



SHES-RIG PAGES

The Annual Newsletter of Samtse College of Education

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Editorial team

Dr. Rinchen Dorji, President
Dr. Sonam Rinchen, Dean of Research and Industrial Linkages
Mr. Dorji S, Lecturer
Ms. Sangay Lhamo, Asst. Research Officer

Welcome

Dear Reader,



Samtse College of Education (SCE) is pleased to present to you the 2021 edition of SHES-RIG PAGES, published annually.

SCE was established and inaugurated on May 29, 1968 as a Teacher Training Institute (TTI) by our beloved Late His Majesty Druk Gyalpo Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. The launching of this premier teacher education institution then marked a significant epoch and milestone in Bhutan's history of educational development and more particularly, in the history of teacher preparation. From a fledgling Institute that initially ran a primary teaching certificate programme with a meagre enrollment of some 41 students only, SCE today has close to a thousand students including both full-time pre-service and in-service teacher candidates.

In the last 53 years of teacher education, SCE has educated close to almost two-thirds of the overall teaching population in the country. In fulfilling our mandate of educating teachers for the Bhutanese school system, we consciously seek inspiration in the wish and trust the founding Father of this College had entrusted in producing not only teachers that are professionally competent and dedicated but also immersed in our rich culture and heritage so that these timeless values can be transmitted to our younger generation.

As a teacher education college, SCE is committed to working with uncompromising commitment in crafting intelligent measures and interventions to transform the way we prepare teachers for 21st century education. We consciously strive to challenge our own existing practices to expand our horizons of learning and professional practice. Every teacher educator in the College is prepared to break away from the comfort zones that have chained them to the old knowledge and tools that no longer serve the purpose of preparing teachers for the 21st century.

The last two years with the COVID pandemic have been a tumultuous time where the usual teaching and learning in the College were disrupted on many occasions. Despite the disruptions and challenges, the COVID pandemic has also helped many of our teacher educators to push their usual boundaries to make their virtual lessons more interactive, engaging, and real-time. The promise technology offers in teaching and learning was optimally harnessed through the use of multiple online tools in VLE, a virtual learning environment that the colleges of RUB have been using for over a decade.

SHES-RIG PAGES is a special tribute to the most sacred gift and precious legacy our beloved Late His Majesty has left for the education system in the country. This newsletter provides a snapshot of the variety of activities the College initiates as part of learning and teaching; research and other events; guest lectures by academics, scholars, and eminent personalities; student experiences of campus life; creative literary compositions; and conversation with distinguished alumni.

We hope you will find this edition of the Newsletter interesting and read worthy. The e-copy of the same can be accessed at www.sce.edu.bt.

With warmest wishes.
(Rinchen Dorji, PhD)
President

SHES-RIG PAGES

Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education launched

The fulltime Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PgCert in HE) programme was launched in the College on 5th August 2021.

In simple inaugural ceremony, the first cohort consisting of a total of ten faculty members from the colleges of the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) and faculty members of the College participated. This programme used to be offered as a part-time programme but was changed to a semester long full-time programme based on the review of the programme which included mainly students feedback and the advice and recommendation of the University. The curriculum of the programme consists of primarily four main modules namely: Introduction to University Learning and Teaching; Curriculum Design and Evaluation in Higher Education; Assessment and Feedback in Higher Education; and Educational Technology. The Programme aims to prepare higher education academics in the colleges of RUB with and advanced knowledge and skills of teaching, learning, assessment, curriculum design and development with educational technology as a primary educational tool. 'The course will prepare higher education academics to up-scale their skills in teaching, assessment techniques and use of educational technology,' added Mr. Lhapchu.

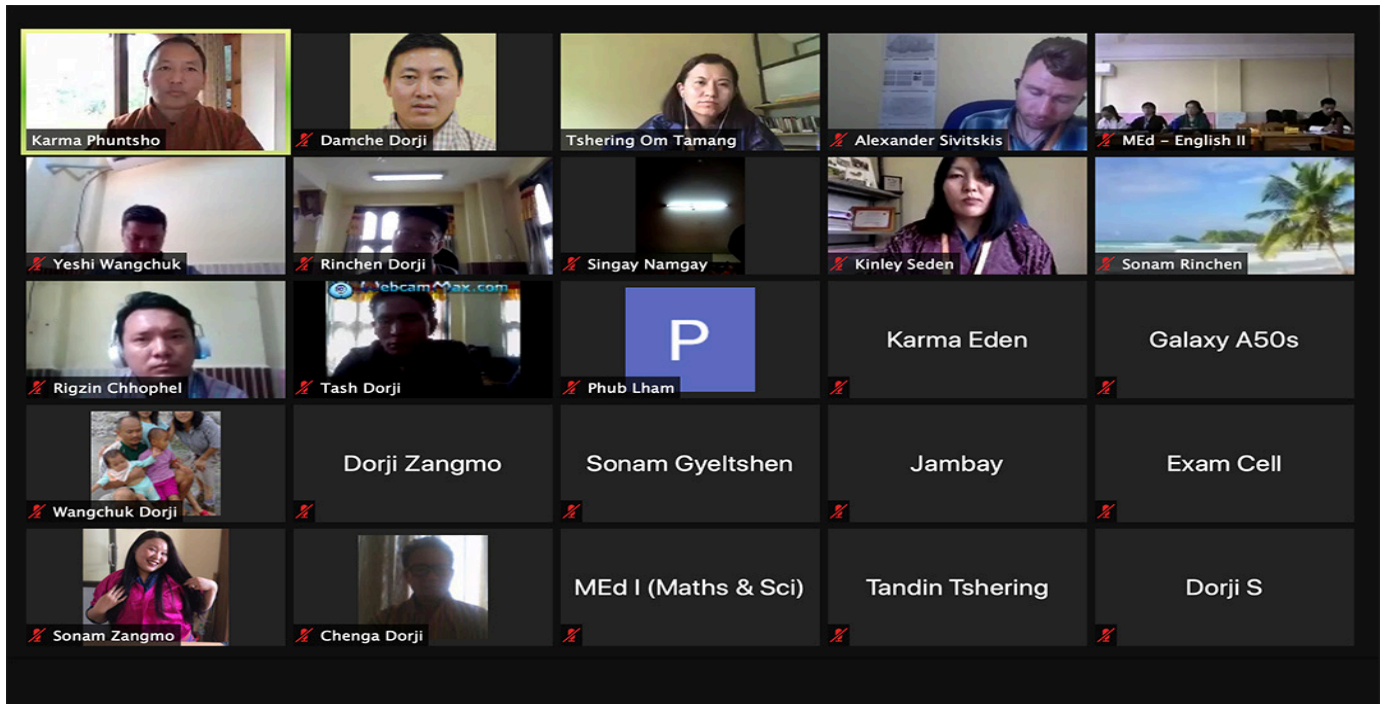
The College President in his remark stated that launching such a course for academics is timely as the country is in the process of initiating a nationwide education reform where higher education such as Samtse College of Education as a teacher education college would play a pivotal role. He reassured the students that the course will bring about a change at how young academics perceive teaching and learning when they get back to their respective colleges to resume their teaching. The President of the College shared that "This is not the best of times to come and study at Samtse at this COVID-19 pandemic period when there is so much of restrictions especially with Samtse being located in a high risk zone next to the border of West Bengal in India. He stated that there will be inconveniences and challenges but shared his expectations that the students might learn to take such challenges and experiences as lessons to develop resilience, patience and tolerance, which are some of the critical traits that educators need to develop." On behalf of the College, the President also congratulated the students for being nominated and selected as candidates for the course. The launching ceremony was held in the Namgay Khangzang – the College Auditorium and students were offered a Tashi Khadar as a welcome gesture from the College.



First Cohort of full-time PgCert in HE students



Webinar on “The Good Teacher and Process of Writing”



A screenshot of the webinar

The Department of Language Education of the College organized a webinar on “The Good teacher and Process of Writing” on the 14th of April 2021, as part of guest lecture series planned for the spring semester. Dr. Karma Phuntsho, a renowned Bhutanese scholar in Buddhism, Tibetan & Himalayan Studies was the guest speaker.

In his talk, Dr. Karma Phuntsho expressed, Buddhism is not a religion rather an education. And in Buddhism, there are different references of a teacher- Khenpo, Lama, Lopon, etc. He also stated, there are three kinds of teachers in the Buddhist tradition: Buddha- a teacher with abilities to teach in multiple languages; Arhat- enlightened being who can read the minds of the audience; Pandita- who educates oneself and uses his best judgement to measure the minds of the audience. Dr. Karma Phuntsho emphasized that the teacher is the most important figure both from the religious as well as the educational perspectives.

He also shared his personal and academic experiences in the field of writing. He advised the participants on many aspects of writing and specifically highlighted the need to share one’s draft work with others for feedback and comments. He further mentioned that people in our society usually get frustrated when they get negative feedback for their works however, it should be taken positively. Dr. Karma Phuntsho narrated his ordeal of getting his writings rejected many times and how these rejections and failures to publish made him stronger. He further suggested getting the writings published in reputed journals. “Everyone can write. Expressing in writing is the only key to be a good writer”, concluded Dr. Karma Phuntsho.

Dr. Karma Phuntsho has published several works including eight books, translations, book reviews and articles on Buddhism, Bhutan and Tibetan Studies. He is the founder of the Loden Foundation and Shejun Agency that researches and documents the cultures of Bhutan.

Declamation Speech Competition

As a part of student engagement activity for students retained in the College during the 2020-2021 winter break, the Literary Club of the College organised the Declamation Speech Competition on January 25, 2021.

Besides engaging the students, this competition was aimed to provide a platform for students to display and hone their communication and public speaking skills and also introduce the audience to great speeches of iconic personalities of the past and present.

The audience was filled with excitement to witness the participants enacting their role models delivering the speeches that were game changing not only in the lives of these great personalities but speeches that are remembered as historic epochs of their times. The participants showed a keen sense of zeal and enthusiasm in being part of the

programme and displayed a great control of the moment on the stage as they declaimed the speeches.

Ms. Kezang Choden of B.Ed VI year Arts A, who declaimed Muniba Mazari Baloch, a Pakistani activist, anchor artist, model, singer and motivational speaker took away the first prize of the event followed by Ms. Nagwang Dema of II year BA in Social Work in the second place, who declaimed Namgay Zam, a Bhutanese freelance journalist's TEDx Talk on "The Value of No" in the Bhutanese society.

Ms. Indra Kr. Vishwa, one of the judges from Samtse Lower Secondary School who had authored two children's short story books titled "A Little Thing Called Love" and "Deyzang" donated three copies each of the publications to the College Library.



A group photo of the contestants of the declamation speech competition

Webinar on “BEING RESILIENT” A Special Session with His Eminence Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche

On 14th January, the faculty, staff and students of the College had a special opportunity and blessings to attend an online session on 'Being Resilient' by His Eminence Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche. Besides Samtse College of Education, the webinar was also attended by the executives of the Royal University of Bhutan, faculty and students from Sherubtse College, Gedu College of Business Studies, Royal Thimphu College, College of Science and Technology, Jigme Namgyal Engineering College, teachers from Samtse Lower Secondary School and Samtse Higher Secondary School.

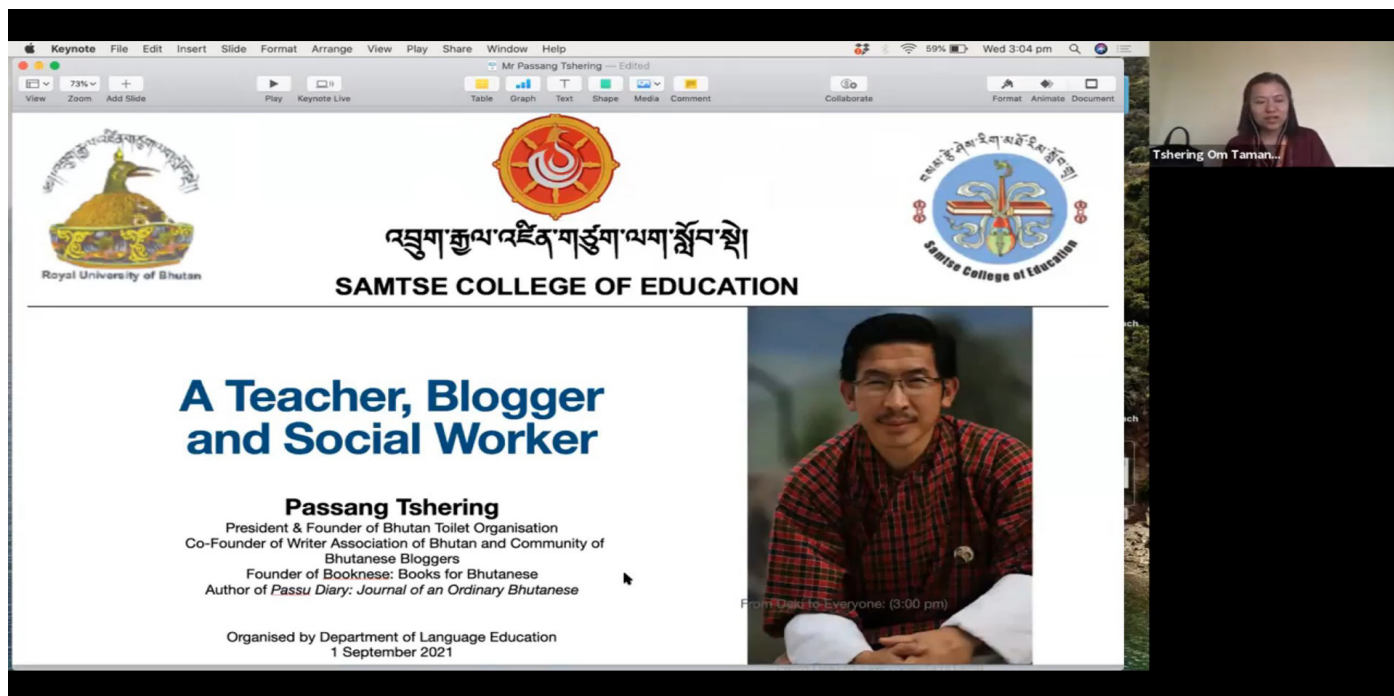
The webinar was quite timely and the substance of the talk deep and profound. The new learning and insight acquired through this webinar could be put into use immediately in dealing with the current anxieties, worries and difficulties people seem to be experiencing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak.

The webinar was the first event for 2021, organised as part of the Samtse 2020 (Khey-chi Khey-chi) Initiative, launched in March 2020 by His Eminence Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche at Samtse College of Education.



Poster courtesy: Samtse 2020 Instagram page.

A Webinar on Blogging by Blogger Passang Tshering (Passu)



A screenshot of the webinar

The Department of Language Education organised a webinar on blogging as a part of their semester plan. Passang Tshering, popularly known as Passu shared his journey as a teacher, a social worker, and a blogger relating them to the experiences of educators and students of the college. Passu was a teacher at Royal Academy who later resigned to pursue blogging, followed by the establishment of Bhutan Toilet Organization in 2015 giving him the title Chablop Passang. In an hour and a half session, he shared his journey of becoming a blogger mainly through examples of what a blogger can accomplish by beginning it with reading habits. He emphasised that reading is never too late for anyone, “I started reading and taking notes when I was in class XI.” He advised the participants to choose a subject of interest or a niche to write about in the first place. Writing, according to him is like any other skill in life. He said that one acquires it only with constant and consistent practice. To be a blogger, one must write every day and not wait to become a perfectionist, advised Passu.

Besides the joy of publishing and the art of writing, he said that blogging leaves a legacy behind and also helps in building social capital (making yourself known to people). “As a young teacher, if you can build your social capital, people would come to you searching for your expertise”, he said to the students. He also emphatically stressed the importance of reading, writing, and publishing for teachers and highlighted that he would hesitate to send his children to be taught by a teacher who hardly has any publication against his or her name. Towards the end of the session, he advised the students not to be an ordinary teacher who simply age and waits for retirement, but pursue some exciting plans such as writing and doing social work which can elevate students’ faith in teaching. “Teachers are all social workers and school is a safe ground to experiment ideas”. Lastly, he introduced Grammarly, a cross-platform cloud-based writing assistant that reviews spelling, grammar, punctuation, clarity, engagement, etc. to encourage the students to begin writing.

English debate competition

The Department of Language Education and College Literary Club organised a College wide English debate competition. The debate was held in two rounds, the elimination round and the final round where three participants from each class participated. In the elimination round, although the speakers debated in teams representing their respective classes, the speakers for the second or the final round were selected based on individual assessment. To help develop spontaneity and also to enable the speakers to read and research for information and ideas at a deeper level, the top ten speakers selected for the final round were not informed whether they would speak from the affirmative or opposing team until the last minute of the final debate. The finale of the debate competition was attended by the students and teaching faculty of the College. The Opposing Team was declared the winner of the competition and Ms. Nidup Zangmo, a first year BA in Social Work student from the opposing team was adjudged the best debater of the competition.

On 30th April 2021, on the final day of the debate, the ten final debaters were divided into the affirmative and opposing teams of five members each through a lottery draw. They debated on the topic "Social media should be banned in school". Phuntsho Choden Tenzing, one of the finalists from BA in Social Work 2nd year shared, "I was very happy about this topic for the debate because it means that the institute as a whole is concerned about the growing negative impacts of social media on children. I realized that children shouldn't actually be allowed to use social media in school because it indeed brings a lot of distraction and poses threat to them since cyberbullying, illicit contents and spreading of fake allegations and defamations are on the rise now".

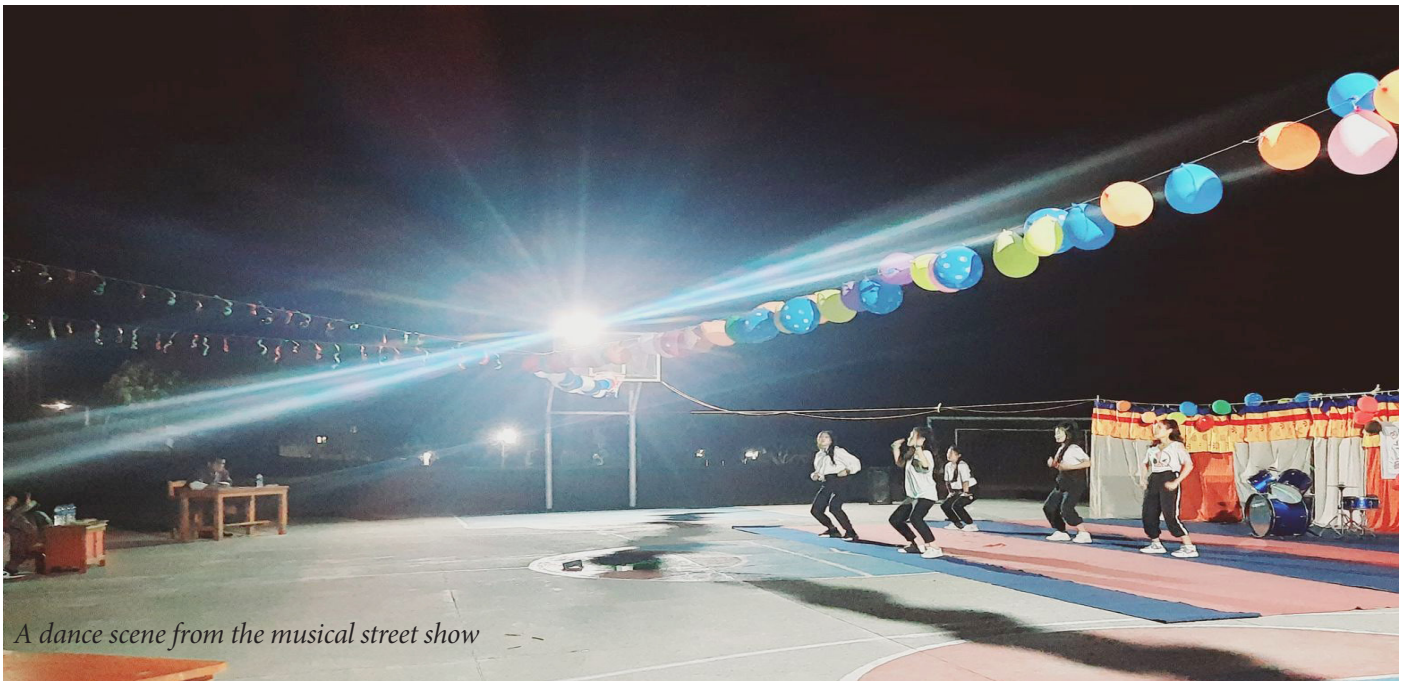
Ms. Rupa Rai, the Literary Club Coordinator said that the objective for conducting such debate is mainly to provide students with an avenue for self-expression. It provides them opportunities to think critically and articulate their thoughts with clarity and develop public speaking skills. It was also to let the club members get the experience of holding such events and be better event organisers. She also shared that the audience, especially the students will get inspired and encouraged to participate in such events by looking at the skills and audacity their fellow student participants display while debating.

Before concluding the programme, a few of the Literary Club members recited a poem as a means to encourage the students to develop a good habit of reading.



Contestants with judges - MEd English in-service students

A Musical Street Show in the College



A musical street show was conducted after a gap of four years by the College Music Club on the night of 3rd April 2021.

On-campus students and a few staff participated in the singing and dancing competition. The event was mainly organised to provide a platform to showcase the musical talents of the students and staff. Mr. Karma Tshering, the Music Club Coordinator shared, “such rare events will help students to refresh their minds while also promoting culture and Bhutanese music”. He further mentioned that the “show was organised to substitute Jam session which has long been discouraged as part of COVID-19 safety protocols”.

The Nature Journaling Club opened a food stall aiming to generate income for the club.

There was also a lucky draw among the students using their student ID number and it helped in the

gathering of spectators and keeping them till the end of the show. From the dance category, Dema Yangzom of BA in Social Work first year won the competition and from the singing category, Sonam Yarphe and Tenzin Duba both from B.Ed English and History final year Arts ‘A’ were declared the winner. All the lucky draw winners and winners of dancing and singing categories were awarded cash prizes.

All the students residing on the campus turned up at the event. “It was entertaining and thrilling!” said Mr. Sonam Chopel of BA in Social Work 2nd year who came to witness the show. The show went on from 7 p.m. till 10 p.m.

Many were of the view that the event was not just entertaining but also a breather amidst the hustles of academic workload. The College looks forward to organising similar events in the future as well.

B.Ed 4th Year Science 'B' wins the B.Ed Rolling Trophy Tournament

From a total of 13 teams that participated in the B.Ed Rolling Trophy Football Tournament in the College that included a team from the College teaching faculty and staff, the Final Year B.Ed Science 'B' students lifted the trophy as the winning team after defeating the PgDE 'B' students. In a fiercely contested game on the 29th of September, the B.Ed 4th Year Science 'B' took the lead with two goals till the last few minutes of the game. However, the PgDE players with display of good skills and techniques still fought well high spirited and motivated till the end. Mr. Chimi Dorji and Mr. Kunzang Dorji of PgDE did not miss the opportunities and scored the goals to end the 90 minute game in a draw. Luck was with the B.Ed Final Year Sci. 'B' players from the beginning of the game. They won the game in the penalty shoot out bringing jubilations to the rest of the class members who kept the hopes and dreams of players alive by constantly cheering for them.

Mr. Sonam Dhendup, player of B. Ed Sci B said that it was a tough and challenging match. "There was immense responsibility shouldered upon us to win the trophy and fulfil the dream of our classmates who had the same vision for a long time. We had believed in ourselves and never gave up which resulted in our triumph. I am immensely overjoyed and proud to win this tournament as well as be a top scorer in the league. I believe that if we put our mind on it and work hard for it, then everything is achievable". he added. Mr. Tandin Dorji, the team captain of B.Ed 4th Year Sci B shared, "Winning the B.Ed Rolling Trophy Tournament after waiting for so many years is such a happiness to every one of us.

Mr. Prakash Sanyasi, the team captain of PgDE-B shared that his playmates showed some real talents in the game making the match both exciting and challenging. He further shared that his team lost the match because of one day luck because in the opening match played in the league round they defeated the same class. He continued, "From this match, we learnt that players should never underestimate the opponents and be overconfident." Both the Winners and Runners Up were awarded cash prizes and trophies. Mr Sonam Dendup took the highest scorer award and PgDE-C took the Best Coordinating Team award.

According to the organizers, the tournament was conducted to institute 'B.Ed Rolling Trophy' as the legacy of all graduated B.Ed students.

The organisers extended their gratitude towards the College for allowing them to organise a Tournament and sponsors such as Mr. Phub Tenzin, Proprietor (Jinzai Construction & Maintenance Services) for sponsoring the game ball, Peling Book Store and Trainees of Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education for sponsoring refreshment for the final match, College canteen for sponsoring the cash prizes for Best Coordinating Team and Highest Scorer. The organisers also thanked the whole student body and other supporters for their wholehearted participation in making the tournament a successful event.



The opening of the final match between B.Ed IV Year Sci B and PgDE B boys.

Farewell to Staff

The College bade farewell to four staff of the College. Mr. Dorji Dukpa, Associate Professor in English, Mr. Johan Westman, Music Teacher, Mr. Rajen Kami, Carpenter and Mr. Buddhiman Rai, Cleaner on 29th January 2021.

In a simple farewell dinner, the President of the College thanked all of them for serving the College and the nation for so many years. He further mentioned that their services in various capacities have helped this premier institution to grow better. Mr. Dorji Dukpa served the nation for 37 years and 8 months. He has begun his career as Transport Officer and later joined teaching because of his passion and enthusiasm for teaching. Before joining this College as faculty

of English, he served as a teacher, principal and education inspector under the erstwhile Inspectorate of Education in the Ministry of Education.

In his emotional farewell remark, he expressed, “It is not my service to the nation rather it is the government and nation who took care of me. So, I would like to thank the government and the nation for taking care of me for all these years.” Mr. Dorji Dukpa was known for his simplicity, humility, hard work and an unassuming personality. The College President made a special mention of these traits in him as a colleague and a professional.

Mr. Johan Westman, from Sweden, joined SCE as a music teacher five years ago. He left the College to join the College of Language and Culture Studies, Taktse in Trongsa.

During his stay in the College, he brought a lot of positive development in music education not only through the teaching of music lessons to the students in the College but also in developing the facilities in the music education centre such as procurement of musical instruments and other facilities. The President stated that Johan is someone who has a deep respect and appreciation for Bhutan and our culture. Johan also conducted free music classes during the weekends for school children living in the college campus. In his remark, Johan mentioned that he learnt a lot from the College and thanked everyone for helping and being nice to him.

Mr. Rajen Kami, a support staff joined the College 17 years ago as a gardener and went on to become one of the multi-skilled support staff of the College. He shared that when he joined the College, he came empty-handed and had nothing with him but now he is going back with lot of experiences.

Mr. Buddhiman Rai, a naive and soft natured person did not speak but his face did speak some remorse.



Mr. Dorji Dukpa
Associate Professor



Mr. Johan Westman
Music Teacher



Mr. Rajen Kami
Support Staff



Mr. Buddhiman Rai
Support Staff



The College President handing gifts to retiring staff and scenes from the farewell gathering

The College hosted the Desuung Skilling Programme



A group photo of Desuup participants with staff of Samtse College

On 16th June 2021, Samtse College of Education hosted the Desuung Skilling Programme (DSP) coordinated by DSP Office, Thimphu.

Dasho Sonam Kinga, the Chairman of the DSP inaugurated the programme virtually from the seat of Cheotse Peonlop, Trongsa Dzong. In his opening statement, Dasho emphasized the importance of understanding the larger goals and aspirations of the nation. Dasho also reminded that Desuups have the shared responsibility in fulfilling the visions of His Majesty The King- one of which is to be a responsible Desuup in nation building. This ICT skilling programme is a stepping stone to the meeting of larger national goals and aspirations and skills have to be the "21st century Bhutanese identity" Dasho concluded. The Officiating President of the College, Dr. Sonam Rinchen highlighted the importance of ICT as a fourth required knowledge in the 21st century besides the 20th century reading,

writing and arithmetic knowledge. The Dean of Student Affairs, Mr. Karma Gayphel shared that there is a very similar role between Desuups and teachers. Society expects teachers and Desuups to be well-mannered, well dressed and trustworthy. He further added, it is important to take self-care and be responsible. 'If you all take selfcare and be responsible, there will not be problems in your hostel,' he concluded.

The same Desuung Skilling Programme was organised simultaneously at Sherubtse College in Kanglung, Trashigang and Gyalpoizhing College of Information Technology in Mongar.

The inaugural ceremony of the programme was concluded with a group photo session and special caking cutting ceremony – a soelra from His Majesty The King.

Celebrating Diwali – The Festival of Lights

Under the auspices of the College Committee for Cultural Immersion and Education, students belonging to the Hindu community organized and celebrated Diwali-the Festival of Lights.

The celebration started at 5:30 pm with Mr. Amrit Sharma of Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (Pg Cert in HE) delivering a heart touching welcome speech. He also shared a lot of historical and spiritual significance of the Diwali celebration. In the celebration, all the faculty, staff and students of the College joined the most awaited celebration. They all received blessings from Goddess Saraswati and tika from the Pandit. It was followed by chanting of devotional songs and a few cultural performances.

According to one of the organisers, Mr Deagendra Acharya of 4th Year Arts 'A', 'the programme and the celebration went as it was planned and that he is happy to see the beautiful smiles on the faces of the College family.' He also wished everyone happiness and prosperity.

Kabita Powdel of Bachelor of Arts in Social Work (BASW) 2nd Year student shared, 'I am very happy and feel blessed to celebrate one of the great festivals with my friends.' She further stated that although away from home, the celebration of such a significant religious festival in the College with other students and staff of the College made her feel homely and blessed.



Officiating President offering prayers to god Lakshmi



Scenes from celebration

Felicitations and Tashi Lekdhar Offering to Academics on Completion of Studies

In a simple ceremony, the College felicitated and offered Tashi Lekdhar to two academic staff for completing their studies from the two different universities in South Asia.

Dr. Reeta Rai, a faculty of chemistry completed her PhD from the University of Kathmandu, Nepal and Mr. Ugyen Dorji, a faculty of mathematics completed his Masters from the South Asian University, Delhi, India. Dr. Reeta shared her experiences of the PhD journey filled with emotion. She said, 'As a lady, I faced a lot of challenges especially during the data collection, moreover, my PhD was mixed-mode and I struggled to strike balance between personal and professional duties.' She further added, 'my husband was the biggest supporter during my PhD journey' and also thanked the College management for supporting her to do and complete the PhD. Dr. Reeta has done her PhD research on, "Assessment of surface water pollution induced by the disposal of vehicle wash wastewater – A case study of two western districts of Bhutan." The study was supported by the Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (NORHED) Projects of College of Natural Resources, Lobesa, Royal

University of Bhutan (RUB) and Kathmandu University, Nepal. She was supervised by Prof. Subodh Sharma(PhD), Registrar, Kathmandu University, Prof. Dhan Bdr. Gurung(PhD), College of Natural Resources, RUB, and Prof. Bishal K. Sitaula(PhD), Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Norway.

Mr. Ugyen Dorji, a faculty of mathematics who completed his Masters in Mathematics shared that he has made the right decision to pursue masters in 2018. He added, 'had he been late in making a decision, the pandemic would have posed a challenge given the nature of the discipline and I thank the College for supporting the decision to pursue the masters.'

Dr. Rinchen Dorji, President of the College congratulated both the academics for completing the degrees. Further, the President highlighted that 'it is not a degree just in paper, it is an outcome of so much of struggle, patience and hard work and I hope with your new learnings, the system will benefit.' The President also reminded the two academics to keep their passion to learn more and contribute to the education system.



Dr. Reeta Rai and Mr. Ugyen Dorji receiving khadhar from staff of the college

Professional Exchange with Druk Gyalpo's Institute

Faculty and Key administrative staff of the college attended a professional exchange programme with faculty from the Druk Gyalpo's Institute (DGI) through an online zoom meeting in the afternoon. The programme, which is the first of its kind was mainly organised to exchange professional experiences, pedagogical ideas, and educational systems practised by each of the institutions.

In an introductory remark made by the President of Samtse College of Education, he expressed that such professional exchange will provide a platform to share newer understandings, newer insights, and newer perspectives to critically reflect and assess the current teacher education practices for a system that is more growth and change-oriented. "We are very conscious of how significant and critical our role is in the development of the whole education system, especially in the wake of the major education reform that is expected to begin soon in response to The Royal Decree on Education Reform", the President expressed with concern.

In the meeting which stretched to almost two hours, different coordinators of the DGI shared overviews of their various disciplines such as students' learning process, mindset, emotional pedagogy, spiritual aspects, social skills and responsibilities, and physical wellbeing. The presentation from the DGI team also constituted a brief background about how the institute aligns its system with the aspiration of His Majesty the King and the Royal Kasho on Educational Reform.

DGI is a visionary initiative of His Majesty the King which was instituted in 2016 to nurture meritorious students from all over the country by providing full scholarship. Unlike other schools in the country, the Institute is a model of education with three interconnected divisions; the school, the Educational Research Center, and the Teacher Development Center.

The two institutes plan to conduct similar exchange programmes and collaborations in the future.



Mr. Tshering Nidup of Druk Gyalpo's Institute orienting SCE staff about the Bhutan Baccalaureate

COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Test in the Campus



With the local transmission case of a 10-year-old student and his mother on April 16, 2021, in Phuentsholing, the government announced the lockdown for thromdes and satellite towns in southern border Dzongkhags on the same day.

Following the directive of the Samtse Dzongkhag COVID-19 Task Force (DC19TF) to close all schools and institutions, the College stopped the normal teaching and learning until the relaxation of the lockdown by the government which was announced on 16th April. All movements, both within and outside the campus were strictly prohibited. Students adhered to COVID-19 protocols such as handwashing, wearing masks and maintaining the physical distance in the students' mess and hostels. The Dzongkhag Medical Surveillance Team was also on the campus to do random rapid antigen test of staff and students. For the test, lecturers, staff, and students volunteered beyond the expected requirement of 10% of the population as per the DC19TF.

A total of 30 people were tested 8 male and 22 female. All tested negative. Faculty, Staff and students who have been to Phuntsholing after 7th April were all sent to the Dzongkhag Flu Clinic to test and none tested positive.

"I volunteered to test for COVID-19 because I was having dry cough and I wanted to know my results", said Chador Wangmo, a first year M. Ed in English student.

Another student, Ms. Sangay Chezom of 2nd year Bachelor of Arts in Social Work said, "I did the COVID-19 test for safety as I have met with my sister who visited me from Phuentsholing the last weekend. It is for the safety of all".

Meanwhile, the students and faculties in the college were kept updated by President through the email and social media platforms of the developments in the Dzongkhag, Bhutan and the neighbouring region.

PhD Thesis Talk: A Research Knowledge Sharing Event



Presenter 1: Dr. Rinchen Dorji, President

The Office of the Dean of Research and Industrial Linkages initiated PhD Thesis Talk engaging all M.Ed students and faculty members on 24th April in the College Auditorium. Although the speakers have shared their PhD thesis in different forums, it is the first of its kind to dedicate the session to M.Ed students.

The first speaker, Dr. Rinchen Dorji, President of the College presented his thesis titled "An Investigation of Attitudes and Experiences of Implementing Inclusive Education in Bhutan: Perspectives of Teachers, Principals, and Past Students with Visual Impairment". Inclusive Education is generally understood as education that embraces differences and diversity relating to disability, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status culture and social class. "While pursuing PhD back in 2015, Inclusive education was quite a new subject in our country and there was hardly any literature available" shared Dr. Rinchen adding that the benefit the findings of the study can have on the larger education system in the country. He also shared the aims and objectives of his thesis, sample interview questions, data analysis and findings. Towards to end of the session, he specifically presented on how to use in-depth data analysis tools such as Leximancer and SPSS. Dr. Rinchen Dorji completed PhD from University of New England, Australia in 2017. The second speaker, Dr. Tashi Gyeltshen, Assistant Professor from Language



Presenter 2: Dr. Tashi Gyeltshen

Department presented on the thesis titled "The Nature of Academic Leadership at the Colleges of Royal University of Bhutan". According to his thesis, the Royal University of Bhutan being a young institution in the country has derived leadership approaches from western countries such as the USA. His findings also reveal that there is a shift from Autocratic leadership to a more Democratic and Relational leadership with the coming of younger generation of leaders. While sharing the significance of his study, Dr. Tashi Gyeltshen share, "The study establishes a basis for Academic Leadership and provides future research direction besides enriching literature on Buddhist-influenced leadership." He completed his PhD from Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia. The programme was organised as a research knowledge sharing event considering the increasing importance of research and publication in higher education and with an objective to help the M.Ed students in the College benefit from this Thesis Talk because research makes a major component of all M.Ed study programmes offered in the College. "Such event will provide encouragement and confidence while carrying out research in real life", ensured Dr. Ganeshman Gurung who is the Officiating Dean of Research and Industrial Linkages in his opening remark. The College Research Committee plans to make Thesis Talk a biannual research event in the college.

Autumn Semester Faculty-Student Research Convention

On 1st October 2021, all the faculty members, staff and students gathered in two venues to participate in the annual research event “Faculty-Student Research Convention”.

In the keynote address, Dr. Dorji Penjore, Lecturer, Royal Institute of Management, Thimphu, explicitly highlighted the role of research in education sharing his personal experiences of research as a civil servant in Bhutan. The address transitioned on to prevailing types of universities: teaching universities and research universities in the world. He was candid in pointing the features of a bad university such as overwork, the prevalence of many subjects/courses, bears heavy administrative burden and research is carried for promotion-not for its own sake. Dr. Dorji Penjore further highlighted that there are three areas of learning what, where and how? and traditionally classroom is the dominant place of learning. And he shared that classrooms are no more the only learning place and posited that learning can happen anywhere. Good researchers make good teachers was one of the highlights of his address. However, he also pointed out some of the bottlenecks of researching in Bhutan and the means to overcome them. The Keynote Speaker concluded that research is indispensable to the teaching profession; it needs a lot of passion and interest and research knowledge in itself is a reward. After the keynote address, a total of 8 papers were presented both by the faculty and students in two different venues. Considering the significance of the research in education particularly to students and the seating capacity of the auditorium, the papers were also presented in the dining hall.

The following were the research papers shared as part of the event:

1. *Teaching through Place-based Education: An Investigation of the Implementation of Place-based Education and its Relationship with Educating for GNH at the Samtse College of Education* by Dr. Nandu Giri, Dr. Kinzang Dorji & Alexander Sivitskis.
2. *Exploring the Relationship Between Environmental Knowledge, Attitude and Behaviour of Key Stage 3 Students: A Case Study in a Dzongkhag in Central Bhutan* by Karma Rinzin.
3. *Effectiveness of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for Online Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Perspectives of Academics and Students of the Royal University of Bhutan* by Ugyen Pem, Chenga Dorji, Sangay Tshering and Dr. Rinchen Dorji
4. *Improving BEd Arts Students’ Academic Writing Skills with Support in Language and Grammar: An Action Research* by Choeda, Dr. Tashi Gyeltshen & Thinley Wangchuk.
5. *Effectiveness of the Projected Instructional Media on Learning Biology for Tenth-Grade Students – Pema Lethro.*
6. *Contextualizing and Infusing Gross National Happiness (GNH) Values in Teaching-Learning Mathematics in Primary Schools of Bhutan: Approaches and Relevancy* by P.B. Subba and Bijoy Hangmo Subba.
7. *Factors Affecting Students’ Achievement in Mathematics: A Case of Samtse Dzongkhag* by Dr. Sonam Rinchen.
8. *The Impact of Educational Technology Tools on the Learning Achievement of B.Ed Science Students in Ecology Class at Samtse College of Education* by Ran Singh Tamang, Tshering & Dr. Sonam Rinchen



Paper presenters of the Convention

One of the M.Ed in Geography students Mr. Karma Rinzin who presented the preliminary findings of his dissertation shared, “I have received comments and suggestions that will help me in improving the quality of my dissertation.” He added, “I also gained a lot of knowledge and insights listening to other presentations.” Mr. Purna Bahadur Subba, Lecturer in Mathematics also expressed his gratitude to all those who quizzed him with critical questions.

In the closing remark, the President of the College succinctly pointed out that anyone who is research active will never get obsolete and there is already a lot of evidence that research is gaining importance in life. He also emphasised that active researchers will be an engine of the growth and development of an economy.

However, the President cautioned and alerted that research has to be methodologically sound, ethically honest and must address problems. In a nutshell, learning to do research correctly or right way is far more important than researching for the sake, he added. The President concluded the remark with a strong message that there is no shortcut in research and one of the gateways to research is a good reading habit.

The theme of this year’s research convention was “Innovating Education through Research-Based Teaching, Learning and Assessment” and was organized by the Office of the Dean of Research and Industrial Linkages with support from the management and staff. It was organised in pursuit of promoting research culture in the College.

Commemoration of 41st Birth Anniversary of His Majesty

Samtse College of Education joined the nation in celebrating His Majesty's 41st Birth Anniversary.

Led by the President, all faculty, staff and students gathered in the Rigsum Goenpa hall for the celebration as early as 6.30 AM. The celebration began with lighting of butter lamps and offering of Soelkha to the pantheon of protecting deities of Bhutan and Buddhist practices for the protection of The Dharma King. The Rigsum Goenpo hall reverberated with elaborate prayers or a series of Monlams conducted for the Happiness, Good Health and Long Life of The Compassionate King and the Royal Family members. It was followed by offering of the birthday cake and recitation of the Gyalpoi Zhabten.



The President of the College while thanking the gathering for their wholehearted support and cooperation in observing this special occasion shared that we do not need to wait for birth anniversaries to offer our wishes and prayers for His Majesty' Long Life. He stated that such prayers and good wishes for our King should be unconditional and be part of our everyday lives. He highlighted how selfless His Majesty has been in his leadership and the sacrifices His Majesty makes on a daily basis for the country and wellbeing of people ever since His ascension to the Golden Throne has been beyond comprehension.

The programme ended with serving of the birthday cake and breakfast to all the staff and students in the College dining hall.



53rd College Foundation Day Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

Every Year, the 29th of May is celebrated as the College Foundation Day. On this day, The visionary King Late His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck inaugurated this College then known as Teacher Training Institute to train national teachers. Thousands of teachers have graduated from this Institute making a vital contribution to the Bhutanese education system.

Although, the Foundation Day would be celebrated in grandeur, however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's celebration was a low affair. It was attended by the representatives of the faculty, staff and students. The celebration began with the lighting of butter lamps in front of the portrait of His Late Majesty in the Counselling block which is the exact location of the first inauguration by The Third King. The College also launched the STEM website as part of the celebration. Thereafter, attendees walked to the Rigsum Goenpo Hall for the offering of various prayers for the welfare, peace and harmony in the country.

One of the faculty representatives, Mr. Ramesh Kumar Chettri, Lecturer in History shared, 'he is extremely happy to have graduated from this College.' He also expressed his gratitude to His Majesty and opined 'Bhutan otherwise would have still depended on others had Late His Majesty not instituted this college'. A student representative Mr. Tashi Phuntsho of B.Ed IVth Year Arts A shared, 'I was looking forward to celebrate as in the previous years, unfortunately, could not due to the pandemic'. He further shared, 'I wished and said silent prayers in my heart for the founder thanking for His vision in establishing this college.'

The commemoration of the day ended with the College management serving lunch to all the faculty, staff and students in the student mess.



Officiating President lighting butterlamp to mark the day

Inauguration of STEM Center's website

Prayers and Tashi Moenlam to mark the first day of 2021 Autumn Semester



The President of the College lighting butter lamp and offering prayers for a fruitful Autumn Semester in the prayer hall.

The 2021 Autumn semester began today (26th July) with the lighting of butter lamps, reciting a few obstacle aversion prayers and offering of immeasurable 'Zhabten' of His Majesty The King in the College prayer hall.

Following this programme, all faculty and section heads of the administration attended the general meeting in the Rigpa hall. As usual, it began with a short mindfulness session.

In the opening remark, President Dr. Rinchen Dorji firstly welcomed all the members from a short summer break and also highlighted and emphasised the key developments in the nation. He mentioned that the pandemic has tested everyone's patience, resilience and commitment to both personal and professional lives. And there is a need for us to be responsible enough in keeping the pandemic at bay. One of the significant highlights for the attendees was the call for making a tangible contribution to the education reform and expressed his confidence of the capability in the members to make contributions to the education reform.

The President also pitched the idea of reflecting on professional and personal shortcomings and strategising oneself to overcome those shortcomings to participate in the reform process.

On the personal teaching and learning area, the President expressed, 'quality of teacher education has a direct bearing on the quality of education in schools. We cannot recycle the old semester plans. Your semester plans have to reflect new skills, innovation, ideas and practices and inject new ideas of teaching and learning.'

He concluded, "As members of the College, we need to fuel the growth mindsets and must be able to predict the future. And one of the ways is through reading and thus the need to develop and model good reading habits as teacher educators."

The actual classroom teaching for the 2021 Autumn Semester officially began for all students w.e.f. the second week of August.

The 66th Birth Anniversary of His Majesty Drukgyal Zhipa Celebrated

The College joined the nation in commemorating the 66th Birth Anniversary of His Majesty The Fourth King Jigme Singye Wangchuck.

The commemoration began on 10th November evening with art and quiz competitions on the theme “His Majesty The Fourth Druk Gyalpo”. In the art competition, team PgDE Section B was declared the winner followed by PgDE Section A. Team Jigme bagged the first position in the quiz competition, the second position was taken by Team Gyalpo and Team Wangchuck came third. All the winners and runners ups were awarded His Majesty’s portraits as prizes.

On 11th November, the College organized a modest celebration of the Birth Anniversary considering the pandemic risk. Led by the President, all the faculty, staff and students offered various prayers and Moenlams for the continued long life, health and well being of His Majesty The Drukgyal Zhipa. It was followed by the recitation of Zhabten of His Majesty The Fourth King.

In the afternoon, various sporting events were organized as part of the celebration because 11th November is also observed as childrens’ day in the country.



Offering butter lamps to mark the 66th Birth Anniversary of Fourth Druk Gyalpo

Bum Recitation in the College: Descending Day of Lord Buddha



Prayers for the wellbeing of all sentient beings



Coinciding with the Lhabab Duechen, Descending Day of Lord Buddha, Bum; the collected words of Buddha was recited in the Rigsum Gonpo Hall.

Volunteers comprising of faculty, staff and students recited the complete set of Bum. According to the organisers, the recitation is a yearly practice of the College dedicated to the wellbeing of His Majesty the King, His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo, their Majesties, the Queens, country and people. The organisers further stated that such prayer ceremonies observed on very special religious events such as the Descending Day of Lord Buddha is also expected to keep the whole College fraternity safe from any unexpected misfortunes, ultimately contributing to the wellbeing of the all sentient beings in the universe.

The College Committee for Cultural Immersion and Education with support from the College management organised the recitation.

Considering its auspiciousness, the descending day of Lord Buddha is a public holiday in Bhutan. This auspicious day is also observed in other Buddhist countries. On this day (Lhabab Duchen), Buddhist believe that Buddha descended from Trāyastriṃśa heaven to earth. According to legend, the Buddha ascended the Trāyastriṃśa heaven temporarily at the age of 41, to give teachings to benefit the gods in the realm, and to repay the kindness of his mother by liberating her from Samsara.

Considering this historical background in Buddhism and its significance, this auspicious day is also observed as Mother's Day in Bhutan upon the advice and declaration made by the 70th Je Khenpo, His Holiness Truelku Jigme Choeda.

Conclusion of 45 days De-suung Skilling Programme on ICT Foundational Course

The 45 days De-suung Skilling Programme on ICT Foundational Course which was organised in the College by the De-suung Skilling Programme Office in Thimphu concluded with a simple closing ceremony on 29th July. The training began on 16th June 2021 with a theme "In Pursuit of Excellence: Building Skill Set and Transforming Mindset" and the training was offered by the ICT lecturers and staff of the College. A total of 27 De-suups participated and successfully completed this course. Dasho Dzungda, as the Guest of Honour for the ceremony shared his delight towards the fulfillment by emphasizing on the need to be updated with ICT skills while serving the nation. He stated that having a qualification alone is not enough in 21st century but one must possess skills that enable full utilization of features of technology such as computers and smart phones.

He shared that Bhutanese are blessed under the extraordinary leadership of His Majesty the King who foresees any challenge and initiate solutions in advance. "De-suung being one of the visionary

initiatives of His Majesty the King journeyed from a decade to such a glory that today, the service of De-suups are recognizable anywhere as a helping hand to nation building and national security", said the Dasho Dzungda. Dasho advised De-suung participants to continue exploring knowledge related to ICT and technology to become self sufficient in and to improve the efficiency of services.

The President of the College in his address affirmed that initiation of such course is yet another memorable achievement where the first cohort of De-suups successfully completes the first ever skilling programme aimed towards four distinct attributes; Integrity, time management, attention to detail and commitment to lifelong learning amongst De-suups. De-suup trainees also performed few cultural dances. The event ended with awarding of certificates to the participants and a group photo session.

The De-suup skilling programme was also hosted by two other RUB Colleges, Sherubtse College and Gyelpoizhing College of Information Technology at the same time.



The ICT Skilling course participants reciting Zhabten led by the Dasho Dzungda and the College President

Award Ceremony: Celebrating the Academic Success of MEd Chort 2 Students

The College organised a decent Award Night and farewell programme on 17 January 2021 for the graduands of the M.Ed in Sciences and Mathematics, who are all in-service teachers. The programme began with the recitation of Tashi Tsekpa and Gyalpoi Zhabten and offering of Tashi Khadar by the President to the graduands.

In his address, the President of the College shared that he wished that this joyous occasion of observing the graduands' completion of their study in the College had happened at a more pleasant time where the special academic achievements could be celebrated with more gaiety and merrymaking. He expressed his hopes that "the evening's programme in spite of all its simplicity in the arrangement would still be cherished as a special moment in the graduands' lives – an award night organised to honour and celebrate your successful completion of your Master of Education."

The President also reminded the graduands of the important role of teachers is not just building the education system but also in the overall nation building processes and asked the graduands to remember that the quality of education in the country cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. Thus, the importance of each one of them as qualified teachers with additional degrees to return to the schools with a goal to make a greater difference and give their best as a payback to the country.

He mentioned that change in education is inevitable and the task ahead is not going to be easy and hoped that each of them with an additional qualification will play their part well in this game of educational reforms. One of the highlights of his address was the antidote he prescribed to the graduands to get out of their comfort zones and break the cycle of mediocrity, namely hard work and diligence, professionalism and integrity, sensibility and

mindfulness, responsibility and SMART (Sincere, Mindful, Astute, and Timeless). He fondly urged the graduands to be diligent and hardworking at all times because nobody can snatch away the benefits one can reap from hard work.

Besides the academic excellence and proficiency awards, prizes for the literary activity i.e., creative writing organised by the Department of Language Education were also awarded.

In the valedictory speech by the graduating students, graduand Mr. Wangchuk, M. Ed in Physics shared, besides academic learning opportunities, they got opportunities to attend Mountain Echoes and Friday Forum of the RIGSS, which were truly a great learning opportunity for them. Another graduand, Mr. Kinzang Dorji, M.Ed in Biology, humorously shared, "research! we all begun from scratch, sometimes reading ten articles and ending writing just one sentence and also being confused is one of the memories. Research has instilled extra 'dremba' and understood resilience. It is all because of the College".



A photo of a graduating M.Ed award recipient with President



A group photo of the graduating M.Ed batch with their tutors and the President

Tarayana Club Organized Open Football and Volleyball League

The Tarayana club in the College organized an open football and volleyball league in the college. The league ended with a final football match between B.Ed secondary final year Science 'A' and B.Ed final year Arts 'A' on 14th April 2021. The championship cup was won by B.Ed final year Arts 'A' with four goals against three goals.

The club organized the championship cup with an objective to engage and entertain the students in the College. They organized football for men and volleyball for women which kicked off from 25th March. Five teams took part in the volleyball league and BA in Social Work first year won the match played against B.Ed. Secondary final year Arts 'B'. The winning teams of both the football and volleyball tournaments were awarded cash prizes and trophies. The cash prize was sponsored by JK Furniture House of Samtse.

The Club coordinator, Mr. Phusum Wangdi said, "The game is a success story of our Club and I am also happy and satisfied with the support rendered by all the fellow mates." Some College staff and students gathered to witness the match.



B.Ed final year Arts A receiving trophy from the President

Teacher's Day: A Day to Remember that "Teachers Matter"

Coinciding with the Birth Anniversary of Late His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, the College joined the nation in celebrating the National Teachers' Day.

Teachers' Day celebration began with the lighting of butter lamps in the Rigsum Gonpo Hall and reciting prayers in memory of Late His Majesty The Third King who was the Founding Father of modern education in Bhutan. It was followed by the cultural programme in the Namgyel Khangzang (auditorium) performed by students from different courses. In the entertainment section, faculty members also participated. Recordings of the day's greeting by the graduates of this College were screened too.

"I have never felt so much joy and excitement like today and this day was the most awaited day for me. As it is the day to pay tribute to His Majesty The Third King and as a student, it is a special day to pay gratitude to all my teachers and teachers around the globe.

I felt satisfied having wished my teachers and taking part in the celebration. Indeed teachers are my light in the darkness; an inspiration and hope. I shall cherish this special day" said, Karma Tshering, B.Ed 4th Year (English & History).

Although UNESCO has declared October 5th as the Teachers' Day, however in Bhutan, the then Health and Education Minister Lyonpo Sangay Ngedup announced and declared May 2nd as the National Teachers' Day. Since then, Bhutan observes May 2nd as the National Teachers' Day to recognize, thank and celebrate the efforts of our teachers in shaping the youths of our nation.

Mr. Dorji Dukpa, a retired Associate Professor of the College was the Guest of Honour for the celebration.



114th National Day: Tributes to the Selfless Leadership of our KINGS!

The College observed and celebrated the 114th National Day in two different parts. Part I of the day began with an early morning offering of butter lamps at the Rigsum Gonpo Prayer Hall of the College followed by a Tashi Moenlam and prayers by the teaching faculty, administrative staff and the BEd final year students who had stayed back in the College to attend the 48th De-suung Training. The gathering also sang the National Anthem and Gyalpoi Zhabten. This was followed by a breakfast in the College Mess for all the teaching faculty, staff and students.

Part II of the programme was observed in the Namgyel Khangzang – College Auditorium where the gathering listened to the National Day address by our beloved Druk Gyalpo His Majesty King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck. After His Majesty's Royal Address to the nation, a team led by Honorable Dasho Dzungda, Dasho Drangpon, Dzongkhag officials and a few Regional Heads of government and corporate agencies and people from the business community gathered in the College to award prizes and certificates to the winners of the creative writing competition that the College organised in collaboration with Samtse Dzongkhag Administration for school children in Samtse to commemorate the 114th National Day. Samtse Dzongkhag Administration and the College co-sponsored the prizes for this creative writing competition.

According to the Coordinators Dr. Ganeshman and Dr. Kinley, this Dzongkhag level literary activity was organised with an objective to not only provide a platform for school students to discover and express their innate creative writing talents but also to create an opportunity to leave behind a lasting legacy of the 114th National Day with their thoughts and feelings of loyalty, patriotism and nationalism penned down in the form of a publication that they can associate to this particular National Day in their lives. The coordinators also stated that the patrons of this initiative have conceived this idea to pay "Tribute to our Beloved Kings" for their selfless sacrifices and visionary leaderships in ensuring the security, sovereignty and prosperity of the nation and her citizens.

The College also declared the result of the musical video creation competition organised for the College students to commemorate the 114th National Day on the same theme "Tribute to our Beloved Kings". The prizes for this activity was sponsored by Bhutan Mining Limited (BML), Samtse. The students and select group of teaching faculty performed some cultural songs and dances as part of this National Day celebration.

The College also hosted a simple lunch for the guests, staff and students as part of the celebration.



In Conversation with our outgoing Administrative Officer



1. Give us a brief introduction about yourself

I am Tandin Tshering and I graduated with BSc. Computer Science from Sherubtse College, Royal University of Bhutan. This is my tenth year serving in this Premier College as Administrative Officer looking after Human Resource, Administrative and Procurement services in the College. I firmly believe in dynamics of equality, professionalism and mindfulness to evolve and grow every moment to be a better version of myself.

2. What made you or who inspired you to take up the career at Samtse College of Education?

Well, the sole purpose of availing education right from the young age, despite endless bounce and hits, were to make the life out of it. After having put in so much of hard work and dedication right from school days, I was determined to look for a descent job that can support not only myself but also my family. I had a firm belief that art is all about finding opportunities in gutter next to you and the best opportunities comes when you hit at right time. Meantime, the vacancy announcement was broadcast which I was actually looking for. I have read the job descriptions which was quite impressive. On the other hand, I realized that there will be endless learning as the premier institutions like SCE comprised of highly qualified and well experienced, learned faculties which in fact, without skepticism there will be continuous learning. This actually pressed me harder to grasp it. Of course, there were external factors that encouraged and inspired me to take up this career. Those encouragement made me to reckon the phrase of Malaya, “When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful”.

Today, I have learned that getting to serve in this premier institute is one of the biggest blessings and getting to work under varied dynamic leaders is the incredible fortune.

3. How did a typical working day look like when you worked here? Were there some challenges that you encountered?

Initially people were skeptical how IT graduates can be efficient enough to hold on non-technical job of Administrative and Human Resource. Indeed, their lenses gave me extra strength and motivation to work harder as human caliber is never being compartmentalized. The most common way people give up is by thinking they don't have any but such notions were surmounted by patience and perseverance.

Having had to manage Human Resource, Administration, Procurement and Protocols was indeed, challenging but from inception to the end, the clear guidance from my immediate supervisors were the rays of light and beam of hopes. For the same, I must not forget to credit the dynamic leaders who have been guiding me throughout. It was twice I have lived forever in a smile.

Despite so much of learning, I still feel that managing human is the most difficult task as any policies or ideas or the principle or being that don't come with complete package which can fit every one exactly like a jig saw puzzle. Managing tactfully and being optimistic were some of the legitimate responses to the failure. In the same note, I wished I had thirty hours in a day to be more efficient.

4. What are your most memorable and positive College experiences during your stay at SCE?

Of many experiences during my stay in this College, one of the most memorable and positive experiences is to be agile, resilient and positive even in the midst of challenging times. This institution has not only nurtured and developed me to be a better version of myself but I make an exit with a wish that the seed of intellectuals and wisdom sown in me during my stay in this College to bear a glowing achievements benefiting the mass. The insights and wisdom received from dynamic leaders, learned faculties, hardworking support staff and cheerful students are the building blocks of my career and my gratitude to all can't be expressed in a single line.

5. Would you have any specific advice/suggestions for the College for positive progression?

When brighter are at side, I feel I am amateur to suggest. I have full confidence that this college would be at greater height yet diligently, I prefer to share few observations than suggestion. Within this short period of time, I have observed tremendous transformation right from infrastructure development to the quality of education. Currently the College is working ceaselessly sacrificing their precious time to bring visible change bringing His Majesty's vision in the forefront. I foresee, these tireless efforts can ward off any hurdles, leap fences and penetrate walls which will have far reaching significant impacts to the Education System and the Bhutanese society. I wish you all to hear a voice of god for your unwavering dedications.

Marking International Peace Day in the College



Student members of SCE Y-VIA Programme holding brochures for International Peace Day

Samtse College of Education joined the world in celebrating the International Day of Peace on September 21. The day is marked to understand the ideals of peace and avoid violence which has brought about nothing but despair and an uncertain future for many. The day was declared by the UN in 1981 mainly to fight against hostility and all forms of threats to peace.

The SCE Y-VIA programme displayed this year's theme, "Recovering Better for an Equitable and Sustainable World", and distributed brochures and chocolates. Students and staffs were all welcomed to take part to ensure peace above all differences and to contribute to building a Culture of Peace. In an email message, the Dean of Student Affairs, who is from a counselling background wrote, "Let us try to forgive and abandon all resentments that we

have been holding onto since our early childhood days because only FORGIVENESS can bring peace, happiness, and emotional healing that would help us move forward in life. If we are not peaceful within, we cannot bring peace to those around us, and observation of such International Peace Day will unfortunately remain as an obsolete idea." The day was marked to also ensure that the new post-pandemic is not just equal in several ways, but is healthier as well and to pray for a rapid global recovery from the pandemic.

The Sherig FM team also hosted a talk show in collaboration with the Y-VIA team later in the evening to talk about the significance of the Peace Day. Guest speakers were students undergoing Post graduate Diploma in Education.

Battle with Life

I am painted black and white,
 Nothing to glow too bright
 Felt I was born,
 To meet with dreaded horns
 Help! I am being tricked by the devil
 Always on trial with my life,
 Imprisoned prisoner like Sirius Black
 Turning me into a maniac
 Thoughts with fangs and claws shredding me
 Help! I am tricked by the devil
 Looking through the engraved windows,
 All that's seen are shadows
 Crawled on by the hand of death
 Helpless to spread wings and fly
 Not through throng but through peace
 Afraid am I that my mind being seized
 A lone traveler trying to be bold
 Rather selling my soul even I am cold
 Am I alone in this journey?
 Or this agony befriended me
 Making me lifeless to be
 Help! I am tricked by the devil

Sangay Nidup, B.Ed IV year, Arts A

I had a dream

It's a beautiful day,
 Golden rays shimmering from the window.
 Ah, what a beautiful smile on her cheek,
 Regarding to express thousand words she haven't
 speak,
 Smile as wide as valley hiding all grief and giving
 love in brief.
 Hello! Sweetheart she called me,
 Yes my darling granny!
 The blissful moment filled with love and happiness,
 Like the melody of flute from a world beyond mine
 she smiled,
 It's calling on me to leave my own world.
 I opened my eyes, it's three in the morning.
 Where shall I begin and where to end?
 Pointless to write down sentence after sentence
 My eyes soaked with tears,
 All this time was before me just a memory,
 Still like a melody for me.
 The past I looked back,
 On restless time months have gone,
 My granny leaves to paradise never to return.
 Yet the waves of time's flux have not dislodge a sin-
 gle memories or immeasurable love,
 You were beyond perfection to have you in my
 heart.

My heart had gone to those waves of memories,
 Like a star-lit night, covered one but remained be-
 yond one reach.
 To have you found in a moment
 The dream, I have it in my heart and remain there
 forever.
 I feel we're too far and too close,
 Just the days are cold and so very long.

Sita Maya Subba, B.Ed IV year, Arts A

Save the mother earth!

She gives us birth
Once she was full of happiness,
With mountains and hills
Now all are getting killed
She bears a name mother earth
Sweet name and define fame
No one understand its worth
Do not litter as the earth
Think it's bitter.
Pick up waste without haste
Be alert to protect mother earth
Let's help our ozone to let the
Ice remain frozen,
Need of Plantation
Keep water clean
So, fish can be seen
Forest remain evergreen
Let's keep our rain and cloud
So, we can speak loud.
We must take pride
For our future we need to strive
Be kind it's worthwhile,
We'll get a light with brighter smile.
So, what are educator waiting for?
Open out that door,
Broadcast the word
And help the world.

Deagendra Acharya, B.Ed IV year, Arts A

The Unlucky Dog

I was born at the time of first snowfall,
Grey in fur and tiniest of all.
I counted my first step with my mother,
By then she was hit by a car, closely missed by another.
She is gone far away, leaving three of us with no food.
It forced me in choosing different path to survive,

Rolling of stones and flying sticks chase me.
Starving and walking all alone, not washing my body smells dirty.
I wag my tail to the people I see.
Yet, their kicks really hurt me.

It's upsetting and heart-wrenching to yelp,
Dragging my back legs without any help.
Bark when someone steps on it,
Waiting for someone to pick me up.

Human keeps dog as a pet, three delicious meals in a day.
But I'm unlucky, nobody noticed me.
Rain makes me wet every day.
Not a single bun to have today,
Staying inside the wood, crying.

Am I always going to be a stray,
Shivering in the chilly breeze of the snowstorm of winter nights.
I'm known as a number,
With no name or collar to show.
It's hard for me to be unwanted on this earth.

Yangchen, B.Ed IV year, Arts A

The Amazing Entity

How do you see the world? Is it through the positive lens or through the lens of negativity? The world is what you make of it. It is an evil horrible place but only if you are looking for reasons that make it horrible. But there is beauty too, if you look hard enough to see rainbows, and stars twinkling like million fireflies scattered across the cosmos.

What exactly is that you are searching for? The mind is an amazing entity of its own if you cannot control it. It can create demons and monsters but it's not always a cruel thing, it can create angels too. It can create scenarios, non-existent in reality that can completely drain you of your energy. And when that happens, it weighs you down, doesn't it?

You, me, all of us are at a constant war battling to stay alive, running away from our demons desperately trying to find that light at the end of the tunnel. But what if these demons, we are desperately trying to hide from is living right inside our heads, rent free? What if these recurring nightmares playing itself like a record player time and over again is nothing but the mind's creation?

You see, the greatest test for ourselves is not achieving greatness but being able to tame our mind. Learn to let go of a thing that darken your beautiful world. Learn to live with your demons, in peace. The world has now reached a stage where we pretend more than be genuine. All these faces masked with a smile hiding everything from the world, afraid of being judged by the immediate others.

Let's learn to live a little happier, hate a little lesser and above all learn to sail with the constant surge of waves of your mind. Stop chasing perfection. The tower of Pisa would not have received the recognition it receives now had it stayed perfect. Imperfect things are just as perfect. Change is difficult but without it life is but a featherless bird. Just as the water changes its form to adjust into any shape, so should we to live happier, brighter, better lives and eventually see the other side of this entity so called the mind.

Dechen Wangchuk, B.Ed Arts B

In Conversation with Honourable Secretary General of the National Council of Bhutan, Dasho Kinga Dakpa



Question: You started your career as a teacher and then progressively moved into different positions in the civil service. Please tell us about yourself and some of the salient milestones of your professional journey.

Alumni: I am Kinga Dakpa currently working with the National Council of Bhutan as the Secretary General. I was transferred to the current position after 31 years of service in the education sector. My last position before this was the Director General of the Royal Education Council which I left on October 30, 2021.

I started my career as a teacher (English and Economics) 31 years ago. After completing my three-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) programme from the National Institute of Education, Samtse, I was placed at Zhemgang High School in the summer of 1990. The placement was based on my option which was driven by my passion to serve in any remote high school in the country. While many of our colleagues opted for schools in urban places such as Thimphu, Paro and Phuntsholing, Mr. K B Gurung (PGCE), who unfortunately is no more with us now, and I chose Zhemgang High School which was then considered to be located in one of the remotest Dzongkhags. This seemed to pay off well in terms of added job experience and satisfaction which perhaps could have contributed to some success later in my career life.

I think I did quite well in a short period of time in my first place of posting at Zhemgang High School. I found myself soon taking up the role of the Assistant Principal there. After about two years of my service there, which included handling the most difficult task of resolving the emerging issues of the early 1990, I was identified as one of the candidates to pursue an 18 month Masters of Education (M.Ed) programme at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, Canada in 1993. Having completed the course there, I came back to Zhemgang High School in the beginning of 1995, within three months of which I got transferred to Drukgyel High School in Paro as the Vice Principal.

Drukgyel High School, they said, was a model high school and that I was privileged to be transferred there. It was indeed new and different from Zhemgang High School in terms of infrastructure, resources and other facilities. The school had classes from IX to XII - Class XII, which offered all three streams, started only after my arrival there, though. Madam Namgay Om then was the Principal of the school. I taught English to classes XI and XII students besides having to run the school as the Vice Principal. I thought the school kept up to the expectations as the model school in terms of performance in all-round aspects at least in the three and a half years of my service there. Towards the end of 1998, I was sent to Tsirang to restore Damphu Junior High School which was closed down and occupied by the army since 1990.

The restoration of the school as Damphu High School was a colossal task for me. I had to literally start from the scratch. When I arrived there, the infrastructure including school buildings, dormitories and staff quarters were old and required major maintenance. The campus had turned into a jungle. There were no furniture and office equipment for the classrooms, offices, dormitories and staff quarters. The school did not have textbooks, stationeries, laboratory equipment and library books. I had to get the campus and the infrastructure ready and also mobilize all the required facilities before the students arrived in February 1999.

Dasho Nima Wangdi who was then the Director of Education was instrumental in ensuring that the school received all the basic requirements to start the school in the beginning of the 1999 academic year. As a result, teachers started arriving - though only seven of us were there when the school started in March. When the students arrived most of the resources including textbooks and stationeries had come in. However, most of the students had to sit on the concrete floor in their classrooms as the school did not receive the furniture on time. We started classes with eight teachers for about 200 Classes VII-XI students. With the help of those students, we cleaned up the campus and made the dormitories, dining hall, toilets and other facilities serviceable. Within the next two to three months we were joined by more teachers, furniture and other necessary resources, and the school got better and better. We then built new dormitories, new classrooms, new science laboratories, a multipurpose hall, basketball court, expanded the football field, piggery cum fishery pond, improved the campus and so on. By the end of the second year (2000), the school had the first batch of Class X students appearing for the ICSE examinations which performed much better than most of the high schools in the country. These students became the first batch Class XI students in 2001 and sat for their ISC examinations in 2002 (after my transfer as the Dzongkhag Education Officer to Dagana Dzongkhag).

I have the honor to mention here that in the winter of 1999, the school was blessed with the visit of His Royal Highness Gyalsey Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck as the Guest of Honour for the first ever National Scouts Jamboree hosted by Damphu High School. Soon thereafter, we realized that we had built one of the best high schools in Bhutan.

Much against my will, because I had so many on-going works, plans and projects for the school, they sent me to Dagana as DEO in the beginning of 2002. To be frank, the status of education in Dagana that time was quite pathetic. They had only eight schools including Daga Middle Secondary School with classes upto X. Within four years of my tenure there, I built eight new schools (mostly primary schools), and upgraded Drujeygang Junior High School to Drujeygang Higher Secondary School (classes VII-XII), Daga MSS to Daga HSS (classes VII-XII), and relocated and upgraded Daga PS to Daga Junior High School.

The quality of education in the Dzongkhag in terms of academic performance improved many folds too. I also played a pivotal role in implementing the first ever Gup elections under the decentralized system introduced by His Majesty The Fourth King since 2002.

Under an ill-advised and very badly thought out policy decision of the Ministry of Education at that time (of DEOs having to go back as school principals and vice-a-versa), I got driven down to Samtse to start the new Samtse Higher Secondary School. Samtse HSS that time was to evolve from an extension of Samtse Lower Secondary School across the road leading to Samtse College of Education. Some buildings had come up and some were under construction. The school was in quite a mess - not enough classrooms, dusty and unsafe for both students and teachers. However, within two years Samtse HSS became one of the all-round best performing schools in the country.

Well, after 19 years in education, it must have dawned on someone that I might be the best person (among the worst) to lead the curriculum development for school education in Bhutan and transferred me as the Chief Curriculum Officer to head the Curriculum and Professional Support Division (CAPSD) located in the Paro College of Education campus. I was then to find out that it was not the best of the places (agencies) I was sent to - it was in shambles and discord. The Ministry had the plan to upgrade it to a department. I had to again work hard - streamline the system, improve curriculum and also work towards upgrading CAPSD to a curriculum department. I had to prepare policies, plans and strategies towards that which I (of course with the help of my capable colleagues there) did it in less than a year and a half. The CAPSD was then all set to become the Department of Curriculum Research and Development (DCRD) to be headed by a Director. I was only a chief then and the Director for the new department had to be selected through the RCSC held competition in 2011. I was not selected and within a month I got transferred as the Chief Research Officer (CRO) at the Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment (BCSEA) which was again just evolving from the Bhutan Board of Examination (BBE).

I worked as a CRO for about two years and conducted a couple of National Education Assessments (NEA) - a large-scale assessment to gauge the health of the education system and 'Way of the Toppers', a magazine that illustrated how the best performing students of classes X and XII performed the way they did - both of which sadly got discontinued during the second government.

In 2013, while BCSEA was still in the transition period, I occupied the post (of course, through the selection interview conducted by the RCSC) of the Secretary of Examinations which was left vacant when Dr. Phub Rinchen superannuated from the civil service. While in BCSEA, we tried to bring in several changes in the examinations and assessment system in the school education system. They included the online registration system for BCSE and BHSC examination candidates, drafting of National School Examination Policy, streamlining the process for selection of officials for various examination duties, initiating an online/ on-screen marking system for student answer scripts, etc., among others.

Towards the end of 2016, I was transferred as the Director for the Royal Education Council (REC) which was just evolving as an autonomous agency from the merger of the erstwhile REC and the Department of Curriculum Research and Development (which I had started in 2011) under the Ministry of Education. I was again found starting up a new organization which included cleaning the mess it was in, streamlining the system, developing and implementing an operational framework that contained the SOP and TORs to properly guide the functioning of the teething agency, and most importantly bringing about major curriculum reforms for school education.

The reforms were based on the findings and recommendations of the first ever National School Curriculum Conference (a holistic national level curriculum review) held in October-November, 2016, right after my joining REC. We started developing the National School Curriculum Framework, a mother document for curriculum development and implementation for all subjects and also the individual subject curriculum frameworks for all subjects to guide the development and implementation of the curriculum in each subject. This major work which we could complete in 2019-2020 focused on competency-based, skill-based, application-based, technology (and ICT) leveraged and exploratory learning rather than the knowledge and content-oriented curriculum that existed prior to 2016. Due to the emergence of COVID-19, we reviewed these frameworks and transformed them into what we called the New Normal Curriculum (NNC) which are comparable to the curriculum of some of the best school education systems in the world. This curriculum is also designed in such a way that an uninterrupted education can be facilitated under any emergencies such as COVID-19. The same curriculum is currently being reviewed to align with the Bhutan Baccalaureate (BB) school system that is being planned for implementation at the earliest. BB is based on the vision and aspirations of His Majesty the King to make the Bhutanese education system one of the best systems in the world.

While still with the REC, I was promoted as the Director General within just over a year of which I was transferred to the National Council of Bhutan as the Secretary General.

I am most grateful to His Majesty The King for the recognition.

Question: Unveiling your memories, tell us briefly about your experience as a student teacher at Samtse College of Education, the erstwhile National Institute of Education (NIE) during your time.

Alumni: I need to be absolutely frank and honest that I did not join teaching as a career of my first choice. After the ISC (Class 12) examination results were out, the Principal (of Sherubtse College where I was studying then) advised some of us who did not do too well in the examination to join Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) programme in the National Institute of Education, Samtse, to become teachers. He said that there was an acute shortage of teachers in Bhutan and that those who join teaching would be heavily incentivized by providing all the required facilities and expenses for the education of our first three children. This was quite promising for a person who came from a very poor family background and for someone who feared that you might land up jobless after many years of education. I rather pounced on the opportunity that was available to me at that time. That was in 1987.

However, this decision did not turn out to be too bad, after all. I gradually started enjoying the course and my stay at the institute. There were many activities that you could take up besides your regular studies. I participated in games and sports such as ball games, jumps and throws; and literary and cultural activities such as singing, dancing, dramas, debates, etc. I did surprisingly quite well in most of them. I also had opportunities to assume some leadership roles.

One thing which turned out to be quite notable was that my batch was a very proactive and influential group of trainee teachers. Some changes took place in the college because of our being there even as trainees. When we first joined the college in 1987, all lecturers and trainees attended the formal college activities such as attending assemblies, classes and even prayers in paints and shorts. We soon suggested and later demanded that these formal activities should be attended in our formal Bhutanese attires - ghos and kiras - and by the second year we found ourselves going to classes and other formal events in the national dress. We also regularized and formalized the evening prayers in the institute.

I think it is also worth noting that I took a bold decision to write and submit a novel (or a novelette to be exact) as a partial fulfillment for the completion of the programme. This was a mammoth task considering my language competencies, meager writing experience (especially a novel), lack of technology (computer, etc.) facilities and expertise - it had to be handwritten in two No. 10 notebooks - against limited time. However, it was very well received by the external examiners who came from the University of London, England. They even offered to take the manuscript to London for publication which my Director advised me to turn down for whatever reasons, and as a result of which it still remains unpublished. Hopefully, the main handwritten manuscript which I submitted (and later type written by the institute), into which I put a lot of time and effort, is still in the institute.

Some other interesting developments also took place during our stay there. We used to quite often skip classes to watch movies in the only makeshift (bamboo hut with tarpaulin roofing) video hall on the other side of the border Checkpost. Some of us were very fond of visiting Chamurchi and Banarhat (nearest Indian towns) almost every Saturday and Sunday mostly on foot without actually having to buy much. I think it was just for the heck of it. In most of the evenings of the last Saturday of every month, that was when the leftover part of our stipend after deducting all the expenditures (mostly on mess) would be given away by Mr. Gopal, a South Indian Accountant, some of us who were interested would collect some amount. The collected amount would be spent on buying some bottles of Changta Whiskey or XXX Rum, about a dozen eggs and a bottle of mustard oil. We would fry the eggs in the mustard oil and add the whiskey/rum on it and enjoy the evening in the gardens. We called the event, the Sharchokpa Party - no regionalism or racism intended here though - we called it so because many were of the view, at least at that time, that most Sharchops drink. Many were looking forward to it and the group was growing in size until my graduation in 1990. I cite this as an example of how we used to enjoy our days in the institute.

One very unfortunate event took place towards the end of the three year B.Ed programme. When we returned to the college from some weeks of holidays, we were surprised to find some Lyonpos and high government officials on the institute campus. We were immediately (on the same day of our arrival there) called for a meeting held in the prayer hall by these officials. Most of us could not understand what was going on until later when we attended an audience from His Majesty The Fourth King in the Dzongkhag DYT hall. This was the time when I realized that the security and sovereignty of Bhutan was being threatened and that the institute was partly responsible as some staff and students were allegedly involved in it. It was the time when I heard His Majesty King speak in an extremely serious tone, in Dzongkha first, “Choerai guto rewda, lhapa gi drim tshorgo marey, Lopen,” and then in English, “When your head rots, your nose should be able to smell.” This happened in 1990.

That was then the National Institute of Education, Samtse.

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.

Question: How is your current position as the Secretary General of the National Council of Bhutan, the Upper House of the Parliament different from being a teacher and how do you make use of the knowledge and skills acquired during your teacher training in performing the duties in your current job?

Alumni: My position as the Secretary General at the National Council of Bhutan is, of course, entirely different from serving in the education sector for the last 31 years. However, one thing that does not change is that I am still serving the Tsa-Wa-Sum where ever I am, and that my sincerity, dedication and loyalty will never change. My knowledge, skills and experiences gained from the teacher training and over the last 31 years of my service in the education sector has made me what I am now and that too a better one. These qualities come certainly handy as I serve to support and facilitate the National Council of Bhutan, the highest law making and review institution in the country, to fulfill their sacred constitutional and parliamentary mandates.

Question: Your views of Samtse College of Education as the erstwhile NIE then and today?

Alumni: This college has evolved out of what was a rudimentary Teacher Training Institute, to the National Institute of Education and now to the Samtse College of Education. Whatever the names it may have assumed over the last many years, it has served the very important purpose of producing trained teachers that Bhutan required for the education of its citizens. It has always played an instrumental role in the Bhutanese education system as the NIE then and the SCE now. There may be drastic improvements in terms of infra-structure, resources and even in the programme offered, and therefore must be producing graduates of different, or perhaps better, quality and caliber now. However, quality is a relative term and the bar (need/ demand) for better quality keeps on increasing with changing times. Therefore, it would not be fair and also make not much sense for me to compare the NIE then and the SCE now. The bottom line is, the college must strive for excellence and produce the best teachers in the whole world.

Question: How do you see the role of Samtse College of Education in the overall development of Bhutan's education system?

Alumni: As mentioned above, the college has played an instrumental role in the education and directly or indirectly improving the livelihood of Bhutanese and in the overall development of Bhutan as a country. It should continue to play this crucial role.

Question: What is your advice to the Bhutanese youths who aspire to become teachers?

Alumni: The education of its citizens is one of the fundamental national goals of this country. Therefore, teaching is a serious job responsibility placed on teachers. If education goes wrong, the country and its people will suffer for generations. As such, not any Tom, Dick or Harry can become a teacher. Only those who have the right aptitude and attitude, capabilities, endurance and passion for teaching and education of children should aspire to be teachers. Once one has decided to be and has trained as a teacher, there is no looking back - one needs to be totally dedicated and faithful to the profession, and be prepared to endure and work hard under any circumstances.

I find it most apt to remind everyone concerned about education here that “the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers.” Like few others, Germany recognising the truth about this has made teaching the highest paid job in the country. When the German judges, doctors and engineers asked the Chancellor, Angela Merkel for the same salary as teachers, she told them, “How can I compare you to those who taught you?” She further justified that teachers are not common people and common people are not teachers and warned that one should not choose to become a teacher until one is worth it.

That's it. We can no longer afford to consider teaching as a profession of the last resort.

Question: Our society is changing and we are becoming a knowledge-based society. From your wide experience as an educator and administrator, how should our teaching learning in the Bhutanese education system be designed to address this fast-changing Bhutanese society.

Alumni: The times have changed. We are in the midst of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) where technology has invaded everything. The needs and expectations, therefore, have changed. We can no longer use the old tools that we are used to. In the same manner we cannot use the same education system, curriculum and methodology that we have been using for many decades. We have to leverage on technology to evolve fast enough, not only to keep pace with but forge ahead of others. This urgency should be, first and foremost, applied to our education process. We must design our education system in such a manner that our children are prepared for an unexpected future. Our education should prepare the future Bhutanese for a job that does not exist now - they should have the transversal competencies and skills to adjust to any job situation, anywhere in the world. In about ten-fifteen years, students from all over the world, including Finland, Korea, Japan, etc. should compete to come to the colleges and universities in Bhutan for their higher education. This is what our education system should be able to do.

Question: What aspects of the Bhutanese education system concerns you as a parent and a Bhutanese citizen who has a stake in education? What opportunities and challenges do you see for Samtse College of Education in addressing these concerns?

Alumni: For too long we, particularly the college education, have been too complacent and rigid. Until very recently when His Majesty the King Himself had to intervene, we prided and confided in our old borrowed system (that too from some nearby rudimentary colleges outside Bhutan). We stuck ourselves to our egos, argued, defended and justified vehemently that what we were doing was the best. In the process, however, the country, through its education system, had been paying dearly until, and thankfully, His Majesty The King came to our rescue.

Question: Samtse College of Education is 53 years old – an opportunity for all of us to reflect on the milestones achieved as envisioned by His Majesty the third Druk Gyalpo, when the College was established in 1968. How do you feel as an alumnus of this College that has served the nation for 53 years in the field of teacher preparation for the Bhutanese education system?

Alumni: I am proud to be one of the alumni of the college and also am thankful for its service in educating the Bhutanese citizens for the last 53 years.

Brief biography and a photograph of the alumni (Primarily an outline of your education background, career or employment history with some key milestones. A line or two describing your personal principles and philosophy as a professional might also be useful).

I am the third, and the only educated, of the six surviving children of the late Mr. Dorji Dakpa and late Lhaden from the remote village of Gamung Nongar, under Shumar Geog of Pemagatshel Dzongkhag. Rest of my siblings are all working in the villages. Married to Sijay Wangmo (the most beautiful woman, my best friend, guide and life partner) from the same village, I have five beautiful and successful children - Ngawang Choden (school teacher), Tashi Tobgay Dakpa (Software/ programme developer at Thimphu TechPark), Kinga Lhaden Dakpa (Assistant Lecturer at the CST), Kinga Wangmo Dakpa (2nd Year English Honours at the Sherubtse College), and Phuntsho Dorji Dakpa (XII Commerce at Motithang High School).

I will be 55 years old on November 11, 2022.

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