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ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



THE STATE OF THE NATION: EDUCATION (2016-17)

**Addendum to the “State of the Nation” annual report of the Hon’ble Prime
Minister to the ninth session of second parliament of Bhutan**

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Acronyms

ANPER	Adjusted Net Primary Enrolment rate
APEMS	Assistance to Privately Enrolled Medical Students
B.Ed	Bachelor of Education
BAC	Bhutan Accreditation Council
BHSECE	Bhutan Higher Secondary Education Certificate Examination
BSA	Bhutan Scout Association
CECD	Career Education and Counseling Division
DDM	Department of Disaster Management
DEO/TEO	Dzongkhag/Thromde Education Officer
DSE	Department of School Education
DYS	Department of Youth and Sports
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECR	Extended Classroom
EVS	Environmental Studies
FYP	Five Year Plan
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GoI	Government of India
HPE	Health and Physical Education
HR	Human Resource
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LSS/MSS/HSS	Lower/Middle/Higher Secondary School
NSFSSPA	National Strategic Framework for School Sports and Physical Activity
NER	Net Enrolment rate
NFE	Non Formal Education
NFEIs	Non Formal Education Instructors
PBE	Place Based Education

PD	Professional Development
PGDE	Post Graduate Diploma in Education
PISA-D	Program for International Student Assessment for Development
PMS	Performance Management System
PP	Pre Primary
PS	Primary School
QECS	Queen's Endowment for Cultural Studies
REC	Royal Education Council
RGoB	Royal Government of Bhutan
RTC	Royal Thimphu College
SEF	Sherig Endowment Fund
SEN	Special Education Need
SGC	School Guidance Counselors
SLSTE	Student Loan Scheme for Tertiary Education
SPA	Sports and Physical Activities
SSSS	School Sports Scholarship Scheme
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TEB	Tertiary Education Board
TEIs	Tertiary Education Institutes
WFP	World Food Program

Introduction

The year 2016-2017 saw the convergence of auspicious moments for Bhutan and its people. It was truly a rare historic moment since it was the birth year of Guru Rinpoche that comes only once after every 60-year cycle of our traditional cosmology. It was also the 400th year of arrival of the peerless Zhabdrung who founded our Bhutanese state. Furthermore, coinciding with these two auspicious moments, we were blessed with the birth of His Royal Highness the Gyalsey Jigme Namgyel Wangchuck. The academic session for another equally auspicious year 2017 started with the celebration of the joyous first birth anniversary of our Gyalsey followed by the celebration of His Majesty the King's birth day. The Ministry of Education (MoE) had the privilege and rare honour to be part of these historic years marked with such auspiciousness.

During the eventful year, the MoE made commendable progress both in terms of access and quality of education. The MoE is responsible for national policies and programs that help achieve objectives of enhancing both access and quality of education. The impressive education indicators for access suggest that within the short span of time, the MoE could enhance the Gross Enrolment Rate¹ in Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) from 7% in 2013 to 18.6% by 2016. Similarly, Adjusted Net Primary Enrolment Rate² in 2016 has reached 98.6% almost achieving universal primary education. The Net Enrolment Rate (NER)³ for basic

¹ Total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the eligible official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in a given school year.

² Adjusted Net Enrolment Rate is calculated on the basis of the percentage of children in the official primary school age range who are enrolled in either primary, secondary education or monastic education.

³ Enrolment of the official age group for a given level of education expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population.

education has reached 96.2% in the same year. Similarly, Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) for tertiary education within Bhutan has increased from 20% to 28% from 2013 to 2016. In an effort to include all children irrespective of their abilities, the MoE continued to strengthen the Special Education Needs (SEN) program. The enrolment of special needs children has reached 525 from slightly more than 400 in 2013.

Various initiatives were taken in the last year to improve the quality of education. The year was observed as the “Teacher Development” year considering the critical role of our teachers. To further improve the relevancy of curriculum, different initiatives were carried out to diversify and develop up-to date curriculum for our children.

The first section of this report provides the highlights of MoE’s achievements in the last year listed based on the thematic area. The following sections provide a detailed report on the six key result areas that were identified by the government in the 11th Five Year Plan (FYP).

1. Key Achievements of the year

- 1.1 30 new ECCD centres were established in remote areas to promote children’s overall social, cognitive and intellectual development.
- 1.2 From the beginning of 2017 academic year, two additional Special Education Needs Schools were identified to extend educational services to children with disabilities.
- 1.3 The MoE completed the development of Inclusive Education Standards.
- 1.4 The MoE has established nine new Central Schools in 2017. In total, there are currently 60 Central Schools across the country.
- 1.5 The first ever National School Curriculum Conference on re-thinking school curriculum was held in 2016 through a collaborative venture by the MoE and the Royal Education Council (REC).

- 1.6 The MoE conducted a 5-day Transformative Pedagogy training for all teaching professionals in 2016.
- 1.7 With the objective of motivating and inspiring the teachers who are serving in remote schools, a total of 71 teachers took part in the study visit to Kerala, India in January 2017.
- 1.8 30 principals of new Central and Autonomous Schools participated in an Immersion Program in July/August 2016 to improve management and administration skills.
- 1.9 Under the Education Information Communication Technology (ICT) Master Plan 2014-2018, *iSherig*, the MoE is establishing computer laboratories and connecting schools with internet services and setting up E-Library.
- 1.10 “Safe sanitary pad to every girl child” project was piloted with the objective that in the future no girl student should suffer indignity and shame during her menstruation days.
- 1.11 Fortified rice has been distributed to all World Food Program (WFP) supported schools to address micro-nutrient deficiency.
- 1.12 For the first time in 2017 academic year all schools conducted values education week to strengthen Bhutanese values and life skill education program in school system.
- 1.13 A total of 51 grants of Nu 20,000 have been awarded to carry out research on various topics related to teaching-learning, school management and life skills education under the Sherig Endowment Fund.
- 1.14 Provided opportunities to 123 students mostly from economically disadvantage background to continue tertiary education through interest free Student Loan Scheme for Tertiary Education.
- 1.15 From the beginning of the 2017 academic year, nine additional School Guidance Counselors (SGC) with Post Graduate Diploma in Guidance and Counseling were deployed in Central Schools.

- 1.16 Guidance and Counseling Program was rolled out in primary schools to build strong foundation for adult life.
- 1.17 The School Sports Scholarship Scheme(SSSS) was introduced in 2017 to motivate participation in Sports and Physical Activities (SPA) and help students to excel academically and in sports concurrently.

2. Expanding access to education

2.1 Support access to quality child care

The MoE continued to strengthen its focus on providing quality child care and early learning opportunities for children as part of the broader education continuum in the last year. Recognizing the early childhood care and development (ECCD) as the foundation for children's long term development, wellbeing and health, the MoE has achieved impressive progress in expanding ECCD facilities across the country. The concept of ECCD is comparatively new in Bhutan. Despite that the MoE successfully established 231 community based ECCD centres in the rural areas in addition to 59 private centres. In 2013, there were only 82 ECCD centres established by the government from a total of 165 centres. As of 2016, there are 7409 children enrolled in 290 ECCD centres comparing to 3835 enrolled in 165 centres in 2013. The gross enrolment rate in ECCD as of 2016 was 18.6%. In 2013, this rate was only 7%.

The MoE has been emphasizing the importance of the ECCD programs. It aims to enrol at least 50% of children aged 3 to 5 years in ECCD Centres and aspires to establish one ECCD Centre for every *Chiwog* by 2024.

2.2 Support access to quality schooling

On a priority basis, the MoE strives to provide universal access to basic education for all children in the country. These were carried out through innovative interventions such as establishment of Central Schools, Extended Classrooms and expansion of primary and secondary schools. As a result, the adjusted net primary enrolment rate in 2016 is 98.6% indicating that almost all the school going age children are in schools or in any other structured education. Similarly, the basic net

enrolment rate was 96.2% in 2016 representing a total of 169560 students are studying in 522 schools and 96 Extended classrooms⁴.

Of late, private participation in education has played a significant role in enhancing access to education. Private participation in education has helped develop a more sustainable education system by reducing the cumulative burden on government and provide alternate options for those who seek and have the means. On an average around 7% of students were enrolled in Bhutan's 36 privately established schools.

2.2.1 Central Schools

Central Schools are established at a convenient location, integrated and resourced-based with residential facilities. The schools are empowered with autonomy in their operations. They are developed with an aspiration to become a model schools and a Centres of Excellence aimed at fostering creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.

The Central School system began with 24 pilot Central Schools in 2015. 27 were declared in 2016 and yet another 9 in 2017 totalling to 60 Central School across the country. About 45000 students are studying in Central Schools.

2.3 Support access to special education programs

To extend educational services to children with disabilities, the MoE initiated establishing special schools and Special Education Needs (SEN) program in mainstreamed schools. As of today, the MoE has established two special schools catering to hearing and visual impairment and 12 schools with SEN program that caters to children with range of disabilities. There are in total 14 institutes catering to children with varying degrees of disabilities. The two new schools with SEN program identified in 2017 were at Tsenkharla Central School in Tashiyangtse and Gesarling Central School in Dagana. Currently 525 students are enrolled in these 14

⁴ Source: Annual Education Statistics 2016

institutes⁵. The MoE has planned to increase the SEN program to 15 schools during the 11th FYP.

Other initiatives include training on sign language, capacity building for teachers to more effectively cater for students with special education needs, procurement of adaptive furniture, teaching-learning materials and assistive devices for children with disabilities.

Another notable achievement was the development of Standards for Inclusive Education. These standards are a tool to support schools in Bhutan towards becoming more inclusive for all children. The standards aim to provide guidance to schools for reflection, planning and actions towards inclusion. The Standards for Inclusive Education are divided into three very important dimensions – Inclusive Culture, Inclusive Policy and Inclusive Practice. All three dimensions combine interdependently to create inclusive schools.

3. Improving Relevance and Quality of Education

3.1 Curriculum

Curriculum is considered as the soul of the education system. The MoE and the REC tries to improve the curriculum on a regular basis to equip the learners with knowledge, skills and values to cope with the rapidly changing socio-economic trend. In the last year, following initiatives were undertaken as an effort to make curriculum more relevant and useful:

3.1.1 Curriculum Development and Diversification

The REC is continuing its endeavor to diversify the curriculum for better choice of subjects for students and their career opportunities. Besides the optional subjects such as agriculture for food security, technical and vocational education, and media studies, environmental science has been introduced as another optional subject in class XI and earmarked for class XII in 2018.

⁵ Source: ECCD&SEN Division, DSE

The first ever National School Curriculum Conference on re-thinking school curriculum was held in October and November 2016 through a collaborative venture by the MoE and the REC. The conference aimed:

- to make curriculum more relevant to the current national and global context through reflection.
- to provide guidance to design short, medium and long-term strategic plans for curriculum reforms.

The conference process fully engaged all the teachers in the education system as it was conducted at three stages viz. school, dzongkhag and national level involving all relevant stakeholders. The conference provided numerous resolutions in the areas of policy and standards in curriculum, curriculum content, assessment of students' learning, and competencies of teachers in teaching. Since the winter of 2016-2017, REC embarked on following numerous curricular works as a part of conference resolutions.

- I. Drafted the curriculum framework (a blueprint for the specific subject) of Geography, Accountancy, History and Vocational Studies for classes PP to XII.
- II. An in-depth evaluation of English curriculum across classes PP to XII was conducted.
- III. The curriculum in classes PP to III has been reduced to three subjects (English, Dzongkha and Mathematics).

3.1.2 Reintroduction of Shakespeare in the secondary classes

Recognizing the profound richness in literature, culture and values, the Shakespeare play (Merchant of Venice) has been reintroduced in secondary classes and all teachers were oriented.

3.1.3 Health and Physical Education (HPE) curriculum

The HPE curriculum plays a critical role in correcting the attitudes and behaviours of youth towards healthy living, particularly developing their understanding of their own changing life styles, including effects of leading a more sedentary life and high

consumption of junk foods. HPE activity guidebooks for PP to VI to respond to these issues were developed and piloted to be implemented from 2018.

3.1.4 Research on value education curriculum

An extensive research on improving the values education curriculum was also carried out, which has guided the development of Values Education Activity guides for classes PP to III. These guides are being piloted in a few schools and it will be gradually expanded to all schools and scaled up to higher grades.

3.1.5 An innovation of school curriculum without textbooks

An innovation of school curriculum without textbooks (Textbookless curriculum) is in the pilot phase with World History. It is based on the novelty of empowering students with the competencies to search and gain wider perspectives of the subject, and facilitate students enjoy learning using diverse media – books, internet and interviews.

3.1.6 National STEM Olympiad 2017

For the first time, a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Olympiad has been organized as National STEM Olympiad 2017 on 5th and 6th May 2017. It incorporated two level programs at cluster and national level, aimed to build scientifically elite and scientifically literate citizens.

3.2 Teacher Development support services

3.2.1 Professional Development

The Teacher Human Resource (HR) Policy 2014 mandates that every teacher receives 80 hours of Professional Development (PD) in a year. In addition, on May 2, 2016 during the Teacher’s Day celebration at the Royal Institute of Management, the Hon’ble Prime Minister declared 2016 as the ‘Teacher Development Year’, which further supported the need to provide PD to teachers to enhance knowledge, skills, and motivation to ultimately improve quality of education.

To support this, the MoE conducted a 5-day Transformative Pedagogy training for all the teaching professionals from July to November 2016. A total of 9591⁶ participants were trained which include teachers, Vice Principals, Principals, Dzongkhag and Thromde Education Officers, Counselors, trainee teachers and lecturers of Samtse and Paro Colleges of Education and teachers from private school. The same training package was also translated to Dzongkha and all the Dzongkha teachers availed the training. The MoE has provided 40 hours of PD in the year 2016 to all teachers across the country at the national level.

Similarly, the 18th National Education Conference in January 2017 endorsed the need to provide PD in English Language Proficiency and Dzongkha program for teachers in 2017. The MoE is preparing to provide PD on English for Effective Communication for Teachers (EECT) and Dzongkha program in July 2017. The teachers will be able to acquire a clear understanding of effective communication skills and its importance in effective teaching-learning, and meaningful social interaction and relationships.

3.2.2 Study visit to Kerala, India for remote school teachers

With the objective of motivating and inspiring the teachers who are serving in remote schools, a total of 71 teachers took part in the study visit to Kerala, India in January 2017.

3.2.4 Immersion Program for Principals

To upscale the knowledge, skills and talents of school principals, the MoE initiated an immersion/engagement program with large residential schools overseas. In 2015, 60 principals were sent on an Immersion Programme for two weeks in some of the high performing schools in India in collaboration with Learn Today and Vasant Valley School in Delhi. Based on the encouraging feedback, the MoE organized similar program for 30 principals from new Central and Autonomous Schools in

⁶ Source: TPSD, DSE

July/August 2016. Such programs are expected to improve management and administration skills which will ultimately lead to improving students' learning outcomes.

3.2.5 Teacher recruitment and deployment

The quality of education hinges around the quality of teachers. However, teachers were over burden by both academic and non-academic responsibilities. The MoE recruited 202 wardens and matrons to free up teachers for academic purpose. Further the contact teaching hours have been brought down to 18 hours from 22 hours since 2017.

In 2017, the MoE in consultation with the Royal Civil Service Commission has recruited 551 teachers. However, in the last year 217⁷ teachers have left the teaching profession for different reasons. The net increase in teachers was 334.

3.2.6 National Order of Merit

In recognition of hardship our teachers go through and sacrifices they make on daily basis, His Majesty the King on the National Day awarded National Order of Merit for teachers. This is the highest honour in the country for their exemplary service as a teacher, school leader or Non-Formal Education (NFE) instructor. On 17th December 2016, a total of 19 teachers received the National Order of Merit from His Majesty for Excellence in Teaching. Three principals were also awarded National Order of Merit for excelling in Leadership and Management.

Since 2009, 332 teachers have received National Order of Merit from His Majesty the King during the National Day Celebrations.

3.3 Establishment of Autonomous Schools

To improve the educational practices and student learning outcomes through empowerment, greater autonomy and flexibility and to give further impetus to the

⁷ Source: HRD, MoE

policy of decentralization, from 2014 academic session, 19 schools were granted autonomy.

The Autonomous Schools started in 2014 with 19 pilot schools. Today, the number of Autonomous schools rose to 22 in addition to Central Schools which are also Autonomous Schools. The MoE encourages schools to apply for autonomy. By the end of the 11th FYP, it is expected that all MSS / HSS and big urban Lower Secondary schools will be granted autonomy.

3.4 ICT in Education

3.4.1 Education ICT Master Plan 2014-2018, *i*Sherig

In order to capitalize the power of ICT in Education, the MoE developed an ICT Master Plan 2014-2018 called *i*Sherig. The implementation of ICT master plan is currently well under way. In the fiscal year 2016-17, the MoE set up 5 computer laboratories and supplied 276 computers to the schools⁸. Internet services are also being provided to schools in collaboration with the relevant agencies. 67 school IT Lab assistants and Science Lab assistants were also trained on school ICT lab management. Additionally, the REC has completed developing ICT literacy curriculum for grade IV-VI which has been implemented in those schools where there is enough IT teachers and computer laboratories.

3.4.2 E-Library

The Government of India has committed establishment of e-Library/Digital library in the country to make educational content accessible to the Bhutanese through modern ICT technology. The implementation of setting up the E-library is now at an advance stage. The following works have been completed:

- i. Development of e-Library Portal (website)
- ii. Provisioning of e-contents

⁸ Source: SPCD, DSE

- iii. Creation of e-Libraries in 49 Central Schools and 12 colleges (Supply and installation of hardware)
- iv. Setup e-Library Studio in Bhutan

3.5 School Health and Nutrition Program

3.5.1 Sanitary Pad

“Safe sanitary pad to every girl child” project was launched with the objective that in the future no girl student should suffer indignity and shame during her menstruation days. The MoE pledged to make available safe sanitary pads to every female student in Bhutan. Towards this goal, the project is being piloted at Kamji Central School which has started production and planning to supply to sister schools.

3.5.2 Fortified Rice

Owing to the incidents of outbreaks related to the micro-nutrient deficiencies in schools, the project of rice fortification was taken up by the relevant stakeholders such as Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, MoE, Ministry of Health and WFP-Bhutan country office. As a result, starting from academic year 2017, fortified rice has been distributed to all WFP supported schools.

3.6 Value Orientation Week

From the start of 2017 academic year, all schools started with the “Value Orientation Week” with the following purpose:

1. Strengthen Value and Life Skills Education Program in school system.
2. Practice life skills and enable students to become responsible and contributive citizens.
3. Promote the essence of Bhutanese identity through practice of Bhutanese etiquettes.
4. Enable schools to start on a well-grounded foundation towards addressing and solving emerging youth issues.

3.7 The Sherig Endowment Fund

The MoE launched the Sherig Endowment Fund (SEF) on 23rd August 2016, an initiative started by the Government to provide equitable access to quality education to all children in the country. The SEF is being used to promote action research among schools, public and private, to address challenges related to quality teaching and learning, school management and emerging youth issues.

Since its launch, a total of 51 projects have been funded up to Nu 20,000 to carry out action research on various topics that address these contemporary challenges. The MoE plans to support about 100 projects every year.

3.8 Education Monitoring Services

Monitoring relevance and quality implementation of educational programs through checks on compliance to education policy and directives is one of the core mandates of the MoE.

To fulfil that mandate, the MoE through its Education Monitoring Division carried out following main activities amongst others:

- Carried out School Performance Management System (PMS). Based on the PMS, schools' performance was analysed and the report shared with stakeholders. Necessary interventions and supports were provided to schools based on the PMS ranking.
- Implemented guidelines for school clubs and oriented teachers, principals and DEOs/TEOs.
- Developed modules for democratic leadership and club guidelines for principals and club coordinators to standardise clubs in schools.
- Reviewed and printed school management guide book.

3.9 PISA-D Project

Recognizing the importance of participating in international benchmarking systems to check the state of education in the country against international standards and acknowledging its need at the earliest, the government decided to take part in the

Program for International Student Assessment for Development (PISA-D). The PISA-D initiative was launched by the Organization for Economic and Co-operation and Development (OECD) and its partners to encourage and facilitate PISA participation by interested and motivated low and middle income countries. Such participation will help government to build effective policies and partnerships for improving learning outcomes.

Against this backdrop, the MoE and Bhutan Council for School Examination and Assessment (BCSEA) has developed a Strategic Framework for PISA-D Project and preparatory works have been rolled out to the Dzongkhags and Schools

4. Enhancing Higher Education

In line with the Royal Government's long term human resource development program, the MoE prepares young men and women with right values and skills to meet the complex demand of society. The MoE provides opportunities for high achieving students to undertake undergraduate study abroad based on the needs of the country.

4.1 Scholarship Services

Annually, based on the national human resource requirement and in accordance with the plan target, about two hundred undergraduate scholarship slots are implemented in various professional and generic fields. These scholarships are mainly funded by the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) and Government of India (GoI). Currently there are 804 students on government scholarship pursuing undergraduate studies spread across to 8 different countries (*India, Bangladesh, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Australia, USA, and RTC, Bhutan*). Of which 197 slots were implemented in 2016-2017 fiscal year. In addition to 197 undergraduate scholarship, 25 ad-hoc scholarships (*6 bilateral and 19 institutional offers*) slots were implemented in 2016-2017. From 197 government scholarships implemented, 94 slots were under the GoI funding and the remaining 103 under RGoB funding.

Following are the different schemes of under graduate scholarships that were implemented by the MoE.

4.1.1 RGoB Scholarships

These are scholarships funded by the RGoB to study abroad. The program includes full scholarship to pursue higher studies in technical and professional fields. The scholarships under this category are:

Sl. No	Scholarship Scheme	Annual Slots	Field of study
1	Queen’s Endowment for Cultural Studies (QECS)	15	Fine Arts, Ayurvedic/Herbal Medicines, Pali, Music and Sanskrit
2	Assistance to Privately Enrolled Medical Students (APEMS)	15	Medical
3	Scholarship to the RTC	30-35	Different courses as offered by the college

4.1.2 GoI Scholarships

These are scholarships funded by the GoI under Project Tied Assistance (PTA) to Bhutan. The program is implemented in India as per the courses determined by the RGoB. The program includes full scholarships to pursue higher studies in technical and professional fields.

4.1.3 Ad-hoc scholarships

These are unplanned ad-hoc offers, mainly bilateral and institutional scholarship. Bilateral scholarship offers are those that are made by various countries/governments based on goodwill and diplomatic relations. They include SAARC Chair, ICCR scholarships, Cuban Government scholarship, Korean Government and Presidential Scholarships.

The table below provides a summary of the undergraduate scholarships awarded in 2016

Course	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Medicine	21	33	54
Biological Sciences	16	2	18
Engineering	44	13	57
Education and Academics	8	5	13
Arts & Humanities	21	34	55
Total	110	87	197

4.2 Tertiary Education Services

The MoE has overall responsibility of direction and oversight for tertiary education in Bhutan. In discharging this mandate MoE serves as the secretariat to the Tertiary Education Board (TEB) and Bhutan Accreditation Council (BAC) which are autonomous bodies for all matters related to tertiary education in the country.

To fulfill these mandates, following major activities were carried out in the last one year.

I. Implemented Student Loan Scheme for Tertiary Education (SLSTE)

This initiative enabled 123 students from economically disadvantage background but academically sound to continue tertiary education in areas of their choice. This is a targeted intervention to give opportunities for students who otherwise would not be able to afford higher education.

II. Developed draft guidelines for establishment of universities and autonomous institutions.

III. Facilitated and monitored establishment of new Government colleges and a private college.

IV. Tertiary Education statistics system and website for the department developed with the support of the RTC.

V. Accreditation of Tertiary Education Institutes (TEIs)

Four TEIs are planned to be accredited in 2016-2017. The colleges are Paro College of Education and Samtse College of Education under the Royal University of Bhutan and Faculty of Nursing and Public Health & Faculty of Traditional Medicine under the Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan.

VI. Provide recognition services

The recognition is mainly sought of election purpose and MoE issued eight recognition certificates from July 2016 till date (March 29, 2017).

5. Expanding Adult Education and Lifelong Learning

Non-formal education and continuing education programs were initiated to provide basic literacy and functional skills amongst the adult population and institute a system of life-long learning. As of May 2017, there are 7236 learners attending basic literacy courses and post literacy courses in 674 centres with 682 instructors. Similarly, a total of 740 learners are enrolled in the Continuing Education program in seven Continuing Education Centres.

5.1 Non-Formal Education

The Non-Formal Education program continues to be an effective program in providing basic literacy and functional skills benefitting mostly rural population who have missed the opportunity to pursue schooling at an early age. The Ministry in its drive to achieve the target of 70% adult literacy rate by 2017 as outlined in the 11th FYP, continues to recruit and train NFE instructors. To improve both access to and quality in NFE program, following activities were carried out:

I. The International Conference on Capacity-Building in Non-Formal Education in Bhutan

The Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU) and the MoE, Bhutan, with the support of UNESCO, Bangkok and the National Institute of Lifelong Education (NILE) of the Republic of Korea, organized an **International Conference on Capacity-Building in Non-Formal Education in Bhutan** under the theme of *“Enhancing Literacy and Lifelong Learning through Effective Management of CLCs.”*

II. Sensitization Program for local leaders

The NFE program has large coverage across the nation. However, as a push to further accelerate, a sensitization program was coordinated to the newly elected local leaders considering the important role they play in enhancing adult literacy.

III. Reduction in the length of NFE course

The longer duration of the program was found as one of the causes for the high dropout rates from NFE program. As a result, the MoE revised the curriculum for the basic literacy course in 2015 and finalized the operational guidelines during the previous year. In the current year, the MoE oriented all the NFEIs on the changes in the program and reduction of the time frame for the course to 1 year from 1.5 years without compromising the quality.

6. Youth Development and Empowerment

The MoE has been taking the lead role in preparing all youth to become productive and meaningful citizens. Every year MoE initiates various engagement and enriching program for youth through the Department of Youth and Sports. These initiatives include:

6.1 Youth Services through Youth Centres

MoE caters to the educational and recreational needs of the youth by establishing youth-friendly centres in the country as well as conducting programs for youth. It

has established 11 Youth Centres so far and 10 were decentralized to the local government.

In the fiscal year 2016-17, the MoE carried out following activities in line with the National Youth Action Plan:

I. Establishment of Youth Centres and support services

The MoE initiated the establishment of the 11th Youth Centre at Khuruthang considering the increasing number of youth in the locality.

II. Youth Friendly Integrated Service Centre

The guideline to implement the youth friendly integrated service centre has been developed in consultation with the relevant stakeholders and piloted at Gelephu Youth Centre. A similar model is being explored to establish in other youth centres.

III. Youth not in education, employment or training (NEET)

To develop the capacity of the NEET youth, 190 youth were trained on Life Skills Education. The MoE as a nodal agency is in the process of developing a comprehensive training manual to be used by all the youth related organizations. This is to standardize and maintain quality of training for youth and avoid duplication of effort.

IV. Provision of Youth engagement platforms

Various platforms aimed to develop public speaking skills, critically analyse issues and enhance knowledge on topical youth issues were provided for youth. Some of these are observation of International Youth Day, YouTurn program, dialogue between youth and parliamentarians, youth forums, and summer and winter youth engagement program.

6.2 Career Education and Counseling program

The MoE has been working toward institutionalizing the School Guidance and Counseling system. The goal is to develop and implement comprehensive youth guidance and counselling to help the youth cope with the multitude of issues that beset them. Youth related issues are addressed through following programs:

- School-based Counseling Programs
- Youth Development Programs
- Parents' Partnership in Education
- Vocational Experiences through Clubs

Following are some of the initiatives that were taken by the MoE to tackle youth issues:

I. Roll out Guidance and Counseling Program in Primary Schools

The guidance and counseling program was introduced initially in secondary schools. Considering the impact that experiences and education at a young age have in building a strong foundation for their adult personality and future productiveness, the guidance and counseling program was expanded to primary schools. In the financial year 2016-2017, 133 primary school teachers were trained on providing basic guidance and counseling services.

II. Peer Helpers Conference

Peer-Peer programs such as the Peer Helpers in secondary schools was initiated to provide an alternate prevention and intervention resources in dealing with common developmental and personal-social issues that many adolescents face. The program trains students and youth leaders with the basic skills of helping themselves and others and thereby, promoting and creating an environment which allows students to help each other. Peer Helpers were also trained to identify peers who are in distress or are vulnerable and make referrals for professional support and intervention to the School Guidance Counselors.

The Dzongkhag Level Peer Helpers Conference is conducted annually to offer a platform for Peer Helpers within Dzongkhags to come together, share and exchange ideas and programs that were being implemented in their schools and to establish a strong network of Peer Helpers within the Dzongkhag. A total of 247 (117 M & 130 F) student Peer Helpers from Samtse, Dagana, Chukha, Sarpang, Haa, Tsirang participated in a 2-day Peer Helpers' Conference in July 2016, held in their respective Dzongkhags.

III. Expansion of Community Parenting Program

To reach out to more families, a 4 Day Training for Focal Persons was conducted for the armed forces families at Samtse, Jigmeling, Deothang and Phuntsholing. The training aims at creating awareness on the developmental stages, challenges faced by the adolescents and parenting skills. It also offers a platform for the parents to put forward their common challenges, share parenting experiences and look for resources within their community.

IV. Third Annual School Guidance Counselors' Conference

The Conference was initiated to create a professional platform for school counselors to share experiences, ideas and challenges from the field. It also provided a forum for School Guidance Counselors to discuss best prevention and intervention practices in areas of youth development and youth issues.

V. Youth Leadership Training (YLT) for at-risk students

The 18 Day Residential YLT program is designed to provide needs-based intervention in personal, social and academic areas for children who are identified as at-risk and vulnerable. The participants were families with personal developmental and behavioural challenges who were nominated

and selected by the schools in their Dzongkhag. The daily routine at the camp included mind training, meditation, guidance and mentoring sessions on self-reflection, relationship building, career awareness, positive disciplining. The participants also took active part in games and sports, vocational skills training, arts and crafts and cultural programs.

VI. Vocational Clubs

To create an extracurricular mode of vocational awareness, a 5 Day Workshop on Food Processing for Multi Skilled Instructors and Vocational Focal Teachers was conducted in Gawailing Happy Home, Selekha. The purpose of the training was for the Vocational Focal Teachers to initiate Food Processing Club in their school and create awareness on the self-employment opportunities.

VII. Dissemination of youth related information

A biannual publication of the Youth Digest contains package of information for youth to explore and acquire information on different topics related to Academic Development, Social and Personal care, and Career related information. The Youth Digest also provides opportunity for youth to share creative thoughts and expressions in the form of essays, stories and poems.

VIII. Entry orientation for new School Guidance Counselors and Principals (9 SGCs & 1 Pvt. Candidate and 10 Principals)

Every year the MoE conducts a 10-day orientation for new School Guidance Counselors entering the school system. The objective of the workshop is to orient them on their roles and responsibilities, professional ethics and duties. Principals from these schools also participate to understand their roles and plan together to institute the counseling program in their schools. From the 2017 academic year, nine additional School Guidance Counselors (SGC) with a Post Graduate Diploma in Guidance

and Counseling were deployed in Central Schools. Currently there are 83 School Guidance Counselors spread across secondary and central schools.

6.3 Games and sports program

As part of the youth enrichment programs, the MoE has been promoting organized Sports and Physical Activities (SPA) since 2000. With the guiding principle ‘Youth Development through Sports’, the primary objectives of the program are to foster holistic development (physically, mentally, socially and emotionally) of children, to enrich teaching-learning process and encourage mass participation.

As an annual program, all schools in the country organize or take part in SPA besides three levels of school sports competitions held at the Dzongkhag, Regional and National levels including in traditional archery tournament.

The National Strategic Framework for School Sports and Physical Activity (NSFSSPA) was developed in 2015 as a road map and is being implemented from 2016. It outlines clear targets, implementation strategies, key interventions, timeline, roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders. It is expected to further harmonize and strengthen the SPA and ensure its sustainability in the long run.

Some of the major achievements that are being initiated in 2016-17 are introduction of School Sports Scholarship Scheme(SSSS). The SSSS is expected to motivate participation in SPA as well as help students to excel academically and in sports concurrently. The recruitment of the additional School Sports Instructors (SSIs) continues to help the development of SPA in schools. Currently there are 124 SSIs in the schools. The MoE aims to place minimum of one SSI in every secondary school by 2019.

6.4 Scouting Program

The scouting program is categorized into three sub programs: Cub, Scout, and Rover in schools/institutions to address the specific needs of young people of different age

groups. Outside of the school system, scouting is promoted through the Community Based Scouting (CBS).

Bhutan Scout Association (BSA) has 33,843 members and 1135 active scout leaders as of December 2016. The scouting program is aimed to expand and more effectively promote scouting in Bhutan. The following represents its achievements in 2016-2017:

Sl. No	Program	No. of participants	Remarks
1	Youth Exchange Program	33 youths and 14 scout leaders	
2	Commissioners' Course	22 DEOs/TEOs	
3	7 th Leadership Training Camp for scouts	124 (62 boys and 63 girls)	From 24 th December 2016 to 14 th January 2017 at Tencholing, Wangduephodrang
4	1 st Gyalyong Gyalsey Nachung Camp	500 Nachung Scouts	Organized at Punakha Central School in December 2016
5	Reunion Camp	70 leadership Scouts and 20 volunteers	At Phunsholing HSS from 8-10 th February 2017.
6	National Day Parade	39 scouts with 2 leaders	National Day celebration at Trongsa.
7	National Cadets Corps (NCC) Delegation	10 NCC Cadets along with 2 officers	visited Bhutan on 13 th December 2016
8	Republic Day Celebration, India	12 leadership scouts (6 boys and 6 girls)	January 2017

Sl. No	Program	No. of participants	Remarks
		along with 2 escort leaders	
9	Spiritual Retreat Program for Scouts	234 scouts and 16 scout leaders	from the schools of Paro Dzongkhag
10	Basic Unit Leaders Training (BULT) course for CBS, RBA &RBP Officers	20 Army Officers and 4 Police Officers	Phuntsholing from 17-19 th October 2016
11	Wood badge Training	124 scout leaders	For 4 regions
12	BULT course for Rover Leaders	18 participants from colleges and institutes	Jigmeling from 27 th March to 2 nd April 2017
13	Leader Trainers Training	15 Scout leaders	Panchmari, India in February 2017.
14	Basic Unit Leaders Training (BULT) for Final Year Pre-Service Teachers at 2 Colleges of Education	All final year students	

I. 4th Annual Scouts Conference

To promote scouting program, an annual scout conference is being held during which the participants were oriented on the fundamental principles of scouting and their roles and responsibilities for the promotion of scouting program. The conference was also intended to review the progress of the scouting program in the Dzongkhags/Thromdeys. The 4th Annual Scout Conference was organized at Gelephu from 4-6th February 2017 on the theme “Success through synergy”.

II. Scout Centre Construction at Paro

A National Scout Centre was established to cater for the growth and enhance the quality of scouting. This enabled training and youth programs to be conducted on a regular basis rather than during school vacation.

The centre is located at Tshaudang Tshoka, Paro. In the Financial Year 2016-2017 with the funding of Nu. 4.00m, construction of additional toilets and development of adventure valley were commenced with the work expected to be completed by July 2017.

III. Regional Level Camp

While the scouts program is being conducted in the respective localities or schools, it is important to conduct Regional Camp to bring all the scouts together and enjoy an outdoor camp life and foster the spirit of brotherhood amongst them. Therefore, Regional Camp has been organized in 2 regions (Rangjung Central School and Chokhorling Lower Secondary School)

IV. Rural-Urban Youth Exchange program

The program is being organized annually by the MoE. The program was successfully conducted for two consecutive years for students from remote schools under Zhemgang and Pema Gatshel Dzongkhag. Later the program was organized in collaboration with Camp RUF (Rural Urban Friendship Camp). In 2017, the MoE will be organizing the same program for students from Trashigang Dzongkhag.

V. Observing the 21st February as the 3rd National Scouts Day

BSA has observed 21st February as National Scouts Day since 2015 coinciding with His Majesty's Birth Anniversary. His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Gyaltsuen graced the celebration of the 1st National Scouts Day.

The National Scouts Day is a day for scouts to reflect on the scouting program and to re-affirm the scout promise and their commitment and loyalty to the Tsa-Wa-Sum. It is also an opportunity to recognize scouting as a value based youth program and emphasize the role of scouts in creating a better nation. On that day, the scouts pay homage to its Patron, His Majesty the King, for his farsighted vision, guidance and enlightened leadership in enriching the lives of youth. It is a day of celebration showcasing the spirit of scouting to do good act, to donate and to unite together in the brotherhood of scouting.

The 3rd National Scouts Day was observed on 21st February 2017 at Trashiyangtse Dzongkhag. 700 Scouts, 27 Leaders and 30 volunteers participated in the celebration.

7. Other Institutional Support Mechanisms

7.1 Reorganization of the REC

The REC at Thimphu, Centennial Institute of Education at Yonphula and DCRD at Paro are successfully reorganized as REC at Paro, representing as an apex professional body in education in the country. It has the mandates to improve the relevancy and quality of curriculum guided by research studies and support the curriculum implementation by strengthening the professional capacities of teachers.

7.2 Disaster Risk Reduction

Disaster preparedness and response has become a priority program for the country particularly in Education Sector. In collaboration with Department of Disaster Management (DDM) and with funding assistance from donor agencies such as Save the Children and UNICEF, the MoE strives to educate schools on Disaster Risk Reduction Preparedness and Response activities with main focus on the following:

1. To implement DRR Policies and Programs in line with GNH values and principles.

2. To create safer atmosphere for schools in the country by training staff and students on disaster preparedness and response.
3. To assist schools/Dzongkhag Education Sectors in building the capacity on DRR.

To achieve these objectives, in the last one year, MoE has trained relevant officials in dzongkhags. The MoE also supplied fire extinguishers and tents to schools.

Thank You