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Annual Education Report 2019 - 2020

Policy and Planning Division
Ministry of Education
June 2020



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ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



Annual Education Report 2019 - 2020

Policy and Planning Division
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Ministry of Education

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1. Introduction

The Ministry of Education during fiscal year 2019-2020 had embarked on numerous initiatives which are all aimed towards achieving the vision; *'An educated and enlightened society of GNH, built and sustained on the unique Bhutanese values of tha dam-tsig ley gju-drey'*. Over the years, the education sector has always remained a priority area for the Royal Government of Bhutan, receiving one of the highest proportions of budget allocations annually.

Bhutan is close to achieving universal primary education with adjusted net enrolment rate at 96.5 percent as of 2019. This has been accelerated by the expansion of educational facilities and support mechanisms in the previous five-year plans. Significant achievements have been made in providing equitable access to education, enhancing the quality of education, and building institutional capacities. However, challenges continue to remain in providing access to education to hard-to-reach areas, providing inclusive education, and improving the quality of education.

His Majesty The King during the 14th Royal University of Bhutan Convocation on 24th May 2019 shared concerns of dramatic changes brought about by technological advancements such as Artificial Intelligence, Quantum Computing, Block-chain, Machine Learning, Big Data, IOT (the Internet of Things), Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality, etc. Based on aspirations from The Royal Addresses, the Ministry of Education embarked on introducing Coding in education starting from Pre-Primary to Class XII from the 2020 academic session.

With COVID-19 declared as a Public Health Emergency and the first case in Bhutan detected on 5th March 2020 all centres, schools, and educational institutes in the country were closed from 18th March 2020 as a precautionary measure. While the health and wellbeing of learners as a primary concern are taken care of, the school closure has disrupted meaningful engagement and learning in institutional settings. Nonetheless, the Ministry of Education and Royal Education Council with support from volunteer teachers, media houses, development partners, besides others, have developed an Education in Emergency (EiE) Plan as part of COVID-19 response plan.

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This report outlines some of the major initiatives undertaken in 2019-2020 focusing on addressing the quality and inclusiveness of education, including improving the health and well-being of children, enhancing equitable and quality tertiary education, enhancing the professional development of teachers, strengthening vocational education in schools and enhancing adult literacy and lifelong learning.

2. Improve Quality and Inclusive Education

2.1 Expansion of access

Universal access to school education has always been a priority of the Ministry of Education. Apart from intervention such as expanding access through extended classrooms, primary and secondary schools, a number of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centres are established to increase school readiness and also to promote children's overall social, cognitive, and intellectual development.

In 2019, the Adjusted Net Enrolment Rate in Primary stands at 96.5%, indicating only about 3.5% of school going age children need to be enrolled in school or other forms of education to achieve the goal of universal primary education. As of 2019, a total of about 166,653¹ students are enrolled in 528 schools and 78 extended classrooms.

2.2 Reduction of Pre-Primary Admission Age

In 1985 when two years of Lower and Upper Kindergarten grades were merged to one year of Pre-Primary (PP), wherein admission age became important, considering the child's developmental stages. From thereon, every child who attained the age of six at the start of the academic session was entitled for admission to Pre-primary class. However, after all the eligible children have been admitted, if there were still space in the schools, the schools were given the discretion to admit children of age five and half years and older at the start of academic session.

During 2019-2020 year, the Ministry received directives from the Cabinet² to bring down the admission age of Pre-Primary (PP) from six to five years starting academic session 2020 and, to accommodate and adjust all the incoming eligible children. Accordingly, the Ministry informed the Dzongkhags/Thromdes and schools to register all children who attained 5 years of age on or before 5th February for admission in Pre-Primary in both public and private schools and ensure a smooth admission process in line with the directives.

¹ AES 2019

² Vide letter No. C-46/2020/403, dated 8 January, 2020

However, the Ministry while presenting the additional resource required for accommodating the additional children on 17th February 2020, Hon'ble Prime Minister directed the Ministry that, while the admission age has been lowered, admission in the schools should be based on space availability to maintain the existing class size.

2.3 Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)

Early interventions for young children are essential to ensure their holistic development and prepare them for school. Studies have revealed that children who have received quality early childhood care and education show stronger probability of advancing to higher education and obtaining better remuneration. Considering the benefits, the Ministry has initiated programmes to harness the interest and potential of children from an early age through provision of early childhood care and education for building a strong foundation and to provide inclusive education. Following are some of the initiatives and plans related to ECCD:

- 1) In the 12th Five Year Plan, the Ministry aims to achieve at least 50 percent coverage of 3 to 5 year-old children through provision of quality Early Child Care and Development (ECCD) programme by 2023, 100 percent coverage by 2030.
- 2) As of today, there are 379 ECCD Centres with 9188 ECCD children and 903 ECCD Facilitators of both privately operated and Government Supported ECCD programmes.
- 3) Completed Mapping of ECCD centre requirements and supply of ECCD learning materials to existing community ECCD centres.
- 4) Supported for implementation of the ECCD Diploma programme at Paro College of Education.

The difficult terrain and widely dispersed population have been the primary hurdles to extending ECCD programmes to rural areas. To address some of these issues the Ministry has piloted 11 mobile ECCD Centres. The Ministry is planning to replicate the mobile ECCD Centre to other far-flung districts.

In addition, the closure of centres due to COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the engagement of children for preparation of formal schooling. Thus, the following alternative plans and activities are designed to cater to the learners:

1. Production of video/animation clips and dissemination through BBS TV
2. Development, dissemination, and distribution of posters/newspaper inserts
3. Art material and reading book, and support for parenting education.

2.4 Special Education Needs (SEN)

The Ministry initiated Special Education Needs (SEN) programmes in mainstream schools to extend educational services to children with disabilities. As of 2019, there are 18 schools with SEN programmes that cater to children with different range of disabilities and two specialized institutes and Draktsho Vocational Training Centres with a total of 740 students. The Ministry has planned to increase the SEN programme to 28 schools during the 12th FYP. Some of the initiatives include:

- a) Developed training package on inclusive education & special education for Dzongkhag & Thromde resource team & pilot the implementation.
- b) Developed SOP on the Guidelines on Assessment, Examination, Promotion, and Transition (AEPT) for students with Disabilities and orientation to end-users.
- c) Rollout of Orientation on Standards for Inclusive Education to 100 teachers from general schools by DEOs/TEOs.
- d) Trained teachers and principals of schools (including SEN schools) on inclusive education modules.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the teachers of the Wangsel and Muenselling Institute have developed packages based on the EiE guidelines and delivered the lessons through adaptation and modification by developing Individual Education Plans. The students in two special institutes and schools with SEN programmes follow the adapted curriculum with some modifications through BBS TV, Self-Instructional Materials (SIM), and radio lessons.

The most challenging task for the Ministry is to provide inclusive infrastructure in schools across the country which require major inclusive retro fitting leading to a huge investment. The other issue has been inadequately trained teachers with the right skills and knowledge to provide services to children with disabilities.

2.5 Review of Central School (CS) programme

The first joint Cabinet – GNH Commission Meeting held on December 6th and 7th, 2018 directed the Ministry of Education to assess and review the Central School Programme and re-opening the community and primary schools by 31st January 2019. Based on directives, the Ministry carried out the review involving Principals, Vice-Principals, teachers, and education personnel to assess the usefulness of the CS provisions and overall CS programme. It was also deliberated during the 19th National Education Conference held in December 2018.

Based on the review report submitted to the Cabinet, directives have been issued to the Ministry on 21st June 2019 with revised provisions as under:

- a) Provide a bedding set (mattress, pillow, and bed cover) for all students in boarding schools (Primary and Secondary Schools) once in five years.
- b) Provide stationery to all students except for students studying in secondary schools in urban areas and
- c) Provide uniforms to identified disadvantaged students based on criteria and procedures established.

In addition, the Ministry as per the resolution of 19th National Education Conference, 24 central schools were segregated in the 2019 academic year. Similarly, another two central schools were segregated in the 2020 academic year and the Dzongkhags were asked to come up with a transition plan to maintain minimum disturbance to students and parents with segregation of schools.

2.6 Autonomous Schools

Autonomous schools were established to improve educational practices and student learning outcomes through empowerment, greater autonomy, flexibility and to give further drive to the policy of decentralization since 2014 with 19 pilot schools. The schools, as recommended by the Dzongkhags/Thromdes applied for autonomy,

which the Ministry granted after signing a tripartite agreement between Dzongkhag/Thromde, School, and the Ministry. The agreement encompasses a five-year Delivery and Performance Agreement that outlines the need for the school to have a five-year strategic plan with overall school performance improvement targets.

In the 2020 academic year, the Ministry identified 18 schools as autonomous making a total of 132 (38 HSS, 67 MSS, 16 LSS & 11 PS) including 63 Central Schools. The Ministry's plan is to adopt this modality of financing and management for all schools in the country.

2.7 School Up-gradation and Expansion

During the 2020 academic year, the Ministry up-graded 5 Lower Secondary Schools (LSS) to Middle Secondary Schools (MSS) and 7 MSS to Higher Secondary Schools (HSS). About 36 existing HSS were expanded to increase the intake of students in public schools.

As proposed by the Samtse Dzongkhag Administration, the Ministry accorded approval to downgrade Nangladang Primary School to Extended Class Room (ECR) on 2nd April 2020 due to low enrolment in the school.

2.8 Rigzhung Premier School

The Ministry has identified Taktse Central School, Trongsa as Premier School for Arts and Culture, particularly *Rigzhung*, from 2020 academic year with the aim to:

- a) Preserve and promote Bhutanese culture, tradition, heritage, history, religion, and language that have inherent values of Tha-Dam-Tshig Ley Gyu-Drey.
- b) Promote the interest of students in both spoken and written Dzongkha, and
- c) Impart with traditional knowledge and skills.

Therefore, Taktse Rigzhung Higher Secondary School will have Rigzhung from class IX from 2020 academic year. From 2021, there will be only Rizhung studies from class IX to XII.

In addition, the Ministry also facilitated in placing Dzongkha Lopens recruited from Zhung Dratshang upon Royal Command and currently, there are 75 Lopens in 75 schools.

2.9 Education Monitoring Services

Monitoring the compliance of educational programmes, policies and directives are one of the core mandates of the Ministry. This is carried out through the school performance management system. The following are the major achievements for the fiscal year 2019-2020:

- a) **Impact Study of School Performance Management System (SPMS).** The Ministry has started an impact study of the SPMS since 3rd February 2020. The taskforce for the impact study is in the process of gathering qualitative and quantitative data from the stakeholders. The Ministry will embark on review of the system based on the findings and recommendations of the study.
- b) **Biannual School Monitoring Report:** Unlike in the past, the Ministry had initiated publication of Biannual School Monitoring Reports. The reports are published and circulated to relevant stakeholders to apprise them of the situations in the schools. The 1st Biannual School Monitoring Report was published and circulated in December 2019.
- c) **Annual School Performance Management System (SPMS):** The annual school Performance Management System (SPMS) report was also published and it presents overall performance of schools in the Dzongkhags/Thromdes as per SPMS with comparative analysis of academic performance for the past four years. The report will trigger Dzongkhags/Thromdes to carry out further study on their academic performance pattern and initiate necessary interventions.
- d) **Intervention to Private Schools:** The Ministry provided intervention programmes on effective lesson planning, inclusion of High Order Thinking activities in the lessons, student engagement and classroom management, assessment, and overall classroom teaching to 587 teachers from 21 private schools.

2.10 ICT in education

The Ministry has undertaken various initiatives to improve ICT in education over the years. The first Education ICT Master Plan 2014-2018 (iSherig-1) was developed with the intention to lay the foundation and create an enabling environment for future ICT initiatives in education. Based on the experience of implementing iSherig-1 and building on the foundation laid during the implementation, iSherig-2 was developed to take ICT in education further to improve teaching and learning and also focus on building and applying digital skills.

2.10.1 Education Management Information System (EMIS) Version 3

The EMIS was developed in 2011 with the objective to help planners make evidence-based decision making. With increasing demand for data requirements, there is a need to upgrade the existing EMIS to link with other relevant systems and make it comprehensive. Therefore, the Ministry decided to upgrade the EMIS in two phases during 2019-2020 fiscal year with following activities as a part of Digital Flagship Programme:

1. A review, assessment, and need analysis for EMIS were carried out.
2. Enhancement and up-gradation of EMIS software are in the process.

2.10.2 Development of eLearning Platform

The Ministry in collaboration with the REC is in the process of developing an eLearning Platform. The platform is expected to enhance student and teacher learning by providing a platform for delivering content, and interactive assessment. The project is part of Digital Drukyul Flagship Programme and is funded by the Government of India. Currently, the Ministry along with consultants is in the process of conducting bilateral meetings with stakeholders.

2.10.3 Digital Asia Kids Pacific Project

UNESCO Asia Pacific Regional Bureau for Education (UNESCO Bangkok) is currently implementing the “Enhancing National Capacity in Fostering Digital Citizenship Education in Asia-Pacific” project, supported by the Korean Funds-In-Trust, which aims to support Member States in building national capacity in making informed policy decisions in fostering digital citizenship in education systems. One

of its core components is the “Digital Kids Asia Pacific” (DKAP) project that has established the DKAP Framework for Education and research tools. Bhutan is also part of this project as envisaged in iSherig 2 (2019-2023). The Ministry is implementing this project in collaboration with the Department of Information Technology and Telecom (DITT), National Statistical Bureau (NSB), REC, and National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC).

2.11 Private School Support Services

With the government’s initiatives, starting from the academic year 2019, all class X passed students were enrolled in class XI in government and private schools. It has allowed our students to stay two or more years to learn and mature which will help them prepare to face the real world better.

Similarly, during the 2020 academic session, the Ministry placed 2138 (1000 boarders and 1138 day-scholars) class X pass students in class XI in private higher secondary schools through government scholarship. Scholarship fee was also raised from Nu 30, 000 to Nu 40, 000 for day-scholar and Nu 50,000 to Nu 70,000 for boarders.

With the revised scholarship fee, all private higher secondary schools have agreed to invest Nu 5,000 from every day-scholar and Nu 10,000 from every boarder student to revise the salary of teachers.

2.12 Disaster and Emergency Preparedness

The Ministry carried out the following activities during the 2019-2020 fiscal year:

2.12.1 Education in Emergency (EiE)

To facilitate students to continue learning and strengthen the resilience of the education system, the Ministry in collaboration with REC, Bhutan Council for School Examination and Assessment (BCSEA), and development partners have developed COVID-19 response plans as part of Education in Emergency (EiE) based on current circumstances.

A. EiE Curriculum

1) Adapted Curriculum. The adapted curriculum is based on literacy and numeracy at key stage **I** (Class PP-III) and **II** (Class IV-VI), and theme-based curriculum for key stage **III** (VII-VIII), **IV** (Class IX-X) and **V** (Class XI-XII). For theme-based curriculum, some learning areas such as Science and Social Sciences have been combined together considering the common themes of the subject.

II) Prioritized Curriculum. The Prioritized Curriculum will focus on key concepts and fundamental subject ideas, by shedding off curriculum load based on the available instructional days.

B. Mode of Delivery

The Ministry in collaboration with REC and volunteer teachers have developed and recorded a total of 440 video lessons. The first 293 lessons were developed and recorded free of cost with the support from BBS-1, BBS-2, Loden Foundation, Film Association of Bhutan, iBEST Studio, and Royal Tutorial Project.

All the lessons delivered in EiE through BBS have also been uploaded in education's e-library and Sherig-YouTube, and Sherig Facebook page for the students' easy access. REC's on-line textbooks are also made available through REC's website³, and MoE's eLibrary. The delivery of curriculum through broadcast media BBS is supplemented by the use of social media platforms (WeChat, WhatsApp, Telegram, etc.), and introduction of Google Classrooms. The Ministry developed 673 Self Instructional Materials (SIMs) and distributed to 32,135 students who do not have access to internet, BBS, and e-learning facilities. In addition, a total of 198 radio lessons were also developed.

C. Assessment

Student's learning outcomes are done by posing a set of competency-based, thought provoking questions at the end of each lesson to assess the students learning outcome as per the adapted curriculum delivered. This is also to facilitate students' continuity of learning by engaging with support of their parents/guardians. The

³<https://rec.gov.bt/>

examination modalities and scheme of assessment will be put in place by BCSEA based on the curriculum.

The detailed response mechanism and implementation plans are outlined in the *COVID-19 Response Plan: Phase II*.

2.12.2 Google Earth Training for the pilot schools in Zhemgang

The Ministry in collaboration with the Department of Disaster Management and support from Save the Children International implemented the Non-Structural Mitigation Project in Zhemgang Dzongkhag. The three-day (29th-31st August 2019) Google Earth training conducted at Tingtibi Lower Secondary School was attended by 30 officials from District Education Office, ICT focal and District Disaster Management Officer, school principals, disaster focal teachers, IT/lab focal and students from the five pilot schools (Sonamthang CS, Buli CS, Gomphu CS, Tingtibi LSS, and Zhemgang CS). The training was aimed at enhancing capacities of Dzongkhag and school staff and children in using Google Earth technology to map risks and resources in schools for informing risk reduction, mitigation, and preparedness actions and decision making.

2.12.3 Support in developing standards of stockpiles for the Ministry of Education

The working group for Education in Emergency was formed to review the existing stockpiles and developed standards for emergency kits. The Ministry stockpiled 10 Basic Education kits (1 kit for 40 students), 10 ECCD kits (for 15 children), 5 Recreation kits, and 50 WASH kits (individual kits). These emergency kits are stockpiled in the Education Emergency Operation Centre in Motithang Higher Secondary School.

2.12.4 Maintenance of fire extinguisher in Ministry of Education

The fire extinguishers distributed in the Ministry of Education were non- functional. All the fire extinguishers (both powder and water) were replaced with new cartridges and placed in designated locations. Additional 72 fire extinguishers (ABC type) were procured.

2.13 Review and develop new designs for school infrastructure

The School designs with costing were completed and shared with Dzongkhags and Thromdes for implementation. With the support from Bhutan Foundation, the Ministry developed the design guidelines for school construction in consultation with the UK Based Consultant. The Guidelines are in the final review and will be distributed to all Dzongkhags and Thromdes.

2.14 Annual Publications and reports

Availability of timely, consistent, and reliable information is essential to support evidence-based planning and decision making. Accordingly, the Ministry published the following documents during the fiscal year:

2.14.1 National Education Policy (Draft) 2020

The Ministry has been working on developing a National Education Policy since 2008. Final draft has been presented to the Committee of Secretaries on 19th February 2020. On 17th April 2020, a revised draft policy was presented to the Committee of Secretaries and endorsed for submission to GNH Commission meeting.

2.14.2 Quantitative Analysis of Dropout and Children Who Have Never Attended School based on the PHCB 2017 Data 2019

It is published to supplement the 2018 qualitative *Study on Dropout, Repetition and Children Who Have Never Attended School in Bhutan* using data from the 2017 Population and Housing Census of Bhutan (PHCB).

2.14.3 Annual Education Statistics 2019

This is the primary source of data on education in the country.

2.14.4 Education policy Guidelines and Instructions (EGPI) 2020

EPGI is published to provide a single point of reference on all education policies, guidelines and circulars that have been issued by the Ministry and related agencies.

2.14.5 Annual Education Report 2020

It is published as part of the Hon'ble Prime Minister's State of the Nation Report to the Parliament. It also serves as a ready reference to the officials in the Ministry

since the report takes stock of major achievements and activities of the previous year.

2.14.6 District Education Officer (DEOs') Conference

The DEOs' Conference is one of the most important biennial events of the Ministry of Education. It provides a platform for the education fraternity and relevant stakeholders to come together to discuss issues, plans and policies of the education sector. It also serves as a forum to disseminate information on the major developments and initiatives, share ideas and feedback to strengthen the education system.

The conference was held from 30th December 2019 till 1st January 2020 at Gelephu LSS, Gelephu with the theme '*Leveraging ICT for Quality Education*'. The theme was based on His Majesty the King's 112th National Day Address to the nation in Thimphu where His Majesty reminded the nation about building a better future for our children as Bhutan's future will be mirrored by the strength and capabilities of our youth.

The conference was attended by over 80 participants from the Ministry, Dzongkhags/Thromdes, Schools, Royal Education Council, Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment, and Colleges of Education. The main highlights of the Conference were:

1. Reflection of The Royal Address by His Majesty on 17 December 2019, the 112th National Day of the Kingdom of Bhutan and special session on National Service by DASHO SONAM KINGA and DASHO KARMA TSHITEEM.
2. Major initiatives in Education such as the Education Flagship Programme (ICT), Bhutan Professional Standards for Teachers, Continuous Formative Assessment, and Protocol for Student Safety and Well-Being and School Reform Initiatives including key issues and challenges faced by Dzongkhag/Thromde Education sectors among others.

The conference adopted 25 resolutions for implementation and follow up.

3. Improve Health and Wellbeing of Children and Youth

The Ministry provides various development programmes to nurture and empower youth with the necessary values and skills to enable them to cope with emerging challenges and provide avenues for their positive growth.

The Ministry also supports both the implementation of programmes in schools as well as specific programmes targeted to suit the needs of out of school youth. The implementation of programmes in schools such as the School-based Parenting Education Programme, Vocational Clubs, Career Guidance & Counseling, Health & Hygiene, Games & Sports, and Scouting is spearheaded by the Ministry. Outside the school system, the Ministry organizes thematic youth forums, supports youth initiatives, celebrates relevant youth days & festivals and provides various services like library, internet, computer classes, music and audio-visuals through its Youth Centers. Following programmes are geared towards enhancing the health and wellbeing of the students:

3.1 School Feeding Programme

The School Feeding Programme has been supported by the World Food Programme (WFP) since 1974 by providing meals to school children. It started with multiple objectives of increasing enrollment and attendance rates, class participation, and improving the nutritional status of school-going children besides others. The current support from WFP include supply of food items, establishment of kitchen and stores, provision of kitchen utensils, capacity development of field staff, and creating awareness on the importance of health and nutrition in schools.

a) Transitioning WFP supported school feeding to the Government from 2019

WFP's food support to the school feeding programme in Bhutan has been completely phased out by the end of 2018 after over four decades of support to Bhutan. The phasing out of WFP supported school feeding programme started from the higher secondary schools with major phase out and handing over of the WFP beneficiaries to RGoB beginning 2014. Since the beginning of 2019, the School Feeding Programme is solely supported under the RGOB funds.

The Ministry introduced day feeding in 181 rural schools (97 schools under phase 1, implementation from 2019-2020 and 84 schools under phase II, implementation

from 2020-2021) as per approval from Cabinet vide letter no. C/3/10/60 dated 31st January 2019.

As of 2019⁴, 86,913 students are benefiting from the school feeding programme – 41,737 students avail three meals, 25,940 avails two meals and 19,236 students avail one meal. There are 41,950 female and 44,963 male students benefiting from the school feeding programme in schools.

b) Stipend Raise to meet nutritional requirements

In July 2012, as proposed, the Government raised the stipend from Nu 700 per child per month to Nu 1000 per child per month. As directed by the Government, the Ministry also instituted the Centralized Procurement and supply system in collaboration with Food Corporation of Bhutan Limited in 2014 to: 1) improve the quality of food; 2) have economy of scale and; 3) ensure an efficient school feeding system. Through this mechanism, 60% of the stipend is used to supply nine essential non-perishable food items⁵ to boarding schools, while the remaining 40% is released to schools for procurement and supply of perishable food items. This arrangement has been made to provide the food items, which are not available across the country or otherwise expensive to procure at the school level.

In January 2020, the Government approved a 50% raise in stipend amounting to Nu 1500 per month. With revision of stipend, the Ministry is required to rationalize the breakfast facilities in rural schools and explore providing lunch to other needy schools. The revision of Stipend approved by Ministry of Finance for schools as follows;

1. 3 meals- Nu. 1500 per month
2. 2 meals- Nu. 1005 per month
3. 1 meal- Nu. 503 per month.

⁴ AES 2019

⁵ Namely- Rice, Pulses, Chickpeas, Lentils, Vegetable oil, Salt, Milk powder, Sugar, Tea leaves and Soy chunk

3.2 WASH Programme

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene facilities in schools contribute to healthy, safe and secure school environments that safeguard children from health hazards. It also enables children to become agents of change for improving water, sanitation and hygiene practices in their families and communities. Towards this, the Ministry undertook following initiatives during 2019-2020:

- a) In preparation towards reopening schools due to COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Education in collaboration with Dzongkhags/Thromdes have identified schools that are in critical need of support such as improving reliable supply of piped water, setting up safe drinking water, adequate handwashing stations and toilets for students and learners. With the support from Save the Children International and UNICEF, the Ministry supplied WASH items such as soaps, hand sanitizer, and wash stations to 40 identified schools, 4 youth centres, 5 ECCD centres, 2 ECRs and 2 CLCs in 14 Dzongkhags and 3 Thromdes.
- b) Installed Sky Hydrant Water Filter for Schools around the Country. The programme is funded by Disaster Aid Australia and in coordination with Rotary Club, Thimphu. The project is targeted to be completed by end of 2020 and covers 120 Schools. So far installation work has been completed in 46 Schools around the country and there is a target to complete 60 Schools by the end of May 2020.
- c) Observation of menstruation hygiene Day and need-based support to increase access to sanitary materials to remote schools.
- d) Capacity building of school health coordinators to achieve 100% coverage and orientation on school with WASH to schools without WASH/health clubs.

3.3 School Health Programme

In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry carried out following activities during 2019-2020:

1. Several advisory notes, guidelines, and awareness materials on the outbreak and preventive measures related to COVID-19, and closure of schools were also issued by the Ministry in line with the guidance from the Ministry of Health, WHO, Prime Minister's Office, etc.
2. Conducted Sensitization on a covid-19 pandemic at the beginning of the year in Thimphu Thromde schools and other schools, the Dzongkhag took responsibilities to sensitize.
3. All students from class 9 – 12 received health talk from health personnel with support from the Ministry of Health.
4. In line with the resolution of the 66th National Assembly held in February 1988, the Ministry of Health reinforced the resolution for the verification of immunization status during the admission to primary schools both in government and private schools. In this regard, the Ministry of Education notified all schools under Dzongkhag/Thromde to verify the immunization status during the school admission at primary level with effect from 2020 academic year.
5. Issued Advisory Note on Safety of Children/Learners to Dzongkhags and Thromdes to disseminate the information to minimize the risks such as neglect, violence, exploitation, abuse with changing family structures/growing social issues and natural hazards to all children/learners and staff in the schools, ECCD, NFE and the Youth centers.
6. Issued advisory notes to Dzongkhags and Thromdes to disseminate information to schools, ECCD, NFE/CLC and Youth Centres as per the directives issued by MoH on COVID-19 on 12th March 2020 and 17th March 2020.

3.4 Life Skills Education

The Ministry adopted life skill education to help both teachers and students to build positive behavior that will enable them to adapt and deal with the demands and challenges of everyday living. During 2019-2020 fiscal year, the Ministry initiated following activities:

1. With financial support from UNFPA and RENEW and technical support from REC, Integration of Life Skills and comprehensive sexuality education was done in English, Dzongkha, Social Studies, Science, Biology, Value Education and Health and Physical Education
2. Mobilized financial resources from UNFPA and carried out Curriculum mapping to integrate Life Skills Education and comprehensive sexuality education done in seven subjects (English, Dzongkha, Social Studies, Science, Biology, Value Education and Health and Physical Education).
3. School Based Action Research on the implementation of Life Skills Education in schools was carried with participants from 16 schools of 9 Dzongkhags and 2 Thromdes.

3.5 Youth Services

The Ministry provides educational and recreational programs/services for positive engagement and empowerment of young people especially those who are out of the formal education system. To date, there are 9 Youth Centres and 4 Youth Friendly Integrated Service Centres (YFISCs) established across the country. To better facilitate and support to youth, the following activities were initiated during the fiscal year:

1. **Revision of National Youth Policy 2011.** The National Youth Policy 2011 is being reviewed and revised to incorporate the emerging concerns of young people and other recent developments in the country. The Consultant has been hired since November 2019 to carry out the policy revision. The Focus Group Discussions with youth, bilateral consultations with relevant stakeholders, primary data collection and desk-reviews have been completed and the consultant is currently working on data analysis and policy development.
2. **Expansion of Youth Friendly Integrated Service Center at Samdrup Jongkhar.** With support from UNICEF, the Samdrup Jongkhar Youth Center has been upgraded as Youth Friendly Integrated Service Center.
3. **Updating the youth library at Thimphu YFISC.** Library is one of the most popular services in the Youth Centers and Youth Friendly Integrated Service

Centers. To keep up with the demand of young people coming to avail the library services at Thimphu YFISC, RGoB approved Nu.100,000 and the books were procured in December 2019 and April 2020.

4. **Youth Enrichment platforms.** To build the capacity of young people to lead a meaningful and responsible life, the Ministry continued to design various engagement and skills development programs for youth. Some of the platforms such as You Turn, Youth Forums for vulnerable youth, Observation of International Youth Day (12th August 2019), world population day (11th July 2019), SDG follow-up workshop, Summer and winter engagement programs.

Despite the achievements, the Ministry also faces issues such as lack of national lead agency for collaboration and coordination of youth related activities and no approved Daily Subsistence Allowance for youth while participating in the various programs within the country.

3.6 Career Education and Counselling Services

The Ministry has been working towards institutionalizing a School Guidance and Counseling system in all our schools. The goal is to develop and implement comprehensive counseling services to more effectively support children and young peoples' development, health, and wellbeing.

In January 2020, 34 new School Guidance Counsellors, including one on contract were placed in 34 Secondary Schools across Bhutan that brings the total number of schools with access to Counselling services to 147 secondary schools. Some of initiatives during 2019-2020 include:

1. **Student Safety and Wellbeing.** The Ministry developed the protocol for Student Safety, Security & Protection. It will provide a broad framework for educational institutions to map, assess, and continuously review to provide appropriate interventions and support mechanisms to strengthen, and safeguard children's health, safety, protection, and care through a multi-sectoral approach. The draft protocol was presented to the DEOs' Conference and endorsed the following:
 - a) Dzongkhags/Thromdes to ensure that the Protocol for Student Safety

and Wellbeing is rigorously implemented upon approval by the Government in all schools and communities, and

- b) The Ministry is awaiting the final presentation to the Government to implement the safety protocol.
- 2. Annual School Guidance Counsellors' (SGCs) Forum.** The 6th Annual School Guidance Counselors Conference was attended by 119 SGCs and it was organized to share experiences, ideas and challenges in the field and revisit and reaffirm the common professional and ethical standards of School Guidance Counsellors in Bhutan. The Conference also covered the Action plan on the Student Safety, Protection and Wellbeing framework that was endorsed in the 19th National Educational Conference.
- 3. Review and Development of New Approaches to Career Guidance.** Three volumes of Teacher resources on Career Education was reviewed with the support from external consultants to a new set of approaches and materials developed to provide meaningful career guidance and support to students. The resources also provide strategies on advocacy and training on TVET pathways in the mainstream education system.
- 4. Youth Leadership Training.** The Sixth Youth Leadership Training Programme for 50 at-risk students from four Central schools in Zhemgang Dzongkhag was conducted from 1-15 January 2020 at Buli Central School.
- 5. Entry Planning and Orientation Program/ Induction of 34 new School Counsellors.** Conducted an 8-day orientation workshop in January 2020 to 33 RCSE selected graduates who had completed Post Graduate Diploma of Guidance and Counselling from Samtse College of Education and one on contract graduate which were placed in 34 Secondary and Central Schools.
- 6. Consultation with the DEOs and Principals on the Finalization of the Draft Guidelines and Framework on Clinical Supervision for School Counsellors.** A framework on the Counsellors' Standards has been completed in March 2020.
- 7. Psychosocial Support Training.** With financial support from UNICEF, a training manual for Psychosocial Support has been developed and the

training for the School Guidance Counsellors has commenced from 8th May 2020 and completed on 25th May 2020.

3.7 Games and Sports

The Ministry has been promoting Sports and Physical Activities (SPA) through various youth enrichment programmes with the objectives to foster physical, mental, social and emotional development of children, and to enrich the teaching-learning process. In addition, National Strategy Framework for School Sports and Physical Activity, 2016-2023 also mandates the Ministry to provide and develop policy/guidelines, strengthen the implementation of Health and Physical Education (HPE), foster sports and physical activities, recruit/ train School Sports Instructors (SSIs), conduct of physical activities/sports competitions and train teachers on the revised HPE curriculum, among others. Thus, the Ministry carried out following activities in the fiscal year 2019-2020:

- a) Training of pre-service and placement of 47 (43 given placement) School Sports Instructors (SSIs) in schools.
- b) A total of 111 teachers were oriented/trained on the revised HPE Curriculum for classes PP – III in two clusters at Trongsa & Mongar in January 2020.
- c) A total of seven Regional School Meets were held which were conducted after the teams qualified from the Dzongkhag School Sports Meets.
- d) Three National level School Sports Meets were held thereby allowing a large number of children to showcase their talent at the national level.
- e) The National Standards and Guidelines for School Sports Program booklet was reviewed for the 3rd time and circulated to schools.

The Ministry is also undertaking an initiative to introduce B. Ed in HPE at Paro College of Education (PCE) by 2021 to have qualified and full-time HPE teachers in schools. Up-gradation of qualifications of existing SSIs to diploma through part-time mode at PCE is also being explored.

3.7 Scouting Programme

The Ministry promotes scouting for all-round development of young people through a value-based youth programme. The scouting programme is categorized into three

sub-programmes: Cub, Scout, and Rover in schools/institutions to address the specific needs of young people in different age groups. As of 2019, 59,673 students were participating as scouts across the country. In addition, there are more than 1500 registered Community-based Scouts members in 20 Dzongkhags and 4 Thromdes. The activities carried out in 2019-2020 include:

- a) 12th and 13th Leadership Training Camp for Scouts at RBA Military Training Center (MTC) Tencholing, Wangdue. The 12th Leadership Training offered for class XII scouts (125 scouts- 62 Boys & 63 Girls) which was conducted from 6th July to 28th August 2019. Similarly, the 13th Leadership Training was conducted from 23rd December 2019 - 11th January 2020 for 125 scouts (62 Boys & 63 Girls). The training was offered for Class X Scouts.
- b) Observation of Scouts Day on 21st February coinciding with the Birth Anniversary of His Majesty the King. The day is celebrated to uphold values of loyalty, patriotism, social service and leadership and emphasize Scouts' role in creating a better nation.
- c) Facilitated participation of Scouts in regional and national exchange programmes such as 9th International Scout Gathering (Sharjah, UAE), National Cadet Corps (NCC) Programme (New Delhi, India), Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths (Japan), Asia Pacific Children's Convention, and 24th World Scout Jamboree.

4. Enhance Equitable Quality Tertiary Education

The Ministry also has a mandate to oversee all aspects of tertiary education in the country. Among others, the Ministry serves as the secretariat to the Tertiary Education Board (TEB) and Bhutan Accreditation Council (BAC) which are autonomous bodies.

4.1 Scholarship Services

The Undergraduate Scholarship Programme is an integral part of the Royal Government's long-term human resource development programme to address the shortage of human resources in the critical need areas. Based on the national human resource requirement, various ex-country scholarships in both professional and generic fields are implemented annually, under the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) as well as the Government of India (GoI) funding. Scholarships are provided based on academic merit, fulfilling the eligibility criteria and other required documents as determined by the Undergraduate Scholarship Steering Committee. The discipline and the number of slots are determined as per the national needs based on the availability of government funding and donor support.

- a) Currently, there are 783 ongoing scholarship students, including bilateral scholarships, pursuing undergraduate studies spread across to 15 different countries (*Australia - 6 students, Azerbaijan - 1 student, Bangladesh - 51 students, Canada - 6 students, Cuba - 9 students, Georgia - 1 student, India - 446 students, Maldives - 1 student, Malaysia - 7 students, Sri Lanka - 163 students, South Korea - 4 students, Thailand - 3 students, UK - 5 students, USA - 20 students, and RTC - 60 students*) out of which 172 are from 2019 cohort. From the total ongoing scholarship students, 723 are ex-country and 60 are in-country, of which 331 are under GOI scholarships, 76 under ICCR, 16 ad-hoc bilateral scholarships and the remaining 360 are under RGOB scholarships.
- b) In the first year of the 12th FYP, 181 undergraduate scholarship slots were implemented in comparison to 172 in 2019, while for the 2020 cohort another 170 students have been selected for the undergraduate scholarship programme. Based on the requirement to overcome the shortage of medical

professionals, the MBBS slots for 2020 have been increased to 35 slots from 30 by increasing the slots for APEMS.

- c) A special focus has also been made to TVET and STEM subjects by ring-fencing a certain percentage of ex-country scholarship slots for these programmes. As such, in line with the Government's initiative to reform TVET programme and make it attractive, 15% of the ex-country scholarship slots have been earmarked for TVET programme from the 2020 cohort which will be implemented in India and third countries.
- d) Similarly, 5% of the ex-country scholarship slots have been earmarked for teaching, mostly in STEM subjects, that will be implemented in first world countries in a bid to attract the best and the brightest into the teaching profession.

4.2 Higher Education Planning Services

The Ministry carried out the following activities during the fiscal year 2019-2020:

- a) **Sensitization of Scholarship and Higher Education Opportunities to the students of Higher Secondary Schools of Eastern Dzongkhags.** All class XI and XII students under Bumthang, Mongar, Lhuentse and Trashigang Dzongkhags were sensitized to prepare for their tertiary education after completion of class XII (BHSCE) examinations.
- b) **Monitor and follow-up with the recommendations provided by TEB and BAC at the time of final approval to Norbuling Rigter College, Paro.** Coordinated regular monitoring by the technical team to follow up on the recommendations provided by TEB and BAC at the time of approval to the college.
- c) **Sensitization of Tertiary Education Road map 2017-2027 to all Tertiary Education Institutions (TEIs).** Road map 2017-2027 was developed and endorsed by the 11th TEB meeting held on 29th June 2017. The action plan was developed and presented to the 13th TEB meeting held on 21st August 2019. As directed by the TEB, all TEIs within the country were sensitized on the Roadmap.

- d) **Appeal to reconsider the in-principle approval accorded for the establishment of a college at Dotey, Paro.** The in-principle approval for Druk National College, Dotey, Paro was accorded by the 4th TEB held in August 2012. However, with no sign of physical progress for 2-3 years, the in-principle approval was revoked on 14th June 2017 during the 11th TEB. Based on the appeal by the proponent and the direction from TEB, the secretariat coordinated a site visit to see the feasibility of land usage for the college involving technicians from National Land Commission on 26th December 2019 and the report shall be submitted to the TEB.
- e) **State of Tertiary Education, 2019.** The Ministry publishes the State of Tertiary Education every year to provide information about the evolution of the education system, growth, governance and statistics of the entire tertiary education system of the country. The TEIs fill up the data into the Tertiary Education Statistics System (TESS) by the month of September and October every year. The data provided are further analyzed and compiled through consultative meetings and the state of tertiary education 2019 was finalized, printed and published.
- f) **Tertiary Education Board meeting.** Coordinated the 13th TEB meeting on 21st August 2019.
- g) **Implement Student Loan scheme for tertiary education- mechanism for reconciliation of Loan accounts.** A total of 488 students were awarded loans to pursue tertiary education in various TEIs within Bhutan and India. However, the loan could not be continued as the scheme was a one time project under economic stimulus plan which was to be implemented within the 11th FYP (2014-2018) with an allocation of Nu 150 Million. The Ministry is continuing with the disbursement of tuition and living allowances for the students who are continuing their studies. As of 2019, a total of 236 loan students graduated from various TEIs.
- h) **Facilitated issuance of visas for foreign students and faculty members coming to study in Bhutan under a student exchange programme.** Facilitated issuance of visa to 45 students and 21 faculty members visiting Royal Thimphu College on the exchange programme.

4.3 Quality Assurance and accreditation services

4.3.1 Accreditation services

Accreditation is one of the most important tools used globally for quality assurance. There are two types of accreditation: institutional accreditation and programme accreditation. The Bhutan Accreditation Council (BAC) started with institutional accreditation, and depending on the need it may initiate programme accreditation in future, as deemed appropriate. Some of key initiatives carried out during fiscal year 2019-2020 include:

- a. During 2019-2020, the BAC undertook institutional accreditation of Arura Academy of Health Sciences, affiliated to Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan in Phuentsholing and awarded grade 'C'.
- b. Trained five accreditors in the six batch accreditors' training conducted in October 2019. Till date, a total of six batches of accreditors' training were conducted and the BAC has a pool of 27 accreditors'.
- c. Accreditation Manual, 2014 was reviewed and the revised Manual will be printed soon. The groundwork for programme accreditation is also initiated.

4.3.2 Recognition of Qualifications

BAC is also mandated to provide qualification recognition services for various purposes including mobility, employment, pursuing higher education and political career. Therefore, on request from the individual, the qualifications of the applicants are verified, reviewed and validated from the awarding body in the host country. Once the confirmation from the awarding body is received, the BAC awards Qualification Endorsement Certificate (QEC).

- a. In the fiscal year 2019-2020, only four applications sought recognition of qualifications. BAC awarded QEC to 3 applicants and confirmation from the university for one is still awaited for. BAC has endorsed and awarded 437 QECs to date.
- b. The Ministry settled a case related to recognition of qualifications. The judgment was passed in favour of the BAC in October 2019.

Since most of the applications seeking recognition of qualifications are for degrees awarded by Tertiary Education Institutions (TEIs) outside the country, the Ministry entirely relies on the concerned TEIs for confirming and validating the qualification. Therefore, it is challenging to meet the turnaround time outlined in the government's annual performance agreement (APA). Further, considering the dynamism in the quality assurance system, sometimes it is a challenge even to check the credential and recognition status of the universities.

4.3.3 Establishment and regulation of Education Consultancy and Placement Firm (ECPF)

ECPFs in Bhutan are established to help students, aspiring to pursue higher studies, make informed decisions on the choice of programmes and colleges/institutes/universities outside the country. ECPFs are mandated to provide counseling services and process admission of students to various tertiary education programmes outside Bhutan. The Ministry facilitated establishment of the ECPFs, renewal of licenses and also monitored the quality of its services.

- a. During 2019-2020, the Ministry facilitated establishment of 4 new ECPFs, one based in Phuntsholing and three in Thimphu. However, since the Guidelines of ECPFs, 2017 is currently under review, the establishment of ECPFs has been suspended since January 2020. Besides, establishment of new ECPFs, the establishment of branch offices for EduLink ECPF in Gelephu, Samdhen Kuendrup, Tenzin and SKEY in Phuntsholing was also facilitated. Currently, there are 38 ECPFs registered with the Ministry.
- b. The business license of 3 ECPFs namely TR ECPF, The Great Learning Tree ECPF and Wang ECPF has been cancelled during the fiscal year.
- c. As a support service to the ECPFs, the Ministry in collaboration with Samtse College of Education trained the counselors for the ECPFs at the Royal University of Bhutan from 2-11 December 2019. A total of 22 participants took part in the 10-day career counseling course.

As a result of COVID-19 pandemic and closure of the colleges and universities in the region and abroad started to close and impose travel restrictions and lockdown by many countries, the Ministry had undertaken several measures to ensure the

safety and wellbeing of Bhutanese students studying abroad. This includes, issuance of advisory notes to Bhutanese students abroad on their safety, wellbeing, sharing travel information, and guidance on travel plans. The Ministry also kept in touch with the colleges and universities, sought information on students and their support, in addition to asking students to register and regularly update their situation on the Ministry's website.

For those students wishing to return home, the Ministry also facilitated logistic support for ground transportation from the colleges and universities to the airport for repatriating the Bhutanese students studying abroad when relief flights were arranged by the government.

A total of 1,934 students studying in various tertiary education institutions abroad returned home. Depending on the situation, the Ministry in collaboration with the Tertiary Education Institutions in the country might have to explore and come up with contingency plans to facilitate their education continuity within the country.

5. Enhance Teacher Development and Support Programme

5.1 Pre-service Teacher Training

The two colleges of Education have been preparing graduates to become teachers with different modes and grades of education level. With changing demands and competencies required major reforms are taking place in this area based on the discussion with the relevant key stakeholders, and feedback from the Colleges of Education, PGDE students, and schools as under:

- a. The nine months of Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PDGE) has been increased to 18 months from 2020, and henceforth all secondary teacher requirements will be met from this new PGDE programme.
- b. The 4-year B.Ed. degree secondary education programme has been accordingly phased out from 2020.
- c. The primary teacher requirement will continue to be met from the 4-year B.Ed degree primary education programme.
- d. The 4-year B.Ed. Dzongkha degree programme will henceforth be converted into a 4-year Dzongkha degree Primary education programme.

5.2 In-service Teacher Training

The Ministry in collaboration with RUB has strengthened and introduced the following programmes:

- a. In addition to the Master's programme in Dzongkha, English, Mathematics, and Sciences, a 2-year regular Masters Programme for in-service teachers in all other subjects will be instituted between 2020 and 2021.
- b. Master's programme in Dzongkha will be continued to be offered as mixed-mode due to the current acute shortage of Dzongkha Language Teachers.
- c. Master's programme for the Counsellors will continue to be in mixed mode as per the nature of the programme

- d. Master's in Primary Education Studies will be initiated from 2021. Should teachers with M.Ed in Primary Education get opportunities to pursue doctoral degrees, they must pursue in primary education studies for specialization.
- e. Started Master in Inclusive Education from 20th February 2020 to equip teachers with the skills and knowledge to teach children with disabilities particularly in specialized schools initially.

Currently, a total of 569 teachers including Principals and Vice Principals are undergoing long term training in 9 different programmes offered by various institutes under Royal University of Bhutan.

5.3 Recruitment of Teachers and Counsellors

Altogether, the Ministry has recruited a total of 711 Teachers in various disciplines and Counselors. 540 Teachers were recruited on regular service in January 2020 selected through the Bhutan Civil Service Examination (BCSE) conducted by the Royal Civil Service Commission while 138 Teachers were recruited on regular contract in March 2020 by the Ministry as per merit raking in the BCSE 2019 result. The remaining 33 candidates were Counselors who have been deployed to secondary schools.

522 Teachers have undergone B.Ed. in various disciplines at the two Colleges of Education under the RUB while the remaining 189 of them have undergone one year PG Diploma programmes at the two Colleges of Education. Among the 384 B.Ed. graduates appointed on regular service, 36 of them were deployed as Special Education Needs (SEN) Teachers to schools across the country with SEN programme. All these graduates were placed to the schools by respective Dzongkhags and Thromdes that have critical needs.

5.4 Bhutan Teacher Professional Standards (BPST)

With the launch of BPST on 2nd May 2019, the Ministry of Education worked on the implementation of BPST and the following activities were carried out in July 2019- June 2020:

- a. Organized Technical Working Group/Stakeholders Workshops to align BPST to Individual Work Plan and Position Level of the teachers.
- b. Development of Tools, Means of Verification, BPST Manual, Resource pack.
- c. Completed translation of BPST to Dzongkha.
- d. Conducted Training of Trainers on BPST from 27-29 February 2020.
- e. Roll out of Professional Development programme on BPST and implementation.

Considering the importance, BPST was presented during DEOs' Conference 2019 and endorsed the following:

- a. Pilot implementation of Bhutan Professional Standards for Teachers (BPST) to begin in February 2020 with a professional assessment system. Dzongkhags/Thromdes to provide full support in ensuring successful implementation of BPST.
- b. Teachers to be well informed that BPST is a means to gauge their performance and enable them to further work towards improving their performance.
- c. PD programmes for teachers at National/Dzongkhag/Thromde/School levels to be provided based on BPST.
- d. Propose formula-based budgeting to the Ministry of Finance for implementation of PD programmes by TPSD, DSE in consultation with Dzongkhags/Thromdes.

5.5 Professional Development (PD)

The Ministry believes that teaching is a profession that needs continuous PD programmes to update teachers with new knowledge and skills and thus, it is mandated that the Ministry provide 40 hours of PD in a year and 40 hours to be given in the Dzongkhag/ Cluster/ schools.

In July 2019, the Ministry provided a week-long summer PD programme on Neuroscience-based Mindfulness & Emotional Intelligence and Helping Skills to

enhance the knowledge, understanding, and skills of the teachers in dealing with students to care, guide, and support students health and wellbeing in the schools.

A total of 9287 Teachers were trained by 250 facilitators. 100 facilitators for Neuroscience-based mindfulness and emotional intelligence were trained from July 2018 to December 2018 through a project supported by Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute (SIYLI) based in California, USA. The 150 facilitators for Helping Skills were trained in June 2019 by the Ministry through a training of trainers (ToT) programme.

6. Strengthen and Expand Vocational Education in Schools

Towards creating diverse educational pathways, the Ministry aims to promote TVET as a part of mainstream education as optional subjects in a few schools during the 12th FYP. To take this forward, with the financial support of ADB, the Ministry has embarked on Skills, Training and Education Pathways Up-gradation Project (STEP-UP). The Ministry and REC developed a framework from PP to class XII and to strengthen School TVET programme further by developing alternative pathways through:

1. Curriculum infusion in classes PP-III
2. Vocational clubs in class IV-VIII,
3. Pre-vocational orientation programmes (PVOP) in class VII-VIII, and,
4. School TVET courses as electives in classes IX-XII.

TVET was introduced as an optional subject in class IX in seven pilot schools from 2020 academic year and will be rolled out in classes X-XII in subsequent years. Over the years, the Ministry initiated the following activities:

1. The Ministry completed and handed over two workshops each in Khuruthang MSS, Punakha Central Schools and Bajo HSS. In addition, one workshop in Babesa and three workshops in Rangjung were completed. However, Chumey and Bayling are slightly delayed but more than 90% of the works are almost completed.
2. Competency-Based Learning Material (CBLM) for classes IX & X developed in NC2 courses (plumbing, masonry, electrical, painting, tailoring, carpentry, welding, computer hardware & auto mechanic) was developed.
3. Competency-Based Learning Material (CBLM) for classes XI & XII developed in NC2 courses (plumbing, masonry, electrical, painting, tailoring, carpentry, welding, computer hardware & auto mechanic) was developed.
4. Vocational Clubs and PVOP guidelines developed in consultation with the school teachers & club coordinators.

5. 13 junior instructors were recruited and trained in pedagogy and completed industrial attachment. They are placed in the seven TVET schools to start implementing the TVET electives (Class IX) starting the 2020 academic year.

7. Enhance Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning

The Non-Formal Education (NFE) programme was initiated in 1990 through the Royal Command during the 53rd National Assembly. Since then, the programme has gained widespread popularity and proven its effectiveness. The programme evolved considerably in addressing the need of its learners which is catered through Basic Literacy Course (BLC), Post Literacy Course (PLC) and Community Learning Centre (CLC). As of April 2020, 4576 learners are attending BLC and PLC in 403 centres with 403 instructors. Similarly, a total of 352 learners are currently enrolled in 24 CLCs with 28 managers.

7.2 Development of NFE Equivalency Operational Guidelines

With the growing emphasis on the importance of education and skill development for personal growth and responding to the changing needs, the government has initiated to make NFE policies more relevant and responsive to the rapidly changing socio-economic patterns and national needs. Therefore, the NFE Equivalency Framework is developed to create flexible pathways and equivalency among formal, non-formal, and vocational education for learning and development of skills through recognition of the competencies.

In the fiscal year 2019-2020, one of the major activities initiated by the Ministry was the development of Operational Guidelines for operating NFE Equivalency Framework with the financial support from UNICEF. The Operational Guidelines will be presented to NFE Board for further recommendations and improvement and seek endorsement from the Bhutan Accreditation Council.

7.2 Establishment of Community Learning Centre (CLC)

CLC is one of the programmes under NFE which was initiated in the year 2000. It is focused on developing the vocational skills of the learners to earn their livelihood. It provides a platform for various lifelong learning activities to Post Learning Course graduates, out of school youth, and literate adults. It will also provide various learning opportunities like community-based development programmes in health, education, agriculture, and entrepreneurial skills.

During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the Ministry targeted to establish two CLCs to meet the target of 28 CLCs by the end of 12th FYP. On 28th November 2019,

Jomotsangkha CLC was established and the Ministry is yet to establish one more in Dorokha which was kept on hold due to COVID-19 pandemic.

7.3 National level Community Learning Centre (CLC) Exhibition and Fair.

The Ministry organized the first National Level CLC Exhibition and Fair from 8th to 9th September 2019 supported by Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU) under the 2019 Bridge Bhutan Project. It was aimed to: (1) motivate and strengthen skills of both the CLC learners and managers to help for their own additional livelihood, (2) provide a platform to learn marketing skills by marketing their products, (3) facilitate exchange of ideas and knowledge among the CLCs, and (4) advocate and recognize the work of CLC learners.

Twenty Two CLCs from across the country participated in the exhibition to showcase products made by the learners and managers. A total of 147 participants consisted of Dzongkhag Education Officers (DEOs), Thromde Education Officers (TEOs), Parent School Principals, CLC Managers and the Learners attended the exhibition. Majority of the centres have tailoring courses while only one centre offers carpentry. The Ministry will now focus on diversification of the skills in tailoring and other products in the centres.

8. Curriculum, Assessment and Examinations

The Ministry and REC continue to improve the relevance and quality of curriculum through opening up more options and pathways for learners to meet current national aspirations and global trends. Some of the initiatives during the fiscal year include:

8.1 Curriculum revision, development and implementation

The Bhutan Education Blueprint 2014-2024, the National School Curriculum Conference 2016 and the resolution of the 19th National Education Conference provided numerous recommendations for review and update the school curriculum.

Now all the subjects have curriculum frameworks that serve as road maps for curricular works in respective subjects. In line with the subject-based educational principles, theories and practices, several textbooks were reviewed and developed in recent years for implementation in the 2021 academic year. All the revised textbooks support experiential learning with ample opportunities for learners to engage in real time experiences enriched by the use of 21st century education skills. Series of orientation workshops in different subjects shall ensure their effective implementation in schools.

8.1.1 Introduction of Coding in Education

Education flagship programme focuses on digitalization of schools and attempts to ensure that the students are engaged with ICT from pre-primary and make them not only IT literate but be competent in coding/programming. To implement the flagship programme of Nu 1.0 billion, the Ministry has come up with the following interventions:

1. A total of 277 ICT teachers from both Government and private schools were trained from 23rd January to 16th February 2020 at Gelephu in two batches.
2. The Coding Workshop for ICT teachers was organized using the Leap Learners curriculum, coding platform, and expertise with support from the Department of Information Technology and Telecom, MOIC, and the Royal Education Council.
3. The workshop was aimed to equip participants with python programming, and orient ICT teachers on implementation of coding to roll out ICT and

Coding in school education starting from Pre-primary to grade XII starting 2020 academic session in all levels of schools.

Beginning 2020 academic session, the Leap Learner Curriculum was introduced as under:

1. PP-VI: Scratch
2. VII-X: PyLeap – Learning Python through Projects like Play, Game Development, and Animations
3. XI & XII: Python Programming.

The flagship programme also includes construction of computer laboratories, setting up computer laboratories in primary schools, providing additional computers and laboratories in larger schools, and strengthening internet connectivity.

8.1.2 Transforming education to competency-based learning and competency-based assessment

The school curriculum, teachers' professional capacity and physical and social state of schools are quintessential of quality education and the state of the nation. This also includes efforts in enhancing the access of education for all, including people with disabilities. Unfortunately, the goals and purposes of education over the years are becoming elusive and susceptible to change under numerous change drivers and circumstances.

Towards this, transformation of learning to competency-based learning and competency-based assessment are achieved through collaborative approach of consultations with relevant key stakeholders. The competency-based learning is enforced and supported through the gradual shift of conventional assessment to competency-based assessment.

8.1.3 Differentiated STEM subjects

The nation desires for professionals in critical science and mathematics fields in its development. The Government accords priority in the development of competencies of learners in STEM subjects. Therefore, as agreed by the members in the 3rd Curriculum Technical Advisory Board (CTAB) and in other numerous forums, REC developed the Differentiated Science and Mathematics Curriculum for

implementation in class 9 in 2021 and in 10 in the following year. The differentiated curricula are grounded on the concept and pedagogy of Place Based Education (PBE) approach to support the real time experiential learning, which stimulates the development of portable or soft skills of critical thinking, communication, creativity and collaboration (4 Cs) of the 21st century education framework.

8.2 Continuous Formative Assessment (CFA)

In line with the Government's pledge to do away with the school examination until class VI, the 19th National Education Conference (2018) recommended to phase out examinations in the primary school level (PP-III) from 2020 and institute an effective alternative assessment system to enhance learning outcomes and performance. The Ministry and REC developed the training package on CFA.

The CFA is being implemented in all schools beginning academic year 2020 for grades PP-III. During the audience with the Hon'ble Lyonchhen on 17th February 2020, Hon'ble Lyonchhen directed the Ministry to roll out CFA gradually and retain the examination system with some weight to ensure that children are assessed holistically.

The Training of Trainers (TOT) on CFA was conducted at Gelephu HSS from 14-23rd January 2020. A total of 201 teachers teaching primary English, Dzongkha and Mathematics were trained on the CFA tools and techniques. The CFA training was rolled out to all the primary teachers including the private school teachers teaching PP-III from 26- 31st January 2020.

8.3 School Examinations and Assessment

Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment (BCSEA) as a national evaluation and assessment agency is responsible for enhancing the standard of the school examinations and assessment system for improving the quality of education. To ensure validity, transparency and credibility of the examination question papers, conduct of the examinations, marking of the answer scripts and result processing, the following initiatives were taken:

1. To make the question papers more challenging, the percentage of Competency Based Questions (CBQs) aligned to the learning objectives

were increased from 30% to 32% in each subject/paper during the July 2019 Test Development Workshop.

2. To ensure error free question papers, pre and post moderation workshops were conducted in May 2019 and August 2019 to finalize the question papers for the board examinations.
3. To strengthen the examination system, the Rules and Regulations for the Conduct of Public Examinations in Bhutan were reviewed with support from the legal officers of the Ministry of Education in September 2019.
4. To ensure smooth and fair conduct of the examinations, 140 Supervising Examiners (SEs) were trained in three regions in October 2019.

8.3.1 Bhutan Certificate of Secondary Education (BCSE) 2019

In the BCSE Class X Examination conducted by Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment (BCSEA) in December 2019, a total of 12,758 candidates from 125 schools (**117** government and **8** private schools) were registered and 12,614 appeared for the examination.

Type	Entered			Appeared			Passed			Failed			Pass %		
	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total
REG	6911	5727	12638	6850	5652	12502	6372	5358	11730	478	772	1250	93.02	94.8	93.82
PVT	56	37	93	56	35	91	40	27	67	16	8	24	71.43	77.14	73.63
SUP	16	11	27	14	7	21	11	2	13	3	5	8	78.57	28.57	61.9
Total	6983	5775	12758	6920	5694	12614	6423	5387	11810	497	785	1282	92.82	94.61	93.63

This year's overall pass percentage is **93.63%**. There is a decrease in the pass percentage by **2.93%** from last year.

The pass percentage has been calculated based on the number of candidates who passed in Dzongkha, English and three other subjects.

8.3.2 Bhutan Higher Secondary Education Certificate (BHSEC) 2019

In the BHSEC Class XII Examination conducted by BCSEA in December **2019**, a total of **11,212** candidates from **61** Higher Secondary Schools (**41** government and **20** private schools) registered and **11,061** of them appeared the examination.

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TYPE	ENTERED			APPEARED			PASS			FAIL			PASS %		
	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T
PVT	193	284	447	190	278	468	159	226	385	31	52	83	83.68	81.29	82.26
REG	4431	4141	8572	4400	4068	8468	4030	3622	7652	370	446	816	91.59	89.04	90.36
SUP	1039	1124	2163	1028	1097	2125	1009	1080	2089	19	17	36	98.15	98.45	98.31
TOTAL	5663	5549	11212	5618	5443	11061	5198	4928	10126	420	515	935	92.52	90.54	91.55

The overall pass percentage is **91.55%** which is an increase of **3.56%** over **87.99%** pass percentage of 2018.

8.3.3 Language and Culture Studies Certificate (LCSC XII) 2019

In the LCSC Class XII Examination conducted by BCSEA in December **2019**, a total of **367** candidates from **3** Schools (**1** government and **2** private schools) registered and **349** appeared the examination. The pass percentage is 86.82%.

TYPE	ENTERED			APPEARED			PASSED			FAILED			PASS %		
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
REG	278	95	183	269	92	177	234	76	158	35	16	19	86.99	82.61	89.27
PVT	35	17	18	30	13	17	19	8	11	11	5	6	63.33	61.54	64.71
SUP	54	22	32	50	18	32	50	18	32	0	0	0	100	100	100
Total	367	134	233	349	123	226	303	102	201	46	21	25	86.82	82.93	88.94

8.3.4 National Education Assessment Framework (NEAF)

BCSEA is developing National Education Assessment Framework in collaboration with ACER, India, UNICEF, Save the Children, MoE, REC and schools across the country under the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) funding which is a three-year project (2019-2021).

The document briefly outlines the assessment programme and explicitly states its characteristics and the principles upon which the assessment is built. It serves several purposes for the individuals and organizations working on a national assessment as well as for the broader public interested in understanding the assessment and how to interpret its outcomes.

