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for GNH Value Education in Schools

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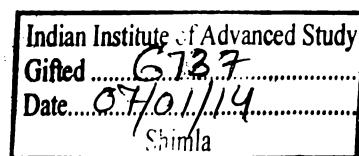


A Proposal for GNH Value Education in Schools

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**Excerpts from the Royal Address by His Revered Majesty,
King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, at the 3rd
Convocation of the Royal University of Bhutan, Paro
College of Education, 17 February 2009**

“I am a firm believer that if there is one word that will stand out above all other words when we describe our country’s amazing journey of modernisation over the last few decades – it is Education. Our institutions, our leaders of today – all of us – including me – are the proud products of the Bhutanese Education System.

“...Our teachers will always be committed and dedicated teachers – our students will always be diligent and loyal students – but it is the duty of parents, policy makers and the government to put the right tools in their hands – the right books, the right curriculum, and the right direction.

“...Contemplate! For what a grave mistake it will be to dream with great optimism of taking our nation from this successful democratic transition into a future of even greater success, without realising that it is not us but our children who must secure the success for the nation.

“...We always repeat what HM the fourth King once said, “the future of our nation lies in the hands of our children.” We must know that His Majesty, my father, meant that quality of education for our young Bhutanese is of paramount importance. And that is our duty as today’s parents, leaders and citizens to provide it...

“...Parents and teachers, I want you to know that as King my passion will always be to nurture our youth, day after day, year after year – for it is their skills, their labour and commitment to the country that will build our future. There is no other path – no other tool – for Bhutan’s future success.

“...Our nation’s Vision can only be fulfilled if the scope of our dreams and aspirations are matched by the reality of our commitments to nurturing our future citizens.”

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Preface

Gross National Happiness (GNH) has now been included in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan, where it states, "The State shall strive to promote those conditions that will enable the pursuit of Gross National Happiness." Its pursuit is not optional, apparently, but constitutional in legal parlance.

And GNH has occurred frequently in the Royal Addresses by His Revered Majesty. In his address to the gathering of Bhutanese graduates of 2007, His Majesty the King again sharply pointed out what the ultimate value of our country is. "Today's world demands economic excellence and I have no doubt that during our lifetime we will be working towards building a stronger economy for Bhutan to further consolidate and secure our own future. In doing so, no matter what our immediate goals are, I am confident that the philosophy of GNH will ensure that ultimately our foremost priority will always be the happiness and the well being of our people."

On another occasion His Majesty has referred to GNH as the "national conscience" underpinning our actions. As a result, we need to find the right tools for experimenting with all the processes of decision making and policy decisions towards the realisation of GNH.

Among the many great initiatives of His Majesty, the educational reform he has launched through the Royal Education Council is of tremendous consequence and acute timing. Similar to his other speeches, the one delivered at the Convocation of the Royal University of Bhutan, Paro College of Education on 17 February 2009, (quoted partly on page v), he urged the government and the people to take the issue of qualitative improvement of education urgently.

In the context of GNH, the weaving of its inherent values into teacher training, classroom teaching and textbooks is of vital importance.

I therefore welcome this opportunity to propose something on the value of an educational framework at the behest of Gyaltshen Penjor and Tashi Wangyal of the Royal Education Council. The original

impetus to explore this issue given by them was bolstered by Hans van Willenswaard - and Wallapa's interest in the issue.

This article is therefore a beginning of a new focus on the complex task ahead to re-orient education on values. I would like to thank Gyaltshen, Tashi, Hans, Jean Timsit and Ross McDonald for their comments and inspiration. Also, Tshoki Zangmo, Karma Wangdi and Sangay Thinley have given me invaluable research support. Many others, whose works I have referred to, have contributed to the contents of the article.

1. Introduction

For the education system to pay attention to values is central to our cultural perspective that is influenced by Buddhism. The educator, the teacher (*ston-pa*), is therefore completely involved in instilling the ethical maturity of students.

I shall not give an account of what GNH is here; that is a separate issue. It's only with regard to value education from a GNH perspective that I shall focus on. Some readers may expect from this article a discussion on the concept and measurement of GNH. However, they will not find it here.

I have put together my thoughts and those who are stimulated by reading and listening to others on value education. To achieve this, I needed an empirical grip on what is happening in this particular field in our schools. This could have been done by examining schools, which are an interacting field of three different parts: teachers, text book content and students.

I had no time to go to school class rooms to observe the situation directly with regard to how value education is taught, if at all. I followed an indirect method: I read most of the textbooks quite rapidly. One can argue that the content of textbooks is central, indeed crucial, in influencing both the role of teachers and students in value education, as textbooks are pivotal to both teacher and student.

As a result, and with the help of researchers from the Centre for Bhutanese Studies (CBS) – we went through about 3,800 pages in 27 textbooks taught right across the social science subjects to get a unified perspective on what is going on in the classroom. If there are some oversights or omissions in the appraisal of textbooks used nationwide, may I be forgiven on account of the breadth of reading.

The exercise was, however, invaluable in giving me an overall impression of what is happening. How, exactly, these textbooks are translated into classroom teaching is difficult to say; all those engaged in teaching would know better.

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I need not point out the ramifications of a poor curriculum. Unlike the activities of public agencies affecting the people, the number of Bhutanese - both students and teachers - directly affected by poor curriculum is the highest. Both students and teachers can be negatively affected by poor textbooks because they are bound by regulation to teach only what they are provided with.

We are not the only country grappling with "value education." It seems that value education is taught in all countries, but the vocabularies used to refer to it are different. It is known as "moral education" in Japan, Korea and European countries, and as "character education" in the USA. In other countries it is known as "civic education", "citizenship education" or "ethics education."

Some countries seem to be somewhat wary of the subject, while others are more explicit. Although it is known by different names the endeavour is, in essence, the same. Yet, globally there is a new emphasis on the importance of a shift in values as a matter of great urgency, towards a shared aspiration of a humane and happy society.

The simplest idea of value education is about creating the emergence of a set of beliefs and attitudes as a person's character and personality unfold, so that their beliefs will influence their behaviour and actions in a positive manner and direction.

But the challenge is how deeply beliefs and attitudes can be planted and retained in a developing mind, especially during the teenage years, when things seem to be vague, confusing and subject to so much change and influence.

In a deeper sense, there is no imposition of values from the outside. Value education should be designed to help students to unfold and develop themselves ethically and realise their ethical potential, despite the many distractions during their early years in Bhutan - and especially in urban Bhutan today.

At another level, it is about exploring common values that will help create a positive future for all by first articulating values, and then

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determining how to apply them to both our personal and collective conduct.

Value education can be made progressive according to the foundations of Piaget and Kolberg's heuristics. In Kolberg's view, value education moves from particular to formal thinking - as children grow up. Value education can therefore be structured from a pre-conventional to a conventional moral reasoning.

Although without a clearer prescription in terms of children's age specification of moral development like Piaget and Kolberg, if the Buddhist orienting framework is used, moral development would involve working on the development of emotional intelligence (I am using the modern jargon to describe the oldest concern of Buddhism, i.e., overcoming negative emotions) through imagination or mental exercises.

The Buddhist approach of moral development places an acute emphasis on reducing negative emotions to embrace inclusiveness and our relationship with the community.

The transformation in a student's life is so huge and rapid that what he thinks as important at age 10, may no longer apply at 15. Furthermore, on reaching adolescence, the values a teenager may think are certain can soon become confused and uncertain.

So, how can we make positive values not only clear but also as a fundamental beacon of progression in children? This will not only involve the lessons in value education in schools, but also the values we as adults transmit to our children, which must be constantly demonstrated through our own actions, decisions, emotions and behaviour. Parents must be examples.

Children and teenagers assimilate a great deal from the world outside the school. Should their parents' values, emotions and behaviour be at variance with what they learn in school, they will discover that we ourselves are at conflict with the values that they are being taught to embrace.

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The border between the behaviour of the adults and children is porous, and adults' behaviour are bound to spill over and influence our children. As a result, value education in school is only half the challenge. The other half is outside the classroom.

2. Lessons from Abroad on Social Responsibility, Trust and Individualism

It is difficult to ascertain whether character education has seriously been taught in the U.S. The choice of US for reference is not systematic. It is influenced by availability of reading material on the internet about the US.

It is contended that the values taught in the US in the last 50 years emphasised individual rights, de-emphasised social responsibility and produced psychological individualism.

In general, according to the criticism presented above, character development in the US has emphasised individual rights, not directly but indirectly. Because of tension between social responsibility and personal rights, it is said that social responsibility has been muted.

Value education taught in the US over the last 50 years also produced psychological individualism, which militates against altruism, against community consciousness, and against social responsibility. As a consequence, trust, commitment and altruism have been undermined. A severe decline in the level of trust has also been reported over the last three decades in the UK, attributed by research to the rise of excessive individualism. Children become suspicious of other and treat them as competitors.

The impact of value education in Bhutan is not yet clearly evident. If the direction is similar to that of the US, not only in the classroom but also in the wider society, negative trends will impinge on the delicate minds of our young children.

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This tension may not be resolved in the minds of the students. The consequences of excessive emphasis on personal rights, social responsibility and psychological individualism will cause deterioration in the trust level among members of society.

I highlight trust because it is crucial to the humanistic view of moral education. Peaceful, human relations and helpfulness towards each other are central factors in creating a contented society.

Another value I should underline is commitment, because it is vitally important for the entire community and towards building a GNH society. The level of commitment is said to have declined in the US. There is a commitment to jobs and professional skills development, but these do not hold a society together as much as the individual who may be in conflict with the social goals.

What is necessary in value education is a process of expansion of our boundaries of consideration and the caring consciousness of others, beyond us, to our friends and relatives.

If one believes in fundamental Buddhist value orientation, commitment to values that restricts our narrow interests to a reasonable degree on the one hand, and commitment to values that affirm welfare of all on the other, is important.

A person's welfare is not achievable by him or her alone, but by pursuing communal welfare and social goals. The foundation for a truly, happy society can easily be eroded if the welfare of the community that underpins our profound interdependencies, disappears due to the wrong direction of value education and other negative influences.

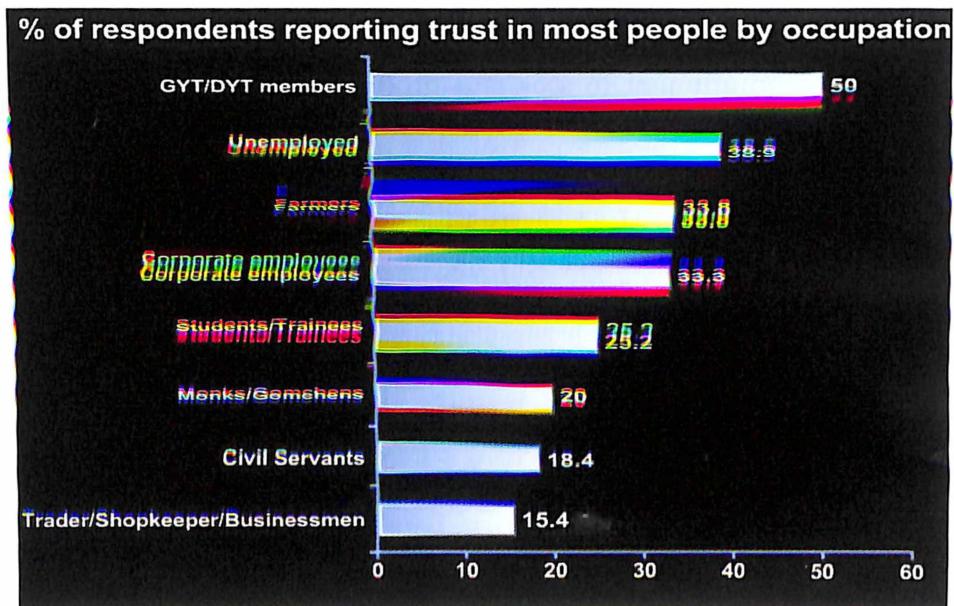
As Ross McDonald has remarked on an earlier draft of this paper, the early data from the GNH survey indicate a certain decline in the collectively-oriented values, and 'a fairly sobering trend away from traditional aspiration and towards a problematic separation of self from an interconnected sense of mutual obligation. It is a trend of huge

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significance for Bhutan and its potential to achieve a genuinely harmonious happiness.'

3. Findings from GNH Survey on Trust, Principles and Emotions

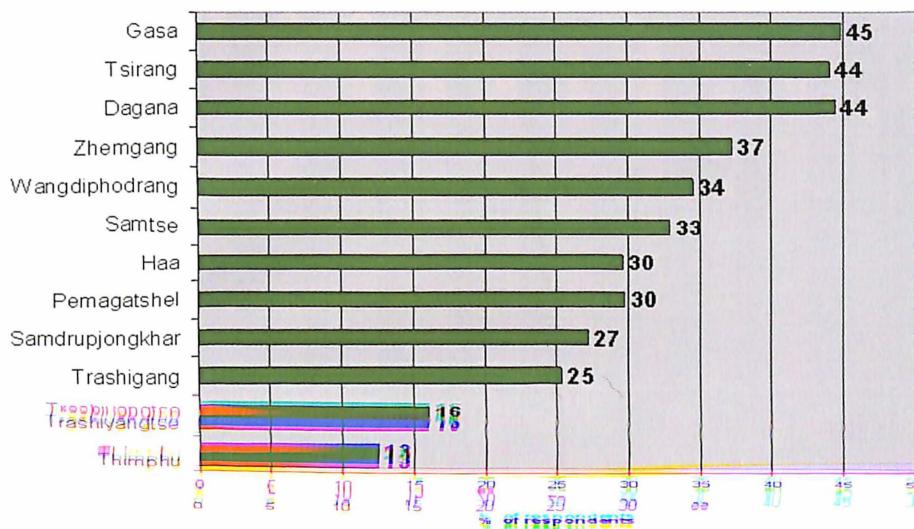
I wanted to find out if the trends in the US in anyway resonate with Bhutan. What is happening in Bhutan at this moment in terms of values? Let us look at some evidence from the GNH survey 2006-2007 carried out by the CBS.



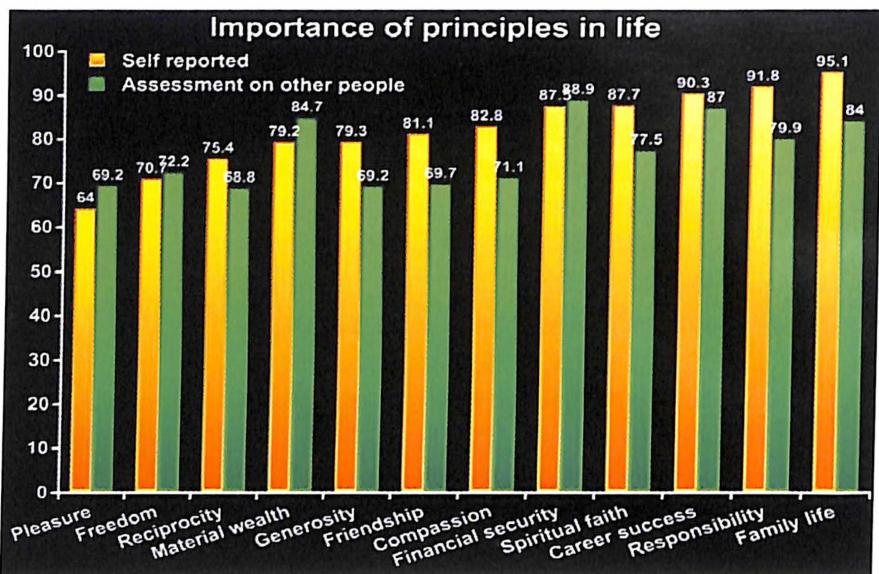
This evidence is not related to school children in particular, but to the country as a whole. Among the better-off sections in our society such as civil servants, traders, shopkeepers, contractors, and businessmen the trust level is comparatively low. This raises an important issue. Why is the trust level at the lowest among the wealthiest elements in our society? Can we extrapolate from this that unless we formulate a different path of development, wealth creation will erode the level of trust in Bhutan? It is a very important question that we must address.

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Trust *most* of the people in general (Bhutan) by dzongkhag



By districts (dzongkhags in Bhutanese), trust level seems to be inversely related to the economic development of a place. The level of trust in Thimphu, the capital, is comparatively the lowest in the country. A large number of students live and study in Thimphu: out of 160,000 students in the country, Thimphu has the highest number. So, if they are embedded in this particular social and cultural environment of low trust level, one can imagine what a struggle it is for the students and for their parents to convince them to hold the right values.



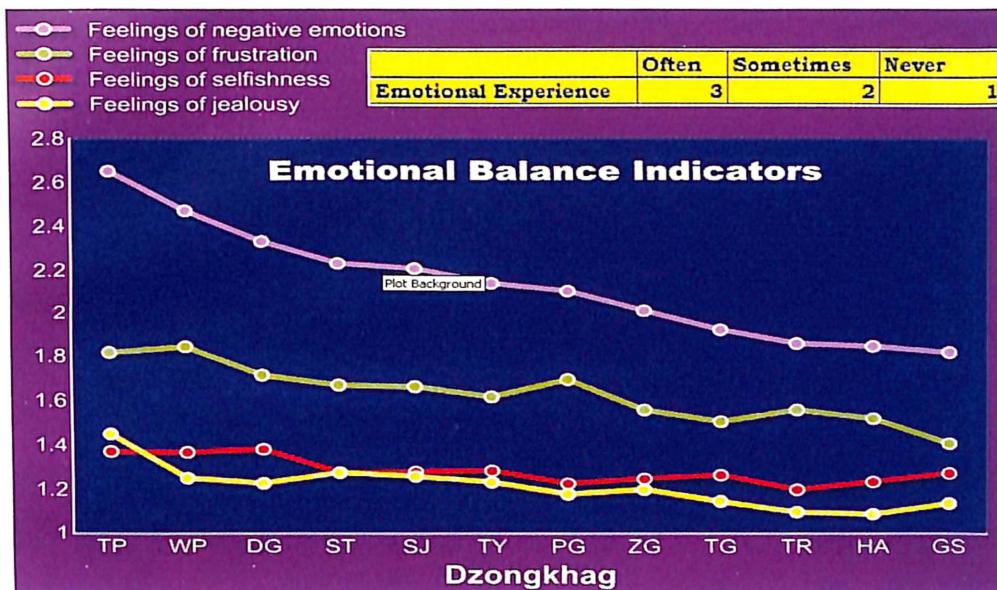
I have no evidence on the commitment level in our country. But I can present indirect evidence on commitment in the chart shown above. One of the numerous findings of the GNH survey of 2006-2007 was an assessment of people's values with regard to themselves and with reference to others.

A comparative study of the two scores reveals that the self-reported assessment for any value is much higher than the assessment of those values that a respondent perceives is held by others. One way of interpreting this data is that an individual thinks that the society is moving in a direction he or she does not want. The proportion of people who hold values such as pleasure and freedom is the lowest compared to the proportion of people who hold values such as family, responsibility, success, spiritual faith etc. About 80% of the people hold that friendship, compassion and generosity to be the important guiding principles in their life. Most people perceive family and responsibility to be of high importance.

I mentioned about the suspected deterioration of trust and commitment in the US. We do not have supporting figures for Bhutan,

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but we do have data on the prevalence of negative emotions - as well as positive emotions.



NB: TP=Thimphu, WP=Wangdi Phodrang, DG=Dagana, ST=Samtse, SJ=Samdrup Jhongkhar, TY=Tashiyangtse, PG=Pemagatshel, ZG=Zhemgang, TG=Tashigang, TR=Tongsa, HA= Haa, GS=Gasa

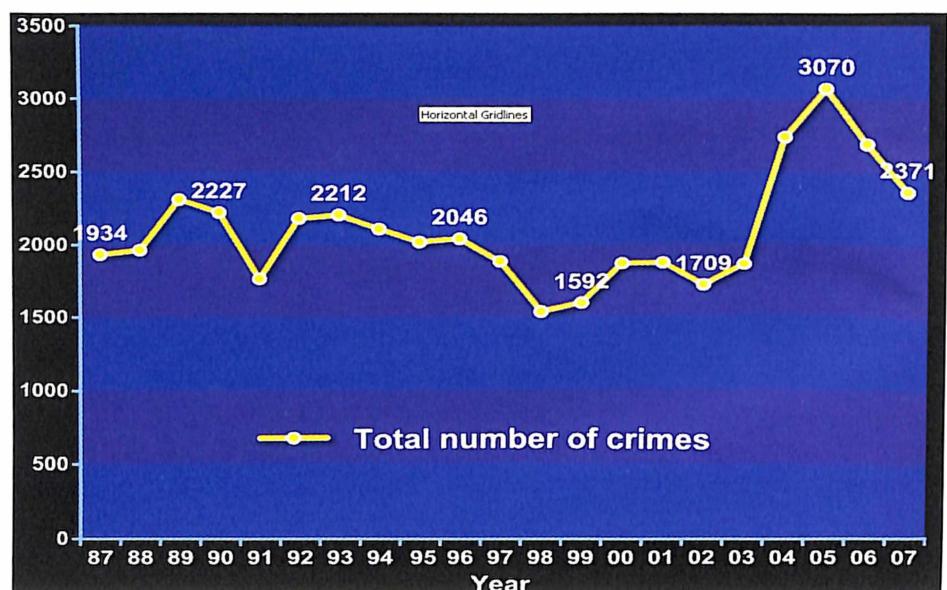
The table shows the distribution of negative emotions across 12 districts. Selfishness, jealousy and frustration are defined as negative emotions, given that they represent other varieties of negative emotions well (by factor analysis). The CBS surveyed about 14 emotions - both positive and negative - in all.

A notable finding is that the prevalence of negative emotions is comparatively highest in Thimphu and Wangdi Phodrang and lowest in Gasa, Haa and Tsirang. A person cannot be altruistic and committed to the welfare of others if he is steeped in negative emotions. The slope of the curves of negative emotions is clear. This implies that if the structure of community, pattern of socialisation and the nature of education are modeled on Thimphu, the other area will almost likely follow Thimphu's example.

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If Thimphu is replicated throughout the country through the creation of urban planning, that has, up to now, been far from sophisticated, then the pattern of negative emotions associated with Thimphu will be replicated. I show this data for the whole country because we don't have any comparable empirical findings for students.

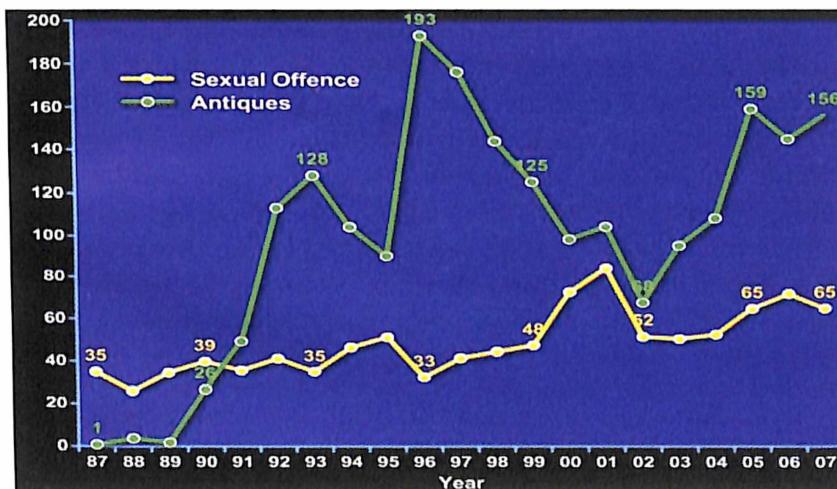
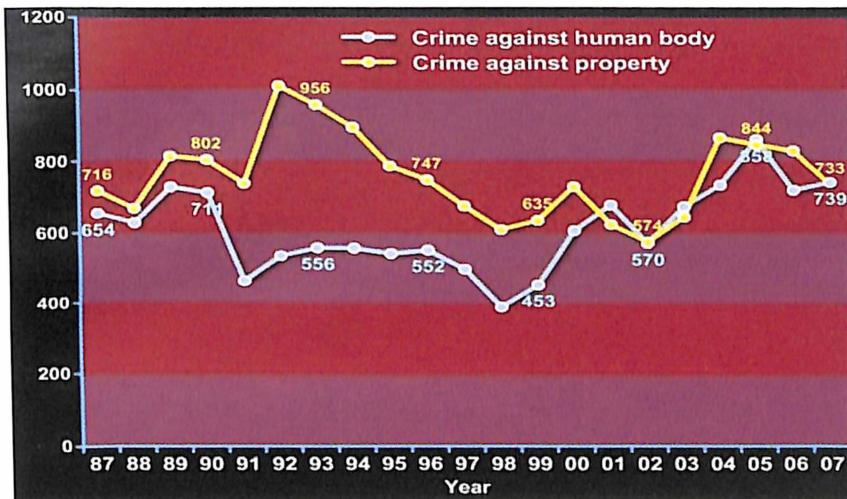
We do have crime statistics for our country, if they can be taken - even remotely - as a sign of declining values among the citizens. One of the indirect associations people make with value education or character development is that it is inversely related to juvenile crime. It could be contended that the growth in the juvenile crime rate and delinquency is directly correlated to poor value education. Surprisingly, police officials turned down the CBS request to give juvenile crime data. However, I have some information for crimes in general collected from various issues of Statistical Year Books as the next best source.



According to Kuensel, the national newspaper, the level of crime has been shooting up over the last three years. Police confirmed this verbally. Here the chart shows the total number of crimes committed from 1987 onwards, derived from Statistical Year Books. The trend is not so alarming; in fact, if it is standardised by the population, the

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crime rate has not risen. Accurate census figures only became available only after 2005 census. Data before this point in are unreliable to estimate crime rates.



In absolute terms, crimes committed against people have been always more than crimes committed against property in any given year. This again is a very interesting pattern. And it prompts questions. Antique crimes have no predictable trend in this country: this may be due to their dependence on demand from Taiwan, China, Europe or the US. It

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may also be due to diversion of police attention to other forms of crime.

There has been a mild increase in the number of sexual offences over the years. Nevertheless, that should be a cause of concern, given that victims are mostly young females. There is also an element of under estimation in this area of recording. The GNH survey confirmed that the reporting of sexual victimisation and domestic violence can be underestimated. The self reported confirmations of sexual victimisation and domestic violence are lower than the perception of incidences of these crimes among others.

In any case, there cannot be a direct correlation between these crime statistics and value education. Criminals reflected in crime statistics were usually above 18.

4. Observation of Value Contents in 27 Textbooks

How can value education be taught? In principle we can have both teacher or text book focus. It is theoretically possible. But both teacher and text book focus doesn't apply to Bhutan. There is teacher focus, but no textbook focus in countries such as South Korea. Only certified teachers are allowed to teach moral education in South Korea. I couldn't carry out further research on whether other countries are doing similar things as South Korea. In our country, there is neither teacher nor textbook specialisation on value education. Every teacher is broad based in a way; every teacher attempts to teach value education as long as the textbook contains passages related to it. Hence, examining textbooks for their value contents becomes important.

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HOW DO WE TEACH VALUE EDUCATION?		
Teacher Specialisation in Value Education		
Text Book Specialisation in Value Education	Yes	No
Yes	?	?
No	South Korea	Bhutan

Whether we have value education or not, John Dewey said that education is not value neutral. There is a hidden value education, according to him; it's just a question of what kind and to what degree it exists. The hidden value curriculum, he claimed, exists in the systems of symbols, disciplinary codes, hierarchy, ceremonies, and rituals that heighten a pupil's collective identity and values. The atmosphere of any school is thus not neutral. But equally, there is a view that those who design value education also cannot be free from values themselves.

How do we teach value education in our country? As we have seen, it is dispersed and scattered in textbooks. In order to teach value education we need to know the value content of the text books being taught. This point is no great surprise to educationists, but for those outside the Bhutanese education system, I suppose the chart below presenting a matrix of classes and various textbooks that apply to each class, is informative.

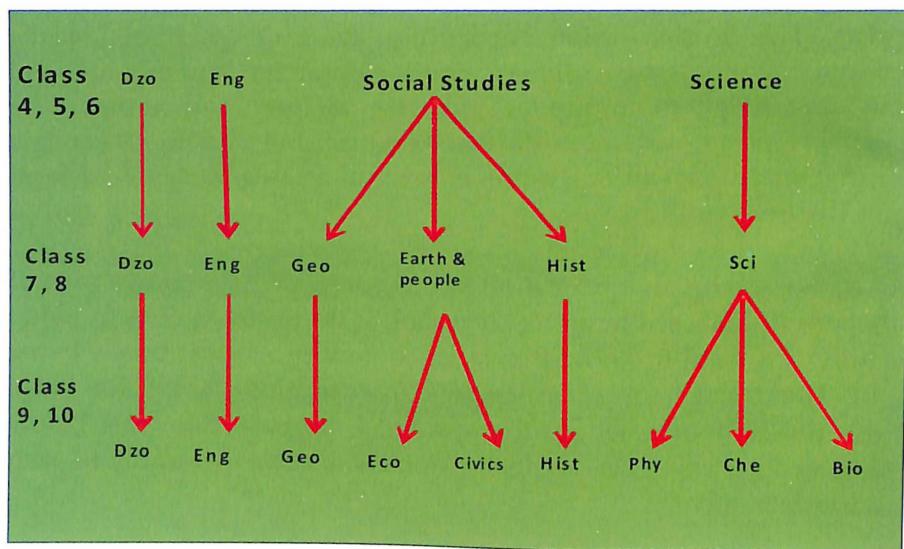
I looked at textbooks from classes 4 and 6. Two subjects - Dzongkha, the national language of Bhutan, and English - are present throughout the hierarchy of our education system.

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'Social Studies' is a single book, though of different standards for each class, from classes 4, 5 to 6. I mention this because all of them carry lessons related to value education. As a student reaches classes 7 and 8, 'Social Studies' is split into three subjects: Geography, History, and the Earth and People. Geography and History goes on upstream from classes 7 to 10, but Earth and People divides into Economics and Civics.

In Science, there is a general textbook from classes 4 to 8 but from class 8, it divides into Physics, Chemistry and Biology. In addition, Indian Economics is being taught. I am intrigued on why it is continued in our education system. It is relevant for knowledge, just as the study of economics of all other SAARC regions is relevant, but students have limited time, and choices have to be made as to what subject is best for Bhutanese students.

The choice is whether students want to study Indian economics or whether they want to divert their time to another subject such as mathematics or science.



All of these textbooks have value education sections. These 27 textbooks were read rapidly to glean information on the value

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education they contain. There may be other things being taught, which were not reflected in textbooks but “What is not published has not happened at all,” as someone said. So we need to focus on the actual evidence.

Some conclusions have been made. The expected areas related to moral and social character are present in our textbooks by being woven indirectly into narratives, stories and biographies. This is usual in designing value education delivery. The question is to what degree it is present.

Values such as social conformity and respect for hierarchy are emphasised. In fact, hierarchy is emphasised too much, in the sense that there seems to be an excessive detail about high post holders such as *dzongda* (district administrators), *thrimpon* (judges), ministers and their ceremonial attire like *kabneys* (scarves).

In my opinion, the textbooks have built up the importance of civil servants excessively in the eyes of students. These details are not so crucial or necessary, in my view. Bureaucrats and politicians are not the only ones who are patriotic and are not the only objects of moral learning. In fact, going by news reports, as well as the perceptions of the people covered in the GNH survey, they are not the most respected members in society, in contrast to the textbooks’ portrayal of them. Textbooks should not be the space where politicians and bureaucrats should enjoy such prestige in the eyes of the students. It is also unfair to present them as more patriotic or upright than people from other walks of life.

I think that in building up their image in the eyes of students, even if it is desirable, there is no reasoning given in textbooks about why we even want conformity. There is nothing on that at all; it is all descriptive. This criticism on description without reasoning applies to other topics. On one hand, there is a great deal of recurrent emphasis on festivals and national holidays. On the other hand, there is no explanation on these in relation to values. With regards to tradition, traditional games and sports appear frequently in textbooks, dispersed in subjects such as Geography, History and Social Studies.

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Personal hygiene is emphasised in the lower primary school textbooks. Although this is necessary, more complex issues could be taught as students climb up the education ladder. A simple example can be why water is dirty and polluted; it is dirty and undrinkable because someone or some establishment is polluting it upstream. That way we can get into various economic and industrial issues to understand why water becomes polluted. But nothing of this sort appeared in any textbooks that were reviewed. Structural issues and causal linkages were avoided.

Similarly, while giving lessons related to the environment, say, mining as a contributory cause of river pollution, it is not discussed. There are some sporadic discussions on the harmful impacts of tobacco and alcohol, but again the issue fails to be embedded in some larger idea of why people become addicted. Not only individuals, but an industry of intoxication is involved. Alcohol consumption is presented as an individual problem, yet there are some causal agencies like distilleries and bars, which are directly involved in the abetting and aiding of addiction for commercial reasons.

The point is, that if there were no production and distribution on a commercial scale, there would be far less consumption. In all coverage of harmful substances, there is no morally engaging discussion that would bring to the surface ethical choices.

Stories based on mythologies and morals, and on Buddhist principles such as compassion and generosity are present, but textbooks do not give students any techniques or training on ways of increasing their motivation. Not even at class 10 level. As a result, the discussion on values remains poor and underdeveloped. So it has been, in a way, just a delivery of jargons.

Mutualism, which is a businesslike approach (you help me, I help you, and often you help me more than I help you), is covered quite strongly in textbooks in various subjects. Another area - reciprocity and exchange - is particularly emphasised, especially with respect to parents. With respect to the monarchy, it could be advocated in a stronger and clearer way given the centrality of this institution.

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Parental repayment of kindness is sharply focused, but again it cannot hold the students' attention deeply because there is no grounding of this concept in moral argument. The delivery of the vocabulary is much stronger than the conceptual explanation. Why do you have to be grateful to your parents, elders or the community at large? On this there is not a single paragraph. So, the area of logical reasoning is simply not addressed.

From the GNH point of view, gratitude, where it is deserved, is a positive sentiment to be used with respect to the monarch and parents.

Meanwhile, more complicated concepts like merit and *karma* are well covered. Rebirth is asserted in History and Social Studies, but as I mentioned before, no conceptual grounding in these ideas are offered. I do admit that although it is the most complex part of Buddhist teachings - and one cannot understand it easily - it is often included. It is necessary to supply better arguments, which can be rational and logical, such as those presented by Vasubhandu (open Yignyen).

In providing some biographical sketch for historical figures, who are also philosophical and religious figures, there is an excessive focus on their magical aspects. But the magical aspects have to be contextualised in terms of tantric aspects of Buddhism. Otherwise, it is not understandable; it will be like a Theravadan trying to understand Vajrayana: it is not easy to grasp. Some intermediate steps are missing. Pema Lingpa, Phajo, Zhabdrung Rinpoche, and similar kinds of figures are presented in that way. This, I think, carries a great risk. Textbooks have to present them within the Mahayana approach.

Tantrism focuses on direct efforts, on the whole person, on energy, on symbolism and on the idea that *samsara* is equivalent to *nirvana*. At least textbooks have to lay the context for understanding Vajrayana figures. Take one mistaken lesson in one Social Studies textbook. Students are asked to take five scenes on Tertoen Pema Lingpa's *ter* extraction in Mebartsho and act them out. This is bizarre, because a student cannot enter that magical world and cannot be expected to simulate jumping into the river to find something. The pedagogy is

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wrong. That is the danger of handling such issues in a trivial way, without any deeper grounding.

It might be better to focus on philosophical and ethical ideas in a more simplified form at the lower levels and then advance toward the higher ground. Stories and folktales, in which individuals and animals benefit and contribute to human welfare, are encompassed. Also, clear examples associated with Ashoka and Buddha are included. If textbooks are presenting them as people possessing ethical and spiritual qualities of Bodhisattva for today, it poses a problem of whether they can be understood, especially at the lower level. At the higher level, people have a more complex view of the world. Yet these are not examples of moral figures people will really emulate today. So, presenting them as moral figures will be a bit too elusive and demanding. I would not like to copy Ashoka for I have no institutional power unlike monarchs, ministers and secretaries. As for Pema Lingpa, we live in a world largely different from Pema Lingpa's. So we can't copy him either.

More pertinent issues need to be considered while portraying moral idealistic figures for students. Just as an example, who the Buddha is and what he taught are two entirely different questions; we could do more on the ethical and moral relevance of his teachings in schools. In that regard, schools should be introduced to the key concepts of the teachings of Mahayana such as bodhicitta, the bodhisattva path, principle of interdependencies and non-intrinsic self (emptiness), and skillful means etc.

Students, like other people, have two types of memories. One is how things work requiring development of reasoning and logic. The other is to pick up and remember names and dates. I have learnt so many things and, equally, I have forgotten so many things. I may now know only 10 percent of what I learnt. That is declarative memory - to remember dates, people, and names of places.

There is too much emphasis on acquisition of declarative memory by students. Textbooks should be designed to ask less of the mechanical storage of names and dates to wean students away from rote-learning.

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But how to reason morally or ethically is taught less at this time. It may be fair to argue that one can't teach this to primary school children; they need to be taught in a different manner. After class 4 or 5, however, students should graduate towards moral reasoning to deal with existential problems; and on how to approach moral dilemmas. Though there is an abundance of folktales, biographical sketches and mythologies in textbooks, they do not lucidly present moral dilemmas. Good and evil dichotomies are drawn too quickly. Textbooks have to challenge students to think how they would resolve moral dilemmas according to values. In presenting the predicaments of real life, stories could be better selected. Stories jump immediately to classifying things into black and white, right and wrong.

The progressiveness of value education over the classes is largely absent. In the lower classes, students should be learning do's and don'ts, but that has to change to introduce the concept of right and wrong later. At the final stage, universal values have to be taught. All along, how values are expressed in our culture should be made clear.

Inversion of standards occurs very frequently. For instance, some complex ideas sometimes appear in the textbooks of the lower classes whereas they should appear in the upper classes. Meanwhile, some basic things occur in the textbooks of higher classes. This reversal of standards occurs quite frequently. This suggests that there is no central consciousness (a master mind who has a complete and overall view of all textbooks), behind the textbooks. Educationists have to assume that an individual from age six to age 15 is on a path of improvement, and he or she must be encouraged and motivated to ascend the mountain of knowledge without going over the same ground again.

Kohlberg, Piaget or Buddhist moral development theories may help in structuring the progression of standards in value education. Bear in mind that if educationists apply Kohlbergian or Piagetian ideas of moral development for evaluation, individuals brought up in Buddhist moral structures could underscore in Piagetian and Kohlbergian assessment. This happens because self-esteem and competitiveness, for example, are under-emphasised for good reason in Buddhist character development.

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In value education, we can't escape from Buddhist influences in Bhutan. Most of our value education will be underpinned by Buddhism. If one believes in it, one might want to structure it according to Buddhist ethical development. Buddhist concepts may be unfolded gradually, like a variegated carpet as a student advances through the classes. Moreover, the key concepts of Mahayana like compassion, non-intrinsic existence, interdependencies and ethical training schemes built around ethics, meditation and wisdom are convergent with universal human development.

There is an over-emphasis on adhering to the current law in textbooks. This is conventional and expected, but at a certain point there is a need to distinguish between law and morality. Law is not always moral and vice versa. Law is a medium, not a value in itself.

In a few cases, the standards are haphazard. There is no progression, as mentioned earlier. The gradient in Dzongkha and English for classes 3 and 4 is too steep, seen from the next lower level. In my opinion, Dzongkha for class 9 is tougher than Dzongkha for class 10, though others' assessment might differ from mine. Its effect may be noticeable in examination results. More students may be failing in class 4 Dzongkha. We might want to test this statistically.

In many Social Sciences, Economics, and Geography textbooks, there is a lack of precision of language and concept. These deficiencies come out as odd expressions, of which I have made copious documentation in a separate compilation titled "Samples of typos/odd expressions, dates information, and text related to value contents in 27 textbooks".

There are too many irrelevant asides in Civics and History. History of the 19th and 20th century are taught in classes 9 and 10. They are loaded with details and asides that are not relevant for schools. For example, the treachery of Uma Deywa, a ruler of Bhutan, mentioned in a book is not relevant to the main line of the story. It is relevant only if an individual is doing research to a certain depth and detail. To enable students to see the whole picture, textbooks should not be laden with such details. They should deal with the main focus of the narrative.

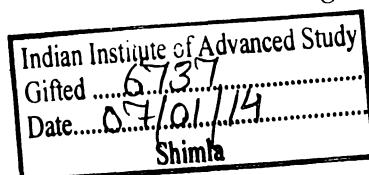
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In general, textbooks have been reprinted many times since 1992. Three reprints for Geography was the minimum and 11 reprints for Social Science for class 4 was the maximum. The last reprint for Social Science textbooks was done in 2007. But no major improvement has taken place since the first print and there has been no review of errors; reprints were done in a mechanical way. In this respect, the School Curriculum Division of the Ministry of Education could have been a little more discerning.

The final conclusion is that revisions are needed in Social Science, Geography, History, Civics and Economics textbooks. These are areas I am familiar with because of my background. I am not able to suggest anything new in Science textbooks other than to make one observation. In the lower classes, Social Science textbooks assume the provision of laboratory equipment. In the absence of equipment, which is a well-known constraint, it provokes curiosity as to how they cope. A lot of imagination on the part of students and teachers must be involved to compensate for the lack of equipment.

Civics is understandably now outdated. Since 2007 the system of government has changed structurally and institutionally and therefore Civics must be revised quickly. Surprisingly, the textbooks in Economics also are obsolete. Information stops in 8th Five Year Plans (FYP's) in Economics textbooks. Our students are learning things about 7th and 8th Five FYPs. Many things have changed in 9th and 10th FYPs. The School Curriculum Division has had no time to revise Civics to keep up with events, but in Economics, the amount of outdated information is surprising. Most case studies in Economics are from Kuensel issues from 1995, the year the textbook was probably written. Case studies culled from Kuensel are 12 years old.

For instance, the town of Tsimalakha is depicted in Economics as it was in 1995. The transport service characterised is similarly dated. The job prospects and manpower situation described are equally outdated, having been drawn from an old projection by Royal Civil Service Commission. If we intend to prepare students for the real world of work, serious amendments are needed in Economics, Civics and History. Too much irrelevant data is being loaded on to our students.



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For example, the concept of 18 dzongkhags in our country is still present in one textbook. A great deal of rewriting work awaits the School Curriculum Division, the Royal Education Council and the Ministry of Education in this respect.

Finally, I have quantified mistakes found in our textbooks, which is a byproduct of checking for value content in the course of reading 148 chapters out of 176 chapters very quickly. I cannot be sure that all the mistakes were caught. The total number of pages read was 3,743 and 568 errors that include typos were found in those pages. They do make huge difference. Sometimes a mistake changes the meaning of the sentence completely. On average one mistake appears every six pages. That comes to about 20 errors in every textbook. If we focus on the rate of typo mistakes the density of errors occur more in English, Science and Social Studies textbooks.

Class	Subject	Typo/Odd or unclear expression	Value related text	Pages reviewed
4	Composition and Language (Dz.)	7	7	92
4	English	85	15	322
4	Science	28	4	194
4	Social Studies	47	42	128
5	Composition and Language (Dz.)	7	9	103
5	English	18	18	240
5	Social Studies	80	39	154
6	Composition and Language (Dz.)	3	8	118
6	English	27	25	262
6	Science	5	10	133
6	Social Studies	7	43	118
7	Composition and Language (Dz.)	6	13	192
7	English	23	57	206
7	Geography	18	5	69
7	History	18	0	16

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8	Composition and Language (Dz.)	15	14	224
8	English	46	18	224
8	Geography	47	9	113
8	History	14	1	107
9	Reading and Literature (Dz.)	2	19	153
9	Language and Grammar (Dz.)	1	16	83
9	Civics	8	4	24
9	English	10	34	132
9	History	28	0	20
10	Language and Grammar (Dz.)	0	19	100
10	Reading and Literature (Dz.)	2		192
10	Economics	13	0	26
Total		565	429	3745

There are a large number of texts related to value education: 429 episodes in 148 chapters. In terms of value content, the breath of issues or episodes covered is adequate. But it is how conceptually clearly one can deliver value education that needs improvement. If it is dispersed and vague, neither students nor teachers will be able to draw conclusions.

5. Contestation between an Emerging World View vs GNH World View

I now come to the proposal part, after the empirical investigation of textbooks. The parallel between the advent of Buddhism in ancient India and today's Bhutan at the broadest level is quite interesting.

We now face a sudden transformation and dislocation, bringing value and community disintegration at this conjuncture in our history. Transformations in our country are notable in terms of the structural change of society, people leaving the relatively well-ordered and stable environment of villages to settle in towns and undertake new occupations; the emergence of commercial corporations and entities;

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the expansion of bureaucracy to regulate hitherto unregulated aspects of life; the politics of institutionalised divisions like the two parties, and so forth. Accompanying all of these is a new sense of individualism.

Not all people think karma and social responsibility are important. I mention these two issues in one sentence to underline the point that a person's karma can hardly improve without commitment to social responsibility. How can one stock up merit and good karma unless one earns it through contribution to society? I would think that enlightenment is collective, in the sense that a person cannot advance ethically alone without affecting others positively. Moreover, the motivation behind any social action, if we are to emphasise a Buddhist ethical point, has to be intrinsic, not for social prestige or other instrumental purposes.

In Buddha's time, societal transition was marked by the advent of the iron age, but now we are directly moving towards the information age in our country, in which attention is the ultimate resource.

Bhutan did not go from agriculture to the basic, chemical, manufacturing stage, and from the basic manufacturing stage to the consumer goods manufacturing stage. We also did not pass through the consumer goods manufacturing stage to the high-tech manufacturing stage - and thence to the information age. We have gone from cement and ferro alloys production, and vegetable oil packaging (palmomein oil was imported from Singapore and Malaysia, repackaged and exported to India in recent years), straight to the information age.

In the information age, attention is first seized and manipulated through commercials, entertainment and propaganda from both overseas and local sources. And then, those who wish to convince an individual as a consumer is able to do so. The skills and organisations necessary to produce new goods as opposed to individualised or household production like textiles, except agriculture commodities, have not been sufficiently dealt with.

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However, some of the major agricultural commodities are already in decline primarily due to substitution by cheaper imported goods. Imports of rice and wheat not only displace domestic production of these cereals, but also other cereals because these imports are substitute foods for millet and maize. As a result, one of major reasons of change has been the transformation of Bhutanese into consumers, at the expense of their role as producers, in the information age.

The other feature of our age is population increase. Globally, this crowding of the earth is a very significant new phenomenon that will affect Bhutan in unexpected ways. The rise of climate change refugees, suffering from displacement and hunger due to altered weather patterns in the next few decades in the coastal regions like Bangladesh, should be truly worrying. Bhutan's population has been increasing for the last four decades. The risk of climate change will be compounded by the phenomenal rise in population movement in South Asia.

In my opinion, our population will stabilise contrary to official estimates, by 2018. Nevertheless, urbanisation will not stabilise unless a conscious, different effort is made in our five year plans. There is no discussion about this at all at the moment. There will be a huge dislocation if urbanisation is accepted as a fait accompli as it is now, projecting as inevitable that 70% of the Bhutanese will live in urban areas by 2050, with huge negative consequences, including farming.

Against these large scale changes taking place in our country, what happens to the emerging world view eventually impinge on our values. There is no space here to discuss this in any detail, but a summary is relevant. It provides the basis for certain arguments for understanding the underlying worldview. If the government, the bureaucracy and the business community, the groups who drive the direction of society, hold a certain world view, it will be reflected in the policies or major decisions affecting the country. Together, these three groups are the main source of any new direction; their world view matters immensely. How their world view can be aligned with GNH is crucial.

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At an official level, GNH is about removing obstacles of public nature to collective happiness through policies, programmes and associated public expenditure. Because official actions create conditions either for or against the success of society's striving for contentment, government decisions and public expenditure, which is at present about 25% of GDP, are vitally important.

A dominant theme in the emerging worldview is that free trade, foreign investment and the free market, all of which lead to very open economy, is desirable and that official policies must be aligned with this trend.

As Michael Sandel has shown, the world view has its origin in the idea that the market approach is best, and the role of the government is to address market failure, by simply mimicking the market. On the other hand, the recent failure of the financial market at the heart of such a world view, should be a reason to cause serious doubts.

At the other extreme, this particular world view that is dependent on, and fed by free trade and foreign investment, may make social and economic democracy difficult to attain, as Eric Hobsawm has indicated in the context of Europe - but equally relevant to a country like Bhutan. These aspects of the worldview are also expected, though it seems very ambiguous to me, to help Bhutan solve many problems including the of lack of capital, technology, know-how and unemployment.

There is a tendency to think of these factors as solutions to problems, while giving up indigenous thinking on how to resolve them in any substantial way within our own social, political and economic context. If a government implements all these standards - neo-liberal prescriptions - the consequence will be that one can hardly claim the identity of Bhutan and GNH, while emphasising dominant views and ideas such as the free market exactly like others. This world view will gradually influence the whole environment.

If one espouses standard prescriptions all the way, then the inclusion of GNH values in textbooks would be an anachronism. We should not propose value education of the type we have been attempting, or

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reinforce it in the way I am suggesting in terms of GNH. The two approaches don't match, and the underlying tension calls for a fundamental platform of clear thinking and position.

6. Linking Societal Vision with GNH Values

If educationists want the concept of GNH society as a goal in our textbooks, we have to clearly outline the ideal state or the future that is best for Bhutan. In other words, we need a vision.

In planning for the future, one must first look at how we want the world to look in terms of valued outcomes, and then at how we must be and act in order to proceed towards this goal. We have to clearly outline what we want with respect to key elements in society, sector by sector, dzongkhag by dzongkhag, Five Year Plan by Five Year Plan. We should not continue as we have been in the way textbooks are written, nor should we proceed as we have done in socio-economic planning, describing the current situations and then trying to think of incremental changes.

On the contrary, we have to create a clear outline of our vision: that is what we mean by not moving from the present situation to the future, but using reverse engineering from our ideal dream state to the contemplation of actions in the present time.

At the same time, this approach leads us to the distinction between – what value theorists like Milton Rokeach would define as the “instrumental and terminal values” respectively - or Weber as the “instrumental and substantive modes” of moral thinking. We have to focus on what sort of values we must create in our students to realise our vision.

As a consequence, this approach will make much of the information now displayed in the current textbooks obsolete. For instance, students should not be made to understand what is going on in Tsimalakha potato marketing, Druk Air or any other sub-sector at present, which is best left to requirements of general knowledge on current affairs, but which take up substantial space in current textbooks.

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We must try to marry Buddhist values inherent in our society, which I don't believe will ever go against the values needed for the 21st century. However, we are in now danger, if one takes a global overview, of facing serious trouble. The current economic system might break down in 50 years due to climate change, population rise, resource scarcity, migration etc.; it cannot go on as it has been over the last half century.

So, we should take into account the predictions and theories about the future to advocate practicing GNH in order to arrive at a common, global future of sustainability, peace and happiness. With respect to each domain, values are outlined along with specific practices to express those values. Further, four broad methods of value education will be suggested. All of these recommendations require the rewriting of several textbooks.

We may prefer to amend our textbooks instead of rewriting to cut costs, but it's not impossible to rewrite for a small outlay. For a good textbook, someone who is really committed and devoted could achieve this in six months or less. The textbooks must then undergo trial in the classrooms before being certified.

Usually one finds a cluster of phrases with regards to universal values such as the examples shown in the next chart. But what makes us who we are is the particular traits due to our history and culture. Our textbooks on value education therefore have to also address the particular values of Bhutan, which are positive, while foregoing those that appear obstructive towards ethical progress. The direction should be from the particular to the universal and not from the universal to the particular. Particular values have to be imparted because the particular is the foundation that gives us a real identity and culture.

GNH is the developmental philosophy of our country and so the values that are contained in it must be reflected in textbooks. There must be correspondence and coherence between these two: values and visions to be mutually supported by the other.

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But in doing so, we will face criticism. Some people will contend that textbooks should be value neutral because we live in a democracy. Those who favour such views may go so far as to say that schools should not promote values, not because values are not needed per se, but because they cannot agree on them. Each value is a priority from an individual or group's point of view, but the priority of values between individuals and groups may differ. However, if one accepts GNH, we are obliged to do something serious at the textbook level.

Universally Shared Values?

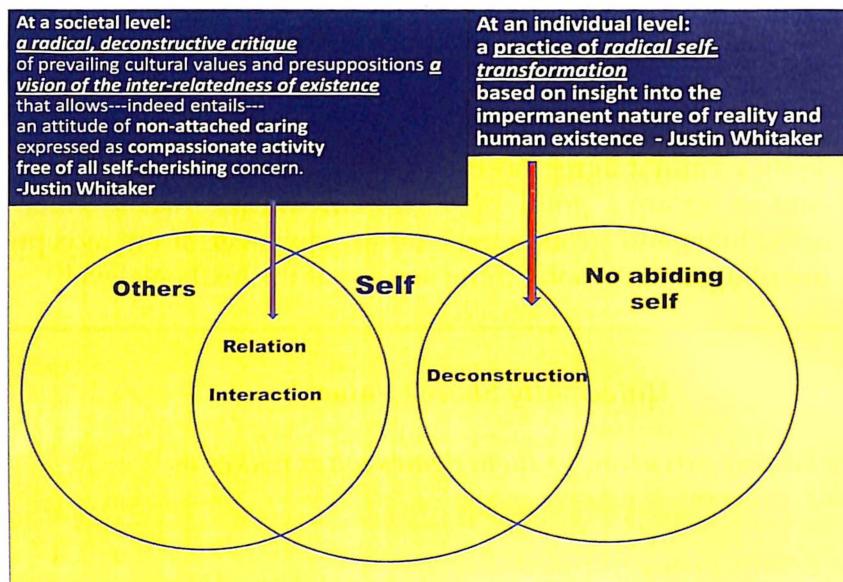
But only paying attention to them denies what makes us particular, diverse

*Equality, Equity, Justice, Fairness
Freedom, Participation, Inclusion
Peace and Non Violence
Respect, Diversity, Tolerance, Acceptance, Understanding*

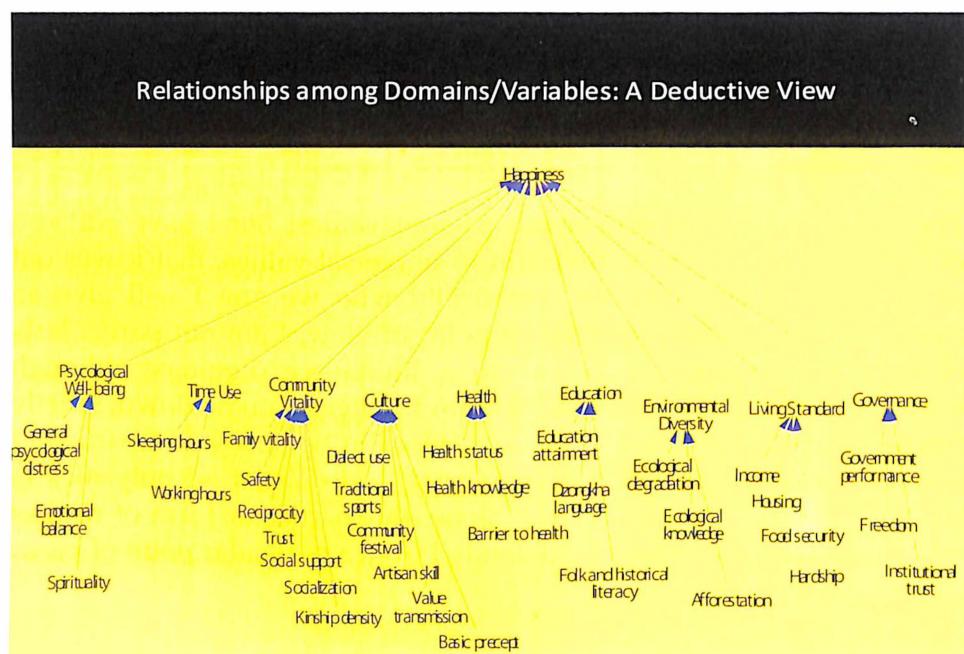
*Human Dignity, Individual Worth
Responsibility – personal, social, civic, environmental
Care and Concern for others, Compassion, Collective well being
Honesty, Integrity, Transparency, Accountability*

The chart above lists universally shared values. But I have added a question: if we only pay attention to universal values, that leaves out those values that make us specifically who we are. I will give an example. From a universal value point of view, I am not particularly obliged to recognise and bow to a Bhutanese dignitary although within our tradition, I should. Nor am I obliged to bow down, strictly from a universal point of view, to a *lama*. But because it is a particular way of manifesting respect in our society, I do. Yet, if we only stick to such universal values as respect alone, this particular form of respect will disappear. It can only be defended from a particular point of view.

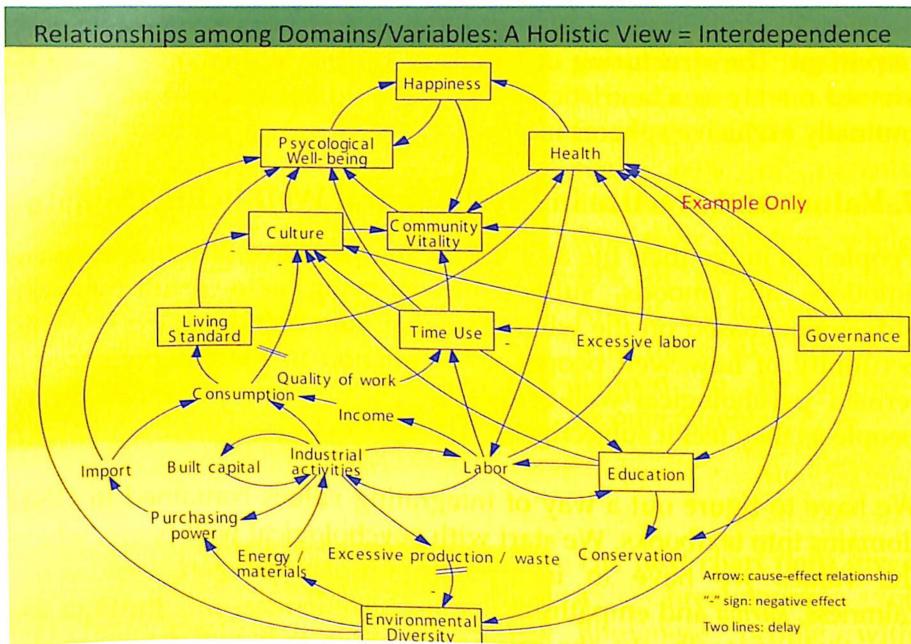
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Values are linked to vision. The vision of our government is GNH. It follows that certain values consistent with GNH vision have to be inculcated in our students.



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I now come to GNH and how it should be reflected in the curriculum. One way of thinking on this issue is that values related to each of the nine GNH domains should be specified and practiced. These nine domains are specified as constituents of happiness, and consider happiness as being absolutely multi-dimensional. If a person gets various elements under each of these nine aspects of life right, the chances for happiness will be much higher. The deductive chart above shows the relationship to be linear.

In reality, what is most important is the inter-relationship between these domains rather than the domains themselves. The inter-relationship is absolutely non-linear as shown in the holistic chart. To get things right in culture is not enough. We have to get it right in culture with respect to other domains, for instance, the economy or industrial activity. If we don't, then the relationship will break down. If we get it right in terms of education, but don't get it right in education with respect to education in psychological well-being, again an adverse relationship will develop. Thus, the inter-relationship between these variables that point to the profound interdependencies

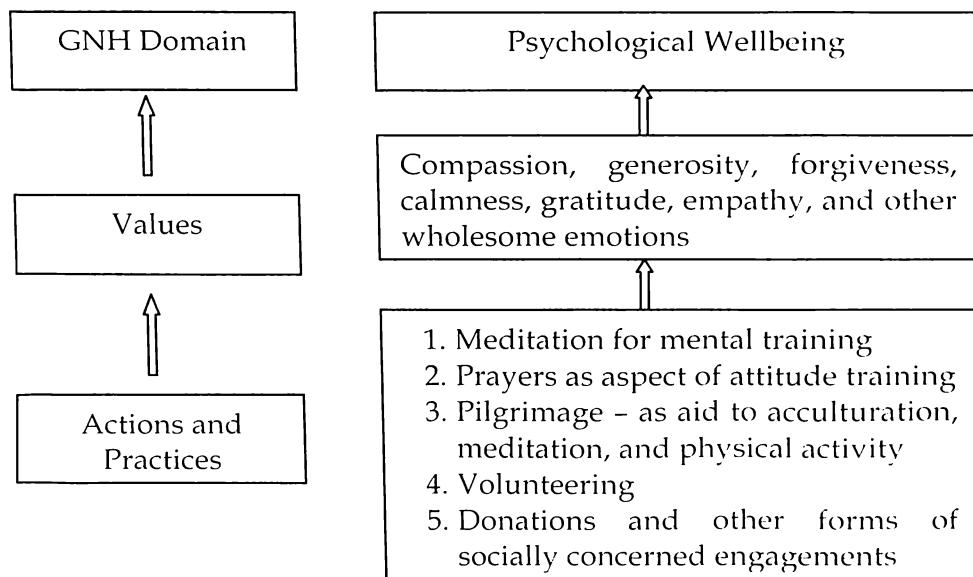
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between various aspects of our life - and the lives of others - is important. The structuring of values according to domains should be viewed merely as a heuristic device: it should not isolate domains into mutually exclusive spheres in practice.

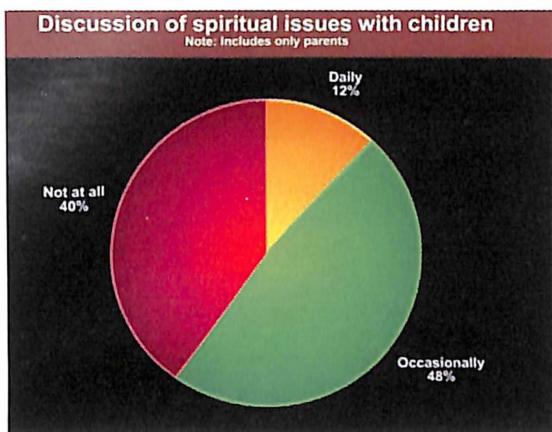
7. Values and Practice in Psychological Well-being Domain

People can judge their life as a whole. As they have differing states of emotions and moods, subjective well-being is a result of such judgements based on the whole range of their emotional experiences. Scrutiny of how well people do in relation to these experiences is termed psychological well-being here. It concerns the inner life of people as they feel it subjectively.

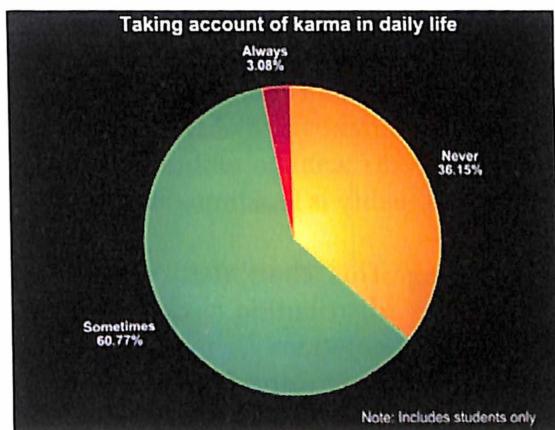
We have to figure out a way of integrating values contained in GNH domains into textbooks. We start with psychological well-being, where the values we have to incorporate are compassion, generosity, calmness, *karma* and empathy. We must also demonstrate through the narratives in textbooks the kind of practice that will facilitate the formation of positive behaviour, wholesome emotions and character among the students.



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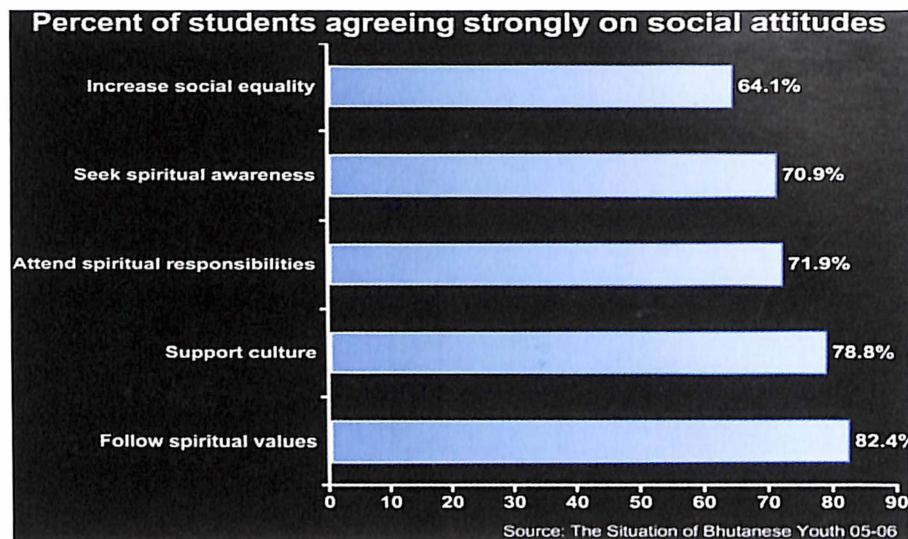
Values are displayed through practicing them. According to the evidence from the GNH survey, some 60% of parents discuss spiritual issues with their children, while 40% of parents do not. And if we identify as to who these 40% are, they happen to be higher-income parents.



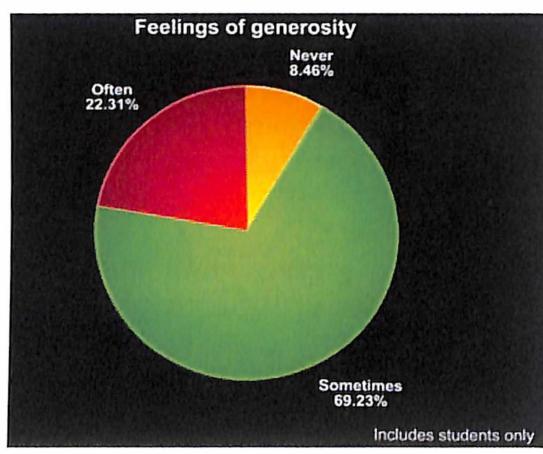
consequences in any decision and action.

The next chart (left) gives a breakdown of Bhutanese people with respect to taking account of *karma* (the concept of cause, conditions and effect) in daily life; that is to say whether people use ethical, Buddhist consciousness in their decisions and actions. There are ethical

A public official's decision and action have greater long term ethical consequences on society as a whole because of their greater scope. Some 36% of people never take ethical consequences into consideration in their daily life. It will be interesting to find out the reference point that people use. It will also be interesting how this pie-chart will change over the next several years with the huge transformation taking place in this country.

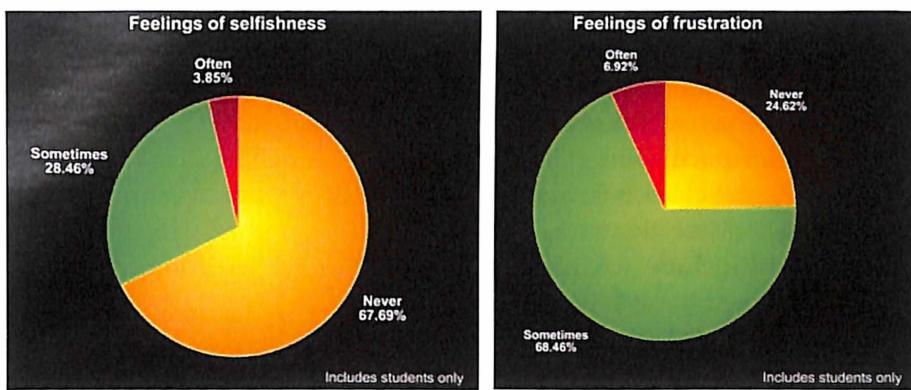


This chart indicates the social attitudes of Bhutanese youth. The information is from the Youth Development Fund's survey. The sample is taken from 300 students, so cannot be taken too seriously. Nevertheless, it indicates that students do want to embrace spiritual values and practices, though the actual reality is less impressive.



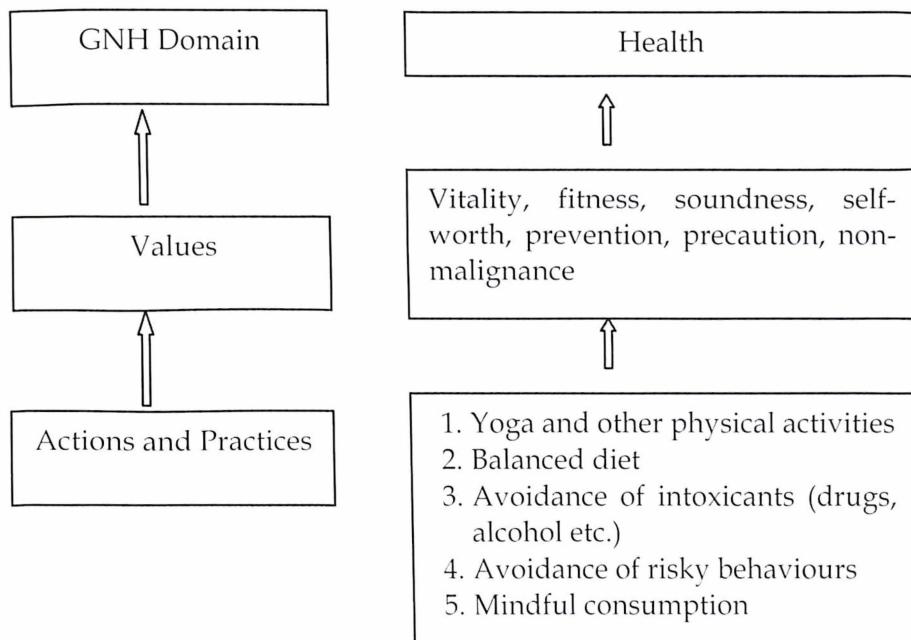
This chart (left) shows the distribution of positive emotions, in particular generosity. The down side is that 9% of students never feel the need to be generous. Of course, we don't know the reference point, but it will be interesting to find out whether the portion of people, 22%, that feelings of generosity often shrink or expand in the course of time.

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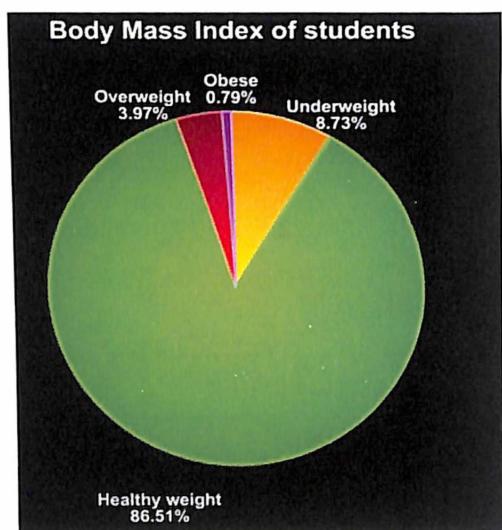
Self-reported selfishness can be underestimated. Some 67% claim that they never feel selfish, while 7% of our people frequently feel frustrated - a disturbing statistic. When the cause of frustration is traced from the GNH survey data - the two groups who are feeling most frustrated are housewives and farmers.

8. Values and Practice in Health Domain



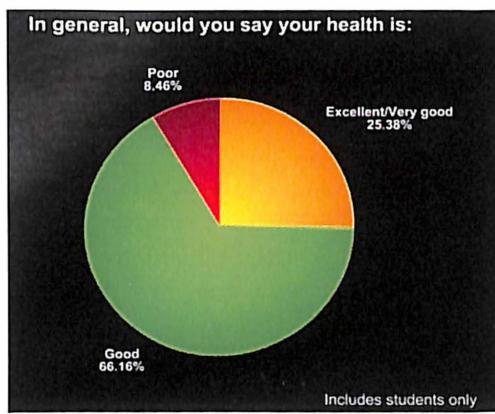
Karma Ura

The values in the health domain are vitality (daily energy levels), fitness (physical condition), and soundness (mental condition). Self-worth, prevention, precaution, non-malignance (not harming ourselves) are other values. Not harming oneself is also a Buddhist idea. One can harm oneself through addictive behaviour. To realise these values, the chart below shows the practices students should take up. Yoga is one of them. A balanced diet is another. Healthy food habits should include weaning students off processed food, which is now being linked to obesity.



About 5% of the students are overweight, including obesity. Latest research shows that it is not only the quantity of food, but also the eating of processed foods that lead to obesity in the long run. Avoidance of risky behaviour, public health, and mindful consumption are other areas of practice. Mindful consumption is a relatively more complex idea but can be introduced in classes 8, 9, and 10.

The chart shows the present profile of Body Mass Index (BMI). As students are young, we expect them to be quite close to having a perfect BMI. However, there are 4% who are overweight according to the GNH survey. Being overweight during the teenage years should be taken seriously as being overweight is linked to health costs - both to individuals and to society.



Students claiming excellent health form 25% of the total. This kind of self report is assumed to approximate the diagnostic, clinical information on mortality rates. It is simply a cheaper way to assess the health of the country. However, the portion claiming excellent health needs to be increased by making students more aware of healthy habits.

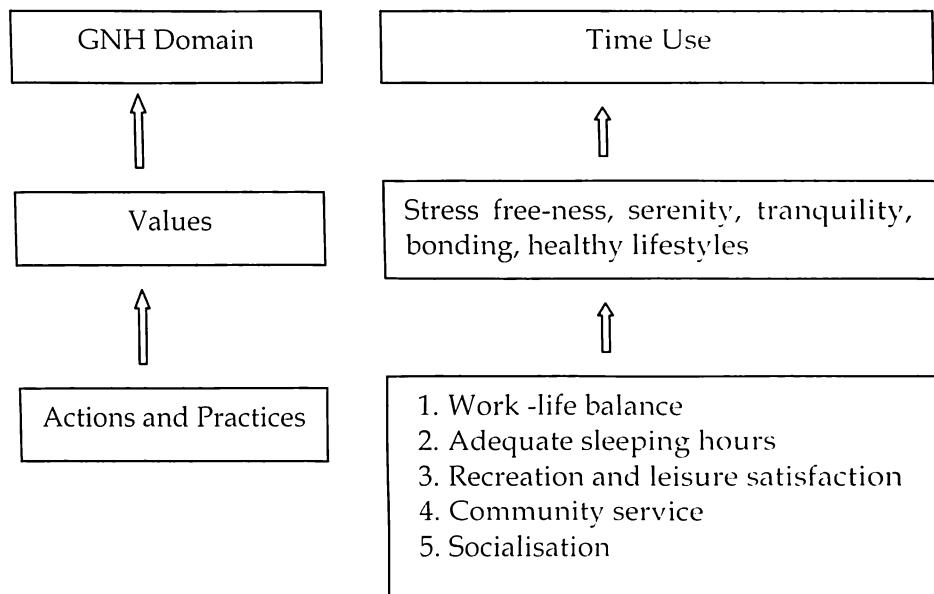
9. Values and Practice in Time Use Domain

Time is an important resource for everyone. It is also a limited resource in that we have only 24 hours in a day. How we use this limited resource is important and has implications for our physical, emotional and social well-being.

Time use studies provide information on the work-life balance of individuals. This covers the number of hours an individual spends on non-work activities, such as socialising with family and friends, sports, and other leisure activities, which are not captured in monetary terms but are crucial from the point of view of well-being. Imbalance in time allocation between work and other activities is caused by a number of factors, among which are the increased number of working hours being the most prominent.

Time use domain is relevant to all sections of society, including students. They too must enjoy a balanced use of their 24 hours. Overall, I am of the opinion that the school hours are too long, not only in Bhutan but in other countries, especially in Japan. Students in Japan finish their cram school, then go for extra tuition, which is almost universal. It is basically one school after another, causing stress both to children and parents.

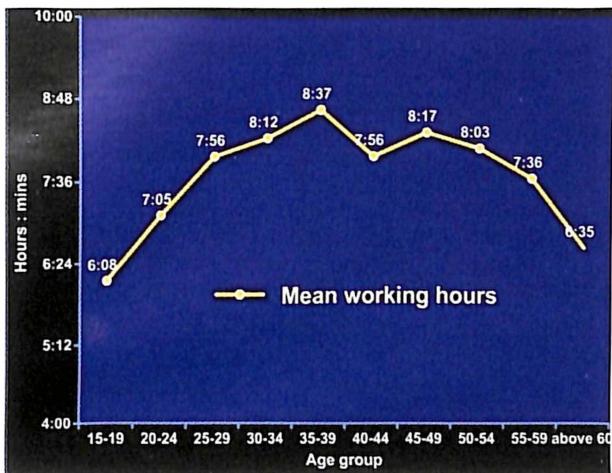
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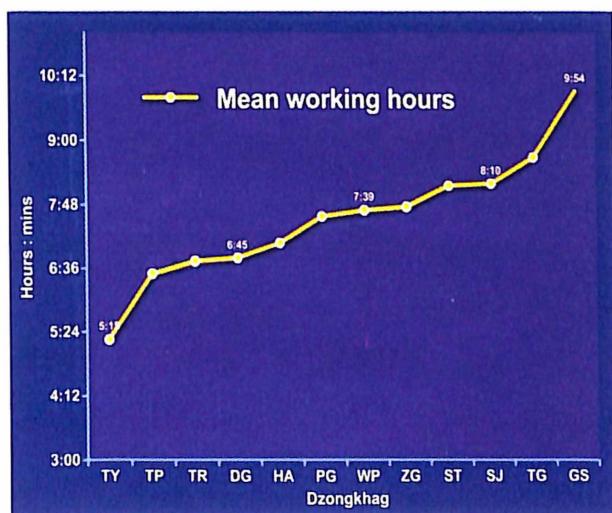
Witnessing the course of the day in Bhutanese schools suggests that the length of time seems needlessly long. For at least 90 minutes, students are cleaning drains or gardening. As this is done ineffectively, the time spent is wasteful. The time they spend in schools should be shortened. Students are needlessly kept until 4:30pm, leaving no time for homework, socialising, physical activity or the pursuit of other activities at home. It takes another half an hour for students to reach their homes after they are dismissed.

Adding anything to the value curriculum must be achieved without increasing, but decreasing school hours. Time use is also very important for a student to create room for doing other things besides classroom experience. Lessons should be made more effective by increasing the students' power of concentration. One method that I will be proposing later is meditation.

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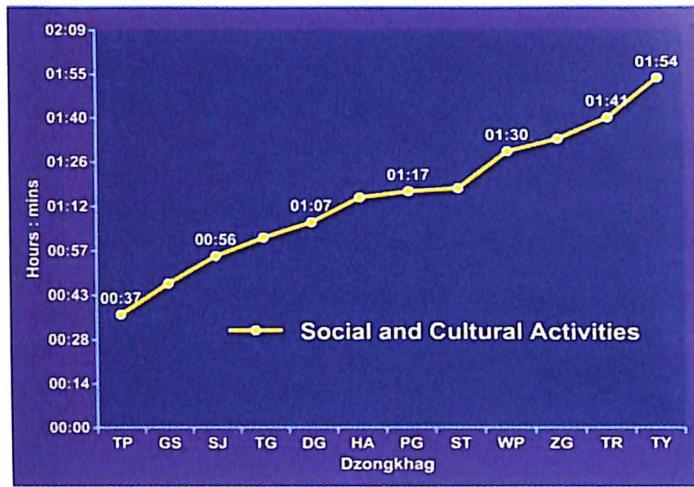


The chart (left) shows time allocation to work in different age groups for the whole country. According to the chart, people under 20 work seven hours. The time use curve rises with age because of work, peaking at 35 or so. Having to work so long is perhaps unadvisable, especially if it is stressful.



The chart (left) shows the geographic distribution of time use, which varies across the country. People in Tashiyangtse work the least hours, whereas Gasa people work the longest. Though people in Gasa work long hours, they follow the rhythm of yaks and their work is not as stressful as it would seem.

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The chart (left) shows the duration of social activities per day. In Tashiyangtse, the hours of work are the shortest partly because the duration given to social and cultural activity is the longest - 1.54 hours per day. This is the highest

average among the districts. In Thimphu, the time spent for social and cultural activities has shrunk to just 37 minutes per day on average. Civil servants enjoy much longer leisure periods. But the average leisure time for people in general in Thimphu is short. The general population of the greater Thimphu district have insufficient time for social and cultural activity.

Activities	Difference in Time		Difference in frequency	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Community participation	3:37	3:24	33	33
Education and learning	5:20	4:38	31	39
Sleep	8:34	8:33	470	467
Personal care	3:19	2:56	470	467
Religious activities	1:44	1:22	170	169
Socio-cultural activities	2:10	2:04	283	247
Sports and leisure	2:58	2:27	190	189
Travel/commute	1:39	1:25	366	299
Waiting	1:54	1:45	20	21

We can get a detailed picture of time use from GNH survey results. The table gives summary information about the division of time in the non-work category for the average Bhutanese by gender.

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For example, for personal care, males spend about three hours and 19 minutes compared to two hours and 56 minutes for females. The national average for hours of sleep do not show any difference between male and female although at a disaggregate level, single mothers sleep the least in the country.

Activities	Difference in frequency		Difference in time		Average Time
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Cooking	192	402	1:23	1:50	1:41
Dish washing	37	199	0:25	0:36	0:34
House cleaning	84	182	0:55	0:46	0:17
Laundry	25	84	1:02	1:22	1:17
Shopping	21	21	1:25	1:48	1:37
Other household activities	172	218	0:29	0:32	0:30

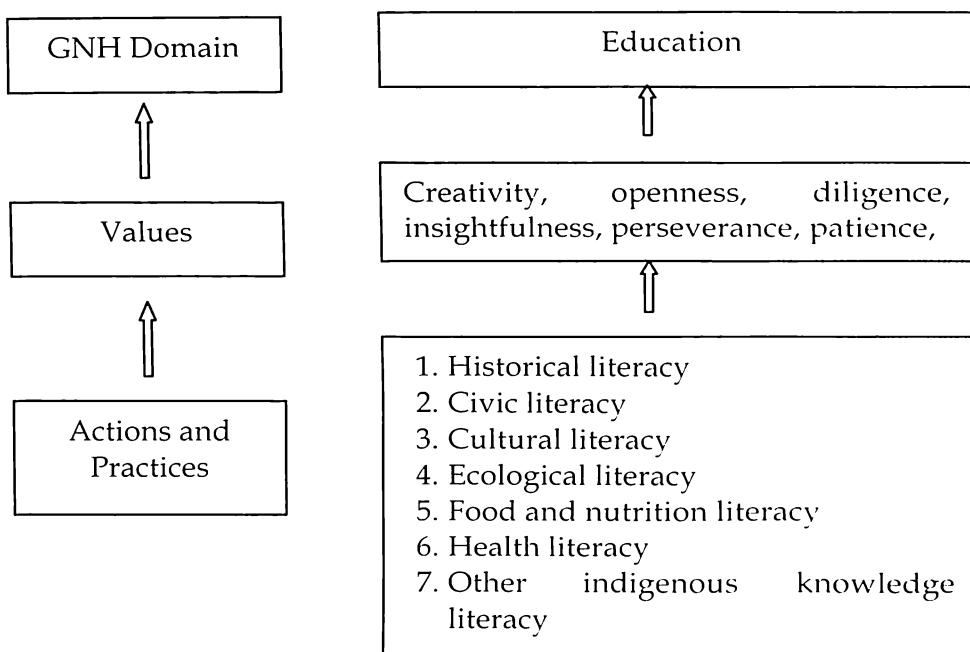
This table shows the time devoted to household maintenance. The duration of household maintenance is not usually included in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and therefore the GDP underestimates its contribution to well-being. From the table, it is possible to discover exactly how much time goes into cooking and washing on average per day, per household. Cooking takes up 1.41 hours. One can multiply that duration by the wage rate and by the number of days in a year to find out of what benefit to society is the work of housewives in terms of cooking.

10. Values and Practice in Education Domain

Conventional education is largely focused on structured, school-based processing measures such as pass percentages, dropout rate, school infrastructure, pupil-instructor ratios and enrolment rates. As a result, the education indicators cannot assess educational attainments in a holistic way.

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Any education system should be able to assess both competence and values. This is well recognised, but only if they are taught in educational institutions. However, knowledge and skills and values are also transmitted outside the school, in communities through indigenous mechanisms. They are all useful for life, whether or not they are transmitted in schools and included in the values and practices in the education domain.



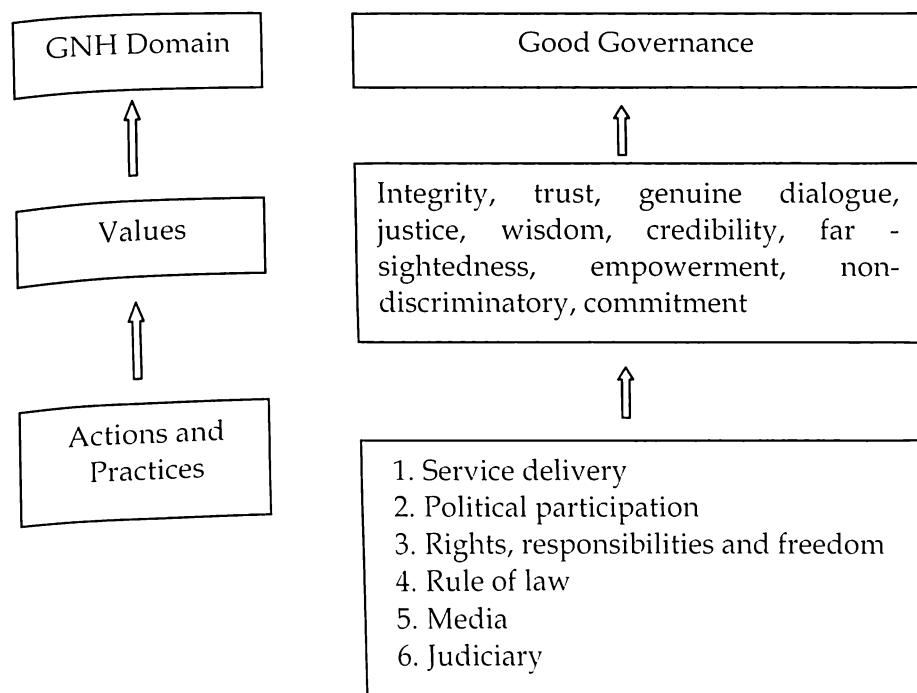
In education, creativity, openness, diligence, insight, perseverance, and patience are the values to be advocated in textbooks. Patience is something which is not taught. In *prajna paramitas*, patience, and by extension self-restraint, is one key quality among many. In literacy, students have to focus on various kinds of which Civics – the learning of institutional rules and regulations - should only be a minor part, unlike in the present curriculum where Civics occupies major lesson time in classes 9 and 10. Students come to know such rules quickly in a small country.

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I would like to suggest a reduction of time devoted to Civics and divert it to fundamental topics concerning food, nutrition, hygiene, culture, health, and ecology. These all deserve more time allocation in schools.

11. Values and Practice in Good Governance Domain

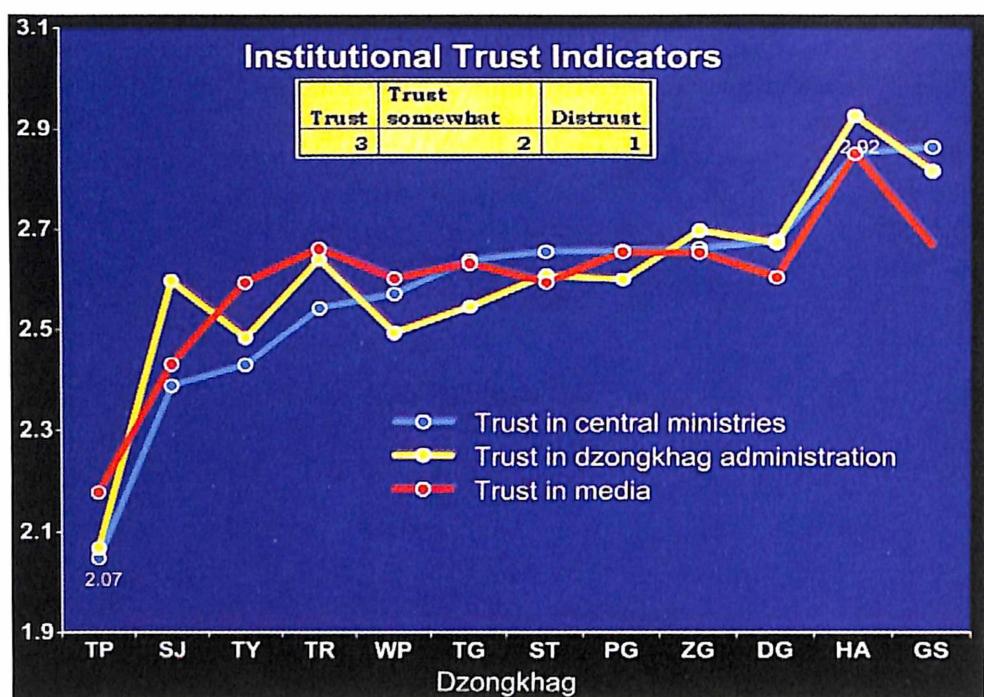
Unlike other domains, governance cuts across all organisations. Good governance is not directly visible by itself. It is evident only in terms of the perceptions of people with regard to service delivery, observance of rights and rules, and accountability in general. Integrity, trust, genuine dialogue (debate), justice, wisdom, credibility, far-sightedness, empowerment, non-discrimination and commitment are all held as key values.



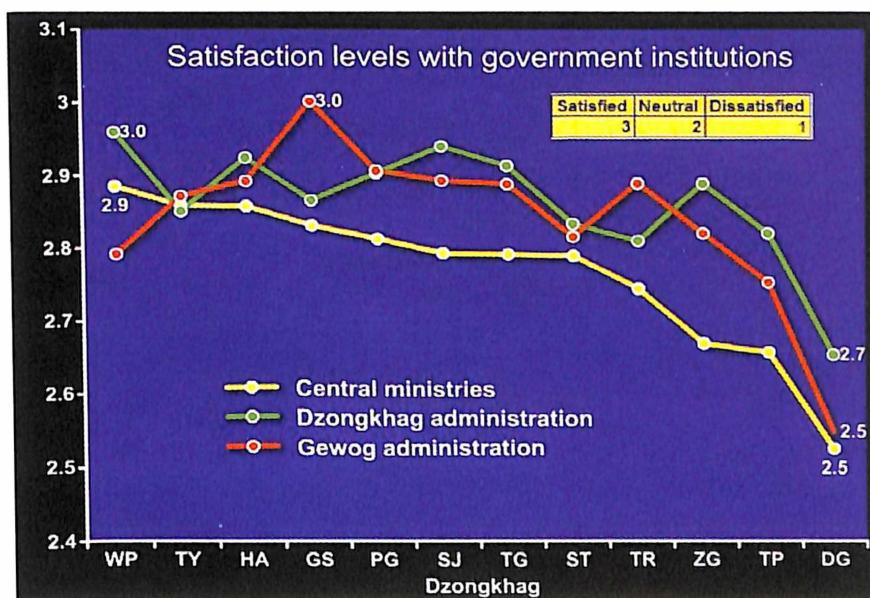
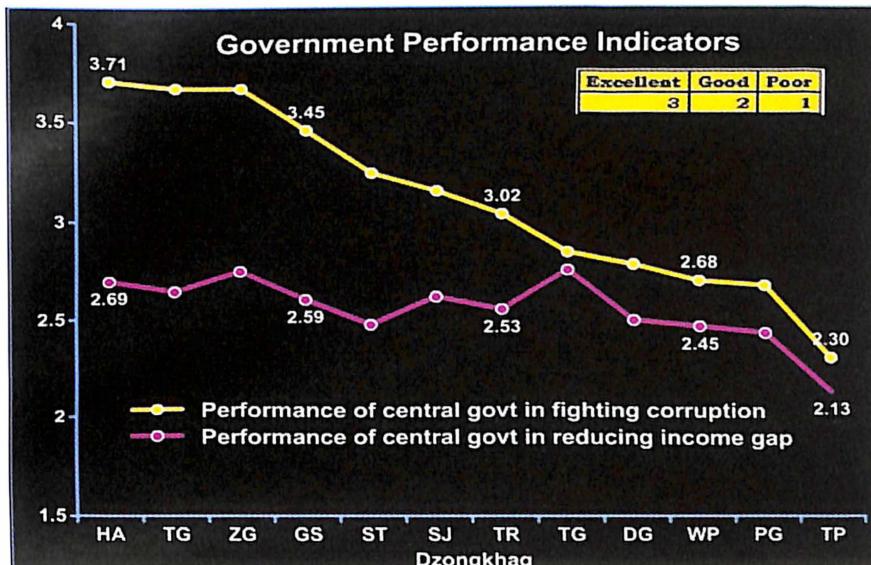
Wisdom is concerned with the consciousness of decision making for the long term - and for the good of all. That is the essence of wisdom in public policies. We can ask, for example, how can we make decisions,

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taking into account the effects 100 years from now, so that a decision looks far ahead in a systematic way? These kind of investigative lessons and pedagogical methods will enable students to develop far-sightedness. Schools could easily simulate the effects of decisions over the next 20 years, if not the next 100, as an aspect of wisdom development.



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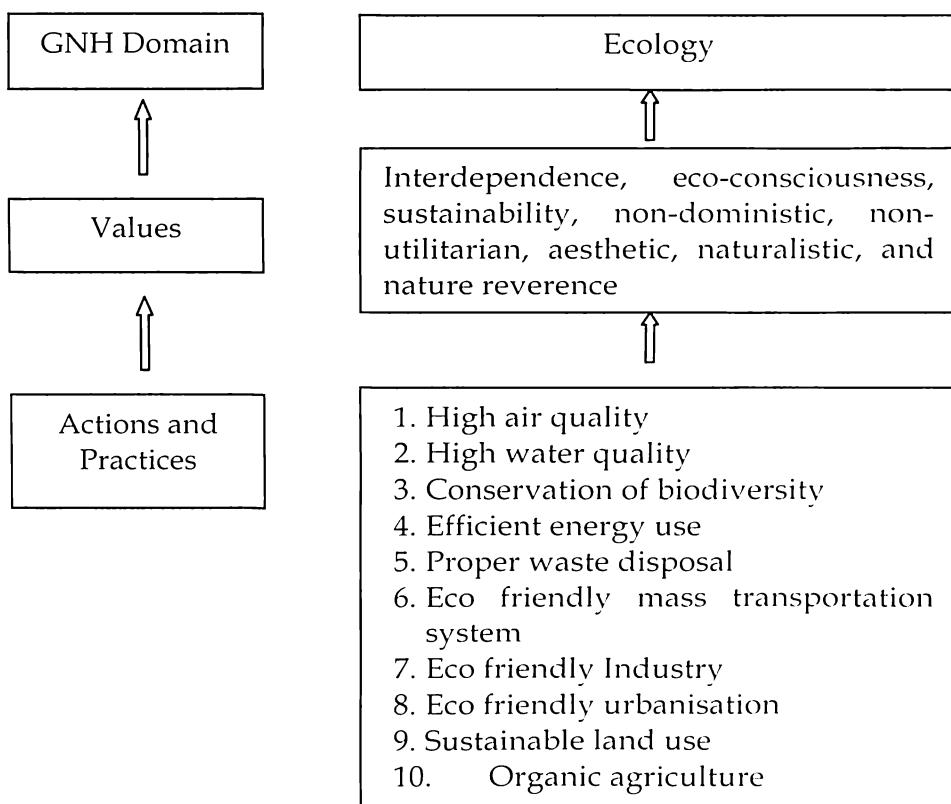


In these charts, the perception of people living in developed areas like Thimphu are the worst, as far as judging government performance is concerned. It is ironic, given the higher level of services in Thimphu.

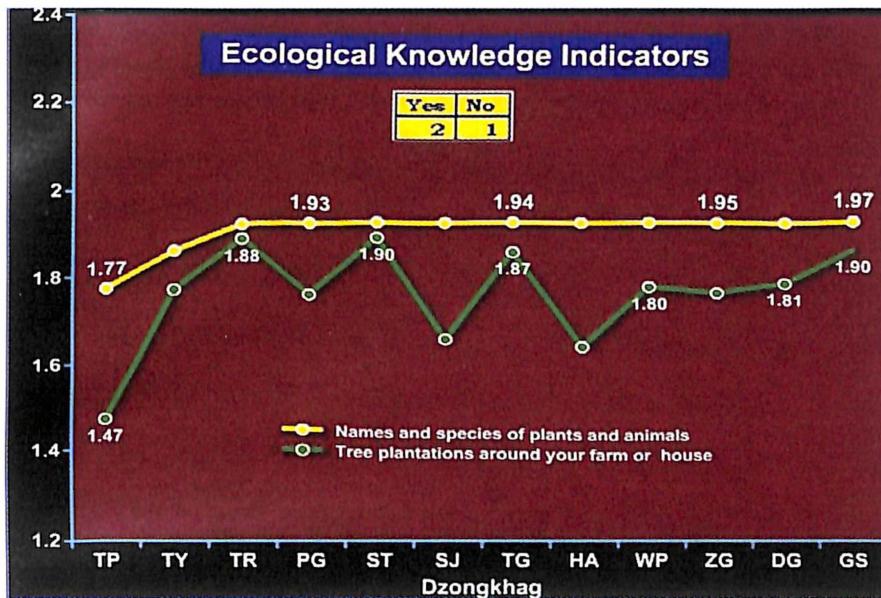
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People are more discerning in the capital and also less satisfied. In this respect, common people do not get enough information to make an intelligent guesses on the government's performance.

12. Values and Practice in Ecology Domain



In Science and Social Studies, lessons could be better planned to nurture our students with a positive and caring attitude towards the environment. More systematic concepts about interdependence, eco-consciousness, sustainability, non-doministic (an attitude that does not breed the idea that you have to dominate nature) values need to be embedded in textbooks.



With respect to the ecology domain, students must be taught to have an elementary knowledge of plants, animals and trees around their farms or schools so that they can have direct experience of their environment. Again, such knowledge level is lowest in Thimphu according to GNH survey. Children in Thimphu cannot name 10 to 20 plants around them.

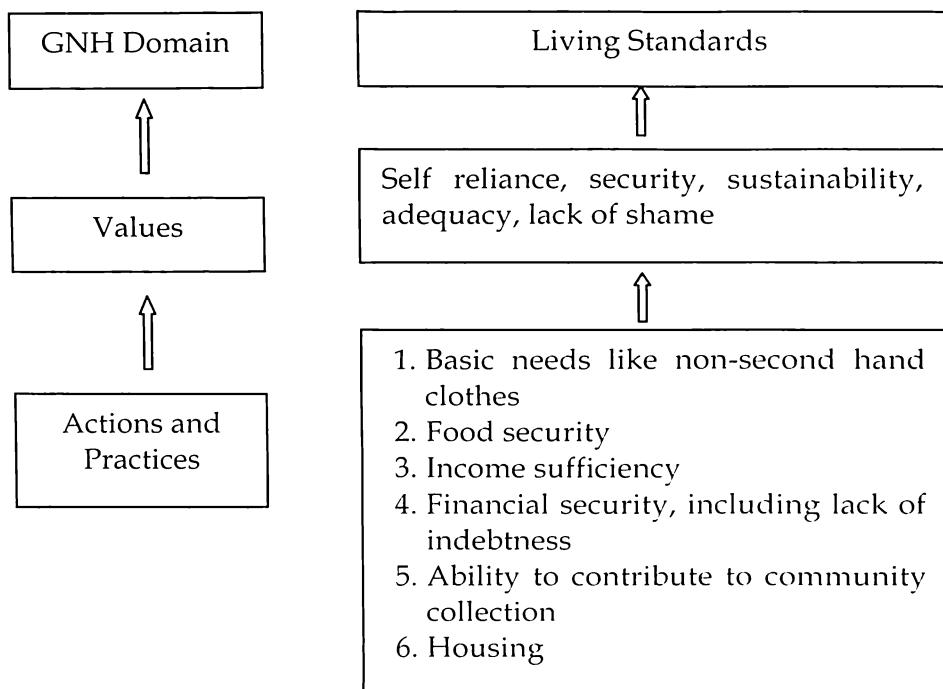
Safe waste disposal practice is another important issue to be written into textbooks. It would also be important to include elementary lessons on toxicology. Increasingly complex understanding about harmful and hazardous substances, whether it is pesticides or used batteries, should be introduced so that students can discriminate non-biodegradable and toxic wastes from bio-degradable and non-toxic wastes.

13. Values and Practice in Living Standards Domain

These days, our standard of living is frequently measured by income, omitting the effects of non-cash income and other dimensions of life that contribute to the well-being of individuals. In the living standard domain, food security, housing, relative and absolute incomes, and the

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perception of hardship like having to buy second-hand clothes and the inability to contribute to the community have a deep effect on our self esteem or well-being. This perception of hardship in some ways measures both the lack of income and the sense of shame of not being able to fulfil our expected roles in a community.

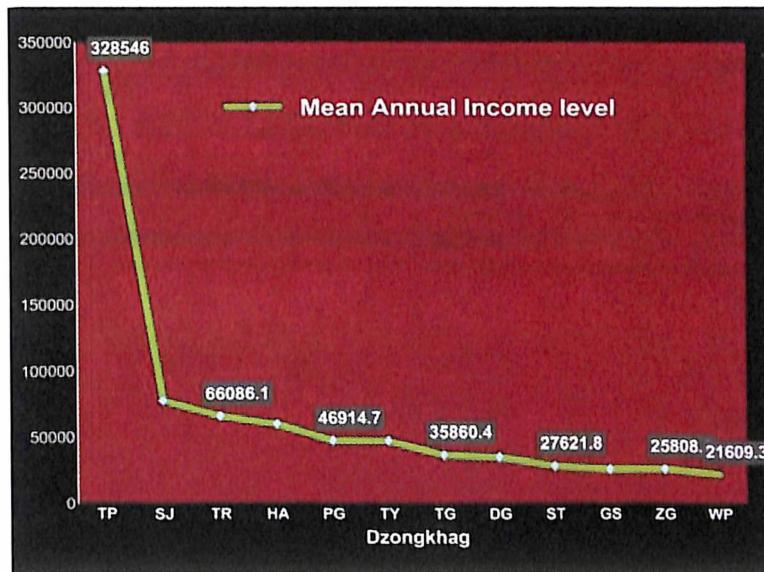
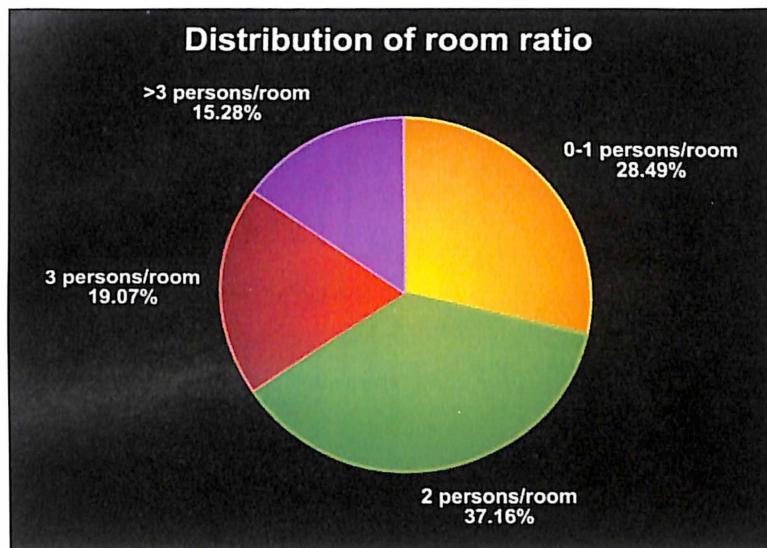


GNH specifies living standards in terms of housing, food, financial security in relative and absolute terms, and the lack of shame when members are able to contribute to community collection of goods.

How school textbooks present the importance of living standards to students can make a huge difference. Poverty is normally presented in terms of the amount of money needed to meet calorific requirements and the basic necessities of life. The poverty line today is fixed at Nu. 1,973 per month. However, this is difficult for children to understand. What's more, the poverty line will shift every few years. From a GNH point of view other criterion are also included. For example, housing

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conditions, as measured by room ratio is an important variable in the living standard domain. In this respect, about 19% of population needs better housing standards. About 19% live in a room with three people.

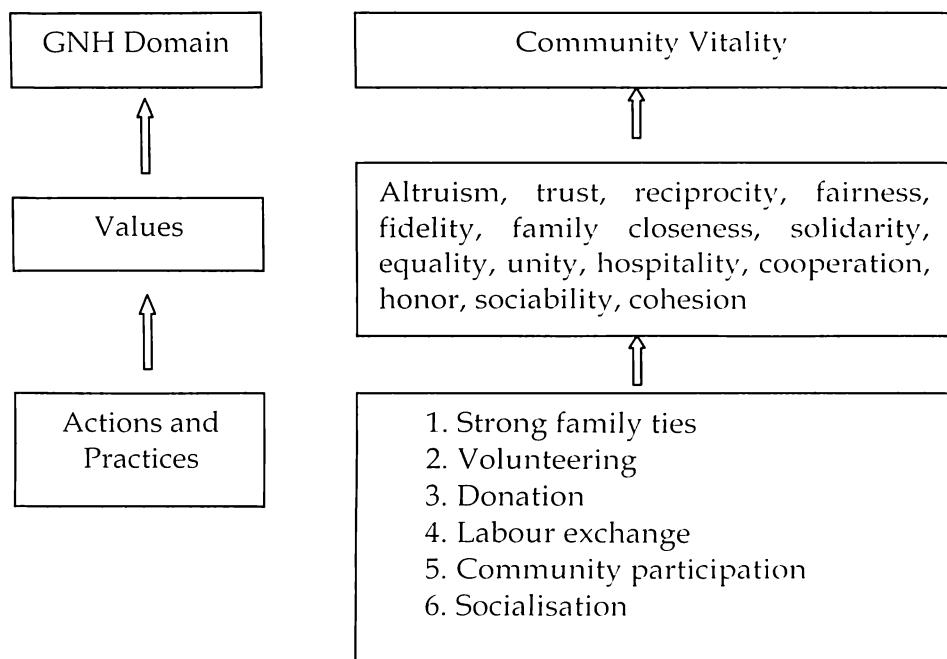


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At a higher level of education, living standards cannot be taught in a simplistic way. Textbooks must present real living standards, or the lack of them, as part of the ecological, social and political-economy systems in which we live. Textbooks have to analyse the global, national, political and environmental issues to understand the reality, and the responsibility, of living standards in wider terms.

14. Values and Practice in Community Vitality Domain

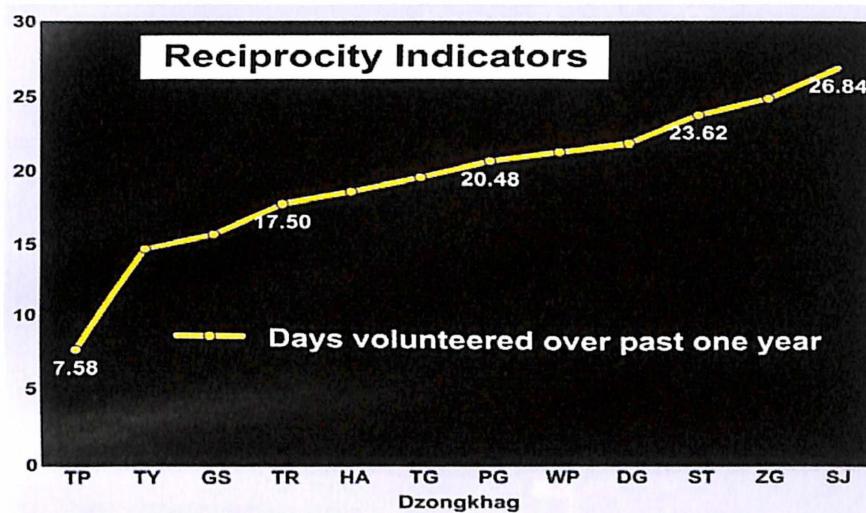
People are influenced and shaped by the kind of communities in which they live. A community is a social group, sharing common activities and experiences, living and belonging to a particular area. Quality of life also depends on the ties within a community, and not just dependent on the economic standards of people. A lopsided focus on material wealth has often gone hand in hand with a loss of community in many so-called developed countries.



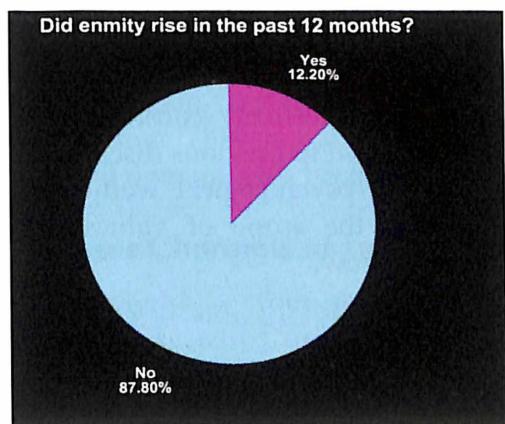
In the community domain, values to be promoted in textbooks are altruism, trust, reciprocity, family closeness, and friendship. These

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values are anchored in activities like volunteering, donations, social support, labour exchange, community participation and socialisation.

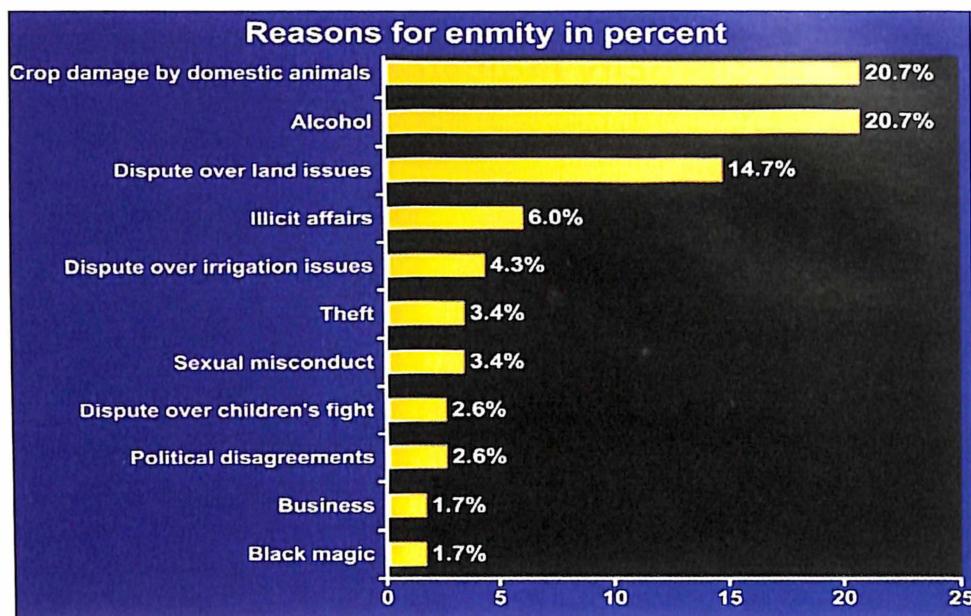


Thimphu is at the bottom of the districts on the reciprocity score, and with respect to social support. The more money people have, the less sharing there is, if we are to infer from Thimphu's case. This does not negate income generation in other districts, rather, it points to the need for education on the values of sharing and giving, which are dissolving in an urban set-up where civic community is lacking.



One of the obvious and most corrosive effects on the community is animosity, and the GNH survey inquired into the causes of this. Enmity rose 12% among the people we surveyed in 2006. The main causes are shown in the next chart. Land and marriage are the two major areas of dispute in the courts in Bhutan today, though the survey shows that

they occupy roughly only third and fourth ranks in the table showing the overall causes of animosity.

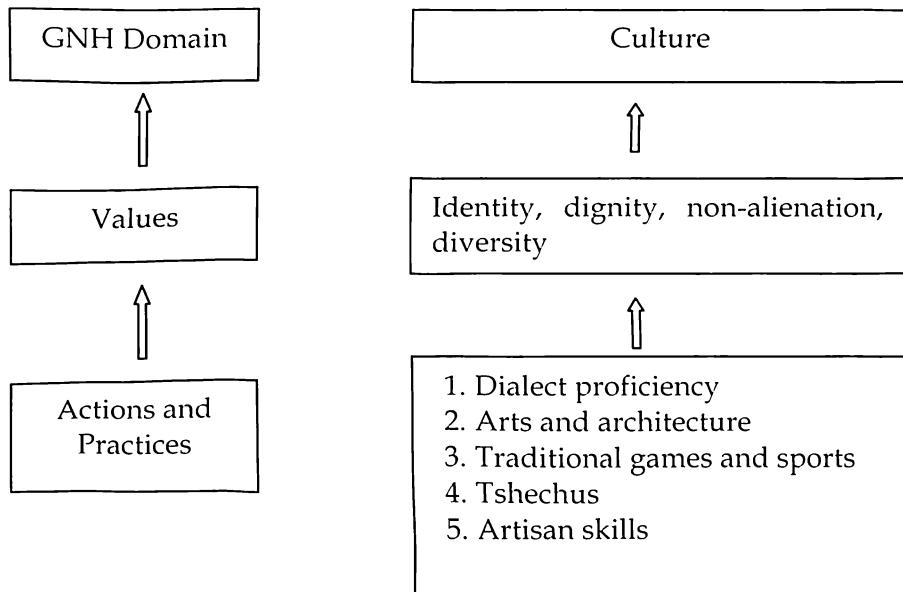


There is no obvious solution of how to tackle such disputes without incurring great costs by launching formal litigations in the courts. Like any bureaucracy, courts expand with the proliferations of judges and lawyers. However, if we can orient our society to overcome disputes at the community level, the cost to society will be far less.

15. Values and Practice in Culture Domain

Some of the values and practices that are normally considered an integral part of our culture have been included in previous discussions on domains related to education, health, psychological well-being, ecology and the community. Therefore, the scope of values and practices here may appear misleadingly narrow.

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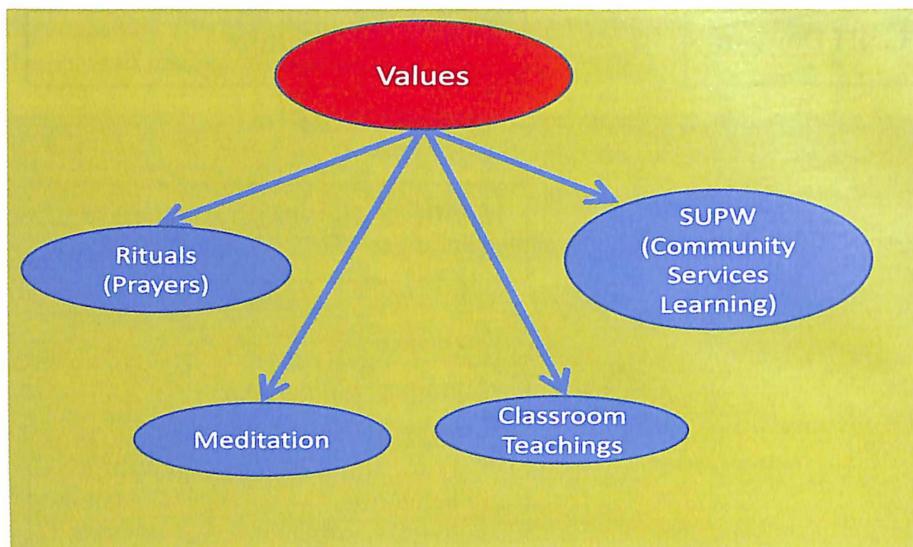


The values to be promoted in the cultural domain are identity, non-alienation, diversity and dignity. Why? Because a culture gives its members diversity, dignity and identity. At the same time, these values prevent alienation of individuals. The members of a cultural group add diversity to the otherwise imploding and homogenising world.

The main actions and practices to entrench those values are specifically those forms and expressions of culture which are indigenous, whether they are languages, artisan skills, the arts, architecture, games and sports. Again, the scope of cultural practices seems narrow and specialised. This is because many practices that overlap with the cultural domain have been included in other domains.

16. Four Channels of Imparting Values

There could be four main channels of imparting values in our education system. Currently, there are three.



The first is prevalent in boarding schools: they are prayers and rituals. They take more or less one hour. Let us say there are 40 weeks per year and five prayer sessions a week. Annual allocation of hours to prayers then comes to about 200 hours. Are we getting a real benefit out of those 200 hours in terms of value education?

There is value in rituals in themselves as repetition reinforces. But it may be beneficial to revise this time allocation, by actually reducing prayer sessions. In addition, we need to introduce some lessons on symbols and techniques that accompany prayers and rituals. Textbooks and prayers refer to the bell, *mudra*, the eight auspicious signs and so forth. Then, when students recite *sherab nyelingpo* they clap during their prayers session. However, it may be fair to say that nobody knows what that *mudra* means, because we don't teach them about symbols and signs. Symbols are a powerful form of communication and as Bhutanese citizens living in a cultural world laden with tantric Buddhist symbols, students need to understand them.

The second channel for value transmission at the moment is classroom teaching based on textbooks. The third stems from the Indian curriculum standards - known as SUPW - that has been continued

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after the curriculum was realigned, for which two hours per student per week are probably allocated. However, it is doubtful that this time has been used to its best effect in terms of value education. It is used for the same purpose every week for cleaning, waste collection, and toilet maintenance etc. Something more out of it can be made.

I would like to suggest a new, fourth channel, as an extension of rituals. It is meditation. Only about 1% of Bhutan's population meditate on a daily basis according to the GNH survey. This is obviously a deplorable finding for a Buddhist country. There are monks and *gomchens* who meditate for extended periods, so one could say they are compensating for others, but, ideally, meditation should be undertaken by most citizens for some of the time.

In this respect, one aspect of value education we may not be able to skip is the value basis of Buddhism. In one way or the other, the indigenous literature we have is all about Buddhism. Our social institutions also rely a great deal on Buddhism. It would be difficult to ignore it.

The basic precepts, Four Noble Truths, and Eight Fold Paths are included in our textbooks, but they are not well explained. And these concepts don't graduate towards more advanced concepts in senior classes such as wisdom, ethics and meditation. By class 10, exploration of topics such as interdependence, which is emptiness (not intrinsic existence), should be approached because it is a technique to deconstruct ego.

All the textbooks offer is at the Theravada level, as if the students are Theravada monks or are going to enter the monkhood. This approach or understanding will hardly enable us to assimilate the cultural and religious world around us, which is Mahayanist. Sketches of biographies, tales and mythologies contain value education, but the direction is haphazard, the progression is unclear, and the selection of texts needs improvement.

Pilot meditation schemes can be introduced immediately, by selecting special teachers. Through regular meditation practice, we can make

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students aware of their inner world of thoughts and feelings. Meditation is not included at present, yet students spend more than one hour in prayers. Between the benefits accrued from meditation and from the one hour of repetitious prayer chanting – the balance is clear to everybody. There is little cost to practise meditation. What we need is to inventively shift our perspective.

Why introduce meditation in schools? The next transformation

Cognitive and Academic Performance

- *Mindfulness meditation may improve ability to maintain preparedness and orient attention.*
- *Mindfulness meditation may improve ability to process information quickly and accurately.*
- *Concentration-based meditation, practiced over a long-term, may have a positive impact on academic achievement.*

Mental Health and Psychological Well-Being

- *Mindfulness meditation may decrease stress, anxiety, and depression.*
- *Mindfulness meditation supports better regulation of emotional reactions and the cultivation of positive psychological states.*

Development of the Whole Person

- *Meditation can support the development of creativity.*
- *Meditation supports and enhances the development of skills needed for interpersonal relationships.*
- *Empathetic responses are increased with meditation and mindfulness practices.*
- *Meditation may help to cultivate self-compassion."*

(Source: Santa Clara University)

The chart (above) was made by Santa Clara Centre for Meditation. Introducing meditation will be the transformation in our education system. In terms of hours, about 30 minutes per day is all that is required. In terms of time shift, it is not much. But the impact it may create could be dynamic.

Britain is experimenting with the contemplative method in several schools based partly on works done by Martin Seligman, the father of

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positive psychology, and it has been scientifically proven to be a success. Santa Clara University's Centre for Meditation also advocates meditation. Scientific findings show that it will improve academic performance, mental health and psychological well-being. Among its many benefits, meditation has also been shown to reduce stress and anxiety among students.

In terms of instructional requirements, we can rely on an abundant number of teachers. For the moment, the resource gap in terms of manpower will remain in the education sector. Capitalising on some of the 168 Bachelors in Buddhist Studies who passed out from Tango - or local *lamas* - could be a solution. Meditation is no longer a religious issue. A great deal of research taking place around the world shows that this can be done without involving devotional piety.

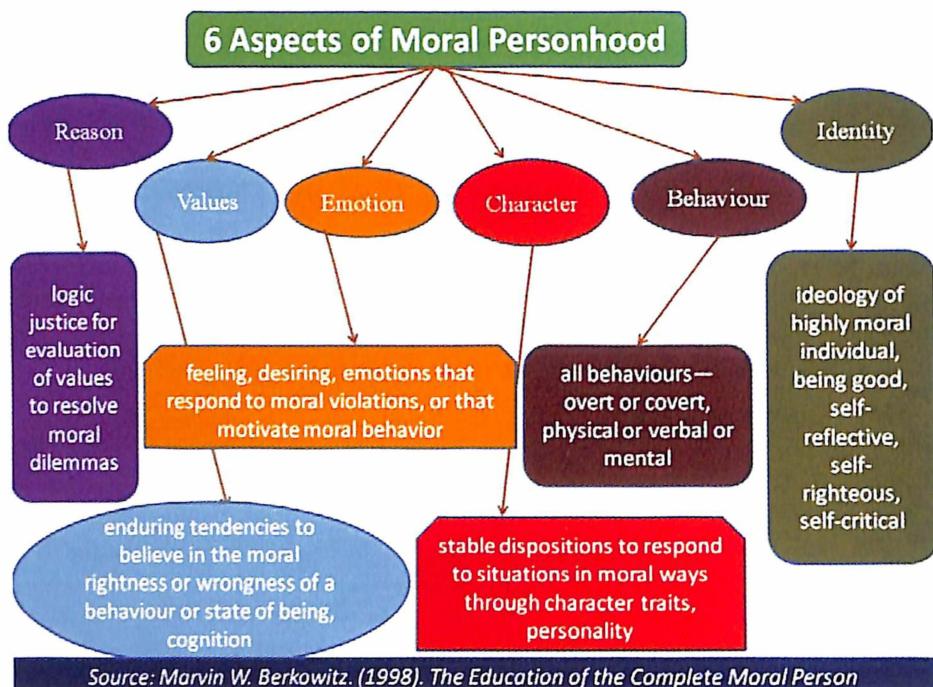
And the last channel - social engagement— should be embodied by learning to contribute to the community. We can envision for classes 8 and 9, a young Bodhisattva training course. We don't need to involve religion, but simply instill a service-oriented community spirit.

What we are doing at the moment is slightly different. What I'm suggesting has also been tried elsewhere and comes from one of the research reports in India. Students are asked, at a slightly more advanced level, such as class 5 and above, to choose a moral issue in a neighbouring village or in the school and then investigate it, and try to understand why it is so. Next, they can ask themselves what needs to be done. The intention is to carry out small projects. This would at least open up students' minds early on, instead of always simulating issues through textbook lessons.

17. Six Aspects of Moral Personhood

Lastly, we need to re-assess our textbooks with respect to moral development. We have to create better assessment tools. Are students developing moral reasoning power? Are students being given entrenched values? Are students developing aesthetic and artistic sensitivity towards moral issues? They should experience a strong reaction, indeed revulsion, against anything that is negative or

harmful. Wholesome and positive emotions should be repeatedly encouraged until they become part of their inner fabric and form an essential part of their character. Paul Ekman, a psychologist, says that when moods arise repeatedly, they become character traits. Character is the consolidation of emotions and moods. Only when moral values and emotions are manifested in behaviour, will individuals develop a moral identity.



Although students possess moral behaviour, and their beliefs and attitudes reflect correct values, teaching in schools will be of little benefit if government policies that influence public behaviour are not pro-GNH. The government spends 50% of GDP every year, about Nu.25 billion. As a result, the government has an enormous influence on society. Individual values and behaviour are influenced by its policies and programmes. If government policies are sympathetic to GNH, value education will be an easier task.

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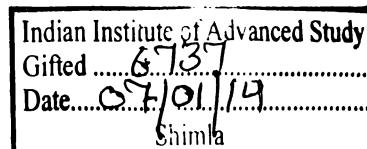
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