of teachers provides an alternative to this problem. Improving the professional competence of teachers will help in alleviating teachers' problems of dealing effectively with classroom disruptive behaviour. The establishment of Resource Centres, which began in 1998, is being pilot-tested in different regions of the country and will be helpful to teachers of all levels of schooling. The participants in this study also cited parental support as an underlying factor determining children's classroom behaviour. Teachers are not only required to interact with students, but equally with parents and guardians. Communicating with elementary children's parents can produce a striking difference in the parents' attitudes toward their children's education. Children can benefit from good communication and effective working relationships between school and home. Haynes, Comer and Hamilton-Lee (1989) explain that parental involvement is associated with better attendance, more positive student attitudes and behaviour, greater willingness

to do homework, and higher academic achievement. Maintaining close communication with children's parents and guardians can make a remarkable difference in knowing about children's conditions at home. This knowledge helps teachers deal more effectively with children's behaviour in school.

In Bhutan, many parents do not possess any formal educational background and many do not know what is expected of them or how they might contribute to their children's education. They do not realize that the school values their involvement in improving the quality of education their children receive. Some parents do not become involved for practical reasons. They may not speak the language used in schools or they may simply be too tired after long days at work (Burden, 1995). In Bhutan, English and Dzongkha are the official language used in schools and many do not speak any English. The language barrier makes parents develop a sense of discomfort toward school. Further, many children come from farming backgrounds, where parents work in the fields most of the time and a good number of children come from families where both parents are working. Parents of such families are themselves overworked after long days and do not get the time to monitor their children's school work. Moreover, some parents view teachers, principals, counsellors, and other school personnel as experts in addressing misbehaviour (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991).

Teachers and school authorities in Bhutan are considered by many parents as experts and they do not feel the need to interfere in actions taken by teachers or other officials in schools. Teachers and school authorities should work toward getting rid of these stereotypical beliefs and encourage parents to be active decision makers in their children's education. To foster effective professional communication between teachers and parents, teachers and school authorities should initiate parent-teacher conferences, organize home visits for parents who are not able to come to school, inform parents on their children's progress through report cards, and invite parents' views and suggestions in organizing special events and activities in schools. Teachers should be very friendly and informal, positive in their approach, and willing to listen and respect parents' feelings. Teachers should avoid such behaviours as arguing and getting angry, asking embarrassing questions, talking about other students, teachers, or parents, outright rejection of parents' suggestions, and assuming a "know it all" attitude while conversing with parents (Linn & Gronlund, 1990). The problem of classroom disruptive behaviours encountered by beginning elementary school teachers may be alleviated by seeking parents' cooperation by taking a collective approach. The consistency in what teachers and parents tell children can also make a difference in children's classroom behaviour.

A collaborative development of in-service activities for teachers concerning how to deal effectively with student behaviour problems should be undertaken jointly in consultation with teachers in the field. Active involvement of teachers and school personnel in program development, for example when identifying areas of discussion for national in-service teacher programs (NBIP), may prove fruitful in overcoming some of the student behaviour problems teachers encounter. The selection process for such programs may also be made on the basis of teachers' interest and aptitude instead of on the basis of the number of years in service. A follow-up study of each NBIP may help in implementing the plan of action in schools. Otherwise, in-service programs without a follow-up action might be a waste of money and time as if programs are not enacted.

Teachers need to carefully consider what rules and procedures are needed to effectively manage the children's classroom behaviour. Teachers should understand that rules are meant to help in organizing the learning environment, to ensure the continuity and quality of teaching and learning, and not simply be focussed on exerting control over children (Brophy, 1988). It is sad but true that many teachers in Bhutanese schools use and apply classroom rules as punishment and as measures to control children's behaviour problems. Levin and Nolan (1991) stated that rules need to be realistic, fair, and reasonable. In setting classroom rules, teachers should remember to ensure that the teacher's right to teach and the student's rights to learn, the student's physical and psychological safety, and school property are all protected. In many cases, teachers make students stand or kneel on the floor, and sometimes suspend them from class. Bhutanese teachers need to understand that rules may vary from class to class according to the differences in children's maturity and developmental levels.

Elementary school teachers should be aware that children in the primary classes (PP-3) often need direct guidance on many matters. For example, instead of "no fighting," an elementary school teacher may say, "fold your hands and look at the board," or instead of "no teasing, shouting, or yelling," he/she may state the rule as, "speak politely to all people" (Burden, 1995, p.110). Teachers who teach younger elementary children should keep the rules simple and to a minimum. In order to avoid any confusion in the children, classroom rules should be consistent with school rules.

Finally, to ensure effective application of classroom rules, teachers should set them collaboratively with children and also discuss the consequences of their infraction. Involving children in rule setting and deciding the consequences for infringement will obtain children's commitment to them and help reduce classroom disruptive behaviour (Burden, 1995). The teachers who use punishment in response to children's disruptive behaviour, should make sure that children understand that the punishment is directed toward the behaviour and not the individual. Most important of all, teachers should act as role models. For example, they should not eat during instruction if rules prohibit students from eating during instruction. Emphasizing a consistent application of rules both for teacher and student behaviours would result in reducing classroom disruptive behaviours.

Limitations

Although the results of this study do provide significant insight into the experiences of beginning elementary school teachers, the results are neither representative nor can they be generalized to the entire population of beginning elementary school teachers in Bhutan. The participants in this study were recruited voluntarily on the basis of their interests. Despite the similarities in their academic and professional backgrounds, the experiences of beginning elementary school teachers working in rural and urban school differ widely. Individual teachers' work ethics and commitment to teaching may also vary and will have a difference in the perception of their experiences of dealing with classroom disruptive behaviour. Thus, the results of this study may not be understood as representative of the general population of beginning elementary school teachers in Bhutan.

Future Research

This study investigated the experiences of beginning elementary school teachers in dealing with classroom disruptive behaviours. Different types of classroom disruptive behaviours encountered by beginning elementary school teachers and some factors underlying classroom disruptive behaviours have been identified. However, there is still an extensive scope for future research and much remains to be done to reduce the incidence of classroom disruptive behaviours and bettering the teaching experiences of beginning elementary school teachers. The study of beginning elementary school teacher's experience of dealing with classroom disruptive behaviours should be continued further, and future researchers should give particular emphases to the following issues.

This study involved only beginning teachers with teaching experience of three or less years. A study should be conducted involving teachers with varying degrees of teaching experiences to compare their perceptions of classroom disruptive behaviours. The participants in this study mentioned large number of students in classrooms as a major obstacle in dealing effectively with classroom disruptive behaviour. A study focussing on methods to deal with large number of students in classroom should be conducted to help beginning teachers reduce classroom disruptive behaviour.

A survey study should be conducted to examine if any differences exist in the experiences of beginning elementary school teachers working in rural and urban schools with a special focus on the types and frequency of classroom disruptive behaviours encountered in rural and urban schools. Techniques for classroom management in rural schools may differ from those which are effective with urban students.

Some of the participants in this study viewed classroom disruptive behaviours as challenges and not as obstacles. A study to examine the differences between teachers who view classroom disruptive behaviours as challenges and those who view them as obstacles should be conducted. Such differences may have implications for teaching classroom management skills in teacher education programs.

Many participants in this study stated the lack of adequate teaching resources as a problem that prevents them from dealing effectively with classroom disruptive behaviour. A study should be conducted to find out how the availability, types and uses of classroom resources can help to minimize classroom disruptive behaviours.

Conclusion

Classroom disruptive behaviour threaten the quality of teaching and learning. Such behaviour adversely affects teachers' interests and commitment in teaching. However, as this study suggests, there are specific interventions which hold much promise for addressing such behaviours. The challenge remains for educators to work unitedly toward this end.

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Student Perceptions of Classroom Learning Environment in Junior High Schools in Bhutan

- Sangay Jamtsho
National Institute of Education, Samtse

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Introduction

Two major beliefs that underlie current conceptions of learning according to Schuell (1996) are: "(a) that learning is constructive rather than reproductive, and (b) that learning is primarily a social, cultural, and interpersonal process governed as much by social and situational factors as by cognitive ones" (p. 743). This implies that creating a learning environment that is facilitative of active participation by learners is very important. It suggests that effective teaching/learning will require the consideration of learners' perspectives of the learning environment, knowledge of which may help bring about a positive learning environment.

Classroom learning environments can be affected by numerous factors such as teacher and student characteristics (Lawrenz & Welch, 1983; Owens & Straton, 1980; Walberg, 1968; Walberg & Ahlgren, 1970; Wubbels, Brekelmans & Hooymeyers, 1991), teaching approaches or methods in use (Jakubowski & Tobin, 1991; Johnson & Johnson, 1991), and the curriculum (Anderson, Walberg & Welch, 1969; Fraser, 1979). Classroom learning environments have been consistently reported to have a significant impact on student achievement (Fraser & Fisher, 1982a; Fraser & O'Brien, 1985; Goh, Young & Fraser, 1995; Haertel, Walberg & Haertel, 1981).

Traditionally, classroom environment studies focussed on investigations of the relationship between the learners' perceptions of the classroom environment and their learning outcomes (Fraser & Fisher, 1982a; Fraser & O'Brien, 1985; Goh, Young & Fraser, 1995; Haertel, Walberg & Haertel, 1981). Studies involving learner perceptions have been fairly recent, sparked by the popularity of the notion that students are active information processors and affect classroom events as much as they are affected by them, as opposed to earlier views that they are passive recipients (Fraser, 1989; Schunk & Meece, 1992).

This paper is an attempt to explore learners' perceptions of their classroom environment in Bhutanese junior high schools. It is hoped to result in obtaining some insights into how students view their classroom environment yielding useful information that will encourage teachers to think about ways to facilitate learning in their classrooms.

Literature Review

Although research in classroom learning environment gained credibility only in the last few decades, conceptual work on the area can be traced back to the works of Lewin (1936) and Murray (1938). Lewin (1936) recognized that both the environment and its interaction with personal characteristics of the individual are potent determinants of human behaviour. Murray (1938) coined the terms 'alpha press' to describe the environment as seen by a detached observer; and 'beta press' to describe the environment as perceived by milieu inhabitants. These concepts clarify the

different viewpoints that can be used to study the classroom learning environment and acknowledge the importance of studying learning environments from different points of view. For instance, researchers observing a class may perceive the classroom environment very differently from how the teachers or learners themselves perceive it.

Classroom learning environment research studies emphasize the importance of learners in mediating learning outcomes and suggest that classroom environment as perceived by learners may be very different from what is observed or perceived by teachers (Fisher & Fraser, 1983; Fraser, 1984). The underlying assumption is that the learning environment as viewed or perceived by the students is important because ultimately they will respond to what they perceive is important (Waxman, 1992; Wittrock, 1986).

Classroom environment perception measures have been used in studies to evaluate curriculum and curricular innovations; to look for differences between students' and teachers' perceptions of the actual and preferred classroom environments, and criterion variables in relation to various other factors such as teacher characteristics, types of school, and student characteristics (Fraser, 1986). A diverse range of variables related to the classroom learning environment have been studied over the years. Some of the notable ones are teacher sex, personality, competency, students' sex, type of school, student attitude, subject achievement, and class size.

Walberg (1968) studied the relationship between teachers' personality characteristics and classroom climate in 72 high school classes and their 36 teachers. Teachers with need for power, order, and change tended to have a formal, subservient classroom, while those with needs to interact with others tended to have controlled, and goal-directed classes. Self-centred teachers had classes characterized by disorganization, constraint, and loose supervision.

Ellet, Capie, Okey, and Johnson (1978) investigated the relationship between teacher competency and classroom environment with 28 beginning elementary teachers and their classes. They found that classrooms taught by more competent teachers were perceived by students as being characterized by greater satisfaction and less friction. Teacher gender differences were explored in some studies. A study of 331 secondary science classes across 14 states in the United States showed that classes taught by female teachers were perceived by students to have more diversity, goal direction, formality, friction, and favouritism and less difficulty, compared to those taught by male teachers (Lawrenz & Welch, 1983).

Another study by Owens (1981 cited in Fraser, 1986) involving 619 teachers reported female teachers expressing a stronger preference for cooperative learning, while male teachers seemed to favour competitive learning. In an earlier study of students' learning environment preference, Owens and Straton (1980) found that girls preferred cooperation more than boys; while boys preferred competition and individualization more than girls.

Increasing class size has been reported as being linearly associated with greater formality and diversity, and decreasing cohesiveness and difficulty (Anderson & Walberg, 1972; Walberg, 1969). This suggests that class size is associated with an increase in the use of formal rules to guide classroom behaviour and diversity in

students' interests; and a decrease in the extent to which students are friendly and helpful to each other and perception of difficulty with their class work. Randhawa and Michayluk (1975) found that rural classrooms were characterized by cohesiveness, cliques, disorganization, and competitiveness, while urban classrooms were characterized by better physical environment, difficulty and satisfaction.

Goh, Young, and Fraser (1995) report that mathematics classrooms that were more cohesive with less friction were clearly associated with students' positive attitude and better student achievement, while they also noted that competition had a very weak association with student outcomes. These findings indicate that the study of classroom learning environment from the learners' perspective may not only provide insights into creating a positive learning environment, but also in making classroom activities truly learner-centred.

Teachers and students differ in their perceptions of classroom environment. Studies of teachers' and students' perceptions of both actual and preferred classroom environments reveal that teachers perceive classroom environments more positively than students, and both parties preferred a more favourable classroom environment than the one that they perceive as actually present (Fisher & Fraser, 1983; Fraser, 1984; Fraser, 1986, Moos, 1979). Fisher and Fraser (1983) found these to be consistent when measured using two different instruments. Such studies suggest that students tend to be less satisfied than teachers with their actual classroom environment, and that teachers need to be aware that students may have a different view of what the classroom environment is like.

Classroom research oriented model of the actual and preferred classroom studies have also been carried out. For instance, Fisher, Fraser, and Basset (1995) designed and carried out several remedial measures to improve the classroom environment after the pre-test perceptual measurement and measured improvement by using a post-test after a period of six months. The remedial strategies were aimed at reducing friction and competitiveness in the class as the pre-test perceptual measures indicated students' preferences for less friction and competitiveness in class. Their action plan consisted of strategies such as use of cooperative learning, teacher tape-recording to identify behaviours reinforced by the teacher and individual behavioural plans for students identified as causing a lot of friction in the class.

Post-test measures on friction and competitiveness showed significant reduction that was almost identical to the pre-test preferred measure. In a similar study by Fraser and Fisher (1986), students' perceptual reports of preferred classroom environment was used to design strategies to improve their classroom environment. The pre-test suggested that students preferred less friction, less competition, and more cohesiveness. Significant improvements were observed at the post-test after two months of intervention to increase teacher support, task orientation, and order and organization in the classroom.

Fraser (1995) emphasizes the need for classroom environment research "to assist teachers to reflect their epistemological assumptions and reshape their teaching practice," (p. 418) and "the need for a new generation of student perception instruments which are more capable of detecting the differences in perceptions between individuals and sub-groups within the class" (p. 418).

Moos (1979) conceptualized learning environment instruments into three dimensions characterizing diverse psycho-social environments. He identified three basic dimensions: the Relationship dimension identifies the nature and intensity of personal relationships within the environment, and assesses the extent to which people are involved in the environment and the extent to which they support and help each other; the Personal Development dimension assesses the basic directions along which personal growth and self-enhancement tend to occur; while the System Maintenance and System Change dimension involves the extent to which the environment is orderly, clear in expectations, maintains control and is responsive to change. The My Class Inventory (MCI), which was used for collecting data on learners' perceptions of their class for this study, includes the first two dimensions of relationship and personal development.

Methodology

Population and Sample

The population selected for the study consisted of class seven students in 17 junior high schools in Bhutan. Two classes in each school were randomly selected where there were two or more sections of class seven. Three schools, however, had only one section of class seven students. The total research sample for the study consisted of 31 classes consisting of 1018 students. Stratified random sampling was used to make samples representative of the four regions of Bhutan and the types of school location (i.e. urban, rural, or remote). The sample included 17 urban classes, 10 rural classes, and four remote classes. For this study, schools in cities and towns where district headquarters or major industries are located and are therefore comparatively populated were labelled urban, while schools located in villages accessible by roads were designated as rural and schools that were not accessible by road as remote. Within the student sample, 538 (52.8%) were boys and 480 (47.2%) were girls.

Instrumentation

The revised My Classroom Inventory by Fraser and Fisher (1983) with 25 items was used to collect the data for the study. The MCI originally consisted of 38 items with 'yes or no' responses. It was further reduced to 25 items for greater economy in testing and scoring time; and making it possible for hand scoring. Fisher, Fraser and Bassett (1995) used it effectively to measure the perceptions of class one students.

The MCI was also used in a number of other studies involving learners in classes one to eight (Fraser & Fisher, 1982b; Fraser & O'Brien, 1985; Fraser, Malone & Neale, 1989; Talmage & Walberg, 1978). It has been used both in studying larger samples including as many as 100 classes (Fraser & Fisher, 1982a), and in studying individual classes (Fisher, Fraser & Bassett, 1995). Fraser and O'Brien (1985) provide evidence to support the use of MCI as a widely applicable and highly economical instrument to measure classroom psycho-social environments. They provide examples of its use in studying associations between classroom environment and student achievement, differences between students and teachers in their perceptions of actual and preferred classroom environments, and practical attempts to improve classroom environments. Fraser, Anderson, and Walberg (1982) report the alpha reliability of the MCI as follows

(N=2,305): Cohesiveness (.67), Friction (.67), Difficulty (.62), Satisfaction (.78), and Competitiveness (.71).

The MCI consists of the five scales of satisfaction, friction, competitiveness, difficulty, and cohesiveness. The satisfaction scale measures the extent to which the students enjoy their class work; the friction scale, the amount of tension and quarrelling among students; competitiveness scale, the degree of competition among students in the class; while the difficulty scale measures the extent of difficulty the students face with work in their class; and the cohesiveness scale measures the extent to which the students know, help, and are friendly toward each other.

Each scale consists of five statements to which they respond either 'yes' or 'no' by putting a circle around the appropriate response. Responses in affirmative were scored 'three', and responses in negative were assigned a score of 'one', with some items in reverse order. Ambiguous responses like both the answers being circled or unanswered were scored 2. Therefore, the total scores for each scale ranged between 5 (lowest) to 15 (highest). Higher scores on a scale reflect higher degrees of agreement, and vice versa. For example, a score of 14 on the friction scale suggests a very high level of friction perceived in the class, while a score of 5 may mean no friction.

At the time of the data collection, the participants were barely over two months in that class (except for those repeating the class), which will restrict the findings to their experiences in the first few months only. It may be possible that they take some time to adjust to the new surroundings. However, it is assumed that a month will be a reasonable time for them to settle in to the new environment.

The MCI was accompanied by a questionnaire on demographic information including questions on other variables that are most likely to affect the learners' perceptions of their classroom environment.

Results

The demographic data collected provided the following general characteristics of the students and their context. The ages of the students ranged between 13 and 15 + years with 61% of them being 15 years or older. Only about a quarter of the subjects (23.2%) studied in a different school the previous year. Hence, it can be assumed that most of the subjects did not experience any stress that may be related to moving to a new surrounding. More than a quarter of the students in the sample (28.6%) lived in school hostels, while roughly 12% reported as living with single parents and 15% with their grandparents or relatives. Only 8% had parents who are both educated, while only 2.1% reported their mothers as being educated.

About 70% studied in classes with more than 35 students, and only 3.2% responded that pair or group work was never used in their class. Almost all the students (94.5%) indicated that some form of punishment was used in their class. Punishment here refers to the use of verbal abuse and/or physical punishment both as a disciplinary measure in classroom control as well as for shortfalls in their academic work.

Learner perceptions of their classroom environment were measured using the five MCI scales of cohesiveness, competitiveness, difficulty, friction, and satisfaction. Score on the scales range from a minimum of 5 to a maximum of 15 for each scale. Mean scores for each of the scales along with their standard deviation are reported in Table 4.1. In general, class seven students in Bhutan seem to be satisfied in their classes (M=11.59; SD=2.56). The low level of friction (M=7.60; SD=1.91) perceived and a relatively high degree of cohesiveness (M=12.92; SD=2.52) perceived also supports this result. They did not perceive class work to be difficult (M=7.50; SD=2.23), but believed a comparatively high degree of competitiveness to be prevailing in their classes (M=13.50; SD=1.88).

Table: *Mean scores of students' perceptions of their classroom environment* (N = 1018)

	M	SD
Cohesiveness	12.91	2.52
Competitiveness	13.49	1.89
Difficulty	7.50	2.23
Friction	7.60	1.91
Satisfaction	11.59	2.56

After performing one way ANOVA, significant differences in learner perceptions of satisfaction ($F(2,1015)= 26.800$, $p<.0001$) and difficulty ($F(2,1015)=4.175$, $p<.01$) were observed with respect to the type or location of their schools (i.e., urban, rural, or remote). Post-hoc analyses showed that children in rural schools (M=12.36, SD=2.55) perceive more satisfaction than do children in urban (M=11.38, SD=2.43) or remote schools (M=10.62, SD=2.46). Children in remote schools (M=8.03, SD= 2.52) also perceived significantly more difficulty as compared to those of urban schools (M=7.41, SD=2.14).

Discussion

Although learners perceived a relatively high degree of cohesiveness and satisfaction, they also perceived a high degree of competitiveness. Ideally a high level of cohesiveness and satisfaction would be considered desirable while very high levels of competitiveness and difficulty would be considered undesirable (Fraser & O'Brien, 1985). Even though students perceived their classrooms to be satisfying, those in rural schools perceived more satisfaction than did their counterparts in urban and remote schools. Schools in urban areas are often crowded while students in remote schools may be studying in difficult circumstances with comparatively poor resources.

Most students in remote junior high schools also live in school hostels away from the comfort of their homes. Living in school hostels entails a lot of new responsibilities such as cleaning, washing, taking care of oneself, in addition to crucial developmental tasks such as relating to others and coping with physiological changes. Even though these are mainly activities outside the classroom, it is plausible that they contribute to the difficulties that they perceive in the classroom. It may, however, be noted that while there were significant differences due to school locale, the overall mean score for perceptions of difficulty is low.

Learners perceived a high degree of competitiveness in their classroom environments. It is possible that the ways in which learners are graded and provided feedback for their performances may be encouraging competition. Midgley, Eccles and Feldlaufer (1991) observed junior high schools to encourage more social comparisons than do elementary schools. Pressures to pass examinations and stay in school may be another factor as students may lose the opportunity to go to school after failing a grade promotion examination.

It is also possible that the relatively small number of seats available in senior high schools and higher institutions, and perceived shortages of available jobs may be contributing to perceptions of competitiveness. While a mainly collaborative classroom culture may be preferred as a model of virtue that should extend beyond the classroom, events and experiences outside the classroom can also influence the classroom atmosphere. For instance, it is not very uncommon to come across parents who constantly remind their children that they are not good enough unless they do better than the neighbours' children at school.

Children living in school hostels perceived more difficulty in the classrooms than those living at home or with relatives, even though the overall mean difficulty perception score was low. Most students go to live in school hostels when they have to move to a junior high school which is often far away from home. Close to half (44%) of the students who participated in the study went to schools that were away from their home and lived with relatives or in school hostels. Midgley, Eccles and Feldlaufer (1991) investigated the transition from elementary school to junior high school and reported that there was a developmental mismatch between the early adolescents and the classroom environments they are provided within junior high schools. While this transition coincides with physiological, psychological, and social changes associated with puberty, junior high school classrooms tended to be less positive and supportive than elementary classrooms.

Teachers in junior high schools were reported to be characterized as less caring, warm, friendly, or supportive, while students were allowed less decision-making opportunities and cooperative interactions, and they also encouraged social comparisons.

Many junior high school students will be faced with a host of life transition challenges. Living in a school hostel seems to be one of them, as those living in school hostels were also found to perceive more difficulty in their classroom environment as compared to those who lived at home. Living in school hostels means adapting to a new place with new roles and responsibilities very different from those of being home with parents and siblings. Being in a new place and a new system requires a lot of adjustments to be made and can be very stressful. Schools should consider ways of dealing with developmental mismatches that children experience during such transitions, and arrange the school and classroom environments to help students through the transition.

Nearly all the student participants (94.5%) reported that some form of punishment, either as a disciplinary measure or as a result of shortfalls in academic work, was used, which suggests a widely accepted use of punishment. The data for this study, however, did not result in any significant relationship between use of punishment and

the students' perception of their classroom environment. This may be due to the cultural acceptance of the use of punishment as a necessary part of the process of education. Although there was no evidence of punishment impacting on learner perceptions in this study, research literature reveals that it presents a potential threat to the classroom environment.

Schools often do not have any documented policy on the use of punishment, and can thus be prone to abuse of a teacher's position of power. Physical punishment especially may turn out to be harmful however well intentioned it may be from the perspective of those inflicting it. Adopting a school-wide discipline policy that specifies the conditions under which it is permissible to be used may be one way of providing that control. Such a policy may focus on preventive measures that include the roles and responsibilities of all concerned.

Close to three quarters of the class seven student participants were in classes with more than 35 students. Classes larger than 35 perceived less difficulty as compared to classes smaller than 35, while one would have expected it to be the opposite. Walberg (1969) reported that class size was negatively correlated with perceptions of difficulty. Anderson and Walberg (1972) replicated the finding that small classes were perceived as more difficult. Results of this study support this assertion. Anderson and Walberg (1972) speculate that in small classes, teachers may make it harder by producing higher task orientation in small groups. Put another way, the larger the class gets, the easier the tasks that the teachers assign may be to reduce correction and feedback work for the teacher. Teachers may be forced to resort to easier learning tasks, therefore compromising both on the quality and quantity of learning.

Conclusions

Students in junior high schools perceive their classrooms to be competitive. They also perceive more satisfaction and cohesion and less difficulty and friction. These may be a function of teacher characteristics and situational factors.

More than the knowledge of learner perceptions of the classroom environment, it is important to think about ways to change the classroom environment for the better. Jakubowski and Tobin (1991) outline three factors important for such a change process. They are "a commitment to change, construct a vision of what the learning environment could be, and be a reflective practitioner through comparing their practices with their visions" (p. 206).

In their research, they found that change in teacher epistemology and practices is followed by changes in the way the students view their classroom environment and their roles as learners. They report that teachers with orientations towards controlling and managing the environment were typified by students who expect the teacher to teach them facts and procedures from textbooks to be memorized.

Teachers who saw their roles as facilitators and learning as meaning-making with emphasis on learners taking active responsibility in their own learning resulted in students taking more active and dynamic roles in their learning, and also saw their classroom environment as less threatening. A pre-test and post-test strategy using the actual and preferred classroom environment instruments can be a practical way to

identify areas of improvement in the classroom environment, followed by strategies for intervention and reassessment (Fisher, Fraser & Bassett, 1995; Fraser, 1989; Fraser & O'Brien, 1985).

The results of this study support the need to emphasize teacher preparation that focuses on learners' interests and open interactions in the classroom as basic to teaching-learning strategies. It also cautions the need to make a distinction between learner interests and greater learner freedom and self-direction. This seems more so in case of classroom cultures that are mainly teacher-centred. It may also depend on the class level as one would assume a better sense of self-direction as students progress toward higher class levels. Self-direction is a desirable skill, however, learners may need to be gradually guided toward it. Students change their roles in accordance with the change in teachers' roles in the classroom environment (Jakubowski & Tobin, 1991).

Tonnelson (1981) asserts that only teachers with a healthy self-concept can create a positive learning environment. Characteristics such as teacher support and teacher innovation have been found to be associated with student perceptions of satisfaction, and feelings of security and interest in the classroom (Tricket & Moos, 1974). Students spend most of their school time in classrooms. Classrooms are also environments where their every move is monitored or even controlled in many instances, and every activity or interaction usually orchestrated by the teacher. Teachers would, therefore, influence the experiences and perceptions of how learners view their classroom environment. Finally, in the words of Good and Brophy (2000):

> Students not only develop inferences about what teachers think of and expect from them; over time they develop beliefs about their potential and roles as students. Some come to believe that they can learn with relative ease, but others come to believe that they can learn only with great difficulty or perhaps not at all. Some are willing to try hard to learn, but others conclude that the costs (embarrassment, long hours of effort) are simply not worth the benefits. Some students learn to ask questions when they are confused, but others view such question asking as a form of public humiliation. (p. 89-90).

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Effective teaching and effective classroom management: one and the same technique?
- A teacher's reflection and approach to "positive discipline"

- Els Heijnen – Project Advisor
Support for Teacher Education Programme (STEP), NIE, Paro.

How I perceive discipline and behaviour management depends on how I see my job as a teacher and to what extent I believe in students' (referring to *children and young people in schools irrespective of age*) abilities to learn and become responsible for their own learning. Classroom behaviour and academic achievement are interrelated and both are greatly influenced by the quality of teaching.

Teacher's influence

Teachers have control over many factors that significantly influence the motivation, achievement and behaviors of students in schools. However, having influence on students is not the same as controlling them. It is the student who ultimately determines the degree to which she/he will be involved in learning, while a teacher's attitude and behaviors can either enhance or impede such involvement. Factors such as a classroom's physical environment, a student's level of psychological comfort in the classroom, and the quality of communication between the teacher and students will affect this involvement.

Teachers have to cater for a wide range of students - including those from poor, disadvantaged families, students who may have to work after school hours, students from different minority groups or those with a variety of learning problems. None of these situations or factors cause educational problems per se, but these students may be at risk of negative and meaningless school experiences if teachers are not ready for them with effective instruction and classroom strategies.

To be able to manage problems of students requires insight into where these problems come from and why and when they arise. It is important for schools and teachers to know students' socio-economic and family background to be able to also understand the non-academic factors such as, for example, health and nutrition status that influences their learning achievement.

The *social* factors that affect learning cannot immediately or directly be altered by teachers, but understanding these factors will enable them to place students' "failure" and difficult behaviors in perspective and create learning environments that reduce rather than increase the effects of social factors. Hopefully, more teachers will consider this a personal and professional challenge.

Are schools to blame?

Schools and teachers should not only look at students and their social background but also at what happens inside schools. Students' behaviors often is a response to factors within schools and classrooms. It may be debatable whether schools and

teachers always provide learning environments that engage all students actively and meaningfully.

Problems may also be caused or reinforced by teaching or disciplinary procedures, by (school) policies or by a curriculum that students experience as problematic, meaningless or boring. It is important to investigate how teaching styles can affect progress and behavior, not only in disruptive students, but in *all* students. Some of the things we do as teachers may be helpful to learning, some of it is rather useless and some of it is even harmful!

Many teachers constantly point out their students' deficiencies rather than praising them for their efforts and small improvements. For many, this is extremely discouraging, and may result in serious feelings of inferiority and failure. Problems are rare in classroom where students are actively involved and interested, and in which they are appreciated as individuals. It certainly has something to do with *what* and *how* a teacher plans, organizes and presents his/her lesson.

Teaching is generally a group activity, while learning is a more individual activity and not all students learn at the same pace or in the same way. Schools need to consider the extent to which policies and practices lead to the labeling of students or promote the view that their capacities to learn are either limited or fixed. Research on teacher-student interaction in classrooms shows teachers often behave differently towards individual students on the basis of their own perception of a student's ability. Students classified as low achieving, for example, get fewer opportunities to actively participate in class activities, and students perceived as "un-disciplined" are treated as such, even when they behave.

Starting to involve students in providing feedback on teaching-learning processes to teachers and schools may be an eye-opener to teachers' prejudices, assumptions and expectations regarding their own behaviors in class and the ways they interact with students. Unfortunately, most teachers are afraid to ask for such feedback.

Teacher-student relationship

Think about the best teacher you ever had and, in one sentence, identify the quality that made him/her special.
Some schools ask students to engage in such an exercise at the end of each school year. Almost without exception, the qualities students identify have to do with a teacher's ability to relate to them as individuals in a positive way helping them to take responsibility, treating them all fairly and with respect, making lessons interesting and varied, providing encouragement and telling them to believe in themselves and their own abilities.
This means that positive teacher-student relations and classroom climate must be important factors influencing how students experience school. A teacher does not only teach knowledge and skills; she/he also helps students to define who they are. From daily interactions with their teachers, students learn whether they are important or insignificant, bright or slow, liked or despised. A teacher transmits these messages through behaviors, gestures and words. From the messages a student receives, she/he decides whether to risk participation in class activities. A good teacher recognizes that

such involvement may not come always easy and that this first requires a trusting, psychologically comfortable classroom environment.

Motivation to learn and to behave is contingent on interest. If I, as a teacher, can harness the curiosity of my students, I can also elicit a willingness of them to learn and to behave. Interest-satisfying teaching motivates students far more effectively than coercing them into tasks they consider irrelevant and boring, and there will be less time and less reason for misbehaviors. This implies that the execution of my task as teacher and role-model is crucial in the prevention of misbehaviour!

Students need clearly communicated expectations. Rules, necessary for a secure learning environment, must be realistic, reasonable, limited in number and clearly understood. It is important to involve students in the formulation of classroom rules and in identifying consequences for inappropriate behaviors as much as possible. Establishing effective classroom routines and creating a good classroom atmosphere are important criteria for a good start in effective teaching and learning.

Management or control?

Students must respect teachers, but not just because they are teachers! And, teachers also need to respect students. There needs to be *mutual* trust and respect, to be earned by both, teacher *and* students alike. When students always hear they give the wrong answer, are slow, or are called derogative names, or provided with other negative messages telling them that they are *not* valued or respected as persons, many will stop trying or may stop coming to school altogether.

Problems in school always have a reason and it is important to find those reasons together with the student(s). I do not believe in teacher power-controlled classrooms. Learning to make responsible choices requires practice and the freedom to make such choices, including making mistakes to learn from without punitive consequences.

However, schools and teachers should also start using teaching methods that do not deny individual differences, but rather recognize and accommodate those differences effectively, such as individualized learning, cooperative learning and peer- and cross-age tutoring.

But as even the most effective teachers may face problems, classroom management must also include effective methods to respond to behaviour problems when they occur. A teacher may choose between different techniques, ranging from a counseling approach, focusing on understanding, open communication and mutually solving the problem to behaviour modification, or ignoring inappropriate behaviour while reinforcing appropriate behaviour. What is crucial though is that teachers should always make clear that it is the behaviors that is unacceptable, not the person!

Despite a teacher's effort to role-model positive interaction, students may still make it difficult for teachers to model respect. These are the times that count most. After all, the teacher is the adult. The issue here is whether the teacher can look beyond the student's immediate misbehaviour and see a person worthy of respect. Teachers who pass this test, gain credibility in the eyes of their students, not only as teacher but also, and more important, as genuinely caring human beings.

In behaviour management, most teachers still focus on discipline: what to do when and after students misbehave. Discipline techniques are often perceived by teachers as something separate to teaching techniques, only to be employed if and when problems arise. However, classroom management is not the exercise of discipline or the enforcement of rules. Classroom management is an integral part of the effective teaching process, which *prevents* behaviour problems through better planning, organizing and managing of classroom activities, better presentation of instructional material and better teacher-student interaction, aiming at maximizing students' involvement and cooperation in learning. Disciplinary or behaviour *control* techniques will in the end be less effective, as they do not promote the development of a self-concept or a degree of autonomy.

What I, as a teacher, wish to convey to my students is a basic sense of respect by (active) listening, by being open to their feedback and giving them a say in classroom affairs. Students must know that their dignity will always be maintained and part of my job as a teacher is helping them to cope with conflict situations in a socially acceptable manner. Students can be made actively involved and responsible for their own and each other's learning and social development. They often influence one another in ways that adults are unable to do and as such may have a greater influence than adults in many learning contexts, academically as well as socially.

Taking up the challenge

Looking at what teachers do, and how they do it, is looking at what they believe about learning and learners. This also involves developing students' emotions and feelings along with their ability to think and act. Teaching is a complex task, and becoming a professional teacher is a journey, not a destination. Schools should, next to meeting the individual needs of their students, also look at the needs of their teachers. Ongoing professional development may have to focus more on skills that enhance effectiveness of instruction, classroom management and organization.

When seeking explanations for lack of achievement and behaviour problems, teachers must be prepared to consider inadequacies in the learning *conditions* rather than inadequacies in learners themselves. We may have to critically reflect on *what* we teach and *how* we teach. What do we say and do in the classroom to develop understanding? How do we introduce new topics? Do we spend enough time explaining purpose and relationship to previously taught information and skills to enhance developmental learning?

These, and other basic teaching skills enhance understanding and involvement of students. Timing of teaching-learning interactions is an essential part of classroom management and many discipline problems can be avoided by properly managing the classroom environment and timing of classroom activities.

Teachers need to take up the challenge and use many different instructional approaches to help all students learn. Such teachers work to ensure that all learners not only want to succeed, but believe they can and want to work for it. Positive self-concept and self esteem are critical factors that affect student success and discipline. Students who feel good about themselves are more likely to be motivated to learn.

Effective teachers create an atmosphere in the classroom where every single individual is valued as a person and where various teaching methods suit the individual student to gain and maintain the attention of all students in order to help each one of them to achieve his/her potential.

Learning should be enjoyable, maybe even fun. Using humor and showing genuine pleasure in your work as a teacher probably results in more effective learning. One way of finding out how effective one is as a teacher and classroom manager is by asking student feedback. Students have their own valid views on what makes a good teacher. Students want a teacher to maintain an orderly and structured classroom environment, to explain matters in a clear way, to be fair and consistent and to be aware of the needs of the class.

Therefore, planning for effective classroom management should start *before* the beginning of a school year and be implemented during the first weeks of school. Less effective managers may wait for problems to occur before they discuss and/or impose classroom rules and procedures.

Conclusion

Learners' development depends on an interaction of both internal and external influences. Students do not become self-disciplined automatically or by means of rewarding, controlling and/or coercion. Values and social skills have to be taught and modeled. All teaching requires setting goals, establishing objectives, selecting and implementing strategies and techniques to achieve those objectives, and evaluating the entire teaching process in terms of its effectiveness.

At the same time, teachers must find ways to motivate and inspire reluctant learners to prevent behavioral problems during lessons, by using different teaching techniques and changing those when appropriate. This requires teachers who believe in their job as educators and classroom managers, who have a professional interest in what happens elsewhere and who wish to cooperate with and ask feedback from teacher colleagues and students, with the goal to grow professionally and become more effective teachers. This will ultimately benefit all students whatever their learning needs and improve the educational experience for all - teachers and students alike.

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Nursery Rhymes – out the window?

- Sangay Bidha, Teacher
Khangku Lower Secondary School, Paro.

Have we ever questioned ourselves whether we enjoyed singing and dancing when we were little children? The answer is guaranteed to be a 'Yes'. Little children love and enjoy chanting and singing aloud. Nursery rhymes cannot be detached from the curriculum of Primary Schools. They have survived for ages unknown and lifted millions of spirits.

Nursery rhymes are simple traditional poems or songs for children. The very young, in their first couple of years sing songs, recite them and play games. As mentioned by Gasper (1971), I agree that at this age, they take naturally to miming their songs and rhymes and often devise nonsensical verses to go with their games. It is further mentioned that in the first two years of their schooling, children should be taught as many such rhymes as possible because only then follows their interest in reading stories. There is a large variety of rhymes suitable for miming, for finger games, for dances, for recitation, and for learning the alphabet and numbers in the book of verse for children.

After the children have learnt songs and easy rhymes at the nursery and kindergarten level, they are ready for simple poems, which are of immediate interest to them and which stimulate their imagination. 'The child's world' as per Gasper (1974) 'at this stage consists to a large extent of animals - domestic pets, birds, fish and creatures of the outdoor world. The child also reacts imaginatively to nature, the sun, the moon, the stars, the wind and the rain.' His delight in external nature is immense, so his power of imagination should be encouraged and sustained. Rhymes and poetry do this job wonderfully.

When I look back at my memorable days of kindergarten, I recall them as times filled with rejuvenating memories of singing and miming exciting nursery rhymes like '*Twinkle twinkle little star*'. ' *Chu chu chu chu chewing gum*', '*This Old Man*' and ' *London bridge is falling down*'.

I vividly remember something. In my class, there used to be a stout looking, fuzzy haired boy (whose name I have forgotten) who had to always sit on a desk in front and be the poor *Humpty Dumpty* whenever we sang it. *Jack and Jill* used to be another exciting one for us. Two students had to take the role of Jack and Jill while the rest sang the rhyme in full-throated ease for them. Then I remember myself dancing joyously to the tune of '*I'm a bow-legged chicken*'.

My teacher would gleefully sample us with the correct actions and we would strain every nerve to get it right. Another nursery rhyme, which I still cherish is the '*Cuckoo bara*'. Whenever I sing it, even now my mind is immediately transported back to those days and I remember my teachers and friends who sang it till throats were sore.
At recess, the children used to get orange juice, so we would sit in rows and the monitors would first distribute the plastic cups of all hues. We would immediately start chanting at each other, '*Red, red su su in the bed*' or '*Blue, blue polish my shoe*' or '*Green, green fairy queen*' or '*Yellow, yellow dirty fellow.*'

This used to be great fun. The ones who got the green would be considered the luckiest for they were the fairy queens for the day. Lunch breaks were not spared, too. The girls

would hold hands and dance '*Here we go round the mulberry bush*' in such ecstasy. This gives me a realization that our teachers then must have created such a wonderful environment for us to educate that even after decades I still cherish these memories. The school I went to was known by the name 'Thimphu Nursery School' in those days but now it is known as Lungtenzampa Middle Secondary School.

My upper primary and secondary years were spent in Punakha Central School. Even there, the Catholic sisters and fathers who ran the school were no less interesting. They would teach us lots of songs and rhymes. We had a sister whose name was Teresa. She was the most adorable lady. Whenever she stepped into our class, we would go into huge excitements for she would combine lessons with music, which truly lifted our spirits. The songs such as ''*From this valley they say you are going*', '*Forward, O youth*' and '*I love to go a wandering*', *to* name a few, ring an old bell. In fact, I am convinced that I have learnt a lot of English expressions and words through the songs and rhymes.

During my teacher-training period, I was taught and brought up with the idea that songs and rhymes play an important role in teaching English. The trainees then learnt almost all of the nursery rhymes available. The English lecturer along with the trainees doing action-rhymes in circles would be a normal sight. Even in the schools around the country, seen during our visits then, singing or reciting rhymes with actions would be a usual practice. One should step into a primary class and his/her spirits would be immediately lifted by the heart-warming melodious action songs sung as a welcoming gesture. As children chanted or sang wholeheartedly, one could easily notice the veins on their necks enlarge. Truly, nursery rhymes added to the flavour of education.

In contrast to the past, one should notice the gloomy atmosphere that envelopes the children now. The gaiety of singing nursery rhymes is lost on the way. The little children no more sing except for competitions or for special programmes; singing a nursery rhyme is now only an occasional event. Even the pre-primary toddlers seem studious and serious at reading and writing. It is a heart-breaking fact that nursery rhymes are slowly vanishing from our real classrooms despite these being there in the curriculum. One would hardly hear chants among children whether inside or outside the classroom.

Sadness grips my heart even when I think of the scintillating rhymes like *Twinkle, twinkle little star* or *Row, row, row your boat* dying a mournful death. I wonder if it is right to let it go. We do not seem to realize that the sense of pure enjoyment passes with growing age, but unless its foundation is built, the child has definitely missed one of the keys to much that is written in English. (Gasper; 1971)

The teachers, who are the prime suspects of not doing their duties well, however, cannot be blamed squarely for the crime. On being asked why they skip the songs and rhymes that were on the syllabus, some said they did not know the tune to it, and thus skipped it, while some others thought it was not important. Then where else do we point our finger? What could be the reasons for this state of affairs? The fault in the curriculum is ruled out definitely because the teachers' manuals do stress on its importance and recommend songs and rhymes all over the blocks.

Next would be the teacher producing units, the teacher training Institutes. According to some lecturers, the trainees get only one session of the many years to be devoted to teach

songs and rhymes. Otherwise, only the club members of the singing-club get to learn some nursery rhymes. I do not think this is enough to equip the primary teachers to do justice to teaching nursery rhymes to children.

The advantages of teaching nursery rhymes are immeasurable. Children enjoy songs and rhymes, so it adds to their pleasure and entertainment; it is a break from their tedious lessons. The teaching of nursery rhymes is a useful way of getting children to listen to English and join in speaking it. It enhances the teaching of the four strands of English language, for instance the children learn to pronounce the English words correctly by listening and singing with their teacher. In this way even listening skill is enhanced. As the children recite or sing the rhymes, they learn a lot of new words, which enriches their store of vocabulary. They also understand the meaning of all those words and expressions because they use gestures and actions to go with them.

As songs and rhymes are actually poems, and thus written in verse, the children are exposed to this form of the genre from an early stage. When the teacher teaches a nursery rhyme, it is normally written on a chart and displayed on the wall. Through this, the children learn the spellings and understand how verse is written: in stanzas and each line starts with a capital letter. Besides being an exposure to poems, they also aid the children in their written work and their reading tasks.

Aside from language benefits, teaching nursery rhymes boosts other developments of the children. The nursery rhymes are normally done with actions; jumping around in circles or moving their hands and feet or their head. This develops children's motor skills. The nursery rhymes such as *Here we go lubin loo* or *Fire on the mountain* or *You put your right hand in* involve a lot of physical movement that would enhance children's body coordination.

Content can be easily taught through nursery rhymes. A primary class could learn counting through *Ten green bottles*, *Five fat momos* and *Chie is one, Nye is two.* Simple addition can be taught through the song *one and one two, two and two four*. There are nursery rhymes composed intentionally to teach content, for example *red and yellow and pink and green* teaches names of colours, *Sunday, Monday, Tuesday* teaches days of the week so on and so forth. The nursery rhymes also help children to remember the content better.

Some nursery rhymes enhance and stimulate children's imagination of nature. Rhymes like '*Up in the blue sky- what do I see'*, '*Dark brown is the river- Golden is the sand'* do this job. Values are also imparted through this. A child learns to greet through the rhyme *Good morning, Good morning*.
Some rhymes also tell a story. As the children sing rhymes, they dramatize. Children enjoy stories and acting. The nursery rhymes- *There was a princess long ago*, *There was an old woman who swallowed a fly* tell stories.

Finally, let me mention that singing nursery rhymes leaves a powerful impact on the young minds and helps make their childhood memorable. When these children leave school, they have something to cherish like we do. Thus, in the light of all the advantages, is it right to let our tradition of nursery rhymes wear away?

If teachers are worried about how to incorporate nursery rhymes, I would say they can easily be incorporated with our daily lessons. It is unnecessary to give special lessons of English songs but use these lovely rhymes to support their lesson objectives. Let me explain what our curriculum wants us to do. In the curriculum documents, songs and rhymes have been differentiated; songs have a tune and should be sung while rhymes should be said with proper intonation, rhyme and rhythm.

In the teachers' manual, some songs and rhymes have been recommended. If the teachers follow them, the children are going to be the beneficiaries. There is a book of songs and rhymes published by the CAPSD for our convenience and distributed to all schools. From there, we could pick the ones related to the topic of our lesson and do it as a follow-up activity. The teachers could also select songs that have good educational lyrics and teach them as well. The book *'A Book of Verse for Children 1& 2"* contains exhilarating nursery rhymes and poems. There may be some teachers who might raise eyebrows and exclaim, 'We may not finish the syllabus if we do that!' But I would advise teachers not to panic. They can spend about five minutes to teach a few lines each day in the afternoon so that by the end of the week, the children would have learnt one poem or nursery rhyme.

The curriculum of English is in the process of revision. It was rescued from the old traditional style of teacher-centeredness in the late eighties and placed in the domain of child-centeredness. However, the importance of teaching rhymes and songs still stands as a vital spice in the English curriculum. However, they risk mysterious disappearance from the real classrooms. I strongly feel that we should do something about it.

I would call upon the curriculum reformers to conduct a research on the fate of the nursery rhymes across the kingdom so that we get a clear picture of where they stand. Then a remedy could be recommended and put through. A workshop on the importance of nursery rhymes and how to teach them could motivate and inspire our enthusiastic English teachers. I am certain that all our English language teachers are ever ready to join hands in making our Language teaching a great success.

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GAZEBO
An Object of Art and its Essence

- Yang Gyeltshen, Lecturer in Fine Arts
National Institute of Education, Samtse

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Introduction

The purpose of art is to close the gap   between you and everything that is not you and thus proceed from feeling to meaning.
- Robert Hughes.

There are varying degrees of feeling and many modes of expressing feelings. The process of expression is complex. I think, in order to proceed from feeling to meaning, we have to entertain our feelings in one form or the other. I use my gazebo as a vantage point to feel what I feel and to reflect on those feelings. These are crucial events through which I experience my life or think about my life. This has some influence on how I look at others' lives as well, especially the students I teach.

I teach art to the student teachers at the National Institute of Education, Samtse, Bhutan. I received a scholarship to do my Masters of Education Degree in art education at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, Canada.

About a year and half after I left the National Institute of Education, my colleague and immediate neighbour, with whom I had entrusted my quarters and its surroundings, wrote to me to say: *Your gazebo collapsed a few weeks back. I am sure it felt deserted like some of us after you left. Prem, the institute gardener, cleared the fallen materials from the site. He also cut down the weeds around your house a few times but the lawn and the hedges are not in their usual shape. Your quarters are intact, don't worry.*

Gazebo! I didn't know the little structure I had built was called a gazebo. I had not given the structure a name. I got the idea from similar structures I found in Shantiniketan, West Bengal, India, where I completed a two-year Certificate Course in Arts and Design. I think there they called it a shade. But I liked the name and its sound . . . gazebo. As the dictionary suggests, perhaps it is from the word gaze. Yes, that is what people do in the gazebo - sit, relax, and gaze at the wide view around them.

One fine afternoon, sometime in early spring, I was sitting motionless in the front garden at 660A Charlotte Street, Fredericton, Canada. That was our home far away from home. Two other Bhutanese students resided with me. It is a small cosy house with two bedrooms, one spacious kitchen-cum- dining room, one living room, and a sun porch. The balcony on the top floor overlooking the front garden was a good place for a morning sun-bath, and evening cool air in the summer. The basement accommodated all our excess stuff. This place had its own space in the backyard away from the noise of traffic. What made that place feel more like home, especially for me, was the small garden where I am able to carry on with my little gardening activities.

Returning to that afternoon, I was totally lost gazing into my past. I remembered my gazebo because of the sad news that it collapsed. It took me back to the time when I conceived the idea of creating this gazebo, how it got shaped and became significant to me. Initially, I built the Gazebo for sheer pleasure, since I love doing craft-work. Little did I realize that I would feel empty without it. Other than my formal education, job and domestic chores, these recreational activities help me develop a certain discipline that I hardly pay attention to otherwise. Having created such a venue where my mind roamed blissfully, I found peace and happiness.

Gazing into the environment from my gazebo, I noticed the dramatic changes that take place in nature. The small valley next to my gazebo is filled with water in summer and completely dry in winter. Likewise, the trees around that shed their leaves in winter are completely green in summer. Insects, birds and animals that appear and disappear in between intimate different seasons of the year.

This is a timeless cycle of events in which things change, move and flow. Are we not part of this flow? Confronted by such thoughts, my emotions are overwhelming sometimes. Whether we are able to get an answer to every question or not, whether we are able to derive meaning from our feelings or not, certainly our response to specific thoughts and feelings has great implications for our physical, mental, social, and intellectual growth.

December 17 is Bhutan's National Day. Our first king was crowned on this day in 1907. Schools and institutes close for winter-break after celebrating the national day. This is holiday time for teachers and I usually have plans. Winter in Samtse is pleasant. The first winter back in Samtse after my studies abroad was in 1989. I didn't have any plan for the first two weeks of that winter. After a few days of doing nothing, I was getting restless. At such times, I often walk into the forest, do some gardening, artwork or read. But at that moment, some fond memories of my days at Visva Bharati University in Shantiniketan flashed back to me. Shantiniketan literally means a place where peace prevails. Visva Bharati, founded by the famous Bengali poet-laureate, Rabindranath Tagore, is world renowned for fine arts, music, and dance.

The place is indeed peaceful with beautiful gardens and parks. The surrounding air is filled with fragrance from trees and flowers. Along the trails in the campus there are certain places to spend time sipping tea or coffee while admiring the scenic beauty. I became most attached to the shades (now gazebos). I would often meet my friends there. Some evenings were filled with fun and laughter; some evenings were filled with sentiments. Somehow, I miss those days. To cherish those memories, I thought - why not recreate that shade?
I wanted to use locally available materials. The timing was perfect. By mid-December, local farmers finish their paddy harvest. I purchased plenty of hay from one of the farmers. Bamboo was used for raising flags, pitching tents and making stalls for the National Day celebration. The officer in-charge gave me some left-over bamboo for helping him with some of the work.

After collecting the rest of the materials, like nails, wire and tools, I sat down to visualize how my gazebo should look. While keeping the same features I had in my mind from Shantiniketan, I wanted my gazebo to be more prominent in style. It took me three days to complete the construction. To be precise, my first gazebo was born on 25th December 1989, at 5.30 p.m. From then on, we became intimate friends.

To separate it from the rest of the surroundings and give it its own space, I planted hedges and flowers. Every harvesting season, to mark the approaching new year, I changed its roof. Once every two years, I changed its inner frames and the bamboo poles to keep it strong. To make its lawn more beautiful, I levelled the ground and planted fine grass. In turn, it protected me from the sun and rain and allowed me to gaze into the endless space outside without any distraction. It provided me a place to entertain my friends in its perfect surroundings. I was always welcomed to share the evening cool air. Above all, the tranquility that prevailed under its shade made it possible for me to contemplate problems, plans, and dreams.

In this age of competition, we are often caught up in worldly matters. But there should be a time to sing as well as to be silent. On this note, how do we balance time?

I have divided my time between teaching, domestic chores, and recreational activities. Once this routine is set, no matter whether I am contemplating, gossiping, playing or sleeping, when it is time for my next routine, my consciousness informs me. This helps me to be watchful and not to miss the overall events.

When I get physically tired, I retire to rest. When I become restless, I resume my work. It is between this tiredness and restlessness that I often make it a point to be in my gazebo for contemplation. It is in contemplation that my mind becomes clear. It is also a Buddhist belief that all things have the nature of mind. In order to be happy and do things well, we have to keep our minds clear. Since our minds can be flighty and elusive, we have to be watchful and that way guard ourselves against possible temptations.

Watching one's mind from a gazebo is one thing. Being able to guard it against temptation is another. The person who makes the attempt experiences the mystery.

The Fusion of Arts and Minds: A Revelation of Possible Worlds

The nature of mind is as creative as it is mysterious. The construction of my gazebo is creative; what made me construct it is mysterious. Between this form and content, there is a world of my own. Everyone lives in a world of his or her own.

". . . no one 'world' is more 'real' than all others, none is ontologically privileged as the unique real world" (Bruner, 1986, p. 96). Big or small, good or bad, the kind of world we live in is a "product of some mind whose symbolic procedures construct the world" (Bruner, 1986, p. 95). I think, we begin to imagine our worlds as early

79

as we can think. The urge to express these worlds is evident once a child starts drawing.

Drawing comes naturally to most children. It is a common observation that children draw or represent what they know without specifically being told to do so. For some, it is spontaneous, while others copy. As a child, I drew pictures. How I started drawing and why I drew is an interesting story.

Growing up in a village farm, I performed my share of responsibilities from a very young age. While the elders were involved in heavy work, the best I could do was to be in the corn-field *khayeah.* This is a specially built hut, tall enough to see the entire field to keep guard against destruction of crops by monkeys. My job was simply to shout or beat a drum from time to time and to make the fire to give out smoke. This was to warn the monkeys that someone was guarding the crop.

Khayeah, in a way, was a gazebo as I see it now. The only difference is that it was used for watching monkeys and not one's mind. Sitting in the *khayeah,* I was watching not only the monkeys but also other animals, birds, insects, and ants. It was hard not to notice their behaviour. The behaviour of ants fascinated me. I used to watch them at work and even feed them sometimes. Unfortunately, one type of ant bothered me, accumulating in large numbers wherever I kept my food. From the ground, it climbed up the wooden poles that supported my *khayeah.*

 I heard my mother once say that if we painted the poles with lime at the base it would keep away the ants. There was no lime. Instead, I took a handful of charcoal from the fire-place and painted every pole a few inches above the ground by rubbing charcoal. I don't remember whether that kept away the ants. What developed was my fascination for charcoal. From rubbing to random marks and lines, my interest in charcoal scribbling grew stronger. When I strolled about the field, I scribbled on almost every flat stone I came across. I didn't draw anything in particular, nor did it mean anything to me - just the black mark on white stone fascinated me.

I enjoyed the sensation that ran through my fingers when I pressed and pulled the charcoal on the stone surface. The squashing sounds it produced all contributed to my pleasure in playing charcoal scribbling. The transition from mere scribbles to representational drawing is note-worthy.

It all began again with an ant. There was a big rock near my *khayeah.* It was flat on one side and had a nice curve on the other to sit and play. I was leaning on this rock with a charcoal in hand when one of the biggest ants of that area came crawling across the flat surface of that rock. What was interesting about that ant was that it shot out a white string of sting when we touched its abdomen. It is painful if the sting hits our skin. As usual, I touched its abdomen to see its sting shoot out. This time, the sting hit me on my finger. With pain, somewhat angry, I traced the ant's movements with the charcoal until it became exhausted. Once it got exhausted, I let it alone.

Slowly, the ant got away from that rock. By then, I was also feeling much better. To my surprise, I could see a figure that resembled the very ant amidst the

charcoal trace on the rock. It didn't have the eyes and limbs, but the head and abdomen were quite prominent. I attempted to mark an eye. I couldn't figure out how to draw the limbs. Even with just an eye marked, it did look like an ant.

That was my first attempted or accidental drawing. Aha! I realized I could draw, that my drawing could mean something. That incident, I thought, was the turning point in my becoming an artist. What I don't understand though is why I never tried to draw the animals, birds, and insects that I saw from life? Instead, I became more interested in copying drawings of birds, animals and insects from science text-books that my brother brought home from school. I would choose to copy mostly those drawings that I had seen live or those drawings that captivated me otherwise. That way, whatever drawings I copied had some meaning or some association.

Children all around the world draw, and they, like more sophisticated, skilled artists, have stories to tell in their drawings. According to Lowenfeld and Brittain (1982), "the process of drawing, painting, or constructing is a complex one in which the child brings together diverse elements of his environment to make a new meaningful whole" (p.3). They maintain that the drawings reflect how he or she thinks, feels, and sees in an attempt to create a meaningful and personal holistic experience. Child art serves as a window onto the inner worlds of children and provides an important tool for planning an effective model of learning development.

Against the Odds: The Role and Place for Art in Bhutanese Schools

With the development of new literature in elementary education, Bhutanese teachers, in general, now appreciate the importance of art instruction for children. In spite of this recognition, no research has been done in Bhutanese classrooms to support the view that art makes an important contribution to childhood education and learning. Edmund Burke Feldmen (1970) echoes these sentiments:

They know that art activity is somehow a good thing; they know children enjoy it; they know a good school should have child art work on display in its halls and classrooms; . . . Nevertheless, it is often difficult for them to distinguish between real learning through art and rather aimless play with materials (p.138-139).

In his article in the *Journal of Education,* Elliot Eisner (1982) share a similar view when he states: "Although teachers of art have an abiding belief in the benefits art activity has for children, the grounds for holding this belief are often less than clear" (p. 227). In my current teaching of art to prospective Bhutanese teachers, I confront the same difficulty in convincing people with specific evidence of learning through art activities. As Eisner rightly said, more and more people ask for justification for what we teach in the schools.

More so with arts because its relation to academic success is not clear in the minds of most people. So from a pragmatic point of view, Eisner (1982) believes that:

Knowing why children create and what they learn from making in arts is important. But it is more important for providing a kind of intellectual security for our work. We ought to be able to describe the value of what we do and place it within a framework for rationalizing the contribution for our work to the educational development of the students we teach (p. 227-228)

On a similar note, Feldmen (1970) claims:

Learning - whether through artistic or any sort of activity - takes place inside the learner. Overt behavior, spoken and written language, tests and measurements - constitute only external signs of learning that is alleged to have taken place within an individual" (p. 139).

Feldmen agrees with what art educators claim - that artistic products as well as artistic process exhibit evidence of learning or growth in a variety of dimensions. However, he comments:

One must know how to interpret and evaluate such evidence of learning. Moreover, it must be demonstrated theoretically (and empirically, if possible) that changes in artistic production reflect changes within the individual that can justifiably be called growth. If we can do so, then we can probably point to the evidence of child art as evidence of the intellectual, social, and emotional growth that elementary schooling seeks (p. 139).

To support or to justify various claims of the importance of arts in schools and answer related questions, I have to validate what I believe and what others have said and done through research. What Ruth S. Hubbard and Brenda M. Power (1993) say is very true: "Using our own classrooms as laboratories and our students as collaborators, we are changing the way we work with students as we look at our classrooms systematically through research" (p. xiii). Hubbard and Power make this point quite clear by quoting what Peggy Groves, a school teacher, says:

The difference between my recent classroom research and my usual classroom practices is that for my research I kept notes about what I did, I looked more closely at what happened, I asked myself harder questions, and I wrote about it all. These differences took a lot of time, but I think I am a better teacher for it. And may be even a better writer (p. xv).

Most Bhutanese teachers are not acquainted with such classroom research. Even if they are reflective about their usual classroom practices, the relationship between art making and learning is least known, although almost every day they do something in their lessons that involves art. What is wrong here is with the system according to Herbert Read. What Read (1943) believes is precisely our habit of establishing separate territories and inviolable frontiers, and the system he proposes has for its only object "the integration of all biologically useful faculties in a single organic activity." He sums up his thoughts as follows:

In the end, I do not distinguish science and art, except as methods, and I believe that the opposition created between them in the past has been due

to a limited view of both activities.   Art is the representation, science the explanation - of the same reality (p. 11).

Considering such views, it becomes apparent that the Bhutanese educational system needs a good art education programme. The beginning has already been marked by Dr. Jennifer Pazienza, the first art professor ever to visit Bhutan to work on the Draft Proposal for the First Art Syllabus for Teacher Preparation in Bhutan in May 1994.

I had the opportunity to work with Dr. Pazienza for two weeks, during which we were able to put together a draft document containing the fundamental structure of an Art Education programme for the preparation of primary school teachers. It is my desire that, through this study, I will prepare myself to carry on from where we have started. Specific to Bhutanese experience, this is the first study on Bhutanese children's art.   What I address then has to be from the very basics, such as: definition of child art, what child art represents, the benefits that children derive from art making, and the role art plays in education.

*   *   *

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The Cost of Higher Education – Who Will Bear the Brunt?

-   R. Balamurugan,
    Sr. Lecturer,
    Sherubtse College

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Educating a poor child is
  -better than feeding hundreds of hungry men
  -better than building thousands of temples
  -better than doing all acts of Dharma which may fetch name and fame.

- Avvaiyar[1]

Introduction

The small Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan provides health and education services (from primary to the tertiary level) free of charge to all its citizens. Though its domestic revenue is only about 42% of the total expenditure (rest 32% from grants, 10% from concessional borrowings and the rest from domestic borrowings[2]), the Royal Government of Bhutan has allocated about 27% (the biggest share) to the social sector, of which 59% (2238.58 million out of 3788.713 million) is expected to be spent exclusively on education[2]. This shows the commitment of the Royal Government to promoting a knowledge-based society for the sustainable growth and development of Bhutan. It is this commitment which has improved Bhutan's ranking (out of 175 countries) in the United Nations Human Development Index from 145 in 1999 to 130 in 2001[3].

Though the National Education Policy (NEP) specifically emphasizes the provision of free education in public schools[4], with little scope to increase the domestic revenue[5], maintaining free education and improving education quality are collectively expected to put enormous pressure on the available financial and human resources – with particular implication for the long-term sustainability of the recurrent expenditure[6]. With the commissioning of the Tala Hydro-electric Project by mid -2006, the Royal Government would be able to overcome this pressure. But it is time that the RGoB starts levying user-fee for social services (health and education), particularly on those who are able to pay. It is also about time that the RGoB started considering privatizing health and education services (at the tertiary level) in recognition of the fact that there are a growing number of Bhutanese today who are actually capable of bearing the full cost of these services[7].

In this paper, an attempt has been made to project the cost, which the RGoB might have to bear, in fully subsidizing education in the future (by the end of 10th five year plan, that is, by 2012) and some suggestions are put forward to identify people who can be charged for educational services. In a country with a very small population, it may not be very difficult to implement the policy decisions made by the Government so that the right people are charged for the right services.

The Problem

i) Increasing Number:

The population of Bhutan is expected to grow by some 35% from 2000 to 2012. Since 43% of Bhutan's present population is of age below 15 years[8], there will be a doubling of the number of 15-19 year olds over a period of 5 years[9]. The impact of this on education is already being felt by the increase in the number of students enrolled in various schools and institutes over the years.

In 1959, there were just 440 students (at all levels). This rose to 139,368 in 2003[10]. This will become 144,466 in 2008[11] and 157,907 in 2012[11]. At the higher secondary level, there were 2058[12] students during 2000. The number went up to 3535[12] in 2002. At this rate, the number will become 7,966[13] in 2008 and 10,920[13] in 2012. This will mean that, by 2012, the Royal Government will have to create facilities (infrastructure and human resources) and finance about 10,000 students at the tertiary level. Under such circumstances, 100% subsidy sounds extremely difficult to sustain.

ii) Escalating Cost:

The cost incurred by the Royal Government to provide one year of post - secondary education (degree course at Sherubtse College[14]) to a single student during the past three financial years is given below.

Year	2002-'03	2003-'04	2004-'05
Unit Cost (in Nu.)*	51,029	88,121	90,835

(* Keeping in mind that

(a). the existing facilities can't support the growing number of students with the present explosive growth-rate:
(b). new facilities are to be created till the students strength stabilises:
the three unit costs mentioned above include both current and capital expenditure)

The projected unit cost for the same class of students for the year 2008-09 is Nu. 176,177 and this will reach Nu. 255,789 by 2012-13. Combining the increased cost with projected number of students, by the year 2012, the Royal Government is expected to spend approximately Nu. 2,793.22 million per annum on post-secondary education alone. At the school level, the expenditure is expected to be about Nu. 2,205 million. In total, the RGoB needs Nu.4,998.22 million per annum to continue education subsidy with present standards. This will mean a three-fold increase in the Education budget alone.

Using the rate at which the budget for education increases, (Nu.1,610.464 m in 2002 and Nu.1859.547 m in 2003), the projected allocation for the year 2012-13 comes to 4,101.294 m. This will lead to a deficit of Nu.897m, which has to be made available at

the cost of other services. At least, to bridge the deficit, the Government can expect the affluent class to finance the education of their wards. So, it is time to decide on the class of people who will shoulder this responsibility.

Who has to pay?

…………….. It also plans to charge a reasonable fee to those who can afford to pay as a way of cost sharing… ………. Other plans include …………involving communities in construction, maintenance and management of schools and……………

-Bhutan National Development Report – 2000

Though cost-sharing is already taking place (in the form of buying text books, half scholarship and community participation as mentioned above) the shared cost is like popcorn to a hungry elephant. To ease this out, the government can now fully/partially charge the class of people who could afford to pay.

Already, people do send their wards (to Kalimpong, Kurseong, Darjeeling and Shillong… many other states in India) by spending at least Nu.60,000 per annum. Some are sent even further afield. They might be happy to pay even little more in a government institution within the kingdom where they are assured of the life and security of their wards. Higher officials working in the education administration would know precisely the people who should be made to pay and how much. Two widely used criteria may be used to do the same.

i)   *Performance Criterion*

As per this criterion, the government finances only the students of the top-most ranking. The rest all will have to bear the full cost of education. Keeping in mind the available monetary resources during a fiscal year, the government decides how many will be supported.
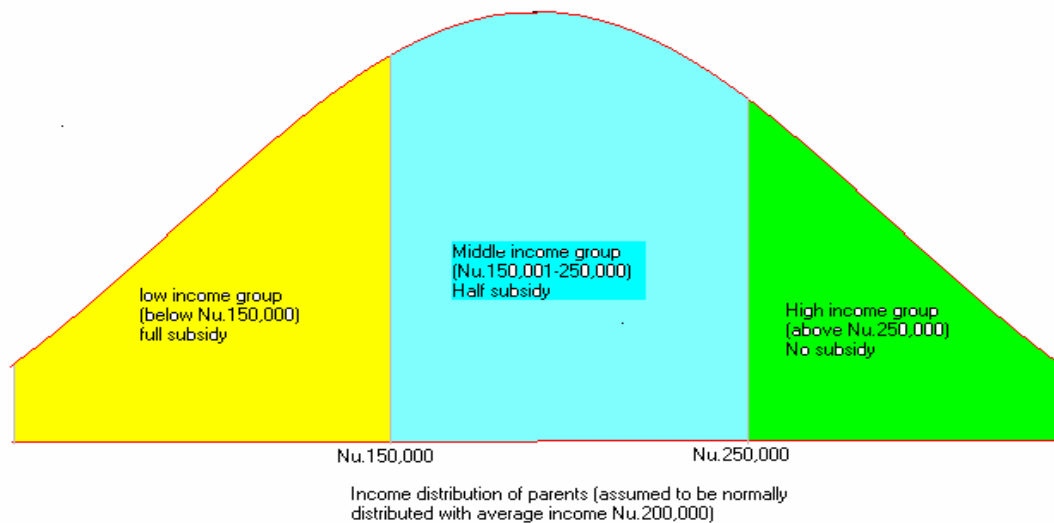
Though this criterion has an advantage of fostering excellence in education, this also deprives the students from the rural background -who may not be in a position to compete with their counterparts from the urban region- of the government support. This criterion would be viable only if the standard of education and infrastructure are equitable across the kingdom. Otherwise, the rural students are at a disadvantageous position to avail themselves of the government funding.

ii)   *Economic Criterion*

This criterion divides the population into different groups based on their annual income and decides which of these groups can be made to pay and how much. We can make a fairly good distribution of the educational services this way.
For example[15], the wards of the parents/guardians whose annual income (full family income) is below Nu.150,000 will be fully supported by the government. If the income is above Nu.150,000 but below Nu.250,000 p.a., their children will get a 50% subsidy on their expenditure (up to a maximum of 3 children per family in both the cases). Finally, people having an annual income above Nu.250,000 will have to bear the full

cost of the education of their wards. Since the Bhutanese citizens can avail themselves of tax-exemption for the expenditure incurred on the education of their children (up to a maximum of Nu.50,000 per child), this kind of criterion is viable and fair.

Income distribution of parents (assumed to be normally distributed with average income Nu.200,000)

Who can pay?

In a survey conducted by Sherubse's BSc III – Group A students of 2003 batch (to study the spending habits of the college students), a very large sample students of Sherubtse College were randomly selected and well designed, pre-tested questionnaires were distributed to them. They were asked to provide the right information and were assured of the confidentiality of the details they would give. To maintain anonymity, their names were not asked (it was optional). Out of the circulated questionnaires, 291 valid responses were returned. A part of the analysis is reproduced here.

- 51.2% of the parents/benefactors are government servants and 17.5% are businessmen
- 30.2% of the students are from middle/high income group (the actual figure is expected to be on the higher side)
- 63.9% of the students spend more than Nu.10,000 per annum
- 22% of the total money spent by the students is on parties and entertainment
- Only 57% of the students said that they can afford to buy books for their use (in spite of the fact that their expenditure on entertainment is much more)
- 27.5% of the respondents were confident that they could spend for their education at Sherubtse College
- 5.5% of them have someone to sponsor their studies abroad

Conclusion

"Gross National Happiness cannot be brought about cheaply. We must enlist every Bhutanese – man, woman and child. They must be able to tell apart the genuine from the artificial; they should learn that consideration for others is more important than carving out a career for themselves; that the worth of people is measured not by what they have but by what they are[16]"

The ultimate decision has to come from the government. A decision favouring this will not come from the bottom up, as every individual may be interested in free education so that they can spare some money to spend on comforts (than necessities). The people will welcome this kind of proposal if they rightly understand that "a Bhutan of Gross National Happiness will be a moral giant where everyone cares enough and everyone shares enough so that everyone has enough[16]"

End Notes

1. *Avvaiyar – a Dravidian, lady, shaivaite saint of the 12th century*
2. *As mentioned by the finance minister of Bhutan during his budget speech 2004*
3. *UNDP Human Development Report 2001, Page number 143*
4. *Millennium Development Goals (Bhutan) – Progress Report 2002 – Page 17*
5. *Bhutan National Human Development Report 2000 – Page 42*
6. *Millennium Development Goals (Bhutan) – Progress Report 2002 – Page 16*
7. *Bhutan 2020 – A Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness – Page 85*
8. *UNDP Human Development Report 2001, Page 156*
9. *Strategic framework for the Royal University of Bhutan, Vol. 1, Page Exec. 2*
10. *As mentioned by the finance minister of Bhutan during his budget speech 2004*
11. *Projected using linear trend (MS-Excel) using the data available from the Statistical Year Book – 2003 of the Education Division.*
12. *Source: Strategic framework for the Royal University of Bhutan, Vol. 1*
13. *Projected using linear trend (MS-Excel) using the data available from Strategic framework for the Royal University of Bhutan, Vol. 1*
14. *Some institutes have unit cost much higher than that of Sherubtse. Some other institutes have more or less equal to that of Sherubtse. So the cost projected may be on the lower side of the actual cost.*
15. *One of the suggestions, which I thought, is fair and just. Officers working in the education administration will be able to make the best-suited criterion.*
16. *T. S. Powdyel, GNH-A Tribute, GNH, CBS, 1999*

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1. Budget – 2004 of the RGoB
2. Strategic Framework for the Royal University of Bhutan, Vol. 1, 2003
3. Statistical Year Book 2003 – Education Division, RGoB
4. Bhutan – Millennium Development Goals – Progress Report 2002
5. UNDP – Human Development Report-2001
6. Bhutan 2020 – A Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness –Planning Commission Secretariat
7. Bhutan National Development Report – 2000, Planning Commission Secretariat
8. Gross National Happiness, Centre for Bhutan Studies – 1999.

* * *

Portrait of an institute: National Institute of Education, Paro.

- Dr Jagar Dorji, Director, and Mr Gopi Chetri, Principal (SA), NIE, Paro.

Name of the Institute: National Institute of Education, Paro.

Year of Establishment: Nov. 4, 1975 as pre-school care training centre upgraded to TTC and then to NIE, Paro.

Location: Located in three different campuses - Nyamizampa, Chhimi Dingkha
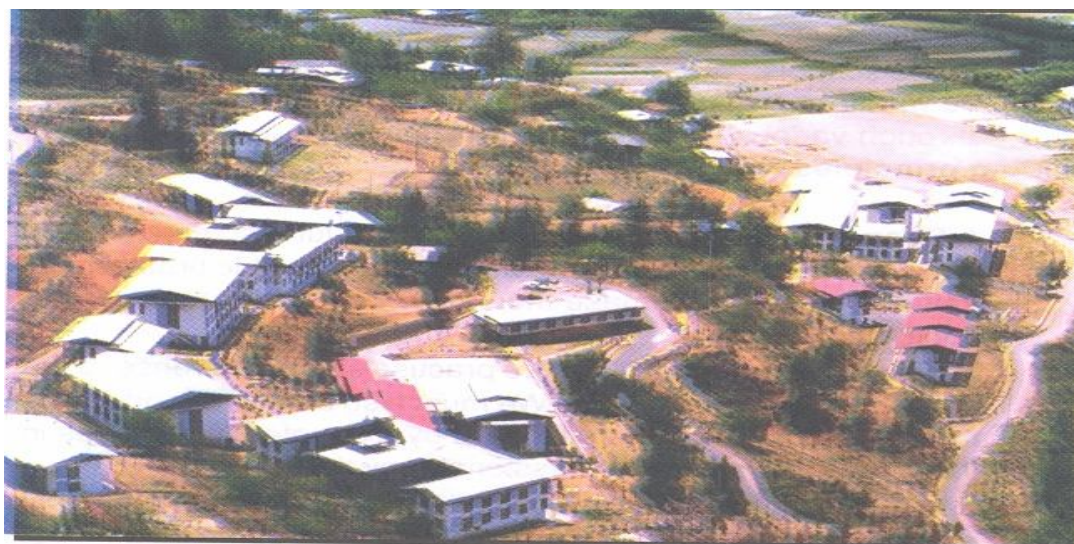
Basic Information

Vision

The National Institute of Education at Paro shall envisage being a place for *excellence* in all its tasks such as teacher education, and research in the region.

Mission

- Our mission is to promote the unique Bhutanese culture and ensure its benefits for posterity while at the same time developing in the learners a sense of loyalty and dedication towards maintaining the national identity and sovereignty. Our main challenge is to play a leading role in promoting wholesome education in the kingdom of Bhutan.

The Aims

a. To provide up-to-date and challenging curriculum materials to schools;
b. To ensure effective delivery of curricular programmes in schools;
c. To provide pre-service teacher education to meet the teacher requirements in the country;
d. To conduct practical research to improve curriculum delivery in the schools.
e. To facilitate professional development for in-service teachers through various INSET programmes.

Guiding principles

- 1. **Responsibility towards the learners**: Our first responsibility is to provide student-teachers with the best possible professional training. We strive to make them highly competent and dedicated teachers.
- 2. **The principle of ethics**: We practice strict adherence to the code of ethics for teachers. We must also create opportunities for our student- teachers to learn by examples at all times in their personal as well professional growth.
- 3. **Strive for higher standards**: We strive to attain a higher standard of quality in our work. This will also serve as a model for student-teachers to emulate as teachers later.
- 4. **Cultivate positive attitude**: We strive to cultivate *positive attitudes* and *love* for the work at hand through practices and personal examples. These endeavors, we believe, will enhance the promotion of wholesome education.
- 5. **Mutual respect and cooperation**: As a *community of educators* and *learners*, we are guided by our conviction that the practice of mutual respect, cooperation, social responsibilities and excellence are pertinent values. To this end, we recognize creative and innovative leadership and initiatives in all individuals.

Pre-service Teacher Education by Courses

NO.	Courses	Eligible	Duration	2003 total
01	Primary Teacher Certificate (PTC)	Class X + Selection Test.	2 yrs	317 (151) Course ended from Dec. 2003 .
02	Bachelor of Education (B.Ed, Primary & Secondary)	Class XII + Selection Test.	3 yrs	250
03	Zhungkha Teachers Certificate (ZTC).	Class X + Selection Test.	2 yrs	66 (33).Course ended from Dec.2003

Teaching Staff at NIE (as of October 2004)

- Subject area   No.   Remarks.
- Professional
  Studies   13   3 UNB (1 graduated)
- Language   13   1 joined UNB
- Maths   4   1 UNB
- Science   3   1 UNB
- Social Studies   1
- Physical Edn   3
- Volunteers   1   Physical Education
- Art Education   1
- Total   39   CAPSD teach one-third of their time.

The Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD)

Goals

- Establish and promote a culture of inquiry and research in the education system.
- Conduct and support conduct of practical research in the classroom practices of the curricular programmes.
- Provide a forum for publication of educational research works
- Support professional development of teachers.
- Advise the CAPSD and schools in curriculum development and implementation

Student projection (9th. Plan)

Courses	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
PTC	170				
ZTC	38				
B.Ed. P.	280	352	408	385	420
B.Ed. Z	95	134	171	210	210
B.Ed. S	73	213	283	350	350
PGCE			35	35	35
Sub- total	656	699	897	980	1015
M.Ed.	18	35	55	75	95
Diploma		100	200	100	100

DE.		35	70	105	140
G. Total	674	869	1222	1260	1350

Future

I   Hardware

- IT and library expansion
- Faculty building for 58 staff
- Gymnasium in the sports complex
- Auditorium of 320 capacity
- Apartment for visiting professors
- Turn old campus into science education centre
- Students hostels.

II   Software

- Development of ICT competencies
- Improving professional qualifications of teacher-educators
- Improving quality of primary and secondary teacher education
- Developing NIE(s) into centres of excellence in teacher education
- Continue present link and establish more links.
- Diversify pre-service courses
- Diversify in-service courses for teachers (management, distance education - pedagogic, academic)
- Research assignments (to participate in the university).
- Quality assurance of courses offered.
- Enhance quality of teacher educators

The Royal University of Bhutan

- NIE, Paro, has become one of the Faculties of Education of the Royal University of Bhutan.
- The University will administer the quality of staff and programmes at the NIE.
- Current working relationship with Ministry of Education will basically remain the same.
  - NIEs serve the interest of Education System in supporting basic education.
  - Pre-service and in-service teacher education is the main responsibility.
  - Curriculum development for schools and research works at NIE Paro are for the education system in the Kingdom.

A brief historical perspective

Like all beginnings of existence, NIE, Paro, took a very humble birth on that momentous day of November 4, 1975. With only eight trainees in the present- day

Rinpung Primary School campus, the goal then was to prepare and groom teachers in Early Childhood Education as the course title "Pre-School Care Training Centre" suggests. The programme was jointly initiated by the Education Department and UNICEF with the adviser, Ms Vareena Ritter from Switzerland working in close partnership with the Bhutanese.

The following year, a school for demonstration was established. It was geared towards making the training more practice-oriented. For about a decade, the programme continued sending forth trained pre-school teachers with an entry qualification of grade eight for the two-year course.

With the experience of a decade, the urge to step up the training programme was felt more intensely, which ultimately ushered in the development of a joint PTC curriculum along with the NIE, Samtse, in 1985. The introduction of the PTC course also raised the entry qualification to class ten and the nomenclature of the institute to Teacher Training College (TTC). This up- gradation invited a second commitment from the UNICEF to contribute towards strengthening its infrastructure facilities and consequently the present-day CAPSD office campus at Rimpung together with the auditorium was completed in 1988.

Another new chapter was added to its history when the institutembarked on further uplift of its academic profile through the introduction of an eighteen- month regular Zhungkha   Teacher's Certificate course in 1993. It was the first ever such a course launched in the country. Soon after, in the same year, Phase III construction - which included the Dining Hall, two hostel blocks and the new academic complex was started with assistance from SDC.

The year 1999 marked yet another historic milestone for the institute with the completion of the new academic complex, and the event gained more significance with the royal presence of Her Majesty Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck, as the chief guest for its inaugural ceremony. The year also saw the first batch of B.Ed Primary candidates both for Dzongkha as well as for English enrolled. The student number now escalated to 445!

The succeeding year 2000, also ushered in similar if not more momentous events when the CAPSD (then Thimphu-based) shifted to the institute campus.
The institute was upgraded to National Institute of Education and the Internet and Computer Education courses were launched. This time, the occasion was graced by yet another royal member, Her Majesty Ashi Sangey Choden Wangchuck.
The year 2001 added a few more feathers to the NIE hat with the establishment of the Centre for Educational Research and Development. Subsequently, the M.Ed. programme for principals and heads of schools as well as a three-year Diploma in Educational Management for heads of Lower Secondary and Primary schools was also introduced the same year.

With the dawn of the year 2002, the NIE student turn-over rose to 633, with a proportionate increase in the number of teaching faculty. The Institute took up the challenge of offering a variety of elective courses in various disciplines such as ICT, mathematics, history and physical education in addition to the initial B.Ed Primary stream.

The January 2003 looked at another additional feature - the In-service D.E programme (a distance education mode) for Dzongkha language teachers.
Ironically, its later phase experienced a brutal thrust in the history of nation, as it was forcefully dragged into war with the Indian insurgent groups from the states of Assam and West Bengal. The event worked to momentarily threaten the stability of the nation, yet it paradoxically shook the nation to more wakefulness.
On November 22, 2003, just a week before leading the troops into battle, His Majesty the King granted an audience to the institute, and made a very inspiring speech on the theme - *the state of the Nation on the verge of a war,* which deeply stirred the hearts and minds of every member of the institute with its profundity and depth.

The institute is also proud to have hosted many educational activities of national importance such as the 5th, 6th, and 7th Annual Education Conferences consecutively for the years 2002, 2003 and 2004, and on May 26, 2004, it hosted for the first time, the 2nd University Council Meeting.

In the span of over a quarter century, from a humble beginning of with eight students and a couple of teaching faculty, the institute today boasts of having sent forth a total of 1542 teacher-graduates - almost a third of the national teaching force.

Presently, the institute's prospective plans promise to increase the student enrolment numbers to hit a thousand students by the year 2007. The infrastructure facilities are being rapidly expanded with a Phase IV construction support from SDC (Helvetas) and this will be markedly distinct with the completion of work underway which includes a computer lab, Library, faculty offices, a lecture theater, a science lab, an apartment for visiting professors, increased residential capacity for student accommodation and an auditorium.

A major curriculum review and revision work also started from this year under the STEP project, which is under progress. A comprehensive Staff Development Plan - both for short and long term courses - has been drawn up and finalized. Such rapid progressive growth clearly shows that NIE, Paro, is moving forward towards becoming the premier education institute of this nation.

A Mother's Dream

- Dechen Zangmo Lecturer, NIE, Paro.

Everything was the same but she had lost her waiting look. Yewang did not look as though she was waiting for anything at all, anymore.

It had been three years since Tsagey left. He was training at the National Defense Academy in Dehra Doon in India. He had left with the promise of coming back not as an ordinary person but as a decorated officer. It has been his dream to serve his king and country. He could have had a chance of lucrative jobs but preferred earning for himself a post through the sheer grit of his labour. His sense of commitment egged him on towards his goal.

Yewang and Wangchuk had met at a mutual friend, Wangmo's restaurant, some twenty years ago. Over tea and snacks, they discussed everything from animals to humans - whether they should be given equal treatment. Eventually, their conversation led to a rather personal note where they exchanged information close to them. Surprisingly, they discovered they shared much in common - from mundane things like choice of colour to more serious facts like both of them belonging to very strict families.

Both Yewang and Wangchuk were oblivious of the fact that it was in fact one of Wangmo's match-making sprees. Wangmo's eyes glistened at the sight of the two of them getting along like a house on fire. She never failed in her match-making ventures, and today, she had another feather added to her cap! But did she know that she was going to cause the greatest pain to her best friend?

Having finished the delicious *momos* prepared specially for the two of them, very different from what Wangmo normally prepared for her other customers, Yewang and Wangchuk parted ways, promising to meet again. They exchanged knowing glances and telephone numbers. The beautiful night came to an end with this brief but promising encounter.

Over the few weeks, the two of them were in constant touch with each other - sometimes they met for lunch and at other times, they just took cold comfort in phone. It was evident that there was something more to this than met the eye.

Finally, after seven months, Wangchuk uttered the golden words over lunch at *Hotel Tandin*, "Um...would you take it to heart if I made an honest revelation?" Without waiting for a response, he continued, "I think I can not fool you and myself any longer. I am in love with you and this is the most beautiful experience ever and I want to marry you".

Yewang could not hide her joy and she gave a nervous laugh as she was born shy by nature. But the next few words came as a rude shock to her when Wangchuk said,

"There is something else I want you to know. Um…that… is um…I am married…and have a son…this… was…an …arranged.. .marriage…"

At first, Yewang thought Wangchuk was up to one of his naughty pranks to tease her as he normally did, and laughed at her funny reactions, but the serious look on Wangchuk's face confirmed it was no pranks this time. Her whole body shook without control and she felt it from the body straight to her heart. She could not believe this is happening to her - the only man she loved in her entire life - she had not even known her father's love as he had died in a fatal car accident when she was just five.

Wangchuk had not mentioned anything of that sort to her before and now she was waiting to tell him that soon he was going to a father to her child. She had no strength left to break the news that she was pregnant!

Wangchuk could not bear the sight of his beloved woman now turning pale and shivering. He tried to persuade her that he would leave his wife and child and marry her. He tried all kinds of ways to console her, but it was of no use. Yewang could not believe that this was happening to her. She did not hear the rest of the things that Wanchuk was saying. She felt her head spinning and her body shaking. The only words she could utter were"….I…have….to …go…home…medicine…its time…to give to my.. .mo..ther".

Yewang ran down the stairs of the restaurant making sure that she was not knocking on the walls with her shaky legs, head spinning and tears blinding her eyes. She managed to get a taxi but those words were ringing in her ears - 'I'm married and have a son".

She heard Wangchuk's voice calling from behind "Wait, Yewang-don't leave me like this". She jumped into the taxi and asked the driver to take her home fast. The taxi driver gave her a confused look and then looked at her stomach. She was five month's pregnant and now that the brooch that was holding the *tego* together to hide the view of her stomach had fallen and the driver made a quick decision: He asked, "To the hospital?" "No, no *sabji bazaar,* please", she managed to say. She got out of the taxi before it barely stopped near her house, paid the driver, and said "Please keep the change".

Yewang felt a lump in her throat and was absolutely shattered. She had seen these sorts of things happening in the films and never thought they could happen in reality. She rushed into the house and heard her mother calling from her room, "Is this Yewang? Give me some tea. I am having a migraine and I have been holding the tablet in my hands for hours now". Yewang quickly heated up the left over tea from the morning and gave her mother a big mug.

The migraine had been attacking her mother very often - sometimes two or three times in a day. This happened when Yewang's father died from a brain injury in a car accident and left her all on her own with six small children. Yewang was the third youngest who dropped school to help her mother at home.

Yewang put a blanket on her mother and sat beside her as she tried to get some sleep hoping that that the headache will go away after a short sleep.

This gave Yewang some time to think about what Wangchuk had said. She went to her room with a broken heart and looked at her stomach and talked to her unborn baby through heart wrenching sobs: "I am going to be both your father and mother. I will not let anything happen to you. I will give you all that I have missed in my life".

Yewang strongly shrugged off those feelings and decided not to get involved again with Wangchuk and his marriage. She did not want to hurt another woman and child by marrying Wangchuk. Instead she gathered all her courage not to meet him from then on.

She thought of finding ways to break the news to her family to keep her child. After making many attempts and failing, she then fell in front of her mother and broke the news that she was pregnant and that she could not afford to marry the father of her child as he was married.

The news brought mixed feelings to the family. Some family members thought a child born before a marriage brings shame to the family, and others felt that Yewang was now someone of her own, but all agreed that she should not make Wangchuk leave his wife and child. So after days and days of discussion and Yewang's persuasion, the family agreed to move to a different place till the child was born.

Yewang and her family waited for the big day. Then after four long months, the day came early in the morning at 4 o'clock when the labour pain started. Yewang was in the hospital praying very hard to her goddess to whom she normally prayed whenever she was in trouble.

The pain went on for two days, but there was no sign of Tsagey coming. All her sisters and brothers prayed to God to have mercy on Yewang and not to make her suffer more. The old mother who could not come to watch her innocent child suffer stayed home praying and prostrating, not knowing what else to do.

Then the doctor called Yewang's brothers and sisters and said that Yewang could not deliver in that hospital and that she should be taken to a better hospital with better facilities!

The brothers and sisters did not lose any time fearing that every second counted for Yewang's life. Without informing their mother, they made the journey to India which took four hours. As soon as they reached the hospital, Yewang was checked by a lady doctor and immediately taken to the operation theatre. As she put on a stretcher, the older sister reminded Yewang not to stop praying to her Goddess. Yewang murmured prayers in bits and pieces amidst her pain and disappeared behind a big door.

There was no news for four long hours. Her brothers and sisters exchanged anxious looks and wondered if this is going to go on forever. Time dragged on....Then, suddenly, the door opened and a woman dressed in white called them in and said,

"We saw you were all worried but God has heard your prayers and there is good news. Both the mother and child are safe and fine". Then she added, 'The best part of the news is that it is a son! Time for celebration!"

The nurse smiled and left saying that it would take another 15 minutes when they could see both Yewang and her son. Instead of thanking the hospital staff, her brother and sisters fell on their knees once again to thank God for showing mercy on Yewang.

Now in Indian custom, it is a celebration when a son is born! So the hospital staff did not allow them to pray "*Ab to laddoo khaney ka samey ahgaya....Aow aow mukh mettha kartey hai*", they insisted. Without waiting for a second, Yewang's brother pushed his hand into his pocket and took out with a handful of money and shouted with joy in Hindi "*Haa! Bhai aur bhan loag, mukh mittha karo aur kisko bi adora chhor na math!*"

In no time, every one in the hospital from the cleaner to the doctor was eating sweets. Yewang's brothers and sisters ran in to see Tsagey and Yewang. Yewang was still unconscious but little Tsagey, a photocopy of his father was looking strong, already sucking his finger.

Gradually, Yewang got better with intensive care from the hospital staff and her brothers and sisters.

Years passed, but Yewang refused to go with Wangchuk and she stayed with her family. Tsagey grew up to be the pet of every one. Each aunt brought a different name from a different monastery or *lama* and Tsagey had five names. But finally, everybody ended up calling him Tsagey.

Twenty years passed. Tsagey grew up to be a strong and tall young man. It was on a Monday morning when an office order came that read: "Report to H.Q. immediately". Tsagey wondered at the office order. He hadn't mentioned anything about his plans to his mother. After much persuasion, he managed to convince his mother that the training would be over before her even realizing it.

Amidst heart wrenching sobs, she said, "I cannot afford to let anything happen to you, my son. You are everything I have in my whole life. Let *Kuenchho Sum* protect you".

The days Tsagey was away seemed to her an eternity. The only consolation she had was in her son's photograph which she had pasted just above her bed. Yewang spent her time counting beads, sometimes praying for her son's safety and at other times counting days for his coming back. The counting varied from one year now to three months, from now to eventually "He is coming tomorrow!"

Yewang waited for the 3 o'clock bus. With anxious face, she waited as time dragged on. The bus arrival was due, yet there was no sign of the vehicle. Everything else was the same, but she had lost her waiting look. Yewang did not look as though she were waiting for anything at all, any longer.

Yewang felt a tug at her *tego* and looked back. She saw a man dressed in uniform. Not bothering about this stranger, she concentrated on spotting her son. "Here is your Tsagey, Ama". The voice sounded familiar!

Yewang could not believe her eyes when she saw that the stranger before her was no other than her own Tsagey! She flung herself into his arms and wept. Tsagey held her firmly. Yewang regained her composure and with a tone of a happy mother said: '"his is my boy. He is finally home. Let me look at you properly, my son."

Tsagey stood straight like an army officer and saluted his mother.
"You made it, Ama. You deserve the biggest salute", he said.

* * *

Stories of Bhutanese Education

The Call: Stories of Yesteryears
Reviewed by Douglas McCurry, ACER, Melbourne, Australia.

As a researcher working in psychometric test construction, it is easy to become mesmerised by the power of numbers and to lose sight of the power of narrative. I have recently been given a delightful reminder of the power of narrative by a 125 page book entitled **The Call - Stories of Yesteryears** edited by Thakur Singh Powdyel, the director of the Centre for Educational Research and Development in Bhutan.

I had but a hazy notion of the location and character of Bhutan until I had the good fortune of working with some Bhutanese educators and visiting Bhutan to work with them. So perhaps a little introduction to Bhutan and Bhutanese education would be helpful before going any further.

Bhutan is a landlocked and largely mountainous Kingdom of 46,500 square kilometres located between China and India. Bhutan had a feudal social and political structure and was isolated from the rest of the world until well into the C20. It has opened itself to the world in a measured way since the 1960s, and the table below from the World Bank shows that there has been significant development in Bhutan in recent times.

Selected Development Indicators for Bhutan - 1984 and 1997		
	1984	1997
Life expectancy at birth (years)	46	66
Infant mortality (per 1,000)	142	71
Maternal mortality	7.7	3.8
Adult literacy rate (%)	28	54
Primary school enrollment (%)	35	73
Combined education enrollment (%)	25	40

(http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/extme/1669.htm)

The World Bank describes the development of education in Bhutan in the following terms:

> In 1961 the tiny, sparsely populated, mountainous Kingdom of Bhutan opened its doors to the modern world with a far-reaching development strategy which included a strong commitment to improve education. Since then, the government has built an educational delivery system providing largely free primary, secondary, and limited tertiary level schooling. This system consists of a year of pre-primary school, followed by six years of primary school, four years secondary school, and two years of junior college. Altogether, approximately 92,000 students are enrolled in 312 schools and institutions. Today, nearly three-quarters of primary school-age children are enrolled and, in contrast to neighbouring countries, nearly half are girls. The government expects to achieve universal primary education by 2007.

While development indicators tell a general story, there are other individual and personal stories behind such indicators, and it is these stories that are beguilingly presented in **The Call**. I wish in this review to introduce the personal stories of 13 senior Bhutanese educators presented in **The Call**, and I also wish to suggest the great value of the insights offered by narratives of this kind.

One of the most remarkable things about these stories is the fact many of the most distinguished educators in Bhutan (and they are distinguished in any company) might never have gone to school and might have been semi-literate or illiterate farmers like some of their siblings. Most of these educators grew up in families of subsistence farmers, and many of those farmers resisted the encouragement (and the coercion) of the government to educate their children.

Dasho Gagay Lhamu, the educator who became the first female judge in Bhutan, describes the resistant attitude of many parents:

> During my time, parents were very reluctant to send their children to school. As such, they resorted to every means in hiding their children even when they heard about the coming of officials to select students. But now parents are facing some problems in admitting their children to school.

This distinguished Bhutanese woman describes her enrolment in school as a matter of bad luck:

> Many parents were successful in hiding their children, but I could not escape because I was in a different row and my parents were sitting elsewhere. It was so ironical that in the place where I was sitting I did not know the neighbours sitting on my left and right side. Since I did not know them, they did not come to my rescue. The officials approached row after row, asking the children's names and writing them in the register. That is how I got picked up and admitted to school.

Another distinguished educator-turned-district administrator, Dasho Zangley Dukpa, also attributes his enrolment in school to bad luck:

> It was mandatory for all children born in the years of the Ox, Tiger and Hare to attend school. All parents tried their best to retain their children of this age group and not to send them to school. Their efforts were in vain. There were twenty-six children belonging to this unfortunate group. I was one of them.

Those who were 'unlucky' (and their relatives) made great sacrifices to attend schools that were often far from their home villages:

> Our school had no boarding facilities, and so my mother spent three years cooking and caring for me. Most students constructed small huts for themselves while a few stayed with relatives nearby. I was fortunate that my village was only two hour's walk from the Dzongkhag headquarters and it was easy for my father to bring rations on time. Those students from far could not go home and had to even beg and borrow ration very often.

The facilities of the school were often very rudimentary:

> We sat on the floor with low benches in front. We learnt how to read and write during the day, said our prayers in the evening and slept in the same rooms during the night. During the day, we used to keep our beddings in the attic. There were huts built around the school campus where we kept our rations and cooked our meals. During the initial years, our parents took turns to cook for ten of us.

And the learning experiences of these early of students were also rudimentary:

> Rote learning was common. I memorised the whole history book of Napoleon in Hindi without understanding the meaning of the text!

But the schooling had a huge impact on our storytellers, and they found themselves drawn into teaching:

> I became immediately fond of the children in my first school. I remember getting thrills simply from being called 'New Sir'. When I was no longer new, they called me 'Go-Go Sir' for my long hair and bell-bottomed trousers.

We see in the stories the significance of teachers to their communities, and the pressures it placed on the teachers:

> As a teacher who the society looks up to as being exemplary in all aspects of behaviour, in other words, a role model, one cannot afford to indulge in vices like alcoholism, smoking and the like. Personally, I had to act and behave like a matured old man when I was only 26.

But the experiences of these new teachers were often little better than their experiences as students:

> The school was roofed with banana leaves and classrooms were created with partitions of bamboo mats. There were no teachers' quarters and the Headmaster accommodated me in a corner of a room which was used as his chicken coop.

The difficulties of finding suitable accommodation are a common part of the stories:

> I found that the school was made up of two blocks of semi-permanent and temporary structures. One was the office-cum-store classroom block and the other four-roomed teachers' quarters-cum-store. As three teachers had already occupied the three rooms, I was given the storeroom. For almost a year, that 3 by 4 metre room served as kitchen, bedroom, dining room and sitting room for me, and storeroom for the school. I felt I was always watched living in the store.

There were hardships and compensations:

Although the life at Trongsa was very hard in view of its difficult terrain, tedious journey, unpleasant weather, poisonous snakes, large adhesive striped leaches all round, marshy and sinking location, risk of being attacked by bear, trouble caused by other wild animals, etc. there were other privileges. The main town being located at the tri-junction of the eastern, western and southern highways, I had the opportunity of meeting many old friends and knowing many other new persons on their way to different directions.

The honour of teaching was not always seen as sufficient reward:

Of course, my near and dear ones who had pitched their hope on me becoming an important official in the government were upset. One of my brothers openly protested saying that one must be pretty dumb to take twenty-five years' study to become just a teacher.

But the pleasures of the true teacher shine in these stories:

But the next thirty-five minutes turned out to be a moment of enchantment. I do not remember clearly what went on between the class and me, but the children were wonderful. There were thirty pairs of curious eyes. They seemed interested in what I had to offer them, which I knew was not much. I walked out of the class sensing a strong hankering after the time that had rushed by so quickly. I felt I would never get bored teaching or being at the head of a class of children.

While these stories are overwhelmingly positive, there are hints here and there of painful problems that are perhaps insoluble:

I cannot say whether time changes or people change. Sometimes I feel it is the change of time. Yes, with the change of time, things also change. The new education policy demanded the posting of graduate and post-graduate Education Officers to Dzongkhags. My proven and dedicated service and sincerity were too weak as arguments in the face of formal paper qualifications.

A good deal of the interest of these stories is in the reflections on education made in passing. Many of the storytellers see teaching as a high vocation:

Teaching itself is challenging. The task of educating, civilizing and spiritualizing children with an aim to shape them into being good human beings and good citizens of a nation is indeed challenging. And it is a challenge for every teacher in this world plagued by a brutish sense of materialism and consumerism.

And they record the things they learned as they gained experience:

I tried to do whatever I could for my class like talking the whole day and covering the textbook from cover to cover. Often, I did more that I really needed to, even doing the thinking for them.

We can also glimpse some of the issues of debate amongst Bhutanese educators in these stories:

Many people point out that school discipline has deteriorated since the students are not as respectful as they used to be. The sense of respect is the key to self-discipline since this contributes to the seriousness of attention in class which ultimately affects the learning outcomes in the students.

The dominant impression of these stories is the personal significance of education in a developing country:

My future would have been limited to being a semi-literate farmer or a gomchen. So without the government's support, I could not be what I am today. This has perhaps pushed me to work harder.

And this personal significance manifests itself as dedication to a high calling:

I believe that I am in the service of my king, this country and the people. My duty is to do my best wherever I am sent.

The Bhutanese Minster of Health and Education, the esteemed Loynpo Sangay Ngedup, describes **The Call** in his foreword as a text of 'personal narratives of our education's pioneers' in which we 'discover the sub-text of the history of our education'. One can only agree with the Minister that:

The Call will be an invaluable record of our experiences and form a basis for future educational historians and researchers.

And one can only wish there were more such texts that record the stories of one's own education system and the systems of other countries and cultures. I have worked in Cambodia and Laos, and I have a certain kind of knowledge of those systems, but I would particularly like the enrichment that the personal stories of educators would give to my understanding of education in those countries.

It is to be hoped that in the future **The Call** will available on the internet. Information on how to obtain a copy of **The Call** can be sought from the editor and director of Centre for Educational Research and Development, Mr Thakur Singh Powdyel at the National Institute of Education, Paro, Bhutan (cerdir@druknet.bt).

One can only congratulate the editor for collecting these stories and congratulate the Department of Education for supporting the initiative.

* * *

Centre for Educational Research and Development

Mission: Serving Educational Progress

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 stake-holders.
- 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 and Development
NIE, Rinpung, Paro: BHUTAN Or email them to cerdir@druknet.bt