



SHES-RIG PAGES

The Biannual Newsletter of Samtse College of Education

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Editorial team

Dr. Sonam Rinchen, Dean of Research and Industrial Linkages
Ms. Tshering Om Tamang
Dr. Yangdon
Dr. Tashi Gyeltshen
Ms. Sangay Lhamo, Asst. Research Officer

Welcome



Dear Reader,

Samtse College of Education (SCE) is pleased to present to you the 2023, Spring edition of SHES-RIG PAGES, published biannually.

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 witnessed monumental growth and development offering a range of courses including a number of postgraduate teacher education programmes.

In the last 55 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 to the College of 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 existing practices to expand our horizons of learning and professional practice with a belief that the quality of teacher education and the professional competencies of teacher educators are the bedrock of a sound education system. Every teacher educator is encouraged to be ambitious, courageous, bold, determined, focused, disciplined, purpose-driven, resourceful, tactful, gritty, resilient, smart, intelligent, and astute in their efforts and attempts to model lifelong learning and excellence in teaching, research, publication, and a plethora of other professional and personal attributes.

Aligned with the current nationwide education reforms and higher education transformation initiated, the College is making every possible effort to push ourselves harder to address the current shortcomings by way of reviewing our teacher education curriculum to make it more current, relevant, effective, dynamic and forward-looking, and timeless in its application to produce a new generation of highly motivated teachers, counsellors, and social workers that are prepared to face the world of work. The College is also hopeful that within the 13th Five Year Plan period, there will be some bold investments to support teacher education not just in the improvement of teacher education curriculum and teacher educators' capacity development but also in improving the existing infrastructure facilities to develop ourselves into a preferred teacher education destination for foreign students from Asia and other parts of the world.

SHES-RIG PAGES is a special tribute to the most sacred gift and precious legacy Late His Majesty Druk Gyalpo Jigme Dorji Wangchuck has left for the education system in the country. This newsletter provides a snapshot of the variety of activities the College had initiated in the last one year as part of learning and teaching; research and other educational events; student experiences of campus life; creative literary compositions; and conversation with a distinguished alumna.

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

With warmest wishes.
(Rinchen Dorji)
President

**SHES-RIG
PAGES**

Panel discussion on the equitable prosperity through inclusive growth

A panel discussion on the theme “Equitable Prosperity through Inclusive Growth” was organised by DRIL’s office on 6th September 2022 with funding support from the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD).

The panelists comprised of six students from MED English, MEd Geography and Pg Cert in Higher Education. The panel session was moderated by three students from MED English. The discussion commenced with the moderator highlighting pertinent national issues on Bhutan’s Equitable Prosperity through Inclusive Economic Growth.

The panelists gave their perspectives on how imperative it is for citizens, and more importantly for teachers to introspect and act on the effect of Covid-19 on the Equitable Economic growth of our country. Highlighting the issue, Ms. Ngawang Choden, a panelist said, “I realised that our economy is going through an unprecedented situation, and our society must make greater contributions to advance and work for a brighter future for our country rather than waiting for the government to take care of everything.” She further stressed that as educators and future teachers, we must encourage greater civic engagement among students so they can successfully navigate through today’s societal, economic, and social issues.


Other panelists also deliberated on pertinent issues such as reduced consumption, living sustainably, employing eco-friendly transport, supporting our local business/ production port, building an entrepreneurship mindset, and exercising the fundamental rights to foster Equitable Prosperity through Inclusive Growth. Ms. Yeshey Seldon said, “Financial literacy among all others has become very crucial for our students to grasp the gravity of Inclusive Economic Growth in our country.”



Participants and moderators of the event

The panelists reiterated the College’s roles and responsibilities as educators and teacher educators to instil the importance of being a constructive contributory citizen in a just and harmonious society.

Ms. Neenuka Gurung, a MEd student who attended the event said, “Panel discussion like this one should be held often as it is insightful and an eye opener for us as teachers to introspect on so many issues concerning our country and youths.” The panel discussion was attended by postgraduate students, faculty, and staff of the College.



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SAMTSE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Expanding Discourse on Bhutan Democracy Forum

Theme: “Equitable Prosperity through Inclusive Growth”

6th september, 2022 (Tuesday), 5:00 pm

at Namgye Khanzang

Participants:

MEd English I & II

MEd Geography I & II

PgCert in Higher Education


Moderators:

Chador Wangmo, MEd English II


Sonam Choden, MEd English II

Kelzang Dorji, MEd English II

Organized by Samtse College of Education



In partnership with:



BHUTAN CENTRE
for MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY

Vision: Centre of Excellence Committed to Research and Innovation in Education

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Saving game and financial literacy

Participants of the saving game and financial literacy training programme

A three day Saving Game and Financial Literacy training was conducted on 3rd October 2022 at Samtse College of Education by PRuDent in partnership with RENEW Microfinance. In attendance were 36 students of BA in Social Work. The training was conducted by Ms. Susma Tiwari and Ms. Tshering Lhamo, training officers at RENEW microfinance. The training is a part of the foundation's financial literacy for all sections of the population. It is expected to help students understand simple financial concepts such as income, costs, loans, inflation, and savings and its benefits.

Participants highlighted that the training was timely and useful. For example, Mr. Pem Tshering contended, "This type of training should be given

to people in the villages so that they can understand between good and bad financial institutions, risks and benefits." Another participant, Ms. Tandin Selden expressed that the training helped her understand about savings and ways to analyse personal household budgets. In conclusion, the training benefitted the students in strengthening their knowledge pertaining to saving and finance.

Blogging and vlogging by Denkars Getaway



Denkar inspiring the audience to blog and vlog

On 26th August 2022, Tshering Denkar, of Denkars Getaway met with the staff and students of Samtse College of Education.

Tshering Denkar, as the first Bhutanese solo travel blogger and vlogger is the face behind the popular social media account “Denkars Getaway”. Describing her obsession with travel, she detailed her journey throughout Bhutan from the pristine highland of Laya to the reclusive communities of Lhops in Samtse to the fraternity of Samtse college. Recalling the beginning of her career as a blogger, she said “When I was doing my masters in tourism management, I faced difficulty in finding literature regarding Bhutanese Tourism Industry. So I thought maybe I could do something within my capacity by writing travel narratives about Bhutan through my experience.”

She stated that her passion has now turned into a career and her travels help her delve into different communities and allow her to become acquainted

with myriad cultures and traditions. “There is no other country more beautiful and peaceful like Bhutan. The more I travel, the more I fall in love with my country.” She further added that “We have not realised that travelling in our own country can enrich our knowledge about our own home.” Her journey across Bhutan cumulated into the publication of her recent book, “The Tourist Within” which presents thrilling stories of travel, nature, culture and tradition and history of Bhutan.

Highlighting the opportunities and challenges in travel blogging and vlogging, Tshering Denkar stressed the importance of pursuing one’s dream stating that “It is important to identify what you are really good at, what really excites you, and pursue it.” She also emphasised the importance of being proactive, receptive, confident and having a positive mindset and attitude, all of which are the key qualities of a mediapreneur/ blogger and content creator.

Indigenous games exhibition

The Students Management Committee organised a half day indigenous games exhibition in the College football ground on 9th November, 2022. The games included Jigdum, Pungdo, Tag and Nor, Khuru, Degor, Soksom, and Archery. The exhibition began at 2.30 pm and attracted a large crowd of students, staff, and faculty members. People tried out different games.

The event was part of a student engagement programme coordinated by the Dean of Student Affairs, Mr. Ramesh Kumar Chhetri with the support of student leaders and volunteers. The main aim of organising this exhibition was to promote our rich history of Bhutanese indigenous games and sports. It also aimed at enriching the social bonding among staff and students besides enhancing the overall health and quality of their life through sporting activities.

According to Mr. Ramesh Kumar Chhetri, “The exhibition provided an opportunity to staff and students to learn about, appreciate and experience our indigenous games and sports. One of the interesting parts of the exhibition was female staff

and students participating in the games.”

Tashi Gyeltshen, one of the coordinators from PgDE in Geography commented, “In my observations, especially with regard to Khuru, I discovered that pupils from rural backgrounds are far better and more in touch than those from urban backgrounds.” The exhibition provided a forum for staff and students to be aware of a host of different gifts of indigenous games from different parts of our country.



A female academic trying her hands on archery



Students playing Degor

Deepawali festival at the College



College girls performing candle light dance during Deepawali night

The Diwali celebration on October 24, was a grand affair at Samtse College of Education. Lhotsam students in collaboration with a Pandit performed an Arti (puja) and Bhajan (devotional songs) sessions.

At 5.30 pm in the College mess, which had been converted into a glamorous celebratory hall decorated with balloons, fairy lights, dazzling tinsels hanging from the ceiling and lit candles, the President accompanied by the lecturers and other staff and students of the College gathered for the evening programme. Tea, selrotis and curry made of chickpeas were served. A variety of dances by the various classes were performed by dancers in bright,

colourful dresses. The celebration came to an end with a vegetarian dinner to all staff and students. According to the organisers, they had spent almost a week in preparation for the festival of lights. Pratika Pradhan of PgDE C informed that this year, the Bhajan (devotional songs) was live, with students singing and playing the instruments, unlike the past celebrations.

Diwali symbolises triumph of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance.

Slovak educationists visit the College: Expanding our international linkages

A three-member team from the University of Prešov, Slovakia visited the College of 8th November 2022. The team consisted of Prof. Alena Kačmárová, Vice-Dean for Development and International Relations, Faculty of Arts, Assoc. Prof. Kvetoslava Matlovičová, Department of Geography & Applied Geoinformatics, and Assoc. Prof. Zuzana Poklembová, Institute of Educology and Social Work, Faculty of Arts. The visit was a part of the faculty exchange programme between SCE and the University of Prešov, Slovakia through a mobility grant.

The team met with the Deans and Programme Leaders of MED English and BA in Social Work and discussed common areas of interest and possible joint research projects.

The team also met with the BA in Social Work Year III students and did a presentation on self-care of social workers and academics in Slovakia and selected EU countries. Mr. Tshering Dorji, PL of BA in SW expressed that Dr. Zuzana Poklembova's interaction with the students has enhanced their understanding on international social work

education and global perspectives on social work practice. The presentation on the self-care practice of social workers has helped students understand the importance of basic self-care skills, developing self-resilience, and intrinsic motivation towards becoming better social workers.

Mr. Tshering is invited to engage in a joint research on Exploring the Self-Care Practices of Social Workers: An International Examination with counterparts from the University of Kentucky, USA and the University of Prešov, Slovakia. The joint research project on self-care initiative will enhance the knowledge on the existing self-care system, challenges, and the best practices among social workers in the field. The project is anticipated to be a springboard for future project and research on social work practice in Bhutan. The knowledge and findings from the project will strengthen the preparation of social workers through wider collaboration with international social work practitioners and educators.



Dr. Zuzana Poklembova talking to Social Work students



Mr. Tshering Dorji in conversation with Prof. Alena Kačmárová (L) and Dr. Zuzana Poklembova (R), University of Prešov, Slovakia

10th faculty-student research convention

The 10th annual faculty-student research convention with the theme “Education Talks: Bridging the Gap between Research and Practice” was hosted by the office of the Dean of Research and Industrial Linkages on 21st October 2022.

The main aim of the convention was to provide a platform for college faculty and students to present research papers, share ideas and discuss the most recent innovations, trends, and concerns as well as practical challenges encountered and solutions adopted in the fields of innovation in education.

The convention was divided into 3 sessions, and featured 12 research papers on diverse topics including 3 papers from the postgraduate students. Tshering Zangmo, from MEd Chemistry, presented her ongoing research on “Understanding the Emotional Climate of a Chemistry Class in One of the higher secondary schools in Paro”. Dr Yangdon, who presented the findings of her PhD Dissertation, “Do Knowledge, Motivation Efficacy and Implementation Affect the Impact of Spiritual Greenery Schools?” said she was excited to share her learnings with the audience and looks forward to such events.

The highlight of the convention was a Keynote address by Professor David Thomas, a Fulbright Scholar stationed in SCE. His address on “Structure and Substance of Digital Discourse” emphasised the varied research approaches and technological tools available to assist scholars in their study.

In his closing remark, Dr Rinchen Dorji, college President expressed that listening to the findings and recommendations from the different research presentations provided new learning and new perspectives about the different trends in the research areas. He further stated that such faculty-student conventions provide an opportunity for the regeneration of knowledge and learning in various fields of study and that each presenter went away with an enriching experience. Dr Dechen Doma echoed similar sentiments adding that she is pleased to see that over the years, the quality of research and paper presentation has drastically improved, which highlights the kind of effort put into it by the researchers.

The convention concluded with the award of participation certificates for the presenters by the President.



The President declaring the convention open



Dr. David Thomas delivering his keynote address

Webinar on open educational resources(OERs) in STEM



The STEM Education Research Center hosted a webinar on 3rd October to share a sample of Open Educational Resources (OERs) to STEM curriculum developers from the Ministry of Education and Skills Development and STEM teachers from Druk Gyalpo's Institute in Pangbisa, Paro.

The OERs in the three sciences (Biology, Chemistry, and Physics) and Mathematics were designed and developed by the STEM teacher educators of College with support from consortium partners from Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, Nigeria, Open University of Tanzania, and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in India as a part of Connected Learning for Teacher Capacity Building in STEM (CL4STEM) an IDRC-funded consortium project.

The foundational designs of OERs are based on Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge, Universal Design for Learning, and Higher Order

Thinking with Inclusion and Equity. The main feature of these OERs is the use of technology as primary learning, teaching, and assessment tools that are customised to the local contexts and secondary school level requirements from grades VII to XII. The OERs have also been aligned with Bhutan's national school curriculum frameworks.

The main objective of organising this webinar is to share newly learned professional practices with the relevant stakeholders to benefit STEM education and the professional development of STEM teachers in Bhutan. It is also aimed to contribute to the larger national education goals of strengthening technology-enabled teaching, learning, and assessment practices in Bhutan's education system, as enshrined in the iSherig-2 Education ICT Master Plan 2019- 2023, as well as realising His Majesty's vision for STEM education.

The webinar participants commended the CL4STEM team's efforts in developing such OERs for the

professional development of school STEM teachers. An officer from the ministry stated that the ministry had begun designing such OERs but was unable to proceed for various reasons and that the OERs developed by SCE could serve as a model for all STEM education stakeholders.

Currently, the STEM teacher educators of SCE are supporting the professional development of the selected secondary STEM teachers of Samtse Dzongkhag through the use of OERs in STEM subjects.

Webinar on "Effectiveness of group work in the colleges of Royal University of Bhutan"

The DRIL's office hosted a webinar on Effectiveness of Group Work in the Colleges of Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) on 24th August 2022. The webinar is aimed to provide a platform to the faculty members to share research findings to relevant stakeholders and provide perspectives on educational opportunities, challenges and potential solutions to overcome them.

The webinar was attended by officials from the Office of the Vice Chancellor, RUB, Officials from the Ministry of Education, lecturers from the colleges of RUB, scholars from University in Australia, teachers from the schools, and students from Samtse College of Education.

The webinar was resourced by Dr. Karma Utha and moderated by Dr. Kinley Seden. In her presentation, Dr. Karma highlighted the concerns such as accountability of group Work is being challenged with rise in case of free rider. Some of the recommendations to curb free riders include marking each student based on his/her contribution using evidences such as records of the minutes of the meeting, attendance in the meeting/ work, and student consultation.

Mr. Dumcho Wangdi, one of the webinar attendees currently pursuing PhD at the Queensland University of Technology, Australia expressed that the study was valuable in terms of understanding the affordances and constraints (e.g., free rider effect) of employing group work. The project was remarkable in that it invites academics and educators alike to reconsider and reinforce parallel research to fully understand the efficacy of group work.

Mr. Dumcho further expressed that since group work is a social and cultural phenomenon, conceptualising the construct of social skills – one of the study's foci of analysis – in our context would have made the findings relevant and significant from both social and cultural perspectives.

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SAMTSE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Effectiveness of Group Work in the Colleges of Royal University of Bhutan
24th August 2022 (Wednesday), 4.50 pm – 6.00 pm (BST)
Webinar Series 3
Organized by Samtse College of Education

Paper presenter:
Dr. Karma Utha
Assistant Professor
Samtse College of Education

Moderator:
Dr. Kinley Seden
Lecturer
Samtse College of Education

Please join us through the following link
<https://drukren.zoom.us/j/69807010032?pwd=NFJlcUlnNmgrRElWSnFET29vcSvQT09>

Vision: Centre of Excellence Committed to Research and Innovation in Education

SCE hosts regional BUSF games



Armed with a warrior's spirit: SCE and GCBS soccer teams

After a hiatus of two years due to the pandemic, the College hosted a first home regional qualifying Bhutan University Students' Federation Games (BUSF) on 1st & 2nd October 2022.

In the intense heat and humidity, players of SCE and Gedu College of Business Studies (GCBS) competed fiercely to win the different games. 'Despite the climatic and weather challenges, teams of both colleges exhibited undying spirit till the end,' said Mr. Ramesh Kumar Chettri, Dean of Student Affairs.

During the morning assembly, the President of the College congratulated all the team players for their good show of not just game talents but also for other values viz: resilience, team spirit, cooperation, punctuality, determination and attitude in the game fields. He further shared, losing gracefully is as

valuable as momentary winning celebrations.

SCE won the archery and women's volleyball, and drew in men's soccer with a goal each, however lost in women's, men's volleyball, and both basketball matches.



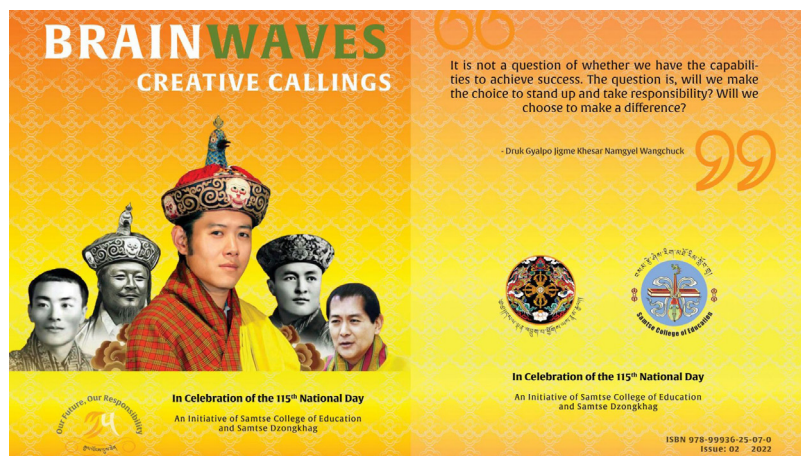
Women volleyball match between Gedu College and Samtse College of Education

Launch of a new e-book, 'Brainwaves: Creative Callings' to commemorate the 115th National Day 2022

The e-book titled 'Brainwaves: Creative Callings' was officially launched on 16th December 2022 as part of the ongoing 115th National Day celebration in Samtse Throm. The initiative was coordinated by Samtse College of Education in collaboration with Samtse Dzongkhag.

The e-book is a culmination of an Open Competition hosted by Samtse College of Education that invited original pieces of creative writing from students of schools and the College under Samtse Dzongkhag on the theme "Our Future, Our Responsibility" and contains write-ups in four different genres of poems, short stories, essays and video essays underlying 14 sub-themes that illustrate our Monarchs' legacies. The competition aimed to instil a sense of patriotic duty towards nation-building and provide an innovative platform for participants to demonstrate their imaginative potential, craftsmanship and artistry that could be channelled towards paying tributes to the Kings.

Samtse Dasho Dzongda, who launched the book, urged audience members to read the book stating that Great Buddhist Masters often preach through the innocence of a child's speech. Thus, the book enables us to better understand the voice of the youths who are full of *rigpa*, which could form the basis of the formation of new regulations that better caters to youths today. Dasho Gyem Dorji, former parliamentarian and popular Bhutan actor, who attended the launch said it was encouraging to see such an initiative undertaken by the College and wished to see more such programmes which would embolden Bhutanese to be creative.



Ms Tshering Om Tamang, Lecturer from Samtse College of Education and the coordinator of the competition, stated that the sheer number of entries received for the competition underlines how important it is to provide such a platform for students and others alike to illustrate their creativity and show their role in achieving a future that they take responsibility for. A total of 34 schools in Samtse Dzongkhag participated in the competition with 376 entries in English and 38 entries in Dzongkha.

Certificates and Prizes were awarded to the participants during the event. Video essays submitted by students were also screened to the delight of the audience. The launch of the e-book is part of the ongoing National Day Celebration in Samtse Throm, comprising cultural show from local artists.

Her Excellency Honourable Health Minister, Lyonpo Dechen Wangmo visits the College



Lyonpo addressing the staff and students

Honourable Health Minister, Lyonpo (Dasho) Dechen Wangmo met with the staff and students of Samtse College of Education in the afternoon of 24th August 2022.

Her Excellency described Bhutan's response to Covid 19 as a triumph over what could have been a major public health crisis. Some of the important achievements managed during the pandemic were 95% inoculation of the population in five days; successful reverse isolation; and the successful evacuation of stranded Bhutanese in foreign countries. Lyonpo explained that the experience revealed the nation's strengths and weaknesses. She emphasised our smallness and solidarity as a strength. The willingness of the Bhutanese people to adhere to the mandates outlined by the government

was a crucial factor for the country's success. However, Lyonpo also pointed out that we lack skills – skills as simple as plucking areca nut. Lyonpo concluded by urging the audience to always choose Bhutan first.

Several students claimed the speech moved them to tears. "I just could not hold back my tears when Lyonpo reminded us of the haunting pause during His Majesty's second address to the nation after the lockdown," said an MEd student. "My throat closed up when Lyonpo mentioned the young students of Faculty of Nursing and Public Health who willingly became frontline workers during the pandemic," commented another student. The afternoon visit ended with a short question and answer session.

An audience with His Excellency Honourable Minister of Home and Cultural Affairs



His Excellency said: Develop a sense of purpose

On 15th August 2022, Samtse College of Education received His Excellency Lyonpo Ugyen Dorji for a short afternoon session.

In his address to the staff and students, His Excellency stressed the need for every citizen to introspect and contribute to the nation's ongoing reforms and transformations. His Excellency said that the nation's fight against the pandemic has resulted in the country gaining a fresh perspective, and better ideas have emerged which will help us become better and stronger under the leadership of His Majesty the King.

His Excellency further emphasised the need for everyone to find their passion highlighting the critical role a teacher plays in nurturing passion and fostering interest in students' lives. Drawing from personal experience, he highlighted the importance of connecting one's passion to the larger vision of the country to develop a sense of purpose that would guide and motivate an individual's efforts.

Visit of the Honourable Opposition Leader

Honourable Opposition Leader of the National Assembly His Excellency Dorji Wangdi visited the College on 17th October 2022 as part of his tour to Samtse Dzongkhag.

In his address to the staff and students, His Excellency shared the significance of Bhutanese democracy and national priorities such as the nation's security, sovereignty; economic prosperity; and unity, harmony and peace.

During his address, The Opposition Leader discussed the crucial role of the opposition party in parliament and emphasized the equal responsibility shouldered by both the ruling party and the opposition. Additionally, he candidly discussed certain unfulfilled pledges of the present government, such as the provision of free WiFi and allowances to

mothers. He noted that these pledges are unlikely to be fulfilled due to the limited timeframe available to the government.

The Opposition leader said that 'there are challenges such as red-tapism, government being both the regulators and implementors, ministries and agencies working in silos and financial gaps, etc'. However, he reminded the audience that it is important for everyone to work hard and strive together to fulfil the aspiration of His Majesty the King.

The Opposition Leader concluded his address by reminding the staff and students of the the 113 National Day Address by His Majesty The King.



Honourable Opposition Leader highlighting the importance of working hard and striving together for the country



Deans and Programme Leaders receiving Honourable Opposition Leader

Graduation ceremony for students

Samtse College of Education observed the graduation ceremony for the Master of Education (MEd), Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PgDE), Postgraduate Diploma in Contemplative Counseling Psychology (PgDCCP), and Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (Pg Cert in HE) students on 30th November 2022. The event was graced by the Honourable Vice Chancellor (VC) of Royal University of Bhutan (RUB). Executives of RUB, Presidents and few Dean of Academic Affairs of other RUB colleges also attended the event. Dasho VC in his introductory remark, reminded the graduates that the journey they embark on as teachers today is a learning journey that never ends. He asked the graduates to uphold their sacred responsibility in the face of the transformative reconceptualisation of the education system.

Ms. Pratika Pradhan of PgDE in Economics in her speech highlighted her learning journey owing to the support rendered by the tutors. Another graduate, Mr. Sonam Rinchen from MEd in English, acknowledged all faculty and staff for not only imparting knowledge and skills but also for teaching life-changing values. He said, “I learned many things through research and participating in college activities after decades of being in teaching service.”

The graduates were awarded prizes and certificates for their outstanding performances in academics and students’ leadership and other services to the College. A total of 242 students (130 PgDE, 71 MEd, 34 PgDCCP and 7 Pg Cert in HE students) graduated from the College. The recipients of the award are given below.

SI No.	Awards	Awardees	Merit Certificates
1	Academic Proficiency in MEd Biology	Tandin Zam, MEd Biology	-
2	Academic Proficiency in MEd Chemistry	Rinzin Wangmo, MEd Chemistry	-
3	Academic Proficiency in MEd Physics	Tashi Dorji, MEd Physics	-
4	Academic Proficiency in MEd Mathematics	Dawa Pem, MEd Mathematics	Purnima Rana, MEd Mathematics
5	Academic Proficiency in MEd English	Sonam Choden, MEd English	-
6	Academic Proficiency in MEd Geography	Sonam Wangmo, MEd Geography	Chundu Zangmo Tamang, MEd Geography
7	Academic Proficiency in PgDE Arts	Pratika Pradhan, PgDE Arts	Dechen Choden, PgDE Arts
8	Academic Proficiency in PgDE Science	Neetu Acharya, PgDE Science	Sonam Choki, PgDE Science
9	Academic Proficiency in PgDCCP-Award	Tshering Yangdon, PgDCCP	Tandin Om, PgDCCP
10	Best School Immersion and Teaching Practice - PgDE	Nar Maya Layo Monger, PgDE Science	Ugyen Dema, PgDE Science
General Award, 2022			
1	Best Performing Artist	Yeshey Choden, PgDE Arts	Kinga Dorji, MEd Physics
2	President’s Award for an Outstanding Student Leadership	Dorji Gyeltshen, PgDE	-



The Vice Chancellor of the Royal University of Bhutan addressing the graduates

An academic staff resigns



President Dr. Rinchen Dorji handing out a parting gift to Dr. Ganeshman Gurung

Ganeshman Gurung (PhD), lecturer in Geography, resigned from teaching after serving 21 years and 11 months.

At the farewell dinner organised by the college, the president of the college shared that he did not wish to call it a farewell but a celebration of Dr. Ganeshman's services to Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) as a teacher and teacher educator. The president added, the college recognises the service of Dr. Ganeshman for touching lives and inspiring souls and offered his sincere prayers and wishes.

Mr. Wangchuk Dorji, a colleague of Dr. Ganeshman shared that he is little sad to see someone who was his friend- a critical and helpful friend leaving the college.

Another colleague, Dr. Kinzang Dorji expressed that the college is losing someone with an academic excellence.

Dr. Ganeshman said in his valedictory speech that he is feeling little guilty to leave the system at this juncture when critical transformation of a system is taking place because he feels that the organisation has given him so much. He further added, 'it is sad to leave behind the best working environment, a highly motivated and dedicated team of faculty and staff.'

Farewell to staff members



College President expressing his gratitude

As the Autumn semester drew to a close, the College also bid farewell to three staff members.

Mr. Monorath Biswa, who joined the College in 1987 as a typist superannuated after completing 35 years of service to the nation. The President, in his farewell speech reminisced meeting Monorath some forty years ago as a young student at then the school for the Blind in Khaling now renamed as Muenselling Institute, and later here at the erstwhile National Institute of Education (NIE) as a typist, when the President was pursuing his Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). The President remembers and knows Monorath as a confident, friendly, and boisterous staff member who spoke with so much of energy and enthusiasm. Monorath received his Civil Service Gold Medal in recognition of his 30 plus years of dedicated service and the President thanked him for his valuable services to the College and the country. The President shared that it is a huge

commitment that not many civil servants would stay on to serve for such a long time.

The College also bid farewell to Mr. Phurba Singh Moktan, ICT Associate, on his new venture under a different agency. Phurba was part of the ICT team that has a reputation for providing prompt and committed service to everyone in the college. Phurba, in his farewell speech, said working with the SCE family has been a true learning experience and that he is taking away lots of learnings, and he hopes he will be able to utilise this knowledge and skills in his new venture. The fraternity congratulated him for paving a better future for his family and wished him the best for his future.

Professor David Thomas and his wife Dr. Cynthia Thomas' six-months stay in the College as a Fulbright scholar also came to an end with the conclusion of the semester. During his stay, Dr David conducted numerous research workshops for both faculty and

students, while Dr. Cynthia Thomas volunteered as a maths teacher at Samtse Lower Secondary School. The President commended on Professor David Thomas and his wife for the professionalism they contributed towards the college and the genuine respect they showed for Bhutanese culture. He also highlighted the numerous contributions made by them to the College and thanked them for their invaluable insights and optimistic outlook. Professor David Thomas stated that it has been a rare honour and privilege to visit Bhutan and that they will be taking parts of Bhutan because of all the stories they can now tell about the country.

The President presented each departee with a token of appreciation for their committed service to the College. The evening of celebration ended with a dinner from the College family.



Mr. Monorath Biswa



***Professor David Thomas and his wife
Dr. Cynthia Thomas***



Mr. Phurba Singh Moktan

An interview with a visiting faculty



Dr. David Thomas, a retired Professor from Montana, USA worked in SCE as a Full-bright Professor for a semester in the Autumn of 2022. He taught maths to PgDE and MEd students. He also mentored maths faculty to make their classroom teaching and learning processes a more interactive, engaging, and reflective; help in the supervision of research dissertation of MEd maths students; design and facilitate professional development workshops with a specific focus on the use of creative and innovative teaching pedagogies to make mathematics teaching and learning interesting and meaningful for both teachers and learners; guide the maths faculty members in writing the manuscript for publication.

Question: Give us a brief introduction about yourself.

Professor: I am a retired university-based mathematics educator specialising in ICT implementation in secondary school and university mathematics. My wife is also a retired mathematics educator. Together, we have taught for 100 years. We live in Great Falls, Montana, USA.

Question: What inspired you to come to Bhutan and Samtse College of Education in particular as a visiting professor?

Professor: The Fulbright Programme is administered by the US Department of State. Every year, this programme sends hundreds of US professors to other countries, where they teach, learn, and collaborate on projects of interest to their host institutions. At the same time, hundreds of professors from other countries are invited to visit US universities. I have served as a Fulbright Scholar (long visits) in South Africa and Bhutan and a Fulbright Specialist (short visits) in Botswana and Nepal. I applied to come to Bhutan because I am interested in its history, culture, and commitment to education.

Question: How was your brief stay in the college? Share some memories and experiences that you would like to take with you.

Professor: We will always treasure our memories of Samtse College of Education and Bhutan. It was interesting professionally and rewarding personally. We particularly enjoyed the cultural events and festivals we attended. I want to thank the faculty and students for welcoming us so graciously.

Question: Did you encounter any challenges in college as a professor?

Professor: Fulbright trips always involve challenges. We embrace those challenges and work with our local hosts and colleagues to meet them.

Question: Any word of advice for the college for positive development?

Professor: This is a critical time in the modernization of Bhutanese education. At Samtse College of Education, faculty and administration must continue to face these challenges honestly and explore solutions boldly. Doing this may involve setting aside some long-established policies and practices as well as adopting new policies and practices. I am confident that the President and faculty have the wisdom and courage to do this and wish them success.

Winner of the President's Award for outstanding student leadership



Dorji Gyeltshen, PgDE in Economics student, received the President's Award for Outstanding Student Leadership during the 2022 autumn annual award function. The President's Award for an Outstanding Student Leadership was instituted in 2018 to encourage and motivate student teachers to develop and demonstrate extraordinary leadership qualities characterised by values of positivity, dynamism, perseverance, determination, punctuality and leadership of the self.

Question: Congratulations for winning the 2022 President's Outstanding Student Leadership award for 2022. How did you feel on winning this award?

Dorji Gyeltshen: I greatly appreciate your kind words. It is difficult to express my feelings in words. Nevertheless, I'm grateful to have received the President's award. It was a happy, exciting and a little surrealistic moment.

Question: Did you expect to receive this award? What preparations did you undertake to achieve this feat?

Dorji Gyeltshen: I did not expect to win the award. I only persisted in doing things that was best for my friends and the college.

Question: Were you aware of the criteria to be eligible for this award?

Dorji Gyeltshen: Although I had heard about the awards that the college gives to the students for his/her accomplishments, I wasn't fully aware about the criteria.

Question: Who would you dedicate this award to?

Dorji Gyeltshen: I want to sincerely thank Samtse College of Education, my tutors and my leader friends and other friends for their unwavering support. I appreciate the support my wife and family rendered. I want to dedicate this honor to each and every one of them.

Question: Who played a critical role in enabling you to this award?

Dorji Gyeltshen: There are many people who played different roles in my personal and professional development. As a young leader, I hope to learn from my friends and elders. There are my teachers who gave me advice, my friends who have always been there for me, and my family who motivate me to do better. They all played a crucial part, not just for the award but for the future.

Question: What are your feelings on being a recipient of the President's award?

Dorji Gyeltshen: Being selected for the President Award is a big honor and I sincerely appreciate it. This honor increased my self-confidence and motivation to work harder. I want to express my sincere gratitude to the Samtse College of Education for giving me the Award.

Question: What is your advice to young and upcoming leaders who aspire to become leader like you?

Dorji Gyeltshen: Instead of advising, I would like to share what worked best for me as a leader. Collaboration is always a great thing and working for the people around us without expecting a reward is always satisfying.

Jetsun Drolema Wang by His Eminence Laytshog Lopen Rinpoche for College and Samtse devotees



On December 23rd, the residents of Samtse were honoured to receive a visit from Laytshog Lopen Rinpoche Sangay Dorji from Zhung Dratshang who delivered an empowering discourse on the significance of "Dema Wang" to a diverse group of attendees. The gathering was held at the Samtse College of Education (SCE) and was attended by local officials, Desuups undergoing skilling programmes at SCE, the college family, and community of Samtse Dzongkhag.

The discourse was well received by the attendees, who expressed their appreciation for Rinpoche's visit and his inspiring message. Many of them were particularly impressed by the emphasis on the accessibility of Dema Wang and the practical benefits that it can provide.

One of the attendees, a Desuup undergoing a skilling programme, shared that the discourse had given him a deeper understanding of the importance of

spiritual practice, and he planned to incorporate Wang into his daily routine. Another attendee, a local resident, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to hear Lopen's message, stating that it had provided her with a renewed sense of purpose and direction.

The visit from Lopen Rinpoche was a significant event for the people of Samtse, who were grateful for the opportunity to learn from such an esteemed spiritual leader.



Annual Choe Bum recitation



Staff and students reciting Choe Bum

Annual Choe Bum Recitation took place on 11th November 2022 in Samtse College of Education to commemorate the 67th Birth Anniversary of our beloved Fourth Druk Gyalpo.

Led by the monks from the Samtse Dratshang and the coordinators, the day commenced with lhabsang (a purification ritual), lighting butter lamps and recitation of Bum.

The annual Bum recitation is for the wellbeing of all the students, staff, and the nation as a whole to cleanse from all negativity that clouds judgement and clear conscience. In addition, it connects every individual's soul to its refuge (Koenchogsum – the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha) and assures blessings and protection for a peaceful learning without any obstacles.

In addition to the deterrence of obstacles in our day-to-day life, it is said that the recitation of the Buddha's teachings blesses us with the capacity to better understand the Buddha dharma. It is believed that all sentient beings who hear the recitation will



develop some understanding of the Buddha dharma, which will help pave their path to enlightenment.

This programme was initiated and funded by the college and voluntary contributions from the staff and the student body. Three monks from Samtse Dratshang and 88 students were involved in reciting Bum. The President of the college and a few faculty members took part in the Bum recitation

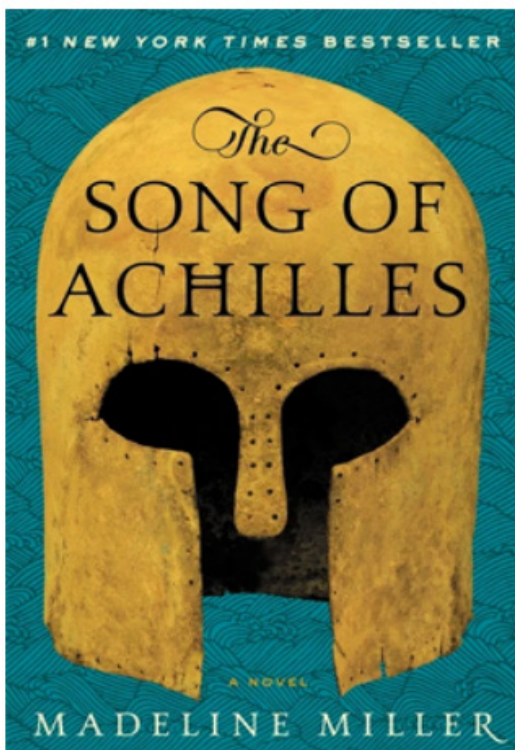
The main objective was “To meaningfully engage students and staff in the realisation of their spiritual self,” said Tashi Dorji, the prayer captain and student coordinator of the programme. He further added, “Spiritualism is a must to overcome all confusions and settle for sound mind and body”.

Book Review

Book: The Song of Achilles

Author: Madeline Miller

A tender and emotional reimagining of Homer's The Iliad as a love story, the plot follows the life of demi-God Achilles and Patroclus from childhood to the siege of Troy and finally, their afterlife. Exiled by his father, Patroclus comes to live in Peleus's court, where he meets the more talented, more beautiful and more skilled Achilles. The pair's initial childhood bond blooms into a moving love affair in adulthood. But their love story is doomed to fail considering the impending tragedy of the Trojan war. Soon Achilles is called to choose between a short and glorious life or a long and immemorial one. Achilles chooses the former; Patroclus follows him to war. Both never return from Troy.



Anyone familiar with Homer's The Iliad, stories of the Trojan wars, or have watched the 2005 movie Troy starring Brad Pitt as Achilles would be familiar with the narrative of The Song of Achilles. But, it is the manner in which Madeline Miller highlights the imaginative love story that holds the readers' attention in this surprising 'booktok' sensation of 2022.

Initially published in 2011, The Song of Achilles saw an enormous spike in sales last year courtesy of booktok. In its initial publication, the novel sold relatively well and won The Orange Women's Prize for Fiction in 2012. But it was the thousands of booktok videos of readers openly sobbing and wailing into the camera after having read said book that gave this novel its second wind last year. Likewise, I picked up the book because booktoker, Aymans posted a 7-second video full-on wailing as her review of the book.

So, what in the book engendered these unfiltered emotional, almost obsessive, responses among its readers? The answer: Characterisation. More specifically, Miller's characterisation of the Greek Hero, Achilles. Achilles has always been depicted as a hero, one full of skill, bravery and courage. But his one defining

character has always been his 'wrath' which Homer clearly depicts in The Iliad's opening line: "Sing, muse, of the wrath of Achilles." The Iliad primarily focuses on Achilles' anger, which is his most prominent characteristic. However, in this novel, readers are given a more nuanced portrayal of Achilles - as the conflicted son of the sea-goddess Thetis, the reluctant husband of Deidamedia, and most importantly the enthralling lover of Patroclus. This refreshing portrayal of Achilles as a multi-faceted three-dimensional character - prone to doubt, jealousy, ego and love - is more relatable than a strong and skilled warrior, and what makes The Song of Achilles such a great read.

But, by no means is Achilles presented as faultless - his wrathful sullenness forces him to watch as thousands of fellow Greeks are slaughtered. Yet, narrated from Patroclus' point of view, the book portrays Achilles through the lens of a lover, showcasing all of his imperfections while still making him endearing. In addition to emphasising the main character, Miller's poetically narrated text also manages to highlight Odysseus's wily persona, Agamemnon's displeasing personality and the quite, tender-hearted, Patroclus.

The often forgotten, Patroclus, is referred to as Achilles' 'philtatos' (which translates to 'the most loved by far') in the book - another refreshing take on an otherwise familiar narrative. While most mainstream books refuse to address the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus, frequently reducing the role of Patroclus to 'companion', Miller moves away from the narrative and works to dismantle the dominant heterosexual narrative and presents them as lovers. It is this relationship between the two that gives real emotional weight to the story, and another reason for the book's popularity in booktok; an addition to a growing niche in literature that represents the LGBTIQ community.

The prose is narrated in dizzying paces in some instances, which might confuse the readers. Miller spends a great deal of the time developing the relationship between the pair before the established myth of the Trojan wars comes into play. Thus, the 10-year Trojan war is condensed into a few chapters with limited descriptions of the war itself. In fact, the only fully-developed battle scene is Patroclus's fight and subsequent death. So if you are someone who loves rage-infested blood-splattered rendition of war-ravaged battle scenes or an account of the military strategies in the Trojan wars, you will be sorely disappointed. The book's premise itself may be a source of criticism for readers of Classical Literature, as many may object to the 'reduction' of a classical tale to suit the narrative of a modern love affair. As one of my professors once told me 'Classics is serious business', and thus, do not mix well with rewrites. Additionally, some may accuse the author of merely capitalising on the market's booming popularity of LGBTIQ literature.

But the author (and booktok) has been explicit about their intended audience: This is a first and foremost, a love story, one that has always lurked in the periphery of the familiar Trojan war stories, but has just now received the full attention it deserves. Thus, if it is a love story you want to read, one intermittent with familiar Greek Heroes and their follies, *The Song of Achilles* makes for a profoundly touching and emotional read.

Most Memorable Quote: "Name one hero who was happy."

Tshering Om Tamang
Associate Lecturer

HAIKU

Piled up russet leaves
Yonder by the tree I sit
O! Fall, my season
Kezang Tshokyed Lepcha

You are not with me
Only present in my dream
Where I am the Queen
Sunita Gurung

Harsh cool rainy night
Enclosed in soothing darkness
Safe and sound Asleep

Down by the River
Sat the girl in her Red Frock
A doll she holds Dear

Light summer drizzle
Droplets carrying memories
Of time that are gone.

Oh thy golden sphere
Merci! I canst sweat no more.
Hath thy no merci?
And when...
Clouds fill the vast sky
To save Samtse from the sun
It drowns us in rain.

My yummy momo
You are fleeting as the wind
When I consume you
Lhendue

Thunder storm-flash crash
Fickle weather of Samtse
Then all calm and bright
Yeshey Seldon

Dusty little room
And a grumpy stuffy nose
Match made in heaven!
Dorji Yangzom

Bright sunny day
A day of beautiful lie
Prelude to rainstorm
Lhendue

Every drop of rain
Touching my strong yearning palm
Feels like you are close
Sunita Gurung

The hero's journey of a teacher

Many of us in education have always fashioned ourselves as agents of change. We have been excited at times about the changes occurring in the education system, while simultaneously being disappointed in the slow development. We are proud of implementing technology but are also frustrated at the lack of technology. We love that the teaching method is evolving, while surprised that others have yet to even attempt these new methods. It's this constant tug-o-war that often leaves us hopeful, while also disappointed. Hence, the question of how to break away from this tug-o-war comes up. I believe that many of us can do so by changing our perspective. We could view our journey to become an educator as that of the literary model – The Hero's Journey. This is the classic story structure created by Joseph Campbell in 1949 as a means to explain how stories unfold. This journey refers to a majority of all stories in which a character ventures out to get what they need, faces conflict and then ultimately triumphs over adversity.

The first step in the journey is the Status Quo or the ordinary world. That's our traditional education system prevalent in the country. We are comfortable in this situation but eventually, we hear the call to action. This call is about the heroes in us to move away from the ordinary world. In this stage, we are faced with challenges. Think about all the challenges we have as an educator. The changing education system to BB, the implementation of EMIS and the changing pedagogy. We feel that these are challenging. That they are impossible to accomplish. This makes us refuse the call because we doubt whether this can be accomplished but then we Meet the Mentor. This can be anyone or anything that inspires us to move and face challenges. To believe that the obstacle can be overcome. That we can do better. It could be a motivational book that we read, a dedicated teacher or even a spiritual leader that shows us that challenges are not impossible.

We then accept the call and cross the First Threshold and leave the ordinary world for the Special World. In this stage, we are introduced to new teaching strategies and new ideas. Everything is new, strange and alien. We have left the ordinary world. For us trainees, it could be the shift from being taught to becoming a teacher. Our journey has just begun and now we are in a new environment where rather than being a student, we are going to become teachers. However, some of us are not experienced teachers. We are fresh inexperienced teachers, and many of us would then face the next phase of the journey which is the Tests/Allies/Enemies. We meet obstacles in our journey. These can be meeting resistance from teachers refusing to accept the changes. Administrative policy and belief that do not align with one's own belief. It could also be the lack of resources and outdated technology. These resistances we face are the test and enemies that we will face in our journey to become an educator. However, at the same time, we meet allies in the form of veteran teachers who guide us, colleagues that have also just entered the special world and even supportive principals that make our teaching journey easier and enjoyable.

We then approach the Inmost Cave where we have our biggest enemy. This is metaphorical and not literal. The enemies are the biggest challenges that are preventing us from moving forward. It is in this stage that we question ourselves. We question whether the challenges can be overcome, and we are overwhelmed with a sense of doubt. In this moment of weakness, we reach the next step of the journey which is the Ordeal. We either fail or succeed. We might fail if we give up and assume that change is not possible. We might start

thinking work is getting too heavy and stressful. We get tired of being constantly prevented from developing and growing. When this happens our journey comes to an end.

Yet if we overcome this ordeal, we will begin to experience the next step of the journey which is the Reward. We experience success. Students are more engaged when you teach. Students tell you that this is the best learning experience they have had. Yet even in this moment of success, we begin to move towards the next phase of the journey which is The Road Back where we realize despite our success we still have room to grow. Moreover, the success we have experienced will come to be challenged, but at the same time it will be the tool to overcome the next challenges too.

The challenge we experience is in the next phase of the journey. Resurrection- our final test. The climax of our journey where we will bring forth everything that we have achieved the moment we moved away from the ordinary world. If we can push through these toughest times, we will prevail. This is where we see that ideas and policies are on the brink of becoming a reality larger than ourselves. Finally, we Return With The Elixir. This is the triumph. We celebrate the change, the success and the apparent moving away from the Ordinary World. The reward is the conclusion of our journey. It is the crystallisation of everything we have worked for. Even then the journey does not end and the cycle continues as time passes and changes that question our success occurs. This is inevitable as education is a constantly transforming machine.

Now you might be wondering why we need to view our educational journey as that of a Hero's Journey. This is because some of us question the education system. The cliched idea of education moving one step forward, and then moving two steps back could be an apt description of our education system. This makes us feel hopeless and often thoughts like these stop us from hearing the Call to Action. So I would like to encourage everyone to heed the call and join those fighting it out in the Special World because together we can make a difference no matter how insurmountable it is.

Namsar Lhendue
PgDE A English

Rays of hope and rhythm of grace

The supreme guardian deity I vow you my deepest confidence, for you are the most revered one,
please! protect us all from unpredictable catastrophes.

My kind root guru, I vow you my greatest strength, for you are the miracle to my endeavour,
please! bless me with your extraordinary manifest.

My beloved supreme commander, I vow to you my sincere gratitude, for you are the source of my inspiration,
please! guide us all through this turbulent journey.

My respected parents, I vow to you my hearty admiration, for you are the hopes of my destiny,
please! pray for the well-being of all the sentient beings.

My dearest partner I vow you, my everlasting love, for you are the promoter of peace in the family, our
togetherness at present is the result of collective prayers of the past,
please! pray for
world peace.

Phuntscho Dorji
MEd Chemistry Graduate



In conversation with Dr Kezang Sherab

Dean of Research and Industrial Linkages, Paro College of Education, Paro

SCE: You started your career as a school teacher and then got elevated to various academic leadership positions in the university system such as Head of Department, Programme Leader and Dean of Research and Industrial Linkages at the Paro College of Education. Please highlight some of the salient features of the journey.

DRIL: Yes la, after a brief school teaching experience of about three and a half years, I joined Paro College of Education [PCE] (the then Teacher Training College) in 1998 as a lecturer. Working at the College has been a remarkable learning journey for me as I had opportunities to serve in various capacities. I began my teacher education career as the head of the health and physical education department, Bachelor of Primary Education programme leader, and then later the programme leader of the Masters in Educational Leadership and Management. As the Head of Department and programme leader, I had opportunities to develop new programmes and review some of the existing programmes which gave me lots of exposure and experiences to work with both colleagues and faculty from other external universities. As I gained more experiences, I was appointed as the head of the Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD) in 2008 even before Royal University of Bhutan had the position of DRILs (Dean of Research and Industrial Linkages) created for all the colleges. In 2009, I sat for the DRIL interview and became the first DRIL of PCE. However, I could not complete the term, as I had to go abroad for my PhD studies. I took up the post of DRIL again in 2014 and successfully completed a three-year term after which I focused more on teaching and research. Upon recommendation of the College management, I once again took up the post of DRIL in 2021. Currently, the CERD is giving its best to provide evidence-based information to both within education fraternity and other relevant stakeholders. We have finally been able to make both the journals (RABSEL - Educational Journal and Journal of Educational Action Research open access, which is registered under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International License. I would like to take this opportunity to invite all researchers (national and International) to submit their manuscripts through our online submission platform.

SCE: Please give a brief description of your experiences as an academic at the Paro College of Education?

DRIL: As an academic at the College dealing with adult students (both pre-service and in-service), is a fascinating learning experience. There is always something new to learn and grow. Over the last 28 years or

so, I have seen in myself a tremendous growth both in terms of my academics and at the social level. As a school student, I fondly remember that I was an average performer. I used to envy my friends who used to score much higher than me in the examinations. With my current experiences, I have realised that school examination score is not an end of the world. If we approach things in life with a growth mind-set, there are always opportunities to learn and grow irrespective of our age. Every day, every week, every month and every year is a learning opportunity.

SCE: Your experience as the Dean of Research and Industrial Linkages at the Paro College of Education for three terms?

DRIL: As I have mentioned above, serving as the DRIL for a couple of terms has been a great learning opportunity for me. As the DRIL, I was able to continue publication of RABSEL the CERD (Centre for Educational Research and Development) Educational Journal and introduced a new journal for the center called – Journal of Educational Action Research (JEAR) to provide forum for the practitioners to publish and share their work with a wider community. As the DRIL, I was also able to develop external linkages and secure many international and national research grants. Much of my time is dedicated to the promotion of research culture amongst both university faculty and schoolteachers.

SCE: How has research culture developed at the Royal University of Bhutan since the institution of Research Department at the Office of Vice Chancellor?

DRIL: As members of the RUB family, we are all aware that prior to the establishment of the RUB in 2003, the research and publication culture was almost non-existent. All colleges were solely focused on teaching and learning. However, over the span of nearly two decades, I can confidently say that research and publication culture at the RUB has improved a lot. As a result of various efforts from both the research department at OVC and the respective colleges, the number of faculty members engaged in research and publication are on the rise. Some have even achieved a high level research and publication status at the international level as evident in their Google Scholar and Research Gate h-index scores. Having said this, we cannot be complacent and be satisfied with the current status. RUB definitely needs to be more aggressive in terms of further enhancing the research and publication culture.

SCE: Give a brief description of your experience as a trainee teacher at Samtse College of Education (then National Institute of Education [NIE]).

DRIL: I joined Samtse College of Education (SCE) B. Ed Secondary programme in July 1991. The three-year experience at SCE has been a turning point for me. I say this because, all through out my schooling days, I was a shy and quiet student although I used to play a lot of sports. I have had no leadership experiences during the school days, not even a class captain. This made my initial years at SCE difficult, as I was not able to face the crowd. This was unbecoming of a teacher. I realised that I had to change whether I liked it or not. My initial years at SCE helped boost by confidence as we had lots of opportunities such as class presentations, micro teachings, teaching practice at different schools, morning assembly speeches, and participate in various co-curricular activities (literary, cultural, and sports). During the second year, I was elected as the football custodian, which gave me opportunities to organise various competitions. To my surprise, I was elected as the Deputy Student Councilor for Chung House while in the second year and a full-fledged Student Councilor during the final

year. I also had an opportunity to be the Chief Councilor. All these experiences gave me leadership and social skills and further boosted my level of confidence. As a result, I received the two most prestigious awards on the graduation night in 1994 - Ms. C.K. Gurung Prize for the Best Student of the Year and the Prize for the Most Remarkable Contribution. In a nutshell, I owe much to SCE for what I am today.

SCE: Your views on Samtse College of Education then and today?

DRIL: It is some 28 plus years since my graduation from SCE. After a brief teaching experience at one of the schools in Paro, I joined the Paro College of Education, the then TTC in 1998. During those days, the two teacher training colleges were still under Ministry of Education (MoE). The faculty of the two colleges used to have frequent interaction to discuss various aspects of teacher training. However, after we were delinked from the MoE and became a part of the Royal University of Bhutan in 2003, there is a decline in the interactions between PCE and SCE. Nevertheless, from my recent interaction with SCE as the external examiner for the master students' research thesis, I have come to understand that SCE has come a long way in serving the nation with the teacher requirements- both pre-service and in-service. SCE has now introduced many masters programmes to provide opportunities to the in-service teachers to upgrade their qualification. This is a critical development, as we need to supply with quality teachers to the MoE to address the issue of lack of quality in our education system. It is also encouraging to see quite a good number of academics with PhD qualifications and that research culture being enhanced. These are important aspects of higher education that cannot be ignored. I wish SCE best of luck in their future endeavour.

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

DRIL: Yes, our society and everything around us are changing at a rapid pace. If we do not move ahead with the changing times, there's a risk of being left behind. We are lucky that we have farsighted monarchs who have envisioned making Bhutan a knowledge-based society. However, research has shown that there are gaps between policy and practice. Often educational reforms are implemented without evidence-based planning, which has led to a huge waste of government resources. We are grateful that our education system has come a long way in terms of access, resource provision, and many other aspects. However, recent research has shown that teaching and learning in the Bhutanese education system (both at the school and higher education levels) is still traditional top-down approach, with strong emphasis on learning from textbook and examination. Our education system has become so rigid with lack of student autonomy that has resulted to narrow outlook. For instance, one of my recent research works have shown that both students and teachers (both school and university levels) prefer examination. The reason being that examination can check how much they have learned. Is examination the only way to check how much students know? Isn't it high time now that we question such beliefs and assumptions? We need to understand that learning from textbook and examination are a thing of the past. Furthermore, some recent researches have also shown that both teachers and students did not like online teaching and learning which happened during the COVID pandemic, not realising that online teaching and learning is the latest trend elsewhere. We need to move ahead with what's happening around us in terms of teaching and learning.

We need to understand that the creation of a knowledge-based society must be a deliberate outcome of the much-needed emphasis on research and publication culture. Teaching and learning should be evidence-based rather than reproducing second hand knowledge from the textbooks, which are ten to fifteen years old. There's no way such system could cope with the rapidly changing world. For instance, the rise in social issues such as drugs, teenage pregnancy, garbage, suicide, mental health, alcohol addiction, etc. are an indication that the bookish knowledge is not helping our children think and manage their own life. Many centuries ago, Albert Einstein had rightly said that, 'Education is not the learning of facts but the training of the mind to think.' The teaching and learning in the Bhutanese education system should definitely focus on training the mind of the youth to think, which Pestalozzi the Swiss Philosopher of the 18th Century called 'education of the heart' besides 'education of the head and hand.' Being a Buddhist nation, we should not be devoid of such philosophy. In fact, we need to note that Buddhism is essentially about training the mind in the four boundless qualities [tshe mey zhi] of love [jampa], compassion [nying jey], joy [gawa], and impartiality [tang nyom]. If our education system were able to take care of these four qualities, Bhutan would be free of all those social issues.

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

DRIL: I have provided the key essence of my concerns about the Bhutanese education system in response to the previous question above. Here I would like to focus on the opportunities and challenges for the education colleges in addressing these concerns. Everybody is aware that the education system of Bhutan has been critiqued for not being able to produce quality graduates. This has a direct bearing on the education colleges because it is us who train the teachers of the entire education system, although there are other contributing factors. Teacher education colleges play a huge role in addressing the issue of lack of quality education. To do that, I have a feeling that it is time now for us to re-examine the teacher education model. I completed my teacher training some 28 years ago and frankly speaking today as I complete 25 years of being a teacher educator, I do not see much difference in how we train our trainee teachers. Given the rapidly changing 21st century landscape, 28 years is too long.

SCE: You have been recently promoted to the Associate Professor position. In fact you are one of the few university academics who received this promotion ever since the Royal University of Bhutan introduced a more rigorous promotion system in 2016. What does it mean to you and what advice do you have for the young academics?

DRIL: The Royal University of Bhutan has implemented a rigorous promotion system that is at par with most higher education systems elsewhere. The current promotion system is focused on one's contribution in three key areas- teaching and learning, research and innovation, and services. For instance, an academic who wish to apply for the Associate Professor position, should have 'secured grants worth Nu. 7.5 million for the College through research grants, projects, consultancies, and other academic or expert services.' Likewise, this person should have published a minimum of 15 research articles in reputed journals. These are just a few

examples; there are many more such stringent criteria. This came as a surprise to many senior faculty members because until the establishment of RUB in 2003, all colleges under RUB were teaching colleges. Research, publication, innovation, expert services were almost non-existent. As a result, today many RUB academics are not able to fulfill these promotion criteria. Although I also fall under the senior category, somehow I have been lucky as I had many opportunities to focus on research, publication, and expert services. So this promotion means a lot to me. All my hard work and dedication for the last 28 years or so in the education system have been rewarded. It is indeed a great achievement for my family and me. I would like to thank and share this joyous moment with all those involved in my academic journey.

While this system has affected many senior RUB colleagues, I personally feel that it is good for the young colleagues. If they wish to continue working in the higher education system, they need to focus on building their career. They need to get into research and publication that is a part and parcel of the higher education system and the rest will be taken care.

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Kezang has published on a variety of educational topics, reviewed journal manuscripts, examined PhD theses, and has led several consultancies for the Ministry of Education (MoE), UNICEF, National Council, UNFPA, and the Royal Education Council. His research interests are in educational change, student engagement, efficacy beliefs, GNH Education, non-cognitive skills, and issues concerning the youth.

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Samtse: Bhutan
PO Box : 329, Phone : 00975-05-365273
Published on 29/05/2023
<https://www.sce.edu.bt>

