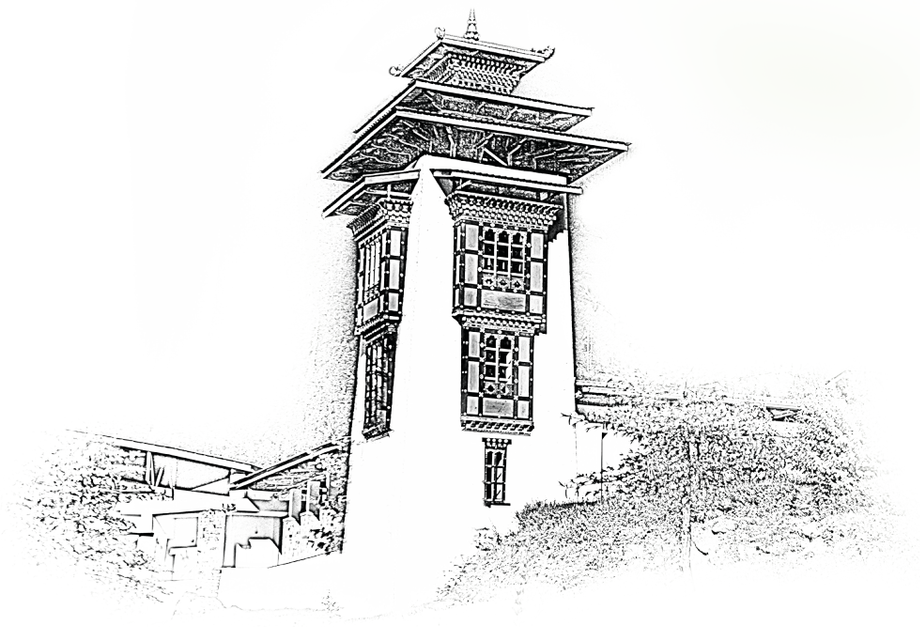

Royal Thimphu College
PO Box 1122
Ngabiphu, Thimphu
Bhutan
www.rtc.bt

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རིག་འཚོལ།

Rig Tshoel

ROYAL THIMPHU COLLEGE

Research Journal of the Royal Thimphu College

Volume 2 Number 1 Autumn 2019

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Rig Tshoel: Research Journal of the Royal Thimphu College
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Royal Thimphu College
PO Box 1122
Ngabiphu, Thimphu
Bhutan
www.rtc.bt

Editor: Jelle J.P. Wouters (PhD)

Editorial correspondence may be addressed to: rigtshoel@rtc.bt

Rig Tshoel – Research Journal of the Royal Thimphu College is an open-access peer-reviewed journal intended to align with a key mission of Royal Thimphu College "to be a crucible of new ideas and knowledge that serves to enrich people's lives and enhance the welfare of society". The journal aims to issue at least once a year and invites contributions on a wide range of subjects. Authors are encouraged to develop their own scholarship in areas of general relevance to Bhutan, submit work that advances knowledge in their fields, and is written in a broadly accessible manner. High-quality original articles in English and Dzongkha including theoretical and empirical research, commentaries, editorials, and reviews are welcome.

Contents

Editorial

I am pleased to present to you the second volume of *Rig Tshoel – Research Journal of the Royal Thimphu College,* which is an open-access, peer-reviewed journal that aligns with a key mission of Royal Thimphu College, that is: 'to be a crucible of new ideas and knowledge that serves to enrich people's lives and enhances the welfare of society.' I am also pleased to introduce to you the Rig Tshoel editorial board that was constituted following the publication of the inaugural issue in 2018, and which consists of Leishipem Khamrang, Karma Lhaden, Priyali Ghosh and Sonam Tobgay who serves as the Dzongkha editor.

This issue features eight articles and two book reviews. The articles published here were researched and written by one or multiple members of the RTC community, and the themes and theories they explore reflect the wide-ranging interest and expertise of different RTC departments and existing research projects. While the inaugural issue only featured articles written in English, this issue also contains two articles written in Dzongkha and which were edited by Sonam Tobgay. Chapter 3 is titled ཟེགཱ་ཆེན་ས་ཅས་ཀྱི་རི་མོ། and is written by Tshoki Dorji, while chapter 6 is titled སྨན་གནས་སྤྱགས་བའི་ཐུགཱ་གི་ཚགས་རབས། and is authored by Sonam Tobgay.

This issue, however, opens with an article titled 'Banking infrastructure in Bhutan: An assessment of commercial bank branches.' In this contribution, Roderick Wijunamai offers an examination of the evolution of the banking system in Bhutan, particularly with regards to its infrastructure and penetration across Dzongkhags. The second article is titled 'Ecotourism and social cohesion: Contrasting Phobjikha and Laya Experiences' and is written by a research team led by Jesse Montes. Through field research the impact of ecotourism on social cohesion was assessed in two popular tourist destinations in the country, and which revealed strikingly diverging experiences between these two places. The fourth article is by Rajitha Sanaka, is titled 'The diversified form of manual scavenging and how it perpetuates the caste system', and takes us to India where the author shows how manual scavenging, an occupation associated with a traditionally lowly ranked caste, continues to persist despite it being formally abolished, albeit so in different forms.

Next we have an article written by Tandin Pelden and Dolma Choden Roder which is titled: "'Woah, that's too personal'": the Reported behaviour, knowledge, perspective

and sources of reproductive health education of RTC students." This article was originally conceived as an undergraduate research project and appears here in revised and abridged form. Among other findings, the authors show how there exists a significant gap between students' knowledge of safe sex practices on the one hand, and their self-reported actual behaviour on the other hand. Article seven is by Tshewang Dorji and is titled: "Environmental humanities in the Anthropocene: A new paradigm" and discusses the environmental humanities as a new way of seeing, understanding, and imagining the relationship between us humans and the environment that surrounds us. The final article of this volume is by Tenzing Choden and is titled: 'Influence of family dynamics on the prevalence of substance abuse among emerging adults in Bhutan.' Through interviews with those afflicted with addiction the author shows how varying family dynamics may influence substance use and abuse amongst Bhutanese youth.

This volume ends with two book reviews. The first is by Pema Yangchen and reviews *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* by the acclaimed author Yuval Noah Harari. The second review is by Aakanksha Singh and is a review of Kunzang Choden's *The Circle of Karma.*

Jelle J.P. Wouters
Editor

Banking Infrastructure in Bhutan: An Assessment of Commercial Bank Branches

RODERICK WIJUNAMAI[1]

ABSTRACT: This paper in trying to examine and understand the banking system in Bhutan, particularly its infrastructure and banking penetration, undertakes a cross-sectional review of dzongkhag-wise statistics of Bhutan. It presents four broad findings. First, in terms of its financial infrastructure vis-à-vis its population, Bhutan has sufficient infrastructure in place. The spread of its financial institution is comparatively much better than India, with at least 3 bank offices in place for each dzongkhag. Second, Bhutan Development Bank Ltd and Bank of Bhutan are two banks which have its bank offices in all of the dzongkhags and hence have the highest reach. These two banks also have the highest number of deposits and credit accounts. This could perhaps be attributed to their precedence in arrival, in the sector. Thirdly, it is observed that there is a huge disparity between deposit accounts and credit accounts. While some dzongkhags have a relatively good amount of deposit accounts, the figure for credit is largely still low. Fourth, and finally, it is observed that Thimphu has a very disproportionate share of financial banking services, especially in credit dissemination. This article concludes by highlighting the need to decentralize finance, primarily in terms of its accessibility.

[1]Roderick Wijunamai is an Associate Lecturer in the Department of Social Sciences, RTC. He holds an MA in Development Studies from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.

Introduction

Bhutan, like all its other aspects of the economy and the country as whole, has a very unique and interesting evolution of its banking system. Unlike India, it's immediate neighbour, who nationalized and made the Reserved Bank of India, a privately owned bank, into a central bank in 1935 with the 'Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934,' Bhutan established the Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan (RMA) in Thimphu with the 'The Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan Act 1982,' and made it operational the year after (1983). The Bank of Bhutan (BOB), the oldest national bank established by a Royal Charter in May 28, 1968[2], acted as the Central Bank from 1968 until 1982. It executed all the functions of a central bank along with the Ministry of Finance and the State Trading Corporation of Bhutan. The State Bank of India (SBI) facilitated BOB to improve its banking services. This partnership led to the re-constitution of the equity share holding of BOB, a 40 percent of the equity share ownership was given to SBI in 1971 (RMA, 2015). This also marks the first advent of foreign bank investment in the banking sector of the Bhutanese economy. Eventually, the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) expanded its equity share and reduced the share of SBI to 20 percent in 2002 (ibid). While banking services were taken care of by the BOB, the printing and issuing of currency was done by the Ministry of Finance. It issued a variety of Ngultrum denominations, ranging from Nu 1 to Nu 100, ever since the 1974 monetary reform[3]. At that time, the then prevailing currency 'Chhetrum,' with the institutionalization of the new currency, was equated to $^{1}/_{100}$ of Ngultrum. This means that one Ngultrum was equated to 100 Chhetrum.

This article reviews the dzongkhag-wise statistics to examine and understand the banking system in the country, more particularly its infrastructure and banking penetration across dzongkhags. A longitudinal panel research was initially attempted, to examine the trends and progress of banking system in the country. However, owing to unavailability of data, this article maneuvered to a cross-sectional research by procuring the latest available data of all the dzongkhags from the National Statistics Bureau of Bhutan. This article concludes with the observation that banking infrastructure in the form of bank offices is at least ostensibly in place, yet, except Thimphu, and to a certain

[2]https://www.bob.bt/about/ (Accessed on March 7, 2019)
[3]https://www.rma.org.bt/historytp.jsp (Accessed on March 7, 2019)

extend Chhukha and Bumthang, the penetration and access to banking is still very low across dzongkhags.

There is no gainsaying that Information and communications technology (ICT) has significantly changed the way banking system operates across the world. The same maybe the case for Bhutan. In October 2010, the RMA announced the following, to commercial banks, in relation to applications for branchless banking: "to act as mobile banks to deliver financial services, instead of relying on physical bank branches."[4] This eventually led to RMA commissioning Bhutan Development Bank Limited (BDBL), in 2015, to introduce mobile and branchless banking technology at the gewog level (ADB, 2016). This was done in partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), under the 'Strengthening Economic Management Program II', which was formulated with an aim "to reach the underserved and raise financial literacy." This article while acknowledging the slow transitioning of the Bhutanese banking scenario owing to the incorporation of ICT and other related initiatives, does not engage with this dimension. This decision is made on two grounds; first, data of such indicators are not readily available in the public domain, at least not yet. Second, such initiatives are still being rolled out and it appears too early to be taken into account and studied systematically. An informed World Bank research report, in view of this, indicated that,

> The mobile phone and internet technology available in Bhutan does not appear to be driving financial inclusion. While mobile phone banking has revolutionized banking in countries with difficulties in financial access similar to those in Bhutan, its outreach has been constrained by the limited mobile banking technology in use and by the low English-language literacy in Bhutan (Niang, 2013, p. 5).

This article hence exclusively analyses the distribution pattern of physical bank branches, and bank accounts (both deposit and credit) across dzongkhags, and in doing so attempts to analyze it vis-à-vis population figures.

[4]http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=47781589&Country=Bhutan&topic=Economy&subtopic=Curr_7 (Accessed on May 7, 2019)

Evolution of Banks and Financial Institutions in Bhutan

Until 1997, the Bank of Bhutan (BOB) was the only commercial bank operating in Bhutan. It was only in January 6, 1997, that the Bhutan National Bank (BNB) was officially opened with the aim "to promote and inculcate saving habits among the general public and to channel capital to productive sectors in the economy" (RMA, 2015; p. 147). BNB was originally set up as a 'Unit Trust of Bhutan' in 1980 by the Royal Government as a subsidiary of Royal Insurance Corporation of Bhutan (RICBL). It got its status of 'independent financial institution' only in 1992, but later, with the assistance of the Asian Development Bank, this trust was converted into a commercial bank in the year 1995[5]. The equity of the bank was floated to the public in December 5, 1996, making it the first bank to be owned by the public. Along with it, 40 percent of its equity was owned by the Asian Development Bank and Citibank, while the remainder was owned by RGoB and RICBL.

The most significant year for the banking industry in Bhutan was however the year 2010. Three banks, of the five existing banks, were either opened or became operational in the first three months in the year 2010. First, Druk PNB Bank Limited (DPNBL) started its business on January 27, 2010. It not only became the third bank to be established in the country, but also the third bank to receive FDI in the banking sector. Its first office was opened at the Bhutan-Indo border city of Phuentsholing. It was incorporated in the banking sector as a joint venture bank with a majority of 51 percent shareholding by Punjab National Bank (PNB), another major Indian bank. The remaining 49 percent was an amalgamate of local promoters and the public.

In March 12, 2010, T-Bank Limited launched its operation "to meet the growing demand of the banking services of the general public and to provide cohesive competition in the financial sector in Bhutan.[6]" The bank made its headway with three domestic promoters holding a total of 60 percent shares, while the remaining shares were floated to the public.

Finally, the Bhutan Development Bank Ltd (BDBL) which existed since January, 1988, evolved into a deposit-taking commercial bank, with cheque facilities, in March 2010. Prior to that, BDBL functioned as a development finance institution with assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB)[7]. Its primarily objective was to

[5]https://www.adfiap.org/members/BNB/BNB.htm (Accessed on March 7, 2019)
[6] http://www.tbankltd.com/about-us/ (Accessed on March 8, 2019)
[7] http://bdb.bt/?page_id=471 (Accessed on March 7, 2019)

assist the private sector by providing financial and technical assistance for industrial, agricultural, and commercial projects.

Apart from these five banks, there are three other Non-Bank Financial Institutions (NBFIs), two insurance companies and one pension fund: Royal Insurance Corporation of Bhutan Ltd (RICBL), Bhutan Insurance Ltd (BIL), and National Pension Provident Fund (NPPF). RICBL is the second oldest financial institution in the country. It also started its operation with the Royal Charter of His Majesty the fourth Druk Gyalpo, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, on the 7th of January 1975. The objective envisaged was "primarily to meet the insurance need of its Citizen as well as to actively participate in the economic development of the nation.[8]" 39.3 percent of the shares in RICBL is owned by the RGoB while the remaining 60.7 percent owned by the public.

On the other hand, BIL, which started its operations on August 20, 2009, has 32 percent of its share owned by local promoters, and 68 percent by public holding[9]. NPPF was set up on March 30, 2000, for managing and administering retirement schemes in the country. On March 9, 2007, RMA licensed NPPF to carry out limited financial services, and subsequently also brought it under the purview of RMA in July 1, 2007 with the objective to "ensure that members' funds were safeguarded." The form and function of NBFIs is outside the scope of this article, however.

Financial Sector Development

The Global Financial Inclusion's Global Findex supposedly "is the world's most comprehensive set of data on how people make payments, save money, borrow, and manage risk… launched in 2011, [it] includes more than 100 financial inclusion indicators that allow worldwide comparisons of adults' access to financial services, including by gender, age, and household income.[10]" Although the 2014 Global Findex database shows a low 34 percent of formal financial institution penetration in Bhutan, which is lower than the 53 percent for India, Bhutan has a good population-bank ratio. This means that the ratio of banks to population is very decent and that sufficient infrastructures seems to be in place for a higher financial inclusion.

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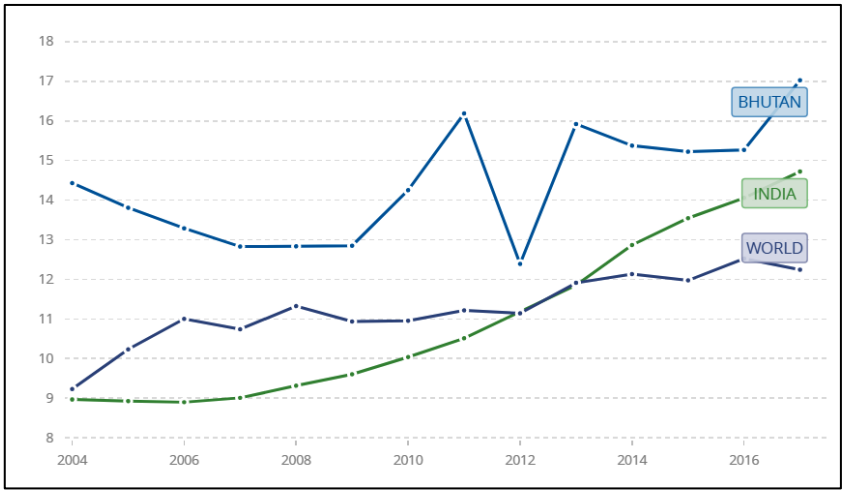
[8] https://www.ricb.bt/company_profile (Accessed on March 8, 2019)

[9] http://www.bhutaninsurance.com.bt/index.php?page_id=101 (Accessed on March 8, 2019)

[10]https://www.worldbank.org/en/events/2018/04/23/global-findex-fintech-inclusion (Accessed on April 12, 2019)

According to World Bank data, Bhutan's bank ratio shows a much better figure compared to its giant neighbour, even as India is on the way of becoming a world economic powerhouse. Figure – 1 shows the number of branches of commercial banks for every 100,000 adults in the reporting country.

Fig 1: Graph of commercial bank branches/offices per 100,000 adults[11]



Source: International Monetary Fund, Financial Access Survey 2017

In its extent of financial inclusion, as on December 2017, 64.47 percent of adults in Bhutan had a savings account with a bank, but just 16.08 percent had access to credit while 17.79 percent held a life insurance policy (RMA, 2018). This means that a higher exclusion occurs in credit sanctions and insurance coverage.

Financials inclusion is facilitated by financial sector development. Few of the indicators one can look at, to examine financial sector development are: number of bank branches, progress in bank credit, growth in bank deposits, and trends in Credit-Deposit Ratio. The discussion in this article confines itself to the number of bank branches, the number of deposit accounts and the number of credit accounts (owing to the researcher's inability of accessing a dzongkhag-wise data of other indicators). This of course will not give us the exact picture of financial sector development, but will nevertheless serve to give a clear sense of it.

[11]Calculated as (number of institutions + number of branches)*100,000/adult population in the reporting country.

As highlighted in Figure – 1, the bank branches to population ratio, as of 2017, if taken for the overall country, is decent and sufficiently in place. The graph/data translates to 1 bank office for every 5873 persons in the country, while the world's average (mean) stands at 1 bank office for every 8180, and while India at 1 bank office for every 6793. Studies in Indian banking have however shown that the penetration of banks in some regions are much worse (as low as 1 bank for every 18,626 person in some states – especially after banking reforms), making access to banking services very region specific and/or urban centric, as various scholars have indeed argued (Ramachandran & Swaminathan, 2002; Chavan, 2005; Ramakumar & Chavan, 2014; Wijunamai, 2017). Therefore, it is relevant and necessary to undertake a desegregated analysis of bank offices set up across the dzongkhags to analyse the distribution of bank offices across the country. By doing so, one can examine whether the banking system in the country is concentrated or dispersed, thus giving us an insight into the accessibility of banks. A synoptic view of the distribution of bank offices/branches across the country, as of 2019, is shown in Table – 1. The figures in the table are inclusive of all the bank offices, extension offices and head offices.

Table 1: Bank-wise distribution of offices across Dzongkhags (as on 2019)

	Dzongkhag	BOB	BNB	Druk PNB	BDBL	T Bank	Total Bank Offices
1.	Bumthang	1	1		1		3
2.	Chukha	4	1	1	4	1	11
3.	Dagana	1	1		1		3
4.	Gasa	1	1		1		3
5.	Haa	1			1		2
6.	Lhuentse	1	1		1		3
7.	Mongar	1	3		1	1	6
8.	Paro	1	2	1	1	1	6
9.	Pemagatshel	2			1		3
10	Punakha	1	2		1		4
11	Samdrup	2	1		1	1	5
12	Samtse	2	3	1	3	1	10
13	Sarpang	2	1	1	3	1	8
14	Thimphu	5	6	1	1+1	1	15
15	Tashigang	1	4		1	1	7
16	Tashiyangtse	1	1		6	1	9
17	Trongsa	1	1	1	1		4
18	Tsirang	1	1		1		3
19	Wangduephodra	1		1	2	1	5

20	Zhemgang	1	1		2		4
	Total	**31**	**31**	**7**	**35**	**10**	**114**

Source: Bank Websites; RMA Annual Report 2017

Based on Table 1, a few inferences can be drawn. First, the capital, Thimphu, has the maximum number of bank branches/offices in place. As per the data, most of the banks' head offices are also located in this dzongkhag. About 40 percent of the total bank offices in the country are concentrated in just four of the dzongkhags, namely Thimphu, Chhukha, Samtse and Trashiyangtse. Second, although BDBL started felicitating commercial bank operations only in 2010, it has the highest number of bank offices, with its offices present in all the dzongkhags. T Bank and Druk PNB, which also started its operation in the same year, on the other hand, have the lowest infrastructure in place, with its offices set up only in half and less than half the number of dzongkhags. Thirdly, BOB and BDBL are the only two banks which have its offices set up in all the dzongkhags. And interestingly, BDBL has more number of offices outside the capital, Thimphu, with the maximum number of bank offices located in Tashiyangtse.

Another observation one can make, from the table, about these two banks, is its large presence in Chhukha, the main gateway to India. Both BOB and BDBL share the characteristic of having the second highest number of offices in this dzongkhag.

While the data on the number of bank offices present in each of the dzongkhags gives us an idea of the spread of branches across the country. It gives us only half the picture of the infrastructure and consequently its accessibility. As noted earlier, one can get a better picture of financial structures in place by measuring the number of bank offices against population figures.

Table 2: Dzongkhag-wise ratio of population-per-bank & other demographic indicators

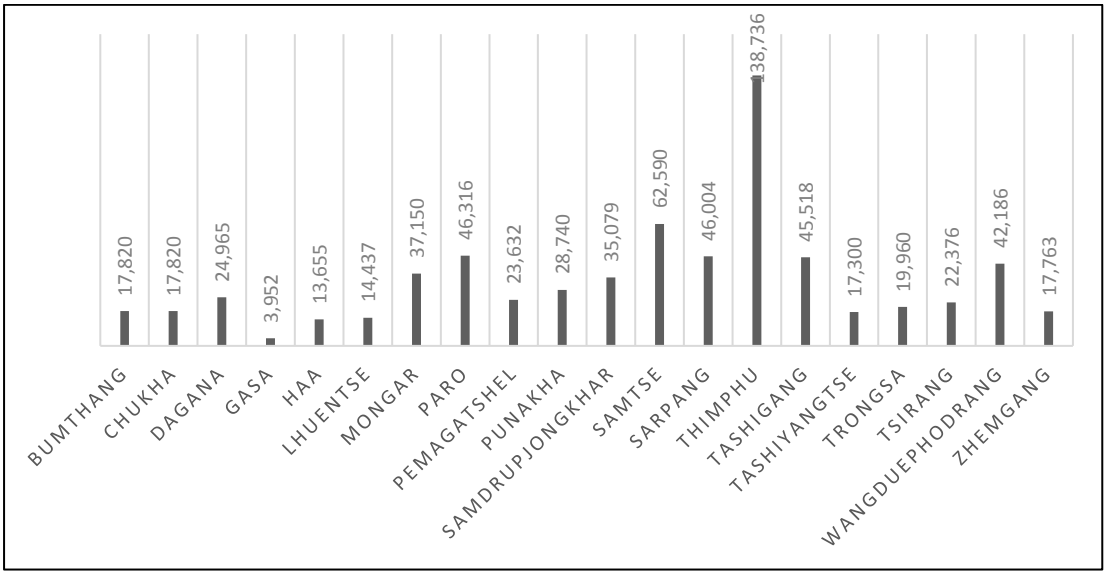
	Dzongkhag	**Area (in km^2)**	**Population (actual)**	**Population Density**	**Total Bank Offices**	**Population per bank**
1.	Bumthang	2,717	17,820	7	3	5,940
2.	Chukha	1,880	68,966	37	11	1,620
3.	Dagana	1,723	24,965	14	3	8,322
4.	Gasa	3,118	3,952	1	3	1,317
5.	Haa	1,905	13,655	7	2	6,828
6.	Lhuentse	1,944	14,437	7	3	4,812
7.	Mongar	2,859	37,150	13	6	6,192
8.	Paro	1,293	46,316	36	6	7,719
9.	Pemagatshel	1,030	23,632	23	3	7,877
10.	Punakha	1,110	28,740	26	4	7,185

11.	Samdrupjongkhar	1,878	35,079	19	5	7,016
12.	Samtse	1,305	62,590	48	10	6,259
13.	Sarpang	1,946	46,004	24	8	5,751
14.	Tashigang	2,067	45,518	67	7	6,503
15.	Tashiyangtse	3,066	17,300	15	9	1,922
16.	Thimphu	1,438	138,736	12	15	9,249
17.	Trongsa	1,807	19,960	11	4	4,990
18.	Tsirang	639	22,376	35	3	7,459
19.	Wangduephodrang	4,308	42,186	10	5	8,437
20.	Zhemgang	2,421	17,763	7	4	4,441
	BHUTAN	**38,394**[*12]	**727,145**	**19**	**114**	**6,378**

Source: 2017 Population and Housing Census of Bhutan,
National Statistics Bureau of Bhutan

[Population excludes all non-Bhutanese/tourist; Density of Population is given in Population per km^2]

Figure 2: Population Size of Dzongkhags



Source: 2017 Population and Housing Census of Bhutan,
National Statistics Bureau of Bhutan

[*12]The actual sum of all the Dzongkhag's area does not equal the figure in Total (it adds up to 40,454 km^2). All the figures (of area, population & population density) in the table, both for the Dzongkhags and the country as a whole, has been reproduced in verbatim from *2017 Population and Housing Census of Bhutan*.

Bhutan has conducted two rounds of population survey (census) to this date. The first round was conducted in 2005 and the second in 2017. The total population as of May, 2017 is 727,145 (National Statistics Bureau, 2017). Two years after the census survey, the UN Population Division estimated/projected the population of Bhutan to be 826,229, as of May 2019, a 1.2 (one point two) percent increase from the 2017 census. This 1.2 percent increase in population, however, may not be uniform across the dzongkhags, and deriving the new census across the dzongkhags based on the same percentage increase may lack precision. Hence, the 2017 population census of the dzongkhags was taken into consideration to derive a bank office-to-population ratio, and also in the later sections to analyse the bank accounts to population ratio.

While Thimphu and Samtse have the highest number of bank offices, it can be noted from Figure – 2 that these two dzongkhags also have the highest proportion of population in the country. Thimphu alone hosts almost 20 percent of the entire country's population. This justifies the high number of bank offices set up in the dzongkhag. Rather, if we were to look at the ratio, the very dzongkhag that has the highest number of bank offices also has the highest population-to-bank ratio. This means that there are lesser number of banks in the dzongkhag facilitating a bigger proportion of the population. The derived figure for Thimphu dzongkhag is one bank for every 9,249 persons, while the country's average stands at one bank for every 6,378 person. In contrast, Samtse, Chhukha, and Tashiyangtse, the dzongkhags with the second highest number of bank offices, have a very good population-to-bank ratio.

Table – 2, suggests that Chhukha has the best ratio of population-to-bank with one bank office in place for every 1620 person. Not very far from it stands Tashiyangtse, which has the second best ratio of population-to-bank with one bank office in place for every 1,922 persons in its dzongkhag. It is further interesting to note that exactly half the dzongkhags have a population-to-bank ratio higher than the country's average. This half includes the capital and two other top tourist destinations, namely Thimphu, Paro and Punakha.

Given the high population density in Thimphu (at least amongst the dzongkhags), it is possible to postulate that the accessibility to banking system, proximity-wise, is relatively well-facilitated. That said, it remains difficult to assume the reach of every population in any of the dzongkhags given its low density of population, topography and widely dispersed population. A look into the number of deposit and credit accounts will, however, offer us a fair idea of the advancement of financial inclusion amongst the population, having established that banks are seemingly distributed sufficiently across dzongkhags.

Table 3: Bank-wise distribution of Deposit Accounts across Dzongkhags (as on 2019)

	Dzongkhag	BOB	BNB	Druk PNB	BDBL	T Bank	Total
1.	Bumthang	7147 (2016)	5675 (2016)		4697 (2016)		17519
2.	Chukha		14139 (2016)	18265 (2016)	11173 (2016)	4564 (2016)	48141
3.	Dagana		103 (2016)				103
4.	Gasa				837 (2015)		837
5.	Haa	5032 (2016)	522 (2016)		4111 (2016)		9665
6.	Lhuentse				3622 (2015)		3622
7.	Mongar	19290 (2015)	2700 (2016)		12239 (2016)		24229
8.	Paro	11835 (2015),	13224 (2015)				25059
9.	Pemagatshel	8837 (2017)	408 (2017)		8978 (2017)		18223
10.	Punakha	7517 (2014)	3265 (2016)				10782
11.	Samdrup Jongkhar						0
12.	Samtse	6589 (2016)	1371 (2016)		7706 (2016)		15666
13.	Sarpang	15808 (2016)	2536 (2016)		5575 (2016)		23919
14.	Thimphu	67416 (2015)	68298 (2015)	4709 (2015)	159261 (2015)	17212 (2015)	22373
15.	Tashigang	11016 (2015)	6257 (2015)		5100 (2016)		6281
16.	Tashiyangtse	4936 (2016)	1345 (2016)				316896

17.	Trongsa	4543 (2016)	1978 (2016)		4285 (2015)		10806
18.	Tsirang	5143 (2013)	801 (2013)		2260 (2013)		8204
19.	Wangdue-phodrang		9594 (2017)	9149 (2017)	9199 (2017)		27942
20.	Zhemgang				3622 (2015)		3622

Source: Annual Dzongkhag Statistics, Various Issues
National Statistics Bureau of Bhutan

The data for both the indicators (Deposit accounts and Credit accounts) are taken from various issues of the 'Annual Dzongkhag Statistics', published by the National Statistics Bureau of Bhutan. While sufficient care has been taken to avoid discrepancies in the data, as is the case for any vernacular statistics, moderate errors do exist. The data presented in Table – 3 & Table – 4 have been taken from the latest issues of the Annual Dzongkhag Statistics with the objective to give a synoptic view of the latest 3 years of the data available.

Table 4: Bank-wise distribution of Credit Accounts across Dzongkhags (as on 2019)

	Dzongkhag	BOB	BNB	Druk PNB	BDBL	T Bank	Total
1.	Bumthang	672 (2016)	409 (2016)		1509 (2016)		2590
2.	Chukha	3557 (2016)	824 (2016)	350 (2016)	1883 (2016)	549 (2016)	7163
3.	Dagana		60(2016)				160
4.	Gasa				269 (2015)		269
5.	Haa	237 (2016)	118 (2016)		1544 (2016)		1899
6.	Lhuentse				1245 (2015)		1245

7.	Mongar	907 (2015)	580 (2016)				1487
8.	Paro	1353 (2015)	943 (2016)				2296
9.	Pemagatshel	468 (2017)			2689 (2017)		6157
10.	Punakha	628 (2014)					628
11.	Samdrup Jongkhar	773 (2015)	118 (2016)		545 (2015)		2436.02
12.	Samtse	832 (2016)	635 (2016)		3242 (2016)		4709
13.	Sarpang	821 (2016)	1200 (2016)		1621 (2016)		3642
14.	Thimphu	5348 (2015)	5733 (2015)	3395 (2015)	146787 (2015)	2972 (2015)	0
15.	Tashigang						2669
16.	Tashiyangtse	557 (2016)	119 (2016)		1993 (2016)		164235
17.	Trongsa	-	-				0
18.	Tsirang	538 (2013)	35 (2013)		1147 (2013)		1720
19.	Wangdue-phodrang		756 (2017)	161 (2017)	161 (2017)		1078
20.	Zhemgang				806 (2013)		806

Source: Annual Dzongkhag Statistics, Various Issues
National Statistics Bureau of Bhutan

Table – 3 presents the bank-wise distribution of deposit accounts across dzongkhags. Deposit accounts here refers to the sum of current deposit accounts, saving deposit accounts, recurring deposit accounts, and fixed deposit accounts. It is possible for a person to have a savings deposit account or a current deposit account while also having a recurring deposit account or fixed deposit account at the same time. It is also possible

for one person to have multiple savings/current/recurring/fixed deposit accounts in the same bank or in multiple banks. Another shortcoming of this table is missing data for some dzongkhags. Owing to unavailability of data from the officially published reports, some dzongkhags have data for the latest years missing, while other dzongkhags do not have any data on banking furnished altogether. Hence, the discussion emanating from Table – 3 and Table – 4 is not so much about complete accuracy, but rather serves to get a sense of the trends and patterns of financial inclusion. For our purposes here, the latest data available is taken as the existing figure, while for the dzongkhags whose data are not available for any year, the figure zero is attributed.

From both the tables we can infer that Thimphu and Chhukha have the highest proportion of both deposit and credit accounts. Thimphu alone accounts for more than 50 percent of the entire country's deposit accounts, while the second highest, Chhukha, stand at a mere approximation of 8 percent. Interestingly, the proportion of deposit accounts translates to about 118 percent of its entire population, and the proportion of credit accounts translates to more than two times its entire population. This becomes all the more fascinating when we also note that about half the dzongkhags have a proportion of less than 50 percent of their population owning a bank account. Dzongkhags such as Dagana does not even have 1 percent of its entire population owning a bank account (at least according to the data we have, and also assuming the figures to be about the same, for the dzongkhags we do not have data on).

This phenomenon about Thimphu can perhaps be explained by three major reasons. First, as highlighted earlier, most individuals own more than one deposit account, either in the same bank in different types, or in other banks, in any other type (including the same type). This is more often the case for people in urban areas compared to people in rural areas. Second, Thimphu being the capital, a lot of conglomeration takes place – be it in the government sector, with all its head offices located in Thimphu, or other business and civil society sectors. A lot of inward migration happens in Thimphu. As high as 48.7 percent of the country's population migrated within the country, in the year 2018, and from this, Thimphu receives the highest number of incoming internal migrants[13]. Hence, it is quite possible that even in the short in-migrations, a large number of new deposit accounts are opened. Moreover, in terms of accessibility and convenience, one tends to prefer the bank office in the capital as against the others. Thirdly, most of the corporate houses, small and medium scale businesses, and other

[13]https://thebhutanese.bt/48-7-percent-of-the-people-migrated-within-the-country-phcb-2017/ (Accessed on April 3, 2019)

government offices, amongst others, will have multiple number of accounts for its department(s) and its employees.

Another interesting observation to note is the relatively high number of deposit accounts in comparison with credit accounts in all of the dzongkhags, except for Dagana. In most of the dzongkhags, the number of deposit account is either twice as high, or even higher. The ratio is the starkest in Punakha where the number of deposit accounts is about 17 times higher than the number of credit accounts. Punakha is followed by Mongar, where the difference is about 16 times. This would seem to imply that there is a very low access to credit facility.

Although a great deal cannot be argued conclusively without the data of actual deposits and credits across dzongkhags, it can nevertheless be postulated that people across are accessing banks more as an institute for savings and deposits rather than to procuring loans. One can however only limit the claim to that since there is no clear data or solid evidence to look at the activity of transactions – of both deposits and credit actually sanctioned.

In terms of deposit accounts' proportion to population, the top three dzongkhags after Thimphu, which have a very good deposit ratio to population are Bumthang, Pemagatshel, and Chukha with a proportion of 98 percent, 77 percent, and 70 percent respectively. The national average, which stands at 81 percent has been skewed, by these four dzongkhags' percentages.

In the case of credit accounts' proportion to population, except for Thimphu, none of the dzongkhags has its population possessing credit accounts by even a quarter of its total population (Pemagatshel just has about a quarter of its population possessing credit accounts). Rather, more than half the dzongkhags have a proportion of less than 10 percent of their population owning credit account. From this it can be understood that disproportionately a very high amount of credit account exist in Thimphu. While the number of deposit accounts present in Thimphu averages to about 53 percent of the total deposit accounts in the country, the proportion of credit accounts in the city is about 80 percent of the entire country. This is say that finance is very concentrated in the capital of the country, at least from what we see through formal financial institutions, and this is all the more so in its credit sanctioning/dissemination as against its use of financial institutions for savings or other forms of deposits.

Concluding Remarks

From the discussions presented above, four broad conclusions can be drawn. First, in terms of its financial infrastructure vis-à-vis its population, Bhutan has sufficient infrastructure in place. The spread of its financial institution is much better compared to its giant neighbour India with at least 3 bank offices in place for each dzongkhag (with the exception of Haa, which has only two banks at the moment). This by itself is a huge achievement with regards to Bhutan's aspiration for financial inclusion. Second, BDBL and BOB are the only two banks which have its bank office in all of the dzongkhags and hence has the highest reach. BDBL has the highest number of deposits and credit accounts, followed by BOB. On the other hand, T-Bank and Druk PNB have the lowest reach, with its offices present in just 10 dzongkhags and 7 dzongkhags respectively. This perhaps can be attributed to their precedence in arrival in the sector. While BOB is the oldest bank, BDBL also existed in its non-retail/non-commercial form since 1988. Thirdly, we notice that there is a significant disparity between deposit accounts and credit accounts. While some dzongkhags have a relatively good amount of deposit accounts, the figure for credit is largely still very low. It is difficult to say whether the demand for credit is low or the supply is not meeting the demand. However, as, it stands it is clear that fewer people have access to credit. Even if the amount of credit sanctions are high, it is very clear that it is confined to a very small number of its population. Fourth, and finally, we observe that Thimphu is not only the political capital, as data suggests that it is also the finance capital of the country. While it is encouraging to find high business and finance activities taking place in the city, this can also be a source of concern for it has taken the lion share of the entire country's finance. There is therefore a need to decentralize finance, primarily in terms of its accessibility.

While the infrastructural mechanisms are ostensibly in place, it appears that this has not translated to accessibility or reach of the population. Credible research reports on the country, and the region, have attempted to answer this puzzle. Ninag (2013), mentions three key findings, mostly based on the population's status, namely financial illiteracy and diffidence, financial products not being responsive to households' needs, and the population's struggle to meet with banks' loan requirements. Grandolini (2015) shares a similar point of view, while highlighting additionally the socio-economic status. In supplementation to them, some of the other possible reasons for low financial penetration can be Bhutan's difficult terrain. Such geographical factors are not always conducive in facilitating the accessibility of the banking institutions. Another possible reason, especially with regards to deposits, is the absence of saving habits, a related

phenomenon of the lack of financial literacy. In many places around the world, financial illiteracy and lack of basic education prevents people from accessing financial services – both for savings and credit. Financial literacy is defined by the OECD's International Network on Financial Education (INFE), as "a combination of awareness, knowledge, skill, attitude and behaviour necessary to make sound financial decisions" (OECD, 2011, p.3). One can further elaborate this point as a 'voluntary exclusion,' a case where people voluntarily exclude themselves from accessing financial services owing to psychological dispositions or lack of trust on the banks to entrust them their hardearned money. Niang (2013, p. 1)already highlighted this in a World Bank research report in which she notes, "Bhutan is a cash-based economy where households have a vibrant, if informal, savings and lending culture." Hence, "formal financial services [remains] only weakly integrated into [their] daily life" (ibid).

All in all, the banking sector in Bhutan, at least in terms of its infrastructural providence, does not come across as neoliberal capitalist forces existing and operating only in pursuit of profit in commercial centres. Although one can quickly get stuck with the fact that Thimphu has absorbed all of the banking services and benefits. The approach remains seemingly evident if we examine the infrastructural and computation or methodological (policy) tools, used by the government, or Royal Monetary Authority (RMA), to reach out to the population together. The social and development banking paradigm is very clear from the policies and strategies that the RMA formulate.

Since the last few years, RMA has devised various policy interventions to promote inclusive economic growth through financial inclusion. In their latest Monetary Policy Statement, the Royal Monetary Authority (2018), has highlighted four policy interventions they have undertaken (and will undertake) to promote financial inclusion.

First, Priority Sector Lending, also called PSL, has been in place to promote agricultural and Cottage and Small Industries (CSI) sector through providing them with better access to finance and increased opportunities for youth employment. This has been termed as an 'integrated' intervention, "from the government with collective commitment from the financial sector for better financing…to catalyse the CSI sector into a growth driver that will contribute to achieving Bhutan's overarching national goal of sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development.[14]"

Second, two documents, namely the National Financial Literacy Strategy (NFLS) 2018-2013 and National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) 2018-2013, a first ever

[14]https://thebhutanese.bt/psl-guideline-launched/ (Accessed on April 3, 2019)

initiative by the authority, have been devised to 'enhance RMA's strategic priority' in promoting financial literacy and consequently financial inclusion. With this a Financial Inclusion and Literacy Division has also been created by the RMA, to support, and is responsible to implement both NFLS and NFIS Action Plan 2018-2023.

Third, digitization and the promotion of e-payment gateways. With the increasing use in technology and internet, the RMA has aptly mandated commercial banks to devise people-friendly technology with mostly no charges in orderto encourage electronic fund transfers, mobile banking and payments. This makes cashless transactions convenient and cost-effective, while also strategically formalizing the flow of finance to the banking systems.

Finally, RMA has been trying to deepen financial inclusion by promoting Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) and Cottage and Small Industries (CSIs) banks. As of March 2018, RMA has certified and promoted three MFIs, namely RENEW Microfinance, Bhutan Association for Women Entrepreneurs, and Rural Enterprise Development and Rural Enterprise Development Cooperation Limited, "with the primary focus on women empowerment and promotion of non-formal rural activities" (RMA, 2018; p 10).

With all these policies and provisions in place, and of course the tireless effort of the RMA, the country can surely hope to improve its banking penetration, and consequently its financial inclusion in the near future

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Ecotourism and Social Cohesion: Contrasting Phobjikha and Laya Experiences

JESSE MONTES,[1] BHUWAN KAFLEY, DILISHA SUBBA, THINLEY DEMA, TASHI DENDUP & PEMA SELDEN

ABSTRACT. Phobjikha and Laya stand as popular tourist destinations in Bhutan, with much potential for future Sustainable Development initiatives that seek to dovetail conservation and livelihood concerns. While ecotourism has been employed in each location, they have done so through different strategies, resulting in differing social outcomes. Through the lens of Neoliberal Conservation, social cohesion, a key GNH indicator, was assessed in each location to understand the broader impact of ecotourism on local communities. Results show communities of Phobjikha experiencing a loss of community cohesion due to increased competition and privatization introduced by the ecotourism sector. As such, ecotourism in this context serves as a quintessential neoliberal project. In contrast, Laya residents express increased social cohesion and lack resentment towards neighbors who serve as competitors for limited tourist earnings. These differences are attributed to existing economic stability, threshold capacities for tourist numbers, and the influence of external actors. As such, these conditions serve as a cautionary note to policy makers, and both communities, as they look to expand ecotourism opportunities in their respective regions.

Introduction

Ecotourism has become synonymous with development in many countries seeking to combat poverty and encourage conservation agendas. 'Win-win' scenarios, meeting socio-economic and conservation goals, motivate the adoption of ecotourism as a

[1] Jesse Montes is Senior Lecturer at the Royal Thimphu College and PhD candidate with Wageningen University & Research. Research areas include ecotourism, environmental impact assessment, ethnoecology and governance. The corresponding author can be reached at jessem@rtc.bt.

strategy, which has been affirmed by local, national, and international entities. The sector is understood as being more 'sustainable' than its older sibling 'tourism', and has been promoted by states, international organizations and development consultants. However, a number of negative impacts from the sector have received attention calling for a critical analysis of planning and operation going forward. This research adopts a case study approach to compare the sector's impact on two rural communities in Bhutan. The study shows that each community's experience differs, which is attributed to underlying economic circumstances, despite each location's investment and efforts related to the sector's development. We focus specifically on the impacts on social cohesion, which is a critical indicator of the country's Gross National Happiness (GNH) agenda, and therefore represents a key criterion for measuring the sector's success. Through a political ecology perspective, we frame ecotourism as a quintessential form of neoliberal conservation. As such, we understand the logics of ecotourism to contest rooted values embedded in Bhutanese society and the country's GNH agenda (Montes, 2019). Nevertheless, we work towards emancipatory goals in order to promote novel adaptations of ecotourism that resonate with the country's vision for development.

Much of what guides ecotourism in Bhutan, and development more broadly, is Gross National Happiness policy. While originally conceptualized as a philosophy, it has experienced a number of renditions to include four pillars, later an expansion to nine domains, and is now accompanied by a series of tools/institutions including the policy screening tool, project screening tool, the GNH commission, GNH index, GNH committees, GNH check, and Five-Year Plans (Schroeder, 2014; 2018). The 12th Five Year plan explicitly works to frame GNH in terms of the nine domains, leaving behind the four pillar approach, in an effort "to bring about greater synergy and focus on the impact of development programmes across the Nine Domains which forms the primary basis of measuring our progress towards achieving Gross National Happiness" (RGoB, 2017, p.1). With numerous Five-Year plans (see RGoB, 2017, 2013a, 2013b, 2008, 2003) and other planning documents (see RGoB, 1999; TCB 2012; NBC, 2014) pointing to ecotourism as a key component to accomplishing GNH within the country, it is necessary to establish a tradition of scrutiny that continuously works to improve the long-term operations of the sector.

We show that ecotourism success is partially dependent on already existing capacities within communities, and not solely dependent on proper management and implementation. Our exploration is narrowed to the aspect of social cohesion, although we recognize that other criteria also play a role in planning decisions that either promote or discourage ecotourism operations. In the case of Laya, despite ecotourism being

implemented only very recently and having relatively low tourist volumes, homestay operators and other residents have positive reports regarding social interactions and a maintenance of communitarian ideals. In contrast, Phobjikha has been operating as an ecotourism destination for many years and has seen a comparatively large number of visitors, and yet social conflicts between competing homestays, minimized interactions with neighbors, and decreased interaction with elders has been reported. These differences are attributed to factors of economic stability, threshold capacities to host tourists, and the influence of external actors. Therefore, this work contributes to GNH studies by providing a comparative concentrated analysis of social cohesion (a component of the 'community vitality' domain) within the country's ecotourism sector.

In what follows, we provide a review of literature pertaining to neoliberal conservation, distinguishing ecotourism as a particular strategy within this movement. We then review ecotourism as a sector within Bhutan, provide a summary of critical perspectives, and present GNH as a transformative tool to be applied to the sector. Following this we introduce our case study of two selected sites, Phobjikha and Laya. Data will present contrasting experiences attributed to criterion independent of the way ecotourism has been established and practiced in each location. We then discuss the findings in relation to broader trends in the ecotourism sector and how they relate to Bhutan's achievement of GNH.

Neoliberal Conservation

Neoliberal Conservation can be understood as a particular phase of capitalism, and characterizes the current international discourse and practice around conservation initiatives. By 'phase', we refer to the distinction that Büscher and Fletcher (2015) make between various modes of operation and accumulation that capitalism adopts throughout time in order to deal with barriers to accumulation. What brings us to our current phase is the realization that resources are finite, and therefore require, as some posit, encapsulation by the economy. Thus, the barrier to accumulation is a limitation of resources, and thus must be addressed by ascribing value to in-situ conservation that may maintain profit potential. Whereas previous strategies for conservation may have provided a protectionist model in appealing to societal values or ethics, capitalism provides the underlying motivation for conservation by attributing economic value to resources. This commodification of the environment serves multiple goals including the avoidance of environmental externalities (Meadows et al. 2005), efficient allocation of resources (Elgar, 2007) and continued economic growth.

Strategies for neoliberal conservation seek to harness markets as mechanisms for conservation, and shy away from state control, which is seen as a hindrance to efficiency (Barnett, 2010; West and Carrier, 2004). This paradigm is accompanied by numerous strategies such as Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES), tax structures, and ecotourism, manifested through the likes of community-based ventures prescribing increased ownership, control and decision-making ability to local residents. While such projects are often framed as positive opportunities for development which increase local decision making and equity, they also support a neoliberal rationale characterized by privatization, competition and efficiency driven profit maximization (Montes & Kafley, 2019). Neoliberal conservation strategies work to harness the power of markets in order to protect nature, but also to ensure that economic growth goes on unfettered.

Critiques of neoliberal conservation are numerous. Honey (2008), Fletcher (2009), and Montes (2019) show how ecotourism's neoliberal logic promotes economics as the primary motivator for conservation with profit "at the forefront of operations" (Duffy, 2002, p.155). Fletcher and Breitling (2012) provide a nuanced analysis of PES strategies showing how, while intended to rely on market interactions for which 'buyers' and 'sellers' develop, these strategies, in practice, result in reliance on government subsidies. As such, while many countries look towards PES mechanisms, such as Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+), as a strategy for obtaining conservation funding, in the end it is local governments that sustain such programs. What this body of literature shows is that the profit motivated logics promote adverse impacts and the reliance on market tools have proved unsuccessful.

Additionally, the literature is abundant with examples of negative social consequences that result from neoliberal conservation strategies. Fletcher (2009, 2010, 2014), West and Carrier (2004), and Hutchins (2007) all show how ecotourism is used "as a means for inculcating norms and values associated with a neoliberal logic" (Montes and Kafley, 2019). With new values, then, comes the danger of undermining existing ethical, moral, and spiritual motivators for conservation (Singh, 2015). Holmes and Cavanaugh (2016) emphasize that these are not just isolated cases and that "within neoliberal conservation, processes of neoliberalisation nevertheless tend to produce certain recurring trends in their social impacts" (p.199). They then emphasize a reshaping of local values and subjectivities that also reify existing inequalities. By subjectivities they mean that novel forms of power are adopted in which conservation regulations are no longer imposed through sovereign governance models (i.e. fortress conservation or fines approaches) and rather work to change behaviors "by appealing to economic rationales and altering values and ideologies" (p.206). They then conclude

that trends of social impacts include: increasing resource availability for elite capture, rewarding actors that are already comparatively economically better-off, distinctions made between social groups and decisions about who can and can't access resources. However, they also recognize the potential for empowerment and alleviation of such inequalities and call for "novel analyses and interrogations of the changing forms of conservation governance, as well as explanations of its diverse social and economic outcomes" (p.207). It is to this call that we hope to attend and provide nuanced analyses that may reveal avenues for improving conservation, and specifically ecotourism practice, within the GNH agenda.

Ecotourism in Bhutan

Ecotourism options in Bhutan have multiplied as the country comes to terms with a bulging tourism sector by seeking new products and opportunities for visitors. Ecotourism in the country, as per the NRED et al. (2012) Guidelines for Ecotourism, is defined by "high value low impact travel that supports the protection of cultural and natural heritage; provides positive and enriching experiences for visitors and hosts; assures tangible benefits to local people; and contributes to the pillars of Gross National Happiness" (p.15). However, it is also equated with the term 'Sustainable Tourism', which is characterized by "(i) environmentally friendly operations, (ii) support for the protection of cultural and natural heritage; and (iii) direct contribution to the social and economic well-being of local people and indigenous communities" (NRED et al., 2012, p.13). Gurung and Seeland (2008) take this even further to say that "all tourism in Bhutan can be said to be a type of ecotourism" (p.492), as does Rinzin et al. (2007) who claim that ecotourism characterizes the larger national tourism strategy.

While the 2012 guideline (NRED et al.) lays out a framework for planning and management of ecotourism within the protected areas network of the country, this has not constrained operations from being initiated elsewhere. Therefore, while many locations within parks such as Mt. Jomolhari, Laya, and Merak/Sakteng have been heralded as ecotourism destinations, Phobjikha, Haa, and others outside the protected areas network have also seen successful start-ups. Activities under this ecotourism banner include bird watching, fishing, rafting, trekking, hot springs, and cultural tours (DoT, 2001). Part of Bhutan's allure to ecotourist is also grounded in the presence of unique flora and fauna including the Red Panda, Black necked Crane, Takin, numerous species of Rhododendrons and Himalayan Poppies, and more.

Pivotal works that address ecotourism in Bhutan include Rinzin et al. (2007) and Gurung and Seeland (2011) who attribute ecotourism as a way to promote sustainable development, Gurung and Seeland (2008) who make an appeal to extend tourism benefits to rural areas, and Gurung and Scholz (2008) with their multi-stakeholder assessment pointing towards benefits of community-based operations. Pertaining to social impacts, the work of Rinzin et al. (2007) claims that "the impact on culture and the environment is currently low. However, expected growth may, if it is not managed properly, erode the unique nature of tourism in Bhutan" (p.109). They attribute this low impact to the state's 'controlled liberalization' approach which permits freedom within the private sector in relation to ecotourism expansion yet preventive measures are put in place to protect culture. Interestingly enough, soon after this publication, Gurung and Scholz (2008) and Gurung and Seeland (2011) both point towards potential inequalities emerging in rural areas due to increased incomes in rural areas.

More recently, the work of Karst (2016, 2017; Karst and Gyeltshen, 2016) on ecotourism in Bhutan has provided additional analyses that point towards entrenched social conflicts. She notes that "ecotourism is often introduced, supported, or dominated by external actors or agencies" (Karst, 2016, p.1), supporting sentiments of Bixler et al. (2015) that "find political mistrust by local people of state authorities and conservation programs" (p.175). External actors, defined by Karst, included those from outside the highland communities she conducted research in, including government officials and park rangers that promoted ecotourism throughout the Merak/Sakteng region. Distrust and angst with such individuals was attributed to unrealized economic benefits. Karst (2016) concludes that "ecotourism fostered discord in human relations while nature was seen as a commodity through which tourism could be used to harness its economic value" (p.8). Therefore, while social relations experienced strain, this also impacted broader human-environment relations as a result of commodification processes. In addition to external actors, community members themselves experienced negative interactions with each other. Shopkeepers, livestock owners, pony porters and homestay owners were seen to have specific advantages that allowed them to access tourism dollars more readily, creating inequities that were, ideally, meant to be squashed. As such, reframing of the landscape as a source of economics and restructuring livelihood opportunities in terms of competitive advantages within ecotourism has emphasized competitive social relations. While competition may have been present previously, ecotourism has introduced a novel dynamic that has instigated a social reconfiguration.

Incorporating GNH

As mentioned in the country's ecotourism definition, GNH is a critical element to planning and implementation of the sector. Montes and Bhattarai (2018) and Montes (2019) make direct linkages between GNH and ecotourism pointing out that GNH represents a hopeful imaginary for what the sector could be. While a neoliberal rationale (competition, commodification, market reliance) underscores ecotourism, GNH provides contesting discourses that provide a potential for transforming the sector. Montes (2019) frames GNH as a formal institution that, despite neoliberal conservation's priorities of accumulation, "instils a more holistic ethic in policy making" and "plays a critical role in directing neoliberal trends" (p.13).

GNH works to promulgate nine domains: psychological wellbeing, standard of living, good governance, health, education, community vitality, cultural diversity and resilience, time use, and ecological diversity and resilience. These domains are then separated into various indicators, for the purpose of measurement within the GNH index. For our purposes in this research, we are interested in investigating ecotourism's impact on community vitality, which is expanded to the following indicators "1) social support which depicts the civic contributions made 2) community relationship, which refers to social bonding and a sense of community 3) family relationships, and 4) perceived safety." (Ura et al., 2012, 161). It is to this domain that the Provisional Findings of the 2015 GNH Survey (Ura et al., 2015) asks "Are our communities more cohesive?" To which the report responds:

> There were statistically significant decreases in sufficiency in all four of its component indicators, and an overall decrease in the contribution of communities to overall wellbeing. The donations of time and money fell by 3%, but the largest change by far was in community relationships. The percentage of people having sufficient trust in their neighbours and sense of 'belonging' to their communities plummeted by 11%, making a noticeable reduction in the contribution of community vitality to GNH (p.70).

Narrowing this analysis even more, we look to the second indicator, that of community relationship. Here we find the core of what we refer to as social cohesion. We accept the findings of Ura et al. (2012) that "identify the community to be one of the significant determinants of wellbeing for individuals, as well as families and

communities" (p.160). Social bonding and a sense of community are thus understood as critical elements. It is this criterion for GNH that we apply a critical comparative assessment of two ecotourism operations in the country.

Methodology

This analysis emerged from a broad ecotourism study that sought to explore sustainability of the sector. After visiting numerous ecotourism destinations, including the Druk Path, Phajoding Eco-Camp, Haa Valley, and others, team members noticed a particular contrast between data gathered at both Phobjikha and Laya communities. Social cohesion became a dominant theme in interviews, calling for an intensified investigation. In contrast to the GNH index approach to measure community relationship, which is more quantitative for purposes of creating index values, we adopt qualitative methodology. Field visits were conducted from 2015-2018 in the communities of Phobjikha and Laya, with research team members being present both during and outside key festival dates (Phobjikha Black-Necked Crane Festival, 2015, 2016, 2017; Laya Royal Highlander Festival, 2017, 2018). This engagement allowed researchers to ascertain fresh recall of individual experiences related to ecotourism sector involvement. Through semi-structured interviews and participant observation we engaged a total of 110 individuals to gain an understanding of how ecotourism impacts social cohesion. Interviewees comprised 51 females and 59 males who ranged from ages 15-72 and included community members, homestay owners, shopkeepers, festival attendees and members of the monk body. Interviews were conducted primarily in Dzongkha, unless otherwise requested by the interviewees, and recorded for data retention purposes. Interview recordings were later transcribed into English and analysed through NVivo 11 data analysis software.

We recognize that issues of social cohesion may not be causally linked to ecotourism engagement. There are numerous variables that likely impact social cohesion and should be explored further. The purpose here is to highlight individual experiences as they engage in ecotourism and look towards possible remedies for improving GNH outcomes.

Ecotourism Engagement and Social Cohesion

Phobjikha

Phobjikha, used here in reference to the larger Phobjikha Valley that includes villages such as Phobji, Gangtey, Moel, Tangchey, Daphu, and others, is located in Wangduephodrang Dzongkhag and has largely become a popular tourism destination due to the presence of Black necked cranes. The cranes use the valley as winter habitat, arriving in early November and then return to summer habitat in Tibet in March. While Phobjikha does not lie within the boundaries of the country's national parks system, the wetland ecosystem was officially designated as a Ramsar site in June 2016 (Phuntsho, 2016a). The Royal Society for the Protection of Nature (RSPN) has adopted a large role in the protection of both the wetlands and the Black necked cranes and has made efforts to incorporate local involvement in conservation through their Community-Based Sustainable Tourism program. Through this program, ecotourism is employed as a means to educate both locals and visitors, provide conservation funding, and create economic opportunities for locals (RSPN, n.d.). Part of this effort has involved the creation of a homestay network in which operators commit a percentage of earnings to conservation and community efforts. A 2017 news article claims that since the inception of homestays in 2012 there were 21 operators that participated in the RSPN program (Gyelmo, 2017).

With RSPN conservation efforts starting in 1986 (Phuntsho and Tshering, 2015; Pradhan et al., 2014), it was in 1998 that the first Black Necked Crane Festival was held (Phuntsho, 2016b). This festival has brought significant attention to the valley, with visitor trends increasing each year. As such, RSPN's vision for the valley as an ecotourism destination has been challenged by an influx of other tourism actors looking to investment in the lucrative location, with a number of large resorts opening. While the resorts operate on the larger national policy of "high value – low impact" by entertaining demand for high-end tourist products, the nature of benefits to the local population is muddled thus contesting the broader goals of ecotourism. While these tourism actors are largely external, coming from locations such as Thimphu, Paro and even abroad, internal actors are also looking to capitalize on tourism profits. A number of local private homestays have emerged, not connected to the RSPN network, and therefore are not required to commit a percentage of profits to conservation efforts. Additionally, some homestays are owned by people originating from outside the valley and hire locals to run operations, with the majority of profits leaving the valley. These actors, both external and internal, create a competitive atmosphere in the valley that makes it difficult for the RSPN homestay network to maintain operations.

When asked about their experience since ecotourism operations were initiated in the valley, a 60-year-old female homestay owner had the following to say:

> They are a bit jealous with each other, homestay owners talking about others, there is this negative vibe developed through jealousy, jealousy is never a good thing

Further, a 25-year-old male Bhutanese, regarding homestay operations, commented:

> There are issues among homestays when one homestay earns more than the other. It seems like some homestays compare the money among others and complain about it creating misunderstanding amongst themselves

Other reports include:

> I think everyone is envious of each other because a person cannot have everything they need in one moment. People in my neighborhood envy me because I get income from the homestay...sometimes I feel insecure when I see new houses built because tourists will be attracted to that house and my business will lose customers (30-year old female homestay owner)

> those of farmhouse holdings and hotel owners are the only ones to be benefitted. Otherwise, the community as a whole is not benefitted (50-year-old female community member)

From comments such as this, it seems homestay operations are creating a competitive atmosphere, thus changing previous social interactions. This new livelihood activity, working towards accumulating limited available tourist dollars, now favors those with particular competitive advantages. Exacerbating this scenario, an international NGO was reported to be working with individual RSPN homestay owners to provide online advertising for their operations. While the intent was to improve visitor numbers to these homestays, it worked against the RSPN initiated reservation system that aimed at distributing tourists in an equitable manner to each member. While the community vitality GNH domain is characterized by 'social bonding' and 'a sense of community', interviewees reported:

> We all live in our own houses so we do not have much interaction or communication with our neighbors. People in our village are concerned with their own life (56-year-old female community member)

> People used to sit together and eat, but nowadays they eat separate and eat with a spoon instead of hands, like people in towns. People have started to speak other languages…imitating the tourists and changing their way of dressing. (34-year-old female community member)

> We all live in our own houses so we do not have much interaction or communication with our neighbors (56-year-old female community member)

> Youth behavior is changing. They have started to dress up like westerners, wanting to buy expensive electronics, and vehicles (53-year-old female homestay owner)

> Before we used to help with building houses…but nowadays we don't really need to help them because there are people who are made for this job and so we simply just watch and do nothing…now we don't have to depend on others because everyone has become independent and can now afford their own…necessities. So the relationships have changed as well. (31-year-old male community member)

While not all of these quotes point to ecotourism as the cause of such breakdown in social interaction, the general trend is concerning, thus begging the question, is ecotourism playing a role in the breakdown of community vitality? If not, why is ecotourism not promoting the opposite trend? Regardless of specific causal relationships, it is hoped that the implementation of ecotourism under GNH guidance should promote social cohesion rather than stand idly while other factors deteriorate this core value. More investigation is required in order to confirm such causal relations and what role the ecotourism sector has to play.

The Phobjikha case presents a scenario where ecotourism has been in operation for more than 20 years, has seen a large growing number of tourists, and has been facilitated by an NGO resulting in mixed success. Along with the data presented here, there were certainly other reports from interviewees to support successful economic and

conservation outcomes. However, these assessments were not uniform. Additionally, the RSPNs reservation system can be seen as a positive attempt to maintain communitarian ideals that work towards equitable distribution of ecotourism benefits. Regardless, social fissures have developed that have either been caused, or at least been ignored, by the ecotourism sector. These fissures may be due to other long-term modernization trends but may also be influenced by the neoliberal rationale underlying ecotourism, thus promoting new social interactions based on competition, decentralization, and market-based incentives.

Laya

The village of Laya has become a popular destination in recent years, not having the same volume of visitors that Phobjikha has had, but nevertheless has seen a steady increase in tourist numbers. The village is located in the northwest region of Bhutan within Jigme Dorji National Park along the infamous Snowman Trek, which is a 26+ day trek stretching from the Paro to Bumthang valleys (TCB, 2019). The 2015 Bhutan Tourism Report (TCB, 2016) states that the smaller Gasa to Laya trek received 291 trekkers in 2015, which represented a 2.06% increase from 2014. The 2017 Bhutan Tourism Report (TCB, 2018) then claims an increase to 319 visitors. While these numbers are still relatively small, it is indicative of a remote location separated from road connectivity that requires significant effort to reach. However, with the 11th Five-Year Plan promoting highland development through "livestock related festivals" (RGoB, 2013b, p.30), The Royal Highlander Festival was initiated in 2016. The festival includes a number of spectacles including horse racing, strong-man competitions, yak showings, dancing, comedic presentations, and more. Highland communities from across Bhutan gather to present their culture and products, including representatives from Haa, Paro, Thimphu, Bumthang, Lhuntse, Trashiyangtse, and Trashigang Dzonkhags.

During our field visits in 2016 and 2017 our research team attended the festivals and stayed in a number of homestays throughout the village. Discussions with villagers revealed that ecotourism was not a significant portion of their income as they were much more reliant on yak herding, but also the collection of various medicinal plant species. When asked about social interactions they commented:

> Before, other income was made by selling incense, and people who are rich did not really look after the problems of the commoners, but now

with the Cordycep business, people are more well-to-do and also more willing to help others. (45-year-old female community member)

In the past we had lack of food and resources, so it was difficult to be cordial to each other but now with our generous government and the King trying their best to provide us with all our demands, life is much easier. Now we are more friendly and compassionate towards each other. Cordycep is another helping hand in making our life much easier. Cordycep is our main source of living so it has solved our problem of poverty. (32-year-old male community member)

I have a very good relationship with my neighbors. If anything happens to me or my family my neighbors are the first to know and help out. During our financial difficulties our neighbors are the ones to help us out, so it is very important to have a good neighbor and have an even better relationship with them. They are of most import when you are building your house. They are your main labor and without them one wouldn't even have a roof over their head. (37-year-old male community member)

Earlier we didn't have much dealing with our neighbors because the houses were built far apart due to a small population. But now thanks to our King, we have the permission to harvest Cordycep and also due to the increase in population here, our relationship with our neighbors has significantly improved. (48-year-old female community)

It seems that the *Cordycep* harvest has played a significant role in improving economic status throughout the community. As such, community relations have improved. With the introduction of new livelihood opportunities through tourism, we were interested in ascertaining local accounts of how the sector was being developed and managed, with a keen interest on impacts to social cohesion. Noticeably, the establishment of homestays, and the larger ecotourism sector, were not reported as points of contention. Rather, both homestay owners and community members reported the following:

My husband is a carpenter, so we earn our revenue through construction and my husband says we can help our neighbors by not having homestay in our house so that there will be less competition and our neighbors can earn form tourism. (36-year-old female community member)

People are actually happy for us and there are certain people who allocate these tourists in different houses so we don't really think much about it. And it also depends on how many our house can accommodate…people do not treat me any differently because I accommodate tourists. (Laya Homestay owner)

We do not steal each other's' guests, so there is no need for anyone to get angry or feel jealous. In fact, if we cannot host tourists at a difficult time, we ask other homestays to do it and they will help us…as we will when they cannot. (Laya Homestay owner)

Now there are tourists coming in our village to see the festival, so people in our village have started homestays. While establishing a homestay we need to have a contract with the Gup, and our neighbors help each other to get the proper contract which strengthens our relationship in the neighborhood. (37-year-old community member)

Right now we do not keep any tourists in our house because my house is far from the festival ground, so tourists do not prefer being away from the festival. From my family I am the only one who is directly involved in tourism. I have yaks and horses so I help tourists carry their luggage from Laya to Gasa and I help tourists find a homestay. When I help the tourists to find a house I also help my fellow friends to earn some money by letting the people stay in their house. (37-year-old male community member)

It does benefit me being a homestay owner. And there is no way there will ever be a conflict among the neighbors. If I have guests and I don't have good vegetables to feed my guests, my neighbors are the ones who would actually bring what he has and will let me borrow it. Even curry cookers and other appliances sometimes. I would do the same for them. In fact there is more interaction among the neighbors due to it. We are all religious people here. We would always be happy of others' success. (35-year-old male homestay owner)

Therefore, while ecotourism cannot be attributed to the expressed social cohesion, we do see positive trends that allow the sector to support and reify community vitality. Community member assessments are generally positive and welcome increased efforts of the Dzongkhag administration to promote ecotourism in the area. However, these positive ecotourism trends seem reliant on economic baseline indicators.

Research team observations also noticed that there is little to no impact from external actors. While a number of external actors were present during the festival dates, that seemed to be the extent of their influence. The local Dzongkhag administration was involved in all the planning, working in collaboration with the Laya community. Additionally, the lack of road connectivity has not fostered a booming real estate market, thus Layaps are the sole residents in the village.

Discussion

Contributing Factors

The two cases show profound differences regarding reports of social cohesion. While the research is not able to make a causal connection to ecotourism specifically, there are a number of possible contributing factors that need to be explored in further research, in order to generate better data for future policy decisions. Three factors that need to be considered include economic stability, threshold capacities, and the influence of external actors.

Phobjikha residents are primarily dependent on potato farming, with some reporting that they run at a loss over consecutive years. As such, the promise of ecotourism as a new livelihood opportunity is very appealing. However, RSPN's strategy is to ensure that ecotourism is seen as a supplemental source of income and does not replace agriculture livelihoods (RSPN, n.d.; Phuntsho, 2010). Regardless, villagers have either been given false impressions or have created their own expectations about how ecotourism will impact them financially. This has resulted in similar frustrations as those found by Karst (2016) in Merak/Sakteng. Contrasting this, Laya residents have benefited immensely from the legalization of *Cordycep* harvest, which has become a primary source of income. Ecotourism is thus perceived by locals as supplemental income, and in return minimizes a sense of competition and conflict amongst community members. This points to the importance of existing economic stability that may allow the implementation of ecotourism to foster social cohesion.

Threshold capacities are also a critical factor, which emphasizes a location's ability to host a specific number of tourists. While tourism literature points to ecological thresholds (Shi et al., 2015; Singh and Mishra, 2004), in which local resources and ecosystems are determined to have a limit to the number of people they can support, we promote efforts to also emphasize social thresholds (see Salerno et al., 2013). Capacities of local communities to engage with outsiders in a way that maintains social values and practice is important to the GNH agenda. The village of Laya has supported very few tourists in comparison to the Phobjikha valley and has thus not experienced the same level of tourist interaction. Phobjikha reports allude to the fact that homestay owners have become more individualistic as they entertain tourists, gearing their homes around tourist interactions, that may deter other community members from visiting. The negative comments regarding social cohesion may indicate that the valley has reached a particular social threshold for engagement in the ecotourism sector. This is not to say that the RSPN homestays are attracting a plethora of tourists, in fact many have reported that they are unable to attract as many clients as they would like. However, the valley as a whole does receive a large number of visitors, with the majority staying at large hotels and resorts. Nevertheless, homestay owners have a particular expectation of economic benefit that is not being met, which is frustrating as they see many tourists present. Therefore, while thresholds related to economic capacities may reveal opportunities for increased revenues in rural Phobjikha households, social thresholds will likely show the opposite, that community relations are stressed and not fostered through ecotourism engagement.

External actors are also playing a role in the contrasting experiences of Phobjikha and Laya. While Phobjikha has seen a range of actors including international NGOs, national NGOs, and trans-local capitalist actors, Laya has essentially seen no such interaction. While the influence of external actors within traditional tourism debates is framed in terms of economic leakages, which is also occurring in Phobjikha, we stress the social fissures that have emerged. These external actors have promoted an atmosphere of competition that has unduly put pressure on a homestay network that was established through communitarian ideals. Therefore, the efforts of RSPN, while external in nature itself, have been thwarted through additional external actor interference. This competition is related to the underlying neoliberal logic of ecotourism. That being said, future research needs to explore how the discursive logics of the sector can be adapted as to provide the communitarian values promoted by RSPN and the broader GNH agenda.

Reassessing Ecotourism in Bhutan

Earlier in this manuscript we acknowledged the work of Rinzin et al. (2007) who claimed that ecotourism's impact on culture was 'currently low'. With this assessment now being twelve years old, it is necessary to reassess the sector. With $29.85 million (USD) earned in 2007 from international visitors (TCB, 2013), this has risen to $79.8 million (USD) in 2017 (TCB, 2018), resulting in a more than doubling of the sector. While these numbers reflect the broader tourism sector, we reflect back to the definitions of ecotourism within the country which conflate tourism, sustainable tourism and ecotourism (see Gurung and Seeland (2008) and Rinzin et al., 2007). While such a conflation is problematic, we nevertheless want to comment on the current state of ecotourism in regard to the five conclusions found in Rinzin et al. (2007), which include:

1. "The tourism sector is a fast-growing service sector" and "has created a fair and healthy playing field for competition"
2. "Government exercises strong control over tourism" but "comprehensive integrated policy is still lacking and various stakeholders stress the need for a stronger and clearer government policy"
3. "Tourism provides additional income and generates self-employment. Hence, tourism has the potential to avert urban migration from rural areas and to keep alive the local culture, arts, and crafts"
4. "The 'high value, low impact' policy can be judged a success…local communities respond very positively to tourists visiting their communities and say that negative impacts on their culture are generally non-existent"
5. "continued growth, eventually up to double the volume of 2004, needs to be carefully managed in order to prevent adverse effects…concerted action…is needed to successfully adhere to the 'high value, low impact' principle" (pp.123-124)

The first part of conclusion 1 is applicable to the present day in that it recognizes growth in the sector and that 'fair' competition has been facilitated. However, what is fair? This seems to imply an issue of equality. While we agree that various actors are able to access the ecotourism market and fairly compete with one another, this does not account for the disadvantages that rural populations have compared to other actors. There are issues of existing economic advantages and management capacities that necessarily favor tourism actors from urban locations such as Thimphu, Paro,

Phuentsholing and others. In this sense, we contest the fairness of such competitive relations, while also contradicting the 'healthy playing field' in light of the social conflicts that have resulted in the Phobjikha case. In terms of Laya, however, there does in fact seem to be more relevance for conclusion 1, although more thoughtful policy work is needed to advance the sector in this region. Conclusion 2 is still very relevant as the government continues to emphasize a "controlled liberalization" (Rinzin et al., 2007) governance model, which has the potential to reverse negative trends from ecotourism's neoliberal rational. This potential could be enacted through collaborative policy making that accounts for impacts, such as those found in this study. Conclusion 3 also has relevance to today's sector, providing income opportunities to rural areas. However, while our current study does not address this specifically, future work needs to explore the effectiveness of these income distribution policy efforts.

In conclusion 4 we see a major discrepancy between then and now. Our findings show that community members in Phobjikha are experiencing negative impacts on their culture, related to social cohesion (i.e. reduced reliance on communal labor, increased competition, lack of Traditional Knowledge transfer, disputes over hosting tourists), which contradicts this 2007 assessment. While Laya has not experienced negative impacts as such, this may be due to the fact that the sector is still in its infancy stage in this location. Regardless, the case of Phobjikha shows this conclusion to be inapplicable to today's ecotourism sector in the country, which should serve as a warning post to decision makers going forward.

And finally, conclusion 5 looks to encourage the sector to expand 'up to double the volume of 2004'. 2004 earnings were $12.5 million (USD) with approximately 9,249 international visitors (TCB, 2011). These numbers pale in comparison to 2017 in which $79.8 million (USD) came from 71,417 international tourists, which is only a portion of the larger 254,704 visitors when you combine both international and regional guests (TCB, 2018). While Rinzin et al. (2007) called for a doubling of 2004 volumes, what recommendation should we present in light of an almost eight-fold increase? Our purpose here is not to disseminate specific policy recommendations. However, we do want to emphasize that our data presents the need for a reassessment of the sector. Such a reassessment requires careful consideration of community vitality, and specifically social cohesion, which is a primary goal of GNH.

Conclusion

Framing ecotourism as part of larger neoliberal trends is a contentious claim in light of global efforts to reinforce the strategy as a path to equitable sustainable development. Nevertheless, conservation literature is clear in this equivocation showing ecotourism as an embodiment of neoliberal logics and practice. As such, we have sought to explore practice of the sector in Bhutan, which has developed a reputation for GNH that represents an alternative development model. That being said, how can GNH, as an alternative to hegemonic trends that prioritize economic indicators and strategies, utilize ecotourism as a development tool despite its underlying neoliberal logic? The data presented in this research shows that this process has not been without struggle.

Social cohesion, something we affiliate with the Community Vitality domain of GNH, emerges as a critical indicator to the (un)successfulness of ecotourism. The cases of Phobjikha and Laya show two contrasting experiences. While Phobjikha has 20+ years of experience with the ecotourism sector and a comparatively larger portion of tourist visitations, social cohesion is reported to be in disarray. Laya, on the other hand, has less experience, less visitors, and yet social cohesion is thriving. Being clear that the data does not point towards a causal relationship between social cohesion and ecotourism, we further complicate the connection by positing other contributing factors that likely play a role: economic stability, social threshold capacities, and the influence of external actors. Regardless, we challenge the sector by asking, even if ecotourism is not causing a breakdown in social cohesion, why isn't it supporting it? And if it is not supportive, how should the GNH agenda move forward in discouraging/encouraging development of the sector? These cases offer warning posts to policy makers and should prompt investigation of factors that facilitate successful ecotourism implementation.

To conclude, we would like to make it clear that we are not promoting an abandonment of ecotourism as a development strategy. Rather, we promote critical investigation that looks to acknowledge underlying logics of the sector in order to repurpose them in-line with the societal values inherent in GNH. While we have highlighted a single element of the GNH bricolage, we encourage future research to explore additional domains. Through such intensified analyses ecotourism can become the hopeful development solution that Bhutan envisions it to be.

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ཐེག་ཆེན་སེམས་ཀྱི་རི་མོ།

མཚོ་སྐྱེས་རྡོ་རྗེའམ་ཐུབ་བསྟན་འོད་དཀར།[1]

ཟླ་ མདོན་ཡོད་དང་མདོན་མིན་གྱི་ཚོས་ཆུ་ལུ་ སྐྱེས་སྦྱངས་ཀྱི་རིགས་པའི་སྟོབས་ཀྱིས་ ཞིབ་འཚོལ་ཆུལ་མཐུན་གྱི་ཐོག་ལས་གནད་དོན་ངོ་མ་དེ་འཚོལ་བའི་དུས་སྐབས་ཅིག་ཡིན། དེ་བཟུམ་མའི་དུས་སྐབས་ནང་ལུ་ མདོན་མིན་སེམས་ཀྱི་སྐོར་ལས་བཀྲད་བསྡུ་སྟེ་ཞུ་བ་ཅིན། སེམས་ཀྱི་གནས་ཆུལ་ངོ་མ་འདི་ གསལ་ཏོག་ཏོ་ དཀའ་ཏོག་གི་ཅི་ཡང་མེད་པ་ཅིག་ཡིན། འདི་ཤེས་ཞིའི་དོན་ལུ་ ཐོས་བསམ་སྒོམ་གསུམ་གྱི་ལམ་རྣམ་དག་ཅིག་ཤམས་སུ་ལེན་དགོཔ་ཡིན། ལམ་རྣམ་དག་ལས་བརྟེན་ ལམ་ཤམས་སུ་ལེན་པའི་གང་ཟགཔ་ཆུ་གི་རྒྱུད་ལུ་ སྤྲུག་བསྡལ་གྱི་རྒྱུན་ཆད་པ་ཡིན། སེམས་ཀྱི་གནས་ཆུལ་འདི་བཟུམ་ཡིན་རུང་ ང་བཅས་ཆུ་གིས་ སེམས་ཀྱི་རང་བཞིན་ནམ་གནས་ཆུལ་ངོ་མ་འདི་ མ་ཤེས་པའི་ཁང་ སེམས་ཀྱི་སྣང་ཆུལ་བརྒྱད་སྤེ་ཡོད་མི་དེ་ལུ་ཡང་ མགོ་རྩོངས་ཏེ་ཡོདཔ་ཡིན། དེ་འབདཝ་ནི་འདི་གིས་ དཔེ་དེབ་འདི་ནང་ལུ་ སེམས་ཀྱི་སྣང་ཆུལ་མ་དག་པའི་རྣམ་རྟོག་གི་ངོ་སྤྲོད་ཁ་གསལ་སྤེ་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཚད་ ཐོས་བསམ་སྒོམ་གསུམ་གྱི་ལམ་རྣམ་དག་ལས་བརྟེན་ མ་དག་པའི་རྣམ་རྟོག་གི་ངང་དག་ནས་ སེམས་ཀྱི་གནས་ཆུལ་ངོ་ཤེས་ཆུགས་པའི་ཁེ་ཕན་སྤྲོས་ཡོད་ལུགས་ཆུ་གི་སྐོར་ལས་ཆུད་དེ་ཡོདཔ་ཡིན་ཟེར་ཞུ་ནི།

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[1] རྟ་མགོ་མཐོ་རིམ་གཙུག་ལག་སློབ་སྟེ་ནང་ལུ་ ལེགས་སྦྱར་བ་སྤེ་ཅོ་དབཏུད་ཀྱི་རིང་ཕུག་ཞུ་ཡོད་པའི་ཁར་ སྐྱབས་རྗེ་ཁྲང་རྗེ་བཙུན་བསྟན་འཛིན་དོན་གྲུབ་ཀྱི་ཞབས་ལས། ཕུག་ཆེན་ཚོས་རྡུག་གི་གདམས་ངག་ཞུ་སྟེ་ཉམས་སུ་ལེན་ནི་དོན་ལུ་ ལོ་གསུམ་སྒོམགས་གསུམ་ ལྷུགས་རིའི་རྗེ་གདན་ལུ་བཅད་ཡོད། འཕྲུག་མེ་ལོང་ཟེར་བའི་གསར་ཤོག་གི་ཅོམ་སྤྲིག་པའི་འགན་ཁུར་ཡང་འབག་ཅི། དཔྱོ་ ཕིམ་ཕུ་རྒྱལ་འཛིན་མཐོ་རིམ་སློབ་གྲྭ་ནང་ལུ་ རྒྱ་གར་ཀྱི་མཁས་གྲུབ་ཆུ་གིས་གསུངས་ཡོད་པའི་ཐེག་ཆེན་ཚུ་ དོན་གཉིར་ཀྱི་སྤྲོབ་ཕྲུག་ཚུ་ སྤྲོབ་སྟོན་འབདཝ་དེ་ཡོདཔ་ཅིན་ཟེར་ཞུ་ནི།

ངདང་འབྲེལ་བ་འཐབས། tsokeyd@rtc.bt

ཀ་ ཐོག་མར་དག་བ་ཤད་ཀྱི་དོན་ལ།

དངས་མཚོད་པ་བརྗོད་པ་ནི།

ཨོཾ ། བཅོམ་ལྡན་མགོན་པོ་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཆེ་དཔག་མེད། །འཆི་མེད་ཆེ་ཡི་སྐུ་བརྙེས་པརླུ་འབྱུང་། །

འཆི་མེད་དོན་ལ་མཉམ་བཞག་རྣམ་པར་རྒྱལ། །མཆོག་གསུམ་བླ་མས་དགེ་ཞིང་ལེགས་པ་སྩོལ། །

གཉིས་པ་བརྩམ་པ་དམ་བཅའ་བ་ནི།

རང་ཉིད་སྐྱེས་སྦྱངས་བློ་གྲོས་མཐུ་ཆུང་ཡང་། །ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོ་མངོན་པའི་གཞུང་བཟང་ལ། །

བརྩོན་པས་ཐོབ་པའི་སེམས་ཀྱི་རི་མོ་རྣམས། །གཞན་ལ་ཕན་ཕྱིར་ཚུལ་ཅམ་བགོད་ནས་ཕྱལ། །

ཁ་ བར་དུ་དགེ་བ་གཞུངས་ཀི་དོན་ལ།

དངས་སེམས་དང་སེམས་བྱུང་གི་ངོས་དྲི་བ་དང་ལན་གྱི་ཚུལ་གྱིས་མདོར་བསྟན་པ།

གཉིས་པ་སེམས་རེ་རེ་བཞིན་གྱི་ངོས་རྒྱས་པར་བཤད་པ།

གསུམ་པ་དོགས་སེལ་གྱི་དོན་དུ་སེམས་ཀྱི་ངོས་དང་འབྲེལ་བའི་དྲི་ལན་གྱི་ཚུལ་གྱིས་མཐའ་དཔྱད་པ།

དངས་སེམས་དང་སེམས་བྱུང་གི་ངོས་དྲི་ལན་གྱི་ཚུལ་གྱིས་མདོར་བསྟན་པ་ནི།

དྲི་བ་ སེམས་ཞེར་མི་འདི་ གཅིག་བརྒྱལ་ཅིག་ལུ་ གོཕ་ཙིན་ན?

ལན་ དཔེར་ན་ པར་བཏབ་པའི་སྐབས་ལུ་ པར་ཤིང་དེ་གིས་ པར་གྱི་ངོ་བོ་ཅམ་ཚུར་ལེན་དོ་བཟུམ་སྟེ་ སེམས་དེ་གིས་ གཟུགས་སྣ་ལ་སོགས་པའི་ཆོས་རྣམས་ཀྱི་དོན་གྱི་ངོ་བོ་ཅམ་རིག་པའམ་ཤེས་མི་གསལ་རིག་གི་ཚ་ဒེགཽ་ལུ་སེམས་ཟེར་སྣབ་ཨིན།།

དྲི་བ་ སེམས་བྱུང་ཟེར་མི་འདི་ གཅི་བཟུམ་ཅིག་ལུ་ གོཕ་ཨིན་ན?

ལན་ དཔེར་ན་ པར་ཤིང་གིས་ པར་ཚུར་ལེནམ་དང་དུས་མཉམ་དུ་ པར་གྱི་ཆ་ཚུང་དང་པར་གྱི་ཆོས་གཞིའི་ལེགས་ཉེས་ཀྱི་ཁྱད་པར་སྟབས་ཅིག་ཁར་བྱུང་ནི་བཟུམ་སྟེ་ སེམས་དང་ལྡན་ཅིག་ཁ་ཤས་ཀྱི་ཁྱད་པར་ཤིང་ལ་སེམས་བྱུང་ཟེར་སྣབ་ཨིན་མས།།

རྒྱབ་རྟེན། མདོན་པའི་གཞུང་ལས། དེ་ལ་དོན་མཐོང་རྣམ་པར་ཤེས།།དེ་ཡི་ཁྱད་པར་སེམས་ལས་བྱུང་།།ཞེས་གསུངས་སོ།།

དྲི་བ་ སེམས་དང་སེམས་བྱུང་གཉིས་དུས་སྟབས་ཅིག་ཁར་བྱུངམ་ཨིན་ན་ ཡང་ན་ སྔ་ཕྱིའི་རིམ་པ་བཞིན་དུ་བྱུངམ་ཨིན་ན?

ལན་ དཔེར་ན་ པར་ཤིང་གིས་ པར་བཏབ་པའི་སྐབས་ལུ་ པར་གྱི་ངོ་བོ་དང་པར་གྱི་ཆོས་གཞིའི་ལེགས་ཉེས་ཀྱི་ཁྱད་པར་ཚུ་དུས་སྟབས་ཅིག་ཁར་བྱུང་ནི་བཟུམ་སྟེ་ སེམས་དང་སེམས་བྱུང་གཉིས་མཚུངས་ལྡན་ལྡའི་སྐོ་ལས་དུས་སྟབས་ཅིག་ཏུ་བྱུངམ་ཨིན།།

དྲི་བ་ སེམས་ཟེར་མི་འདི་ གཅིག་ཏུང་མ་ཅིག་ཙམ་ན་ ཡང་ལེ་ཤ་ཡོད་པ་ཞིན་ན?

ལན་ སེམས་ལྟ་དབྱེ་བ་ཅིན་ རྣམ་པ་མ་འདྲཔ་བརྒྱད་ཡོད་པ་ཞིན། དེ་ཡང་ ཀུན་གཞི་རྣམ་ཤེས། ཉོན་མོངས་ཅན་གྱི་ཡིད། མིག་གི་རྣམ་ཤེས། རྣ་བའི་རྣམ་ཤེས། སྣའི་རྣམ་ཤེས། ལྕེའི་རྣམ་ཤེས། ལུས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་ཤེས། ཡིད་ཀྱི་རྣམ་ཤེས་ཚུ་ཞིན། དེའི་སྐོར་ལས་རྒྱས་བཤད་འགའ་ལས་ཞུ་ནི་ཞིན།།

དྲི་བ་ སེམས་བྱུང་ཟེར་མི་འདི་ གཅིག་ཏུང་མ་ཅིག་ཞིན་ན་ ཡང་ན་ལེ་ཤ་ཡོད་པ་ཞིན་ན?

ལན་ སེམས་བྱུང་ལྟ་དབྱེ་བ་ཅིན་ རྣམ་པ་མ་འདྲཔ་ལྟ་བ་ཙུང་གཅིག་ཡོད། དེ་ཡང་ སྤེ་ཚན་བྱུག་སྤེ་ཡོད་པ་ཞིན། ཀུན་འགྱོ་༤ ཡུལ་དེས་༤ དགེ་བ་༡༡ རྩ་ཉོན་༦ ཉེ་ཉོན་༢༠ གཞན་འགྱུར་༩ ཚུ་ཞིན། དངོས་འདི་མཚན་ཉིད། སེམས་ཀུན་དང་དེས་པར་མཚུངས་པར་ལྡན་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ལྟ་ཀུན་འགྲོ་ཟེར་སྦྱབ་ཞིན། དབྱེ་ན་ཀུན་འགྲོ་ལྟ་ཡོད། དེ་ཡང་ ཆོར་བ་དང་། འདུ་ཤེས་དང་། སེམས་པ་དང་། ཡིད་ལ་བྱེད་པ་དང་། རེག་པའོ། དངཔ་སེམས་བྱུང་ཆོར་བའི་མཚན་ཉིད། བདེ་སྡུག་བར་མ་གང་རུང་སྣོང་བའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། གཉིས་པ་སེམས་བྱུང་འདུ་ཤེས་ཀྱི་མཚན་ཉིད་ནི། ཡུལ་གྱི་སྣུ་རིས་འབྱེད་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། གསུམ་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད་ནི། སེམས་མངོན་པར་འདུ་བྱེད་པ་ཡིད་ཀྱི་ལས། བཞི་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། དམིགས་པ་ལ་སེམས་སྐད་ཅིག་རེ་རེར་གཏོད་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ ལྟ་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། གསུམ་འདུས་ནས་དབངོའི་འགྱུར་བ་དང་འབྲ་བའི་ཡུལ་གཅོད་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་།།

སྤེ་ཚན་གཉིས་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། ངོས་ཉིད་ཀྱི་དགེ་བ་དང་ཉོན་མོངས་གང་ཡང་མ་ཡིན་ཞིང་ཡུལ་སོ་སོ་ལ་མཐའ་གཅིག་ཏུ་དེས་པར་འཇུག་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ལྟ་ཡུལ་དེས་ཟེར་སྦྱབ་ཞིན། དབྱེ་ན་ལྟ་ཡོད། དེ་ཡང་ འདུན་པ་དང་། མོས་པ་དང་། ཏན་པ་དང་། ཉིངེ་འཛིན་དང་། ཤེས་རབ་ཞིན། དངོའི་མཚན་ཉིད། འདོད་བྱའི་ཡུལ་དོན་དུ་གཉེར་བའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ གཉིས་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། དེ་ཡང་ དེ་ཁོ་ན་ལས་ཀུས་བཤད་འོག་ལས་ཞུ་ནི་ཞིན།།

དྲི་བ་ སེམས་བྱུང་ཟེར་མི་འདི་ གཅིག་ཏུང་མ་ཅིག་ཞིན་ན་ ཡང་ན་ལེ་ཤ་ཡོད་པ་ཞིན་ན?

ལན་ སེམས་བྱུང་ལྟ་དབྱེ་བ་ཅིན་ རྣམ་པ་མ་འདྲཔ་ལྟ་བ་ཙུང་གཅིག་ཡོད། དེ་ཡང་ སྤེ་ཚན་བྱུག་སྤེ་ཡོད་པ་ཞིན། ཀུན་འགྲོ་༤ ཡུལ་དེས་༤ དགེ་བ་༡༡ རྩ་ཉོན་༦ ཉེ་ཉོན་༢༠ གཞན་འགྱུར་༩ ཚུ་ཞིན། དངོས་འདི་མཚན་ཉིད། སེམས་ཀུན་དང་དེས་པར་མཚུངས་པར་ལྡན་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ལྟ་ཀུན་འགྲོ་ཟེར་སྦྱབ་ཞིན། དབྱེ་ན་ཀུན་འགྲོ་ལྟ་ཡོད། དེ་ཡང་ ཆོར་བ་དང་། འདུ་ཤེས་དང་། སེམས་པ་དང་། ཡིད་ལ་བྱེད་པ་དང་། རེག་པའོ། དངཔ་སེམས་བྱུང་ཆོར་བའི་མཚན་ཉིད། བདེ་སྡུག་བར་མ་གང་རུང་སྣོང་བའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། གཉིས་པ་སེམས་བྱུང་འདུ་ཤེས་ཀྱི་མཚན་ཉིད་ནི། ཡུལ་གྱི་སྣུ་རིས་འབྱེད་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། གསུམ་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད་ནི། སེམས་མངོན་པར་འདུ་བྱེད་པ་ཡིད་ཀྱི་ལས། བཞི་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། དམིགས་པ་ལ་སེམས་སྐད་ཅིག་རེ་རེར་གཏོད་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ ལྟ་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། གསུམ་འདུས་ནས་དབངོའི་འགྱུར་བ་དང་འབྲ་བའི་ཡུལ་གཅོད་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་།།

པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། དམིགས་པ་ལ་སེམས་རྩེ་གཅིག་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། ལྟ་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། ཚོར་ཀྱི་དབྱེ་བ་སོ་སོ་འབྱེད་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ངོ།།

གསུམ་པ་དགེ་བའི་མཚན་ཉིད། ཚོར་གཞན་ལ་མི་ལྟོས་པར་ལས་དགེ་བའི་ངོ་བོར་སྐྱེས་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ལྟ་དགེ་བ་ཟེར་སྨན་ཞིན། དབྱེ་ན་བཅུ་གཅིག་ཡོད། དེ་ཡང་ དད་པ་དང་། ངོ་ཚ་ཤེས་པ་དང་། ཁྲེལ་ཡོད་པ་དང་། མ་ཆགས་པའི་དགེ་བ་དང་། ཞེ་སྡང་མེད་པའི་དགེ་བ་དང་། གཏི་མུག་མེད་པའི་དགེ་བ་དང་། བརྩོན་འགྲུས་དང་། ཤིན་ཏུ་སྦྱངས་པ་དང་། བག་ཡོད་པ་དང་། འདུ་བྱེད་བཏང་སྙོམས་དང་། རྣམ་པར་མི་འཚེ་བ་ཡིན། དང་པོའི་མཚན་ཉིད། མ་དད་པའི་དངོས་གཉེན་དུ་གྱུར་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ གཉིས་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། རང་རྒྱུ་མཚན་དུ་བྱས་ནས་ཁ་ན་མ་ཐོ་བ་ལ་འཇོམ་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། གསུམ་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། གཞན་རྒྱུ་མཚན་དུ་བྱས་ནས་ཁ་ན་མ་ཐོ་བ་ལ་འཇོམ་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། བཞི་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། ཚགས་པའི་དངོས་གཉེན་དུ་གྱུར་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ ལྔ་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། ཞེ་སྡང་གི་དངོས་གཉེན་དུ་གྱུར་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ དྲུག་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། གཏི་མུག་གི་དངོས་གཉེན་གང་ཞེག་ཤེས་རབ་ཀྱི་ཚ་ལ་བཏགས་པ། བདུན་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། དགེ་བ་ལ་སྨོ་བའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ བརྒྱད་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། ལུས་སེམས་ལས་སུ་རུང་བ། དགུ་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། བྱང་ངོར་ལ་གཟོབ་པ་ལྷུར་ལེན་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ བཅུ་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། ཉོན་མོངས་ཀྱི་ཚ་ལ་བཏགས་པ། བཅུ་གཅིག་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། སྙིང་རྗེའི་སེམས་ཀྱི་ཚ་སྨྲོས་པས་བཏང་སྙོམས་སུ་སྦྱངས་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ བཅུ་གཅིག་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། སྙིང་རྗེའི་སེམས་ཀྱི་མི་འཚམ་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ངོ།།

བཞི་པ་ཉོན་མོངས་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། སེམས་རང་ཉ་མ་ཞི་བར་བྱེད་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་གང་ཞེག་སྲིད་པའི་རྩ་བར་གྱུར་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ལུ་རྩ་ཉོན་ཟེར་སྨན་ཞིན། དབྱེ་ན་རྩ་བའི་ཉོན་མོངས་པ་དྲུག་ཡོད། དེ་ཡང་ འདོད་ཆགས་དང་ ཁོང་ཁྲོ་དང་། ང་རྒྱལ་དང་ ཉོན་མོངས་བ་ཅན་གྱི་མ་རིག་པ་དང་། ཐེ་ཚོམ་དང་། ལྟ་བ་ཡིན། དང་པོའི་མཚན་ཉིད། ལུས་སམ་ཡོངས་སྤྱོད་ལ་ཆགས་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ གཉིས་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། གཞོན་བྱེད་ལ་ཀུན་ནས་མནར་སེམས་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ གསུམ་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། འཇིག་ལྟ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་སེམས་ཁེངས་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ བཞི་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། བདེན་བཞི་ལ་རྩོངས་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ ལྔ་པའི་

མཚན་ཉིད། བདེན་བཞི་ལ་ཡིད་གཉིས་ཟ་བའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། དྲུག་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། རྟོག་པའི་བདག་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ཤེས་རབ་ཉོན་མོངས་སུ་གྱུར་པ། དཔྱེ་ན་ལྟ་ཡོད། དེ་ཡང་ འཇིག་ལྟ་དང་། མཐར་འཛིན་ལྟ་བ་དང་། ལྟ་བ་མཆོག་འཛིན་དང་། ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་དང་བརྟུལ་ཞུགས་མཆོག་འཛིན་དང་། ལོག་ལྟ་ཚུལ་ཡིན། དངོས་པོའི་མཚན་ཉིད། ཕུང་པོ་ལ་བདག་གམ་བདག་གིར་འཛིན་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། གཉིས་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། ཕུང་པོ་ལ་རྟག་པའམ་ཆད་པར་འཛིན་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། གསུམ་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། དམན་པ་ལ་མཆོག་ཏུ་འཛིན་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། བཞི་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། འདག་གཞོལ་མིན་པ་ལ་འདག་གཞོལ་དུ་འཛིན་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། ལྔ་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། རྒྱུ་འབྲས་ལ་སྐུར་པ་འདེབས་པའམ་སྤོ་འདོར་གས་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་གང་ཞིག་འཇིག་ལྟ་སོགས་གཞན་བཞི་མ་ཡིན་པའོ།།

ལྔ་པ་ཉེ་ཉོན་གྱི་མཚན་ཉིད། སེམས་ཉོན་མོངས་པ་དང་ཉེ་བར་བྲེད་ཅིང་རྩ་ཉོན་མ་ཡིན་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ལྔ་ཉོན་ཟེར་སྣབ་ཚིག། དཔྱེ་ན་ཉི་ཤུ་ཡོད། དེ་ཡང་ ཁོ་བའི་མཚན་ཉིད། དཔྱའི་གནོད་བྱེད་ཁོ་ན་ལ་ཀུན་ནས་མནར་སེམས་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། ཁོན་དུ་འཛིན་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། སྡང་གྱི་གནོད་བྱེད་ཁོ་ན་ལ་གནོད་ལན་བྱེད་འདོད་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། འཚབ་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། ཉེས་པ་སྤྲེད་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། འཆིག་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། ཁོ་བ་དང་ཁོན་འཛིན་སྟོན་དུ་འགྱེ་བའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ཆོག་རྩྭ་ཀུན་ནས་སློང་བྱེད། ཕྲག་དོག་གི་མཚན་ཉིད། གཞན་གྱི་ཕུན་ཚོགས་མི་བཟོད་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། སེར་སྣའི་མཚན་ཉིད། ཡོ་བྱད་ལ་སེམས་དམ་དུ་འཛིན་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། སྒྱུའི་མཚན་ཉིད། ཡོན་ཏན་དང་མི་ལྡན་ཡང་ལྡན་པ་ལྟར་དུ་སྟོན་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། གཡོའི་མཚན་ཉིད། ཉེས་པ་རྙེད་གྱིས་སྤྲེད་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། རྒྱགས་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། གཞན་གྱི་ཆོས་ལ་མ་ལྟོས་པར་རང་གི་ཆོས་ལ་ཆགས་པས་སེམས་གང་བའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། རྣམ་པར་འཚེ་བའི་མཚན་ཉིད། སྐྱིང་རྗེ་མེད་པས་གཞན་ལ་ཐོ་འཚམ་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། ངོ་ཚ་མེད་པའི་ཉེ་ཉོན་གྱི་མཚན་ཉིད། བདག་རྒྱུ་མཚན་དུ་བྱས་ནས་ཁ་ན་མ་ཐོ་བ་ལ་མི་འཇེམ་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། ཁེལ་མེད་པའི་ཉེ་ཉོན་གྱི་མཚན་ཉིད། གཞན་རྒྱུ་མཚན་དུ་བྱས་ནས་ཁ་ན་མ་ཐོ་བ་ལ་མི་འཇེམ་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། རྒྱགས་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། སེམས་བློན་པར་གྱུར་ནས་དེ་ག་བའི་དམིགས་པ་ལ་མི་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ངོ་། །རྩོད་པའི་

མཚན་ཉིད། འདོད་ཆགས་ཁོ་ནའི་ཚར་གཅོགས་ཤིང་སེམས་མ་ཞི་བར་འཕྲོ་བའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། མ་དད་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། དད་པའི་མི་མཐུན་ཕྱོགས་སུ་གྱུར་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། ལེ་ལོའི་མཚན་ཉིད། དགེ་བ་ལ་མི་སྤྲོ་བའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། བག་མེད་པའི་ཉེ་ཉོན་གྱི་མཚན་ཉིད། བློ་ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་ཏུ་སྣང་བའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། བརྗེད་ངས་ཀྱི་མཚན་ཉིད། དགེ་བའི་དམིགས་པ་བརྗེད་པའི་ཉོན་མོངས་ཅན་གྱི་དབང་པ། ཤེས་བཞིན་མིན་པའི་ཉེ་ཉོན་གྱི་མཚན་ཉིད། སྐོ་གསུམ་གྱི་སྤྱོད་པ་ལ་མི་ཤེས་བཞིན་དུ་འཇུག་པའི་ཉོན་མོངས་ཅན་གྱི་ཤེས་རབ་ཀྱམ་གཡེངས་ཉེ་ཉོན་གྱི་མཚན་ཉིད། དུག་གསུམ་ཆར་སེམས་ཀྱི་ནམ་པར་འཕྲོ་བའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ངོ།།

དྲུག་པ་གཞན་འགྱུར་གྱི་མཚན་ཉིད། དགེ་མི་དགེ་ལུང་མ་བསྟན་གསུམ་པོ་གང་དུའང་འགྱུར་དུ་རུང་བའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ལུ་གཞན་འགྱུར་ཟེར་སྨྲབ་ཚིན། དབྱེ་ན་བཞི་ཡོད། གཉིད་ཀྱི་མཚན་ཉིད། འཇུག་པ་རང་དབང་མེད་པར་ནང་དུ་སྡུད་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། འཕྱོད་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། སྔར་གྱི་ལས་ལ་ཡིད་ལ་གཅག་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་། རྟོག་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། ཚོལ་བའི་ནམ་པ་ཅན་སེམས་རྩིང་བའམ་རགས་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང།། དཔྱོད་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད། སོ་སོར་རྟོག་པའི་ནམ་པ་ཅན་སེམས་ཞིབ་པའམ་ཕྲ་བའི་སེམས་བྱུང་།།

དྲི་བ་ སེམས་དང་སེམས་བྱུང་མཚུངས་ལྡན་ལྡའི་སྐོ་ལས་མཚུངས་ཟེར་བའི་སྐབས་མཚུངས་ལྡན་ལྡ་དེ་ གཅིག་ཅིར་སྨོ?

ལན་ རྟེན་དབང་པོ་མཚུངས་པ་ཟེར་མི་འདི་ དཔེར་ན་ མིག་གི་ནམ་ཤེས་བརྟེན་ཅིག་ལུ་ཆ་བཞག་པ་ཅིན་ མིག་གི་ནམ་ཤེས་དེ་ མིག་དབང་པོ་ལུ་བརྟེན་སྐྱེ་བའི་སྐབས་ དེའི་འཁོར་དུ་བྱུང་བའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ཚུ་ཡང་ དུས་སྙམས་ཅིག་ཁར་ མིག་གི་དབང་པོ་ལུ་བརྟེན་སྐྱེཔ་ཨིན།

དམིགས་པ་ཡུལ་མཚུངས་པ་ཟེར་མི་འདི་ དཔེར་ན་ མིག་གི་ནམ་ཤེས་དེ་ ཡུལ་གཟུགས་ལུ་དམིགས་ཞིནམ་ལས་སྐྱེ་བའི་སྐབས་ལུ་ དེའི་འཁོར་དུ་བྱུང་བའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ཚུ་ཡང་ དུས་སྙམས་ཅིག་ཁར་ ཡུལ་གཟུགས་ལུ་དམིགས་ནས་སྐྱེཔ་ཨིན།

རྣམ་པ་མཚུངས་པ་ཟེར་མི་འདི་ དཔེར་ན་ མིག་རྣམ་ཤེས་དེ་ ཡུལ་གཟུགས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་པ་འཛིན་པའི་སྐབས་ལུ་ དེའི་འཁོར་དུ་བྱུང་བའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ཚུ་གིས་ཀྱང་ གཟུགས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་པ་འཛིན་མ་ཞིན།

དུས་དུ་ཁྱབ་མཚུངས་པ་ཟེར་མི་འདི་ དཔེར་ན་ མིག་གི་རྣམ་ཤེས་སྐྱེ་བའི་དུས་དེ་ནང་ལུ་ དེའི་འཁོར་དུ་བྱུང་བའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ཚུ་ཡང་ དུས་སྦྱབས་ཅིག་ཁར་སྐྱེས་མི་ཅིག་ལུ་སྣང་ཞིན།

རྟག་ཏེ་རེ་བ་མཚུངས་པ་ཟེར་མི་འདི་ མིག་གི་རྣམ་ཤེས་ཀྱི་རྟག་པ་ཅིག་སྐྱེ་བའི་སྐབས་ དེའི་འཁོར་དུ་བྱུང་བའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ཚུ་ཡང་ རྟག་པ་ཅིག་ཡོད་རེ་འདྲ་ཡོད་པའི་ཅིག་ལུ་སྣང་ཞིན།།

གཉིས་པ་སེམས་ཅེ་ཅེ་བཞིན་གྱི་ངོ་སྤྲོད་རྒྱས་པར་བཤད་པ་ལ།

སེམས་ཀྱི་འཁྲུལ་གཞི་ཆོས་ཉིད་རང་བཞིན་རྣམ་དག་དང་ འཁྲུལ་འཁོར་མི་སེམས་གཉིས་ལས།

དངོས་ཆོས་ཉིད་རང་བཞིན་རྣམ་དག་ལ་ངོ་སྤྲོད་མཚན་གྱི་རྣམ་གྲངས་རྒྱབ་རྟེན་དང་གསུམ་ལས།

དངོས་སེམས་ཀྱི་ཆོས་ཉིད་རང་བཞིན་རྣམ་དག་ཟེར་མི་འདི། རྣམ་རྟོག་གི་དྲི་མ་གཅད་བཟློག་བ་འོད་གསལ་བའི་རང་བཞིན་ཅན། ཡང་ན་ བདེ་བ་ གསལ་བ་ མི་རྟོག་པའི་རང་བཞིན་ཅན། ཡང་ན་ ཕྱི་ཁ་ལས་ཉོན་མོངས་པའི་སྤྲིན་པ་དང་ཤེས་བྱའི་སྤྲིན་པ་གཉིས་ཀྱིས་སྤྲིན་པའི་ཆོས་ ངོ་བོ་སྟོང་པ་ རང་བཞིན་གསལ་བ་ ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཀུན་ཁྱབ། དཔེར་ན་ བྱམ་པ་ནང་གི་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་སྐུ་བཟུམ་དང་། ཕྱམ་ཁ་ཀོག་བཅད་བཞག་ཡོད་པའི་ནང་ལུ་ མེ་བཏེགས་བཞག་པའི་སྐབས་ལུ་ ཕྱི་ཁ་ལས་མེའི་འོད་མ་མཐོང་རུང་ ནང་ན་འོད་གསལ་ཀོག་ཀོ་འབད་ཡོད་དོ་བཟུམ་སྟེ་ སེམས་ཀྱི་རང་བཞིན་འོད་གསལ་བ་ཅིག་ལུ་ སེམས་ཀྱི་ཆོས་ཉིད་རང་བཞིན་རྣམ་དག་ཟེར་ཞུ་ཡིན།།

གཉིས་པ་ མཚན་ཀྱི་རྣམ་གྲངས་ལུ་ ཆོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས། སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་སྙིང་པོ་ཅན། རང་བཞིན་རྣམ་དག་བདེ་གཤེགས་སྙིང་པོ། སེམས་ཀྱི་གསང་བ། གཞིའི་དབུ་མ། སེམས་ཀྱི་ཆོས་ཉིད་དང་། གཉུག་མའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཟེར་ཞུ་སྟོལ་ཡོད་པ་ཡིན།།

གསུམ་པ་ རྒྱབ་རྟེན། ཉིངའཛིན་རྒྱལ་པོའི་མདོ་ལས། བདེ་གཤེགས་སྙིངཔོས་འགྲོ་ཀུན་ཡོངས་ལ་ཁྱབ། །ཅེས་གསུངས་སོ།། མདོ་སྡེ་སྣ་དན་ལས་འདས་ཚུངལས། སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད་ནི་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པའི་སྙིངཔོ་ཅན་ཡིན་ནོ། །ཞེས་དང་། མདོ་སྡེ་སྣ་དན་ལས་འདས་པ་ཆེན་པོ་ལས་ཀྱང་། དཔེར་ན་འོ་མ་ལ་མར་གྱིས་ཁྱབ་པར་གནས་སོ། །དེ་བཞིན་དུ་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པའི་སྙིངཔོས་ཀྱངས་སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་ཁྱབ་པར་གནས་སོ། །ཞེས་དང་། མདོ་སྡེ་རྒྱན་ལས་ཀྱང་། དེ་བཞིན་ཉིད་ནི་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ། །ཁྱད་པར་མེད་ཀྱངདག་གྱུར་པ། །དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་ཉིད་དེ་ཡི་ཕྱིར།།འགྲོ་ཀུན་དེ་ཡི་སྙིངཔོ་ཅན། །ཞེས་གསུངས་སོ།།

འཕགས་པ་ལྷས། ཆོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས་ལ་དབྱེར་མེད་ཕྱིར། །རིགས་ནི་ཐ་དད་རྣངབ་མ་ཡིན། །ཞེས་དང་། ཆོས་རྗེ་དཔགས་པོ་ལྷ་རྗེ་ཞལ་ལས། དེ་ལ་འཁོར་བ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ནི་རང་བཞིན་སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་ཡིན། རྣམ་པ་འཕྲུལ་པ་ཡིན། མཚན་ཉིད་སྨྲ་བསྟལ་དུ་ཤར་བ་ཡིན་ནོ།། སྣ་དན་ལས་འདས་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ནི་རང་བཞིན་སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་ཡིན། རྣམ་པ་འཕྲུལ་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཟད་ཅིང་ཡལ་བ་ཡིན། མཚན་ཉིད་སྨྲ་བསྟལ་ཐམས་ཅད་ལས་གྲོལ་བ་ཡིན་ནོ། །ཞེས་དང་། ཀུན་མཁྱེན་པན་དཀར་པོས། ཆོས་རྣམས་ཀུན་གྱི་རང་བཞིན་ཉི། །རང་གི་སེམས་དང་གཉིས་མིན་པར། །བཞུགས་ཀྱང་དམན་པས་མ་རྟེད་པར། །བླ་མ་དགོན་མཆོག་ཡི་དམ་དང་།།མཁའ་འགྲོ་མ་དང་ཆོས་སྐྱོང་ཆེ། །འཇིག་རྟེན་པ་ཞེས་རིགས་སུ་འཛེད། །བྱོ་གོས་ཆེན་པོ་དེ་དག་ནི། །གཅིག་དང་ཐ་དད་གར་མི་འཛིན། །བསྟོད་བྱ་སྟོད་བྱེད་བསྟོད་པ་རྣམས། །ཇི་ལྟར་ཆུ་ལ་ཆུ་བཞག་ལྟར། །རང་གི་རིག་པའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་ལས། །བསྟོད་པའི་དམ་པ་གང་ན་མཆིས། །ཞེས་གསུངས་སོ།། དཔེ་ཅན་སེམས་ཀྱི་ཆོས་ཉིད་རང་བཞིན་རྣམ་དག་མཚོན་པའི་ཕྱིར་དུ་དཔེ་བྱཔ་བགོད་དེ་ཡོད་ལ། རྒྱ་མཚན་ བྱཔ་འདི་ ཏི་མ་དང་བྲལ་བ་འོད་གསལ་བའི་རང་བཞིན་འབད་ནི་འདི་གིས་ཤེན།།

གཉིས་པ་ཆོས་ཅན་སེམས་ཀྱི་སྐོར།

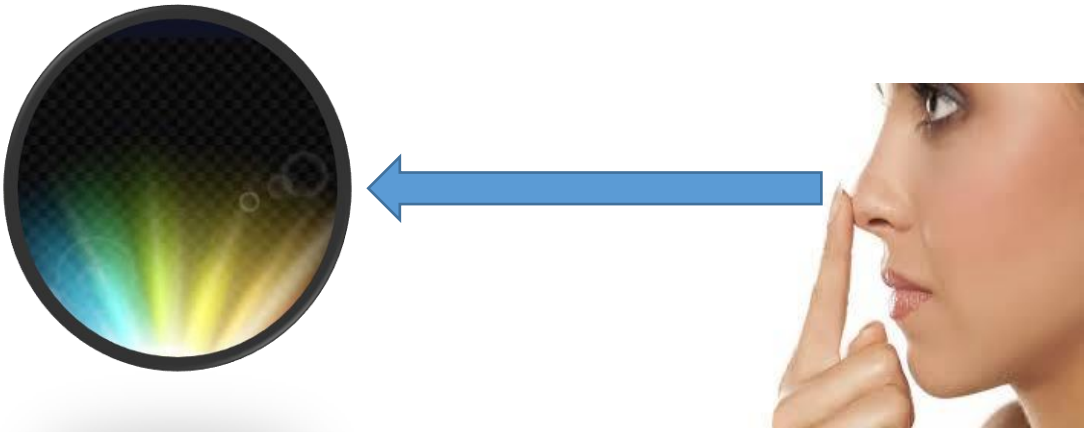
སེམས་ཀྱི་ཆོས་ཅན་ཀུན་གཞི་རྣམ་ཤེས་ཟེར་མི་འདི་ ལྟ་བཟང་ངན་བར་མ་གསུམ་གྱི་བག་ཆགས་འཛིན་ཞེང་ རྒྱུ་རྐྱེན་ཚོགས་པའི་སྐབས་ལུ་བཟང་ངན་གྱི་འབྲས་བུ་ཐེག་ཚུགས་པའི་ཤེས་པ་ཅིག་ལུ་ཀུན་གཞི་རྣམ་ཤེས་ཟེར་སྦྱབ་ཨིན།།

མིང་རྣམ་གངས་ནི། ཐོག་མ་མེད་པའི་དུས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས། ཀུན་གཞི་རྣམ་ཤེས། ལེན་པའི་རྣམ་ཤེས། ཚུད་མི་ཟ་བའི་ཇུས་ཟེར་སྦྱབ་སྟོལ་ཡོད་པ་ཨིན།།

རྒྱབ་རྟེན། ཆོས་མངོན་པའི་མདོ་ལས། ཐོག་མ་མེད་པའི་དུས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས། །ཆོས་རྣམས་ཀུན་གྱི་གནས་ཡིན་ཏེ། །དེ་ཡོད་པས་ནི་འགྲོ་བ་དང་། །སྡུང་འདས་པའང་ཐོབ་པར་འགྱུར། །ཞེས་དང་། ཆོས་ཀུན་ས་བོན་ཐམས་ཅད་པའི། །རྣམ་པར་ཤེས་པ་ཀུན་གཞི་སྟེ། །དེ་བས་ཀུན་གཞིའི་རྣམ་ཤེས་དེ། །དམ་པ་རྣམས་པ་ངས་བཤད་དོ། །ཞེས་དང་། མདོ་ལས། ལེན་པའི་རྣམ་པ་ཤེས་པ་ཟབ་ཅིང་ཕྲ། །ས་བོན་ཐམས་ཅད་ཆུ་བོའི་རྒྱུན་བཞིན་འབབས། །བདག་ཏུ་རྟོག་པར་གྱུར་མི་རུང་ཞེས། །འདི་ནི་བྱིས་པ་རྣམས་ལ་ངས་མ་བསྟན། །ཞེས་གསུངས་སོ།། དཔེ་ཅན་ཀུན་གཞི་རྣམ་ཤེས་མཚོན་པའི་ཕྱིར་དུ་དཔེ་ཆོས་གཞི་སྣ་ཚོགས་ཡོད་པའི་པར་ཅིག་བཀོད་དེ་ཡོད་ལ། རྒྱ་མཚན་ པར་འདི་གི་ཆོས་གཞི་ཚུ་གིས་ བག་ཆགས་སྣ་ཚོགས་མཚོན་ཚུགས་པའི་ཕྱིར་རོ།།

ཉོན་མོངས་ཅན་གྱི་ཡིད་ཟེར་མི་འདི་ ཀ་ཅི་བརྒྱལ་ཅིག་ལུ་སྣང་ཙེན་ན་མནོ་བ་ཅིན་ དམིགས་པ་ཁ་ནང་ ཀུན་གཞི་རྣམ་ཤེས་ལུ་ལྷ་ཞིན་ལས་ ང་ངར་ཟེར་མནོ་བའམ་འཛིན་པའི་རྣམ་པ་ཅན་གྱི་སེམས་ཅིག་ལུ་ ཉོན་མོངས་ཅན་གྱི་ཡིད་ཟེར་སྣང་ཙེན།།

རྒྱབ་རྟེན། ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་གཞུང་ལས། ཀུན་གཞི་རྣམ་ཤེས་ལ་ཁ་ནང་དུ་ལྷ་བ། བདག་ཏུ་ལྷ་བ་དང་ བདག་ཏུ་ང་རྒྱལ་བ། བདག་ལ་ཆགས་པ་དང་། བདག་ཏུ་རྟོངས་པའོ།།ཞེས་གསུངས་སོ།། དེས་ ཚོར་གཞི་སྣ་ཚོགས་ཡོད་པའི་པར་ལུ་ བལྟ་ཞིན་ལས་ ལགཔ་ལྷབ་པ་གུ་བཀལ་ཏེ་ཡོད་མི་འདི་གིས་ དེས་ ཅན་ ཀུན་གཞི་རྣམ་ཤེས་ལུ་དམིགས་ནས་ ང་ངར་ཟེར་མནོ་མི་ ཉོན་མོངས་ཅན་གྱི་ཡིད་མཚོན་པའི་ཕྱིར་ དུ་བཀོད་དེ་ཡོད་ལ།།



འཇུག་ཤེས་ཚོགས་དུག་འདི་ མིག་གི་རྣམ་ཤེས། རྣ་བའི་རྣམ་ཤེས། སྣའི་རྣམ་ཤེས། ལྕེའི་རྣམ་ཤེས། ལུས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་ཤེས། ཡིད་ཀྱི་རྣམ་ཤེས་ཚུ་ལུ་སྣང་ཙེན། དེ་ཚུ་ དམིགས་པ་ཁ་ཕྱི་ལུ་ལྷ་ཞིམ་ལས་ རང་རང་སོ་སོའི་ཡུལ་ལུ་འཇུག་པ་ཙེན། དེའང་ན་ པར་བཏབ་ནི་གི་པར་ཤིང་ པར་བཏབ་སའི་ས་ཕྱོགས་ པར་ཤིང་ པར་བཏབ་སའི་ས་ཕྱོགས་ལུ་ཁ་བསྒོར་མི་ལས་བརྟེན་ ལེགས་ཉེས་ཀྱི་པར་བྱུང་དོ་བཟུམ་སྟེ་ བདག་

ཆུན་དབང་པོ་ དམིགས་ཆུན་གཟུགས་ལ་སོགས་པ་ སེམས་ཡུལ་ལུ་གཏོད་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ཡིད་ལ་བྱེད་པ་ གསུམ་ཚོགས་པ་དེ་ཅིག་ཁར་འཇུག་ཤེས་ཚོགས་དྲུག་སྐྱེ་ཞིན།།

དམིགས་ཆུན་གཟུགས།

བདག་ཆུན་མིག་གི་དབང་པོ།

དེ་མ་ཐག་པའི་ཆུན་སེམས་བྱུང་ཡིད་ལ་བྱེད་པ།

མིག་གི་རྣམ་ཤེས་ཟེར་མི་འདི་ བདག་ཆུན་མིག་གི་དབང་པོ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་བྱུང་བའི་རང་གི་ཡུལ་དུ་གྱུར་པའི་གཟུགས་ཀྱི་ངོ་བོ་རང་སྟོང་ས་ཤེས་མི་ཅིག་ལུས་ཤིན། དེ་ཡང་ བདག་ཆུན་མིག་གི་དབང་པོ་ དམིགས་ཆུན་གཟུགས་ སེམས་ཡུལ་གཏོད་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ཡིད་ལ་བྱེད་པ་སྟེ་རྒྱུ་གསུམ་ཚོགས་པའི་སྐབས་ལུ་ མིག་གི་རྣམ་ཤེས་དེ་ཡང་དུས་མཚུངས་སྟེ་སྐྱེ་ཞིན།།

ན་བའི་རྣམ་ཤེས་ཟེར་མི་འདི་ བདག་ཆུན་ན་བའི་དབང་པོ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་བྱུང་བའི་རང་གི་ཡུལ་དུ་གྱུར་པའི་སྣའི་ངོ་བོ་རང་སྟོང་ས་ཤེས་མི་ཅིག་ལུས་ཤིན། དེ་ཡང་ བདག་ཆུན་ན་བའི་དབང་པོ་ དམིགས་ཆུན་

སྒྲ་ སེམས་ཡུལ་གཉེད་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ཡིད་ལ་བྱེད་པ་སྟེ་རྒྱུ་གསུམ་ཚོགས་པའི་སྐབས་ལུ་ རྟ་བའི་རྣམ་ཤེས་དེ་ཡང་དུས་མཚུངས་སྦེ་སྐྱེ་ཞིན།།

སྣའི་རྣམ་ཤེས་ཟེར་མི་འདི་ བདག་ཅུན་སྣའི་དབང་པོ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་བྱུང་བའི་རང་གི་ཡུལ་དུ་གྱུར་པའི་དྲི་བའི་ངོ་བོ་རང་སྟོབས་ཀྱིས་ཤེས་མི་ཅིག་ལུ་སྣང་ཞིན། དེ་ཡང་ བདག་ཅུན་སྣའི་དབང་པོ་ དམིགས་ཅུན་དྲི་སེམས་ཡུལ་གཉེད་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ཡིད་ལ་བྱེད་པ་སྟེ་རྒྱུ་གསུམ་ཚོགས་པའི་སྐབས་ལུ་ སྣའི་རྣམ་ཤེས་དེ་ཡང་དུས་མཚུངས་སྦེ་སྐྱེ་ཞིན།།

ལྕེའི་རྣམ་ཤེས་ཟེར་མི་འདི་ བདག་ཅུན་ལྕེའི་དབང་པོ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་བྱུང་བའི་རང་གི་ཡུལ་དུ་གྱུར་པའི་རོའི་ངོ་བོ་རང་སྟོབས་ཀྱིས་ཤེས་མི་ཅིག་ལུ་སྣང་ཞིན། དེ་ཡང་ བདག་ཅུན་ལྕེའི་དབང་པོ་ དམིགས་ཅུན་རོ་སེམས་ཡུལ་གཉེད་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ཡིད་ལ་བྱེད་པ་སྟེ་རྒྱུ་གསུམ་ཚོགས་པའི་སྐབས་ལུ་ ལྕེའི་རྣམ་ཤེས་དེ་ཡང་དུས་མཚུངས་སྦེ་སྐྱེ་ཞིན།།

ལུས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་ཤེས་ཟེར་མི་འདི་ བདག་རྒྱུན་ལུས་ཀྱི་དབང་པོ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་བྱུང་བའི་རང་གི་ཡུལ་དུ་གྱུར་པའི་རེག་བྱའི་ངོ་བོ་རང་སྟོང་གིས་ཤེས་མི་ཅིག་ལུ་སྣང་ཞིན། དེ་ཡང་ བདག་རྒྱུན་ལུས་ཀྱི་དབང་པོ་དམིགས་རྒྱུན་རེག་བྱ་ སེམས་ཡུལ་གཏོད་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ཡིད་ལ་བྱེད་པ་སྟེ་རྒྱུ་གསུམ་ཚོགས་པའི་སྐབས་ལུ་ ལུས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་ཤེས་དེ་ཡང་དུས་མཚུངས་སྟེ་སྐྱེ་ཞིན།།

ཡིད་ཀྱི་རྣམ་ཤེས་ཟེར་མི་འདི་ བདག་རྒྱུན་ཡིད་ཀྱི་དབང་པོ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་བྱུང་བའི་རང་གི་ཡུལ་དུ་གྱུར་པའི་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ངོ་བོ་རང་སྟོང་གིས་ཤེས་མི་ཅིག་ལུ་སྣང་ཞིན། དེ་ཡང་ བདག་རྒྱུན་ཡིད་ཀྱི་དབང་པོ་ དམིགས་རྒྱུན་ཆོས་ སེམས་ཡུལ་གཏོད་པའི་སེམས་བྱུང་ཡིད་ལ་བྱེད་པ་སྟེ་རྒྱུ་གསུམ་ཚོགས་པའི་སྐབས་ལུ་ ཡིད་ཀྱི་རྣམ་ཤེས་དེ་ཡང་དུས་མཚུངས་སྟེ་སྐྱེ་ཞིན།།

གསུམ་པ་དོགས་ཟེལ་གྱི་དོན་དུ་སེམས་ཀྱི་དོམ་སྒོམ་དང་འབྲེལ་བའི་དྲི་ལན་གྱི་ཚུལ་གྱིས་མཐའ་དཔྱད་པ་ནི།

དྲི་བ་ ཀུན་གཞི་རྣམ་ཤེས་ཀྱི་སྟེང་ལུ་ བག་ཆགས་བཞག་པའི་སྐབས་ལུ་ གཅིས་ གལ་ལུ་བཞགས་ཨིན་ན?

ལན་ གལིས་ མིག་གི་རྣམ་ཤེས་ལ་སོགས་པའི་འཇུག་ཤེས་དྲུག་གིས་ **གལ་ལུ་** བག་ཆགས་བཞག་ཏུ་རུང་བའི་ཀུན་གཞི་རྣམ་ཤེས་ལུ་ དགེ་མི་དགེ་ལུང་མ་བསྟན་གྱི་བག་ཆགས་བཞགས་ཨིན། ཀུན་གཞི་རྣམ་ཤེས་བག་ཆགས་བཞག་རུང་བའི་ཤེས་པ་དེ་ལུ་ ཉོན་མོངས་ཅན་གྱི་ཡིད་ཀྱིས་དམིགས་ནས་ དང་དང་དང་དང་དང་དང་ཨེ་ཝ་ཨིན།།

དེ་བ་ སེམས་ཅན་ཀྱི་ལུས་རྟེན་ནང་ལས་ རྣམ་ཤེས་ཀ་ཅི་ཐོན་འགྱོཝ་དང་ ཤིཝ་ཟེར་སྨྲབ་ཚེན་ན?

ལན་ རྣམ་ཤེས་ཆོགས་བརྒྱད་ལས་ ཀུན་གཞི་རྣམ་ཤེས་ལུས་རྟེན་འདི་ལས་ འཐོན་འགྱོ་བའི་ཤུལ་ལུ་ སེམས་ཅན་དེ་ ཤི་སོ་ནུག་ ཟེར་སྨྲབ་ཚེན། གཞན་རྣམ་ཤེས་ཆོགས་བདུན་ལུས་རྟེན་འདི་ལུ་མེད་རུང་ ཤི་སོ་ནུག་ཟེར་མི་སྨྲབ། གཞན་རྣམ་ཤེས་ཆོགས་བདུན་ལུས་རྟེན་འདི་ལུ་མེད་རུང་ སེམས་ཅན་ཤི་ཡི་ཀྱི་ཡིད་དང་ འཇུག་ཤེས་ཆོགས་དུག་མེད་ཚེན་རུང། གཤགས་པའི་ཐ་སྙད་མེད། སོ་སོ་སྐྱེ་བོ་འདུ་ཤེས་མེད་པའི་སྟོམས་འཇུག་སྐྱོམ་པའི་སྐབས་ལུ་ འཇུག་ཤེས་ཆོགས་དུག་བཀག་ས་བཅས་རུང་ ཤི་སོ་ནུག་ཟེར་བའི་ཐ་སྙད་སྨྲབ་ནི་མེད། དེ་བཟུམ་སྟེ་ གཉིད་ཐལ་བའི་སྐབས་སུ་ འཇུག་ཤེས་ཆོགས་དུག་མེད་ཚེན་རུང་ ཤི་སོ་ནུག་ཟེར་སྨྲབ་ནི་མེད་པཚེན། དེ་འབད་ནི་འདི་གིས་ ཀུན་གཞི་རྣམ་པར་ཤེས་པའི་རྟེན་ ལུས་ལུ་དོ་ཡོད་པ་ལས་ མི་ཚུ་གིས་ཤི་སོ་ནུག་ ཟེར་བའི་ཐ་སྙད་འཛིག་རྟེན་ནང་ལུ་སྨྲབ་སྟོལ་མི་འདུག་གོ།།

དེ་བ་ ཤི་སོ་ནུག་ཟེར་བའི་ཐ་སྙད་ ནམ་སྨྲབ་ཚེན་ཟེར་བ་ཅིན་ ཀུན་གཞི་རྣམ་ཤེས་ ལུས་རྟེན་འདི་ལས་ཐོན་འགྱོ་བའི་ཤུལ་ལུ་ ལུས་རྟེན་འདི་ལུ་ ར་ཟེར་སྨྲབ་ཚེན་མས། ལན་ པར་རིས་ཀྱི་ཐོག་ལས་ཞུ་དོ། དེའི་སྐབས་ལུ་ གཟུགས་ཁར་ཡོད་པའི་དོད་ཡལ་འགྱོཝ་མ་ཚད་ དོད་ལུ་བརྟེན་སྡོད་མི་འབྱུས་ཐིན་ཚུ་ ཡང་ཤྱི་ཁར་འཐོན་འགྱོཝ་ས་མཐོང་ཚུགསཔ་ཚེན།།

དེ་བ། སེམས་ཀྱི་ཚོར་ཉིད་རང་བཞིན་རྣམ་དག་ལྟ་ བག་ཆགས་བཟང་ངན་བར་གསུམ་གྱི་རྣམ་རྟོག་ཉོན་ མོངས་པའི་སྒྲིབ་པ་དང་ ཤེས་བྱའི་སྒྲིབ་པ་གཉིས་ཀྱིས་སྒྲིབ་ཡོད་པའི་མཐོང་སྤང་ལ་གཟིགས་ཞིནམ་ལས་ ལན་ རྒྱས་པར་གཟིགས་ནིའི་ཐུགས་འདོད་ཡོད་པ་ཅིན་ རྒྱུད་བླ་མ་ནང་ལྟ་གཟིགས་སུ་གསོལ་ལོ།།


དེ་བ། ཀུན་གཞི་རྣམ་ཤེས་འདི་ ནམ་ཡལ་འགྲོཝ་ཙམ་ན?

ལན་ ཀུན་གཞིའི་སྣེང་ལྟ་ཡོད་པའི་བཟང་ངན་བར་མའི་བག་ཆགས་ཚུ་ སངས་རྒྱས་བཅོམ་ལྡན་འདས་ ཀྱིས་གསུངས་པའི་དམ་པའི་ཚོས་ཀྱི་དོན་ཉམས་སུ་ལེན་ལས་བརྟེན་བྱུང་བའི་རང་བཞིན་རྣམ་དག་དང་ མཐུན་པའི་དམ་པའི་ཚོས་ཀྱི་བག་ཆགས་ལས་བརྟེན་ཡལ་འགྲོཝ་ཙམ།། དམ་པའི་ཚོས་ཀྱི་བག་ཆགས་དེ་ ཡང་ ཆུ་བཏུལ་ཚར་བའི་ཤུལ་ལྟ་ གྲུ་དགོངས་མེད་དོ་བཟུམ་སྟེ་ ས་བཅུ་དོ་རྗེ་ལྟ་བུའི་ཏིང་ངེ་འཛིན་གྱི་སྤང་བྱ་ ཙམ་ཞིག། བག་ཆགས་ཡལ་འགྲོཝ་དང་མཉམ་ཅིག་ ཀུན་གཞི་རྣམ་ཤེས་དེ་ཡང་ གནས་འགྱུར་ཙམ་ཞིག། དེའི་རྣམ་ཀ་ ནམ་མཁའ་ལྟ་ ས་སྟུག་འགྲུབ་པའི་རྒྱུ་ཚར་ཆུ་རྗེགས་པ་དང་ ས་སྟུག་ཡང་ཡལ་འགྲོཝ་ཙམ་ཞིག་རྟུང་། དེའི་སྐབས་ལྟ་ ནམ་མཁའ་མི་ཡལ་བར་སྡོད་དོ་བཟུམ་སྟེ་ ས་སྟུག་བཟུམ་གྱི་ཀུན་གཞི་ཡལ་བའི་ཤུལ་ལྟ་ སངས་རྒྱས་ཚོས་སྐུ་ཡེ་ཤེས་ལྟའི་རང་མདངས་དེ་མཐལ་ རྒྱུགས་པ་ཙམ།།

རྒྱབ་རྟེན། འཕགས་པ་རྟོ་རྗེ་གཅོད་པ་ལས། དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པས། ཚོས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་གྲངས་གཟིངས་ལྟ་བུང་ ཤེས་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་ཚོས་རྣམས་ཀུང་སྦུང་བར་བྱ་ན། ཚོས་མ་ཡིན་པ་རྣམས་ལྟ་ཅི་སྨོས།ཞེས་གསུངས་ སོ། །སྐྱབས་རྗེ་དགེ་འདུན་རིན་ཆེན་ཀྱིས། གང་ཤར་འཛིན་མེད་གཏེར་བའི་ལས་སྦྱོར་ཀྱིས། །དུ་མ་ངོ་ གཅིག་རྟོགས་པའི་རྩལ་རྗོགས་ཀེ། །སྒོམ་མེད་ཚོས་སྐུའི་རྒྱལ་སར་ཚེ་འདི་གར། །ཞེས་དང་ དག་པ་གཉིས་ལྡན་ཚོས་སྐུའི་ངོ་བོར་ཐིམ། །ཞེས་གསུངས་སོ།།

དྲི་བ་ སེམས་ཀྱི་ཚོར་ཉེད་རང་བཞིན་རྣམ་དག་གི་ཟླ་ཤ་འདི་ ག་ཅི་གིས་མཐལ་དགོས་སྟེ?

ལན་ ལམ་ལྟ་ལུ་བཏེན་པའི་ཐོས་བསམ་སྒོམ་གསུམ་གྱི་སྤྱན་གྱིས་ ཏོ་བ་ཆོང་བ་རྟོགས་པའི་སྒོ་ལས་ སེམས་ཀྱི་ཚོར་ཉེད་རང་བཞིན་རྣམ་དག་གི་ཟླ་ཤ་འདི་ མཐལ་དགོས་ཞིན།།

ག་ ཐ་མར་དགེ་བ་མཇུག་གི་དོན་ལ།

དངས་བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་ལམ་ལ་འཇུག་དགོས་པར་ཞུ་བ།

ཐོས་བསམ་རྣམ་དག་ལས་བྱུང་བའི་ཤེས་རབ་ཀྱི་**མདའ**་འདི་ སྒོམ་སྤྱད་ཀྱི་**གཞུ**་ཀུ་བཀལ་ཞིན་ལས་ སྒྲིབ་གཉིས་ཀྱི་**ཆུང**་གིས་མ་དཀྱོགས་པར་ རང་བཞིན་རྣམ་དག་གི་འབའ་ཀུ་**བཀག་རི**་ཐོགས་ཅིག་མཚོད་ གནང་ཟེར་ཞུ་བ་ཕྱལཕ་ཞིན།།

གཉིས་པ་ནོར་འཁྲུལ་བཤགས་ནས་དགེ་རྩགཞན་དོན་དུ་བསྟོ་བ།

འདི་ལ་ནོར་འཁྲུལ་ཉེས་པའི་ཚོགས་མཆིས་པ། །མཁས་དང་གྲུབ་པའི་ཚོགས་ལ་སྐྱིང་ནས་བཤགས། །

འདིར་འབད་དགེ་བས་རྒྱལ་བསྟན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །སེམས་ཅན་རྒྱུད་ལ་ཞུགས་པའི་རྒྱུ་རྣམས། །

གསུམ་པ་བརྩམས་བྱང་།

ཐེག་ཆེན་སེམས་ཀྱི་རི་མོ་ཟེར་བའི་དཔེ་དེབ་འདི་ ཐིམ་ཕུ་རྒྱལ་འཛིན་མཐོ་རིམ་སློབ་གྲྭ་གཞི་བཙུགས་མཛད་དེ་ ལོ་ངོ་བཅུ་ཕྲག་གཅིག་འཁོར་བའི་དུས་སྟོན་བཅྱེ་སྡུངས་གི་དོན་ལུ་དམིགས་ཏེ་ རིག་འཛིལ་གྱི་ལས་ཟེར་མི་ཅིག་འགོ་འདྲེན་འཐབ་མི་ནང་ལུ་ སློབ་དཔོན་རང་སོའི་སྤྱི་བ་དང་འཁྲིལ་ཏེ་ སྤྱན་འདྲུལ་གྱི་ལས་རིམ་རེ་འགོ་འདྲེན་འཐབ་ཅི། དེའི་སྐབས་ཀྱི་རང་གི་སྤྱན་འདྲུལ་གྱི་དོན་ཚན་གུ་གཞི་བཞག་ཐོག་ལས་ ཆོས་པའི་མིང་ཙམ་འཛིན་པ་ ལེགས་སྦྱར་བ་མཆོ་སྐྱེས་རྟོ་རྗེའམ་ མིང་གཞན་ཐུབ་བསྟན་འོད་དཀར་གྱིས་གཞན་ལུ་ ཕན་པའི་ལྷག་བསམ་རྣམ་པར་དཀར་བས་ སྤྱི་ལོ་༢༠༡༧སྤྱི་ཟླ་༤པའི་སྤྱི་ཚེས་༢༣ ལུ་བྱེས་པ་དགེ་ལེགས་སུ་གྱུར་ཅིག། ||

ང། རྒྱབ་རྟེན་དཔེ་དེབ་ཀྱི་མཚན་ཐོ།

ཆོས་མངོན་པ་ཀུན་ལས་བཏུས་པའི་མཆན་འགྲེལ།

ཆོས་མངོན་པ་ཀུན་ལས་བཏུས་པའི་རྒྱ་ཆེར་འགྲེལ་པ།

ཆོས་མངོན་པ་ཀུན་ལས་བཏུས་པའི་སྐྱིང་པོ་ལེགས་བཤད་ནོར་བུའི་འཕྲེང་བ།

སེམས་ཀྱི་གནས་ལུགས་མཐོང་བའི་མེ་ལོང་།

༢ བཀུ་ཤིས་གཡང་ཆགས་དགེ་ཞིང་ལེགས་པའི་རྩེར། །རྒྱལ་འཛིན་མཐོ་རིམ་སློབ་གྲྭའི་མེ་ཏོག་ཤར། །

ཕྱི་ནང་ཆོས་ཀྱི་སྣང་རྩི་རྒྱ་མཚོ་འཁྱིལ། །དོན་གཉེར་ཤེས་ལྡན་འཛིམས་པའི་སྙན་ལམ་དུ། །

འཛིན་ཆ་རྣམ་རྟོག་ཐམས་ཅད་སེམས་ཡིན་ནོ། །འདི་ནི་ཆོས་རྣམས་ཀུན་ཀྱི་རྩ་བ་ཡིན། །

ཕྱི་ཡི་འཇིག་རྟེན་ནང་གི་འཇིག་རྟེན་རྣམས། །སེམས་ལས་བྱུང་བ་ཡིན་ཞེས་རྒྱལ་བས་གསུངས། །

མཐོ་རིས་ལྷ་དང་མི་ཡི་ལུས་རྟེན་རྣམས། །སེམས་བཟང་དགེ་བའི་ཚོགས་ལས་བྱུང་བ་ཡིན། །

ངན་སོང་དུད་འགྲོ་དམྱལ་བ་ཡི་དྭགས་ལུས། །སེམས་ངན་མི་དགེའི་ཚོགས་ལས་བྱུང་བ་ཡིན། །

ལུས་ཀྱི་བདེ་བ་སེམས་ཀྱི་ཡིད་བདེ་སོགས། །དགེ་བཅུ་སེམས་བཟང་རྒྱུ་ལས་བྱུང་བ་ཡིན། །

ལུས་ཀྱི་སྡུག་བསྔལ་སེམས་ཀྱི་ཡིད་མི་བདེ། །མི་དགེ་སེམས་ངན་རྒྱུ་ལས་བྱུང་བ་ཡིན། །

འཛིན་ཆ་དག་པས་སེམས་ཀྱི་གསང་བ་མཆོག །མཐའ་བས་ཉན་ཐོས་རང་རྒྱལ་དག་བཅོམ་དང་། །

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་རྣམས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱས་རྣམས་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེན་པོ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ཡང་། །

ཕྱི་ཡི་ལུས་ངག་བཅོས་པ་ཙམ་གྱིས་ནི། །ནང་དུ་ཡོད་པའི་སེམས་ཀྱི་རང་བཞིན་མཆོག །

མཐོ་བའི་གོ་སྐབས་བསྐལ་པའི་བར་དུ་དབེན། །དེས་ན་སེམས་ཀྱི་གནད་ལ་དཔྱད་ན་ལེགས། །

ཐིམ་ཕུ་རྒྱལ་འཛིན་མཐོ་རིམ་སློབ་གྲྭའི་ལེགས་སྦྱར་བ་མཚོ་སྐྱེས་རྡོ་རྗེས་བྱིས་པ་དགེ་ལེགས་ཀྱང་ཅིག།

The Diversified Form of Manual Scavenging and How it Perpetuates the Caste System

RAJITHA SANAKA[1]

ABSTRACT. This paper explores the changing definition of manual scavenging in India, offering a glimpse into their harsh lifestyle, which is forced upon them mainly due to the caste they happen to be born into. In the past, people born into the Dalit caste, which is lowest according to the Hindu caste hierarchy in India, engaged in cleaning dry latrines, where they picked up human waste using their bare hands. Today, the occupation is passed on to subsequent generations, albeit in different and diversified forms, but in ways that perpetuate casteism and social stigma. This diversified occupation has also become far more hazardous, at times even fatal. Those employed, for instance, have been 'promoted' from cleaning dry latrines, to cleaning sewer lines, which are filled with toxic gases. This has led to the death of many, mainly due to asphyxiation. Several government policies have been formulated over the years to eliminate this horrific occupation, which could prevent deaths and also remove stereotypes surrounding caste-based occupations. However, the policies have benefited only a few, leaving many in the warp of poverty, danger and societal stigma of caste.

Life of a Manual Scavenger

Before discussing the caste system in India, and the way it has affected people engaged in manual scavenging, it is essential to understand how the occupation is disturbing and dehumanising, and yet highly prevalent in India. As a newspaper reporter for over four years in the Southern state of Telangana in India, I had the opportunity to interact with several individuals who were engaged in the profession. Among other things, I learned

[1] Rajitha Sanaka is a former journalist who covered development-related issues extensively in Telangana, India. She holds an MA in Communication and Journalism from University of Hyderabad. Prior to joining Royal Thimphu College, she worked as a reporter with the national daily, The New Indian Express, in Hyderabad. She can be contacted at rsanaka@rtc.bt.

that those who are currently employed as 'sewer line cleaners' or as cleaners of public toilets and railway tracks, do so because these jobs were passed down to them from their parents; it was in many ways the only choice they had to earn a livelihood. Members of the former generations of these individuals were similarly employed to clean dry latrines. The ones of the current generation have more diversified jobs, mainly because dry latrines have been replaced across the country with flushable toilets linked to a central sewer system in every major city, town and also many villages. For this reason I use 'manual scavenger' as synonymous with 'sewerage worker' in this article.

In any major city in India, a sewerage worker employed with the local municipality, comprising the water board and sanitation departments, is called on to clean septic tanks in households, companies and apartment complexes. Septic tanks are generally built in the basement or the cellar of an apartment and is the place where all the toilet waste is sent and collected. Apart from this, his job is to clean sewer lines that get clogged on a regular basis. On several occasions, individuals who have entered these toxic sewer lines have died due to asphyxiation across major cities in the country. A report by the National Commission for *Safai Karamcharis* (roughly translated from Hindi to sweepers, cleaners, manual scavengers and sewer line cleaners), a government organisation to aid and support those employed in the sanitation department, shows that 576 people have died between 1993 and 2018 due to asphyxiation. Non-governmental organisations working for these people put these deaths at more than 1200 (Subramaniam, 2018).

When a sewerage worker is called in to unclog a drain, it is generally a three-member team that reaches the location. The materials that clog a drain, as revealed by these workers, usually include cloth, plastic, sanitary napkins and similar materials which cannot pass through the drains or the sewer lines. There are no machines that can identify these materials, and they can be removed only by a human hand – to spot, touch, sense it and then pull it out.

Hence, one of the three members is suspended into the manholes with a rope tied around his waist. Another person mans the hole and is in charge of the pulling out the one dangling below when the job is done. These individuals have no prior knowledge of what might be clogging the line, and they tell that every experience is new and different. If it is sanitary napkins in one sewer line, it is lump of hair in another. They always have to go in and remove it by hand. While unclogging these drains, they are not protected by any gears like nose masks or hand gloves, which could at least partially ease their discomfort. It is in the absence of gears that several people have died inside these sewers. This is because they are exposed to toxic gases like hydrogen sulfide, ammonia, methane, esters, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides. It must be

emphasised here that these individuals are risking their lives to prevent a drain from overflowing and in doing so they ease the discomfort caused by overflowing drains in metro cities – traffic blockades, stench on the main roads or to live up to the image of a smart and clean city. A little bit of stench when passing through a trash can in an Indian city forces us to wrinkle our nose, hold our breath or cover it, but for these individuals, that is how the air smells, at all times. During my interactions with these individuals, it was revealed that the discrimination they face from people and society is multi-pronged. First, their caste leaves them with very few choices in occupation which are limited to sanitation and cleaning. The nature of the job is also inhuman. They are vulnerable to all kinds of diseases and health hazards. In order to sustain in the stench and to breathe through it, these men consume alcohol, not infrequently leading them to become dependable on it. This, in several cases, has also led to other problems like domestic abuse in their households.

They are further discriminated because of the stench that emanates from their bodies. They live in isolated colonies, even in urban cities, usually close to a dumping yard. Their lives are restricted to activities of cleaning and often their celebrations are also done in isolation. Skin diseases, fever, nausea and lung diseases are common among them. Health care is out of question and in any case a far-fetched thought for these individuals. Taking a day off for the sake of health care is also out of question as their pay depends on their availability for a cleaning job. Their children are affected too, not just by the situation at home. They have to adjust to low-quality education, while battling social stigma where 'casual' casteism – demeaning them in the name of their caste and their parents' occupation – is routine. One common example of casual casteism in the Telugu states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, is people calling someone or verbally abusing someone with the word 'pichakuntla', when they behave unusually or if they seem unkempt, unclean or messy, which the name of a caste in the Telugu states whose occupation traditionally, was begging.

In the past, when dry latrines or dry toilets were still existent, it was a woman's job to go to every household in the locality and clean up an unknown human's waste with her bare hands. Then came the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993, which called for the eradication of dry toilets and prevented their construction. It needs to be noted here that those employed to clean the dry toilets are now cleaning sewer lines. At the same time, the Indian Railways, which is the fourth largest railway network in the world, is also the largest employer of manual scavengers in India (Patankar, 2015). The toilet system in the majority of Indian trains leaves the waste on the railway tracks. As pointed out by (Baruah, 2014, p.2.),

"wastes are piled into baskets, which are then carried by the scavengers on their heads to such locations that are sometimes several kilometres away from the scavenged toilets." Some of them now have bio-toilets, but these need to be cleaned by people too.

The nature of the job is undoubtedly inhuman. The life that these individuals live and the way they are stigmatised all point to the caste system and years of prejudice that perpetuates in the Indian society. There is blatant violation of human rights, at multiple levels, of these individuals engaged in this occupation. The caste system prevents them from making a choice of a different or a better life. At work, the nature of the job puts them at physical and psychological risk that is not just limited to them, but their succeeding generations.

Bezwada Wilson, founder of Safaai Karamchari Andolan, a movement aiming to eradicate the occupation completely has been vocal in pointing out that in the current time, when there is technology solving almost every problem in the world, it is shocking that India is not keen to create or find technology that can help eradicate this occupation. He stated, in an interview with me, the argument he has been making for several years now, that it is because it threatens the caste hierarchy and dominance of upper castes.

Caste and Manual Scavenging – Some Historical Context

Caste and occupation in India are inter-linked, and this has been noted by many sociologists and anthropologists. Certain jobs, for several centuries, were assigned to certain sections of the Indian population, based only and entirely on the caste of one's birth.

Across the country, there is a hierarchy of occupations where every caste is assigned to a different occupation. This originates from the Hindu religious philosophy, where aspects of culture, diet, rituals, and occupations were considered either superior or inferior to the other and hence the order (Srinivas, 2013). This was institutionalised by the British who colonised India. There are individuals born into the highest caste, the Brahmin caste, who have usually been associated with occupations of preaching or orchestrating rituals and customs for others, namely priests and scholars. Individuals born into the Kshatriya caste have been warriors and kings. Individuals born into the Vaishya caste have largely been merchants, traders, money lenders. In some parts of the country, they are also land owners, employing people from lower castes to tend to their lands. Finally, individuals born into the Shudra caste have been laborers, mainly employed by the Vaishyas. Besides these, there was an additional 'out-casted' group called the Dalits or the 'untouchables' who occupied the lowest step of the social ladder

(Ambedkar, 1989[1925]; Pick and Dayaram, 2006, as cited in (Sankaran, Sekerdej, & Hecker, 2017)).

Some of these Dalits also follow the Christian faith, with their conversion, some argue, expressing a sign of protest against their marginalised position, but that does still not exempt them from carrying on with the caste-based occupation. This hierarchy also brings with it societal stigma and prejudice among people. The prejudice against "Dalits" or the "untouchables", (Baruah, 2014), is also inherited by individuals. Caste contributes to social stigma, where even the shadow of the 'untouchable' is considered unclean and dirty by those of the other castes.

The word Dalit means oppressed or broken. This prejudice can be related to the nature of the work they were allocated, as per the caste system. This can also be witnessed across the country on an everyday basis. At the village level, the 'lower caste' families often live on the outskirts of the village. There is visible prevalence of casteism even today. As part of an internship, where I was studying about certain weaving and shepherding communities in villages of Central Telangana in 2013, I observed that these individuals are served food in separate utensils or are asked to bring their own. On one occasion, a Dalit woman was invited by a woman from the shepherding caste, Kuruma. It was an act of courtesy extended by the Kuruma woman in the presence of us, the interns, and the members of the organisation we were working for. The Dalit woman had her meal outside the house, in her own plate and water, from her own glass. In the Telugu States too, there has been caste discrimination where Dalits are often dominated and discriminated against by the upper caste land owners. There were at least three cases between 1985 and 2012 where several Dalits in these states were massacred by people from the upper castes. Several villages in the Northern part of India also practice segregation till this day. In public occassions like weddings or funerals, people belonging to different castes have their meals separately, Dalits often far away from the rest. In urban spaces caste is equally blatant in educational institutions, government organisations and households. The most common pointer regarding the prevalence of casteism in educational institutions is the number of suicides by those students belonging to Scheduled Castes, the Shudra category. In 2014, the suicide of a Hyderabad University student, Rohit Vemula, who reportedly ended his life as he could not face discrimination in the name of caste brought to light the deep-rooted caste bias in educational institutions. In this reputed university, at least 8 Dalit students killed themselves, unable to face discrimination over a decade, until 2016. More recently, a second year medical student also committed suicide unable to face the discrimination she was subjected to by fellow students. The 26-year-old doctor, Payal Tadvi belonged to

a community that is categorised as a scheduled tribe. Tadvi was studying at one of the top medical colleges in Mumbai – Topiwala National Medical College. The suicide of Tadvi is a clear indication that those from the lower castes aspiring to choose a different profession and succeeding at it does not necessarily mitigate the stigma attached to the deep-rooted casteism in India.

This discrimination by the upper caste individuals stems from the tradition that every caste is designated to a specific occupation only. The occupations of Dalits, even today, are mostly those which no other individual would 'choose' to do. These include preparing bodies to be cremated, as per the Hindu religious custom, skinning of animal carcasses, which are considered unholy and dirty according to the Hindu philosophy, and then used to make leather goods. Besides this, killing of rats and pests, and ensuring cleaning all kinds of dirt and waste – human, animal feces, household waste or any other kind. Upper caste individuals believe that those engaging in these occupations, namely the Dalits are interacting constantly with polluted environments, leading to the stereotype that they are "polluted individuals", who, if touched or interacted with can pollute others too.

To eliminate this stereotype and the stigma attached to caste, there have been several movements by Indian leaders, like MK Gandhi and also a series of policies by Indian policy makers, starting with Dr. BR Ambedkar, who pioneered the social movement against Dalits. Born in the Dalit caste himself, Ambedkar fought against the deep-rooted social and economic discrimination against Dalits. His public movements were aimed to break the stigma against Dalits in the country and aimed at political reforms. However, small yet notable practices of untouchability still exist, where upper caste people serve food and water in separate utensils, which are always set aside. On the other hand, Gandhi eliminated the word 'untouchables', replacing it with 'Harijans', which translates to 'children of God'. He also held a fast for six days, protesting against the British to eliminate untouchability, which was instrumental to an extent.

The policies which, on paper, seek to stop the employment of people for this job, thereby aiming to eradicate the caste system, have only failed. The number of people who are employed in jobs, diversified from manual scavenging is still high.

At the same time, the number of people who are losing their lives while on the job is also not negligible.

The Case of Manual Scavenging Deaths in Telangana State

In August 2016, a total of three men who entered a sewer line, which was 20 feet deep, in Hyderabad lost their lives. The person who was suspended into the sewer line drowned in the water, and died due to asphyxiation. Meanwhile, the person who suspended him and the driver of the vehicle, in the process of saving each other, were also killed. This incident was one of the many, though one of the few, where three people died in a single instance, and occurred after the 2013 Act came into force. The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013, not only penalises people who employ individuals to clean sewer lines, toilets or septic tanks, but also orders the state governments to provide a monetary compensation to families who have lost people in these sewer lines. As per the Act, a sum total of Rs.10 lakh is to be given to the families who lost individuals while on this dehumanising job, starting from 1993, as compensation. In this case, the Hyderabad Municipal Corporation and the water board were the ones that needed to be penalised, but there was little action taken. When questioned, the authorities argued that they do not employ these individuals directly, but through middlemen, who should be penalised instead. This is only one of the many cases which were reported in the media. There is no collective data documenting the deaths of people engaging in this profession. However, in a question to the Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment during a session in February 2019 on the floor of the Lok Sabha, it was stated that there are no deaths of manual scavengers reported. It needs to be noted here that the term manual scavenging does not exist in its original context, as dry latrines have been replaced with flushable ones. Since no individuals are engaged in this particular nature of work, the report says, 'no deaths' reported.

On the other hand, a list by the Ministry stated that only two families were paid the full compensation of Rs.10 lakh until March 27, 2014 in Telangana. However, in an independent investigation done in the year 2017 it was found that that there were a total of 22 families who lost their family members who entered sewer lines to clean them since 1993. Out of this, only three families, (excluding the two listed by the Minister) have been provided with the Rs.10 lakh monetary compensation. The highest number of families who have been paid a compensation hail from the state of Tamil Nadu at 155.

The Act also seeks to rehabilitate these individuals into other occupations which are financially stable and less taxing – socially and also physically stable and more human occupations. However, in several instances, there is strong prejudice that comes in the

way of society accepting their services in any other occupation. Hence, this comes in the way of these people's choice to opt for a different livelihood. In her book, *Unseen: The truth about India's manual scavengers*, (Singh, 2014), talks about instances where those who dared to make a choice and choose a different occupation were ridiculed and looked down upon. The author stresses on how the rigidity of the Indian caste system does not allow people to look beyond certain aspects.

The rehabilitation scheme states that those employed as manual scavengers are entitled to a one-time cash benefit of Rs.40,000, which could enable them to look for an alternative livelihood. Under this, over 45,000 people were identified to be eligible, however, only 37 % of them have received this benefit. (Mitra, 2019) In the state of Telangana, under this scheme, the government launched a rehabilitation plan in 2017, which might seem like a breath of fresh air. The State purchased mini sewer-jetting machines, a technology that in majority of the cases does not require men to enter in the dangerous sewer lines, but helps suck out materials clogging the drains. How many of these jetting machines will change the life of these sewer line workers, break the stigma surrounding their caste, remains to be seen.

One appreciative move, which is likely, to help destigmatise caste in the coming years, needs to be mentioned here. A former officer in the Indian Police Service in Telangana, Mr Praveen Kumar was instrumental in initiating a movement called SWAEROES – Social Welfare Aereoes. Aeroes means the sky in Greek. The idea behind this was to tell the children born into families categorised as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, that sky is their limit. It aims to break the caste stereotypes that are normally forced upon them.

Mr Praveen Kumar, believes that education is one way to curb the stigma surrounding caste. He and his family were all victims of casteism and he believes education can help break that. In an interview with The Economic Times, Kumar (2016), he mentioned:

> My parents are living examples of the transformative power of education. But for education, they would have ended up as bonded labourers like my grandparents. My parents used to share their dreams with me and my siblings and we worked hard to make their dreams true. Today I am an IPS officer, my brother is an associate professor and my sister is a doctor. While caste has been working against me, I ignored the pain it inflicted, because I had a formidable goal. I am absolutely comfortable with my identity today.

He is the secretary for the Telangana Residential Educational Society, which runs residential schools, providing free education, while also focusing on the overall development of the children.

Conclusion

To conclude, despite policies to provide monetary compensation to rehabilitate those engaged in the occupations of cleaning sewer lines or manual scavenging, there has been little or no change in their lives. It is clear that the occupation which has branched out into several others has only proven to be dangerous, where some of them have been killed while others have to live with the unpleasantness of the occupation on a daily basis. This is a continuing reality and cannot be looked at independently, but has to be observed from the perspective of the caste system that has been deeply rooted in India. Unless the ways to address the stigma attached to caste are identified, these occupations will be passed on to the subsequent generations, thereby perpetuating casteist mentality.

Acknowledgments

Writing about a subject as sensitive as this one is not easy. If it wasn't for many people, including the ones from the manual scavenging community, the article would have been an unfair representation of their experiences. Even now, I feel that their troubles are not fully and fairly represented, or their lives would have been better already. Hence, I would like to thank those from the community who wholeheartedly shared their living experiences with me, reliving their reality more than once while talking to me.

Besides this, trained as a journalist, writing an academic article was quite a difficult task for me. My first draft was a reportage of facts and nowhere close to an academic piece. However, my reviewer was kind and patient to point out all that was needed to be improved, which helped me a great deal to understand how academic writing is done. It is not just the way the argument is presented, but how everything needs to be interpreted. This was clearly communicated to me by my reviewer, which was a great learning experience for me. Hence, I would like to thank my reviewer for contributing to my learning process, for the time that was spent on my work and the help that was provided to me, with lot of care and scrutiny. I would also like to thank Dr. Jelle JP Wouters for constantly encouraging me and helping me with all the necessary help and advice. I view this as a great learning opportunity and appreciate his patient and careful guidance.

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"Woah, that's too personal": The Reported Behavior, Knowledge, Perspective and Sources of Reproductive Health Education of RTC Students

TANDIN PELDEN[1]& DOLMA CHODEN RODER[2]

ABSTRACT. This research project looks at RTC students' reproductive health knowledge, attitudes and self-reported behavior. The project aimed to learn about the factors that influence students' knowledge and behavior, to understand the relationships between what students know and their perspectives, and the impact of reproductive health education on their sexual behavior. Data was collected in the spring of 2018 over a period of a month, using a mixed-method approach (both interviews and a survey). A total of 20 students were interviewed, while 52 completed the survey. The findings showed that there was a large gap between the students' knowledge and their actual behavior in terms of safe sex practices, that sexually-active students are more concerned about the risk of pregnancy than they are about STIs and that sexually-active male students have a murky understanding of consent, while female students reported that sexual relationships often begin under pressure. The project was conceptualized and conducted by Tandin Pelden, as her undergraduate research project, while Dolma Choden Roder was her supervisor for this project.

[1]Tandin Pelden graduated from RTC with a degree in Political Science and Sociology. She can be contacted at peldentandin8@gmail.com.
[2]Dolma Choden Roder is Senior Lecturer, Anthropology Department, Royal Thimphu College. She can be contacted at dolmacroder@rtc.bt

Introduction

On September 7th 2017, I[3] attended an 'Orientation in College Learning' class on Reproductive Health Education (RHE) with first-year college students, when I was a third year student, as an observer. The talk was given by an emergency- room nurse who was one of two college counselors. In her talk she highlighted unprotected sex, sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancy. She used a banana to demonstrate how to use a condom properly. She asked, "As I need a friend to hold the banana to demonstrate condom use, can anyone volunteer?" The whole class remained silent and a number of students even looked down and tried not to catch her eyes. After what felt like a long time, I volunteered to help her, and the students reacted in a shocked way and whispered among themselves.

The students were too shy to participate and ask questions about reproductive health. When I was a first-year student in college we were also given RHE. However, there were many important differences between this class and what I had experienced in my first year. In the case of the 2017 batch, RHE was given in their classroom rather than an auditorium, which leaves more room for active engagement with the educator. The educator brought in a range of real contraceptives for students to see and handle, which was not done during the RHE class I had attended as a first year student.

Bhutan signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990. It is a human rights treaty for the political, civil, social, economic, health and cultural rights of children (National Report, 2009). In the Constitution of Bhutan (2008), the government provides the people of Bhutan with free health care, which includes reproductive health services. Still, unplanned pregnancy and reproductive health is an issue in Bhutan, in general, and at my college in particular. I became more concerned about this issue after the unplanned pregnancies of two of my seniors and one of my classmates. In personal communications with the Dean of the college (S. Bhattarai, personal communication, May 14, 2018), he stated, "On average we face 2 to 3 female students leaving college or taking maternal leave due to pregnancy every year." There are, however, no official records regarding this, so an accurate figure is not possible. It was also not possible to learn the number of male parents at the college or the STI rates.

[3] This piece of research was conducted by TandinPelden as her undergraduate research project while she was a political science and sociology students at RTC. Dolma ChodenRoder was her faculty supervisor.

This gap made me even more curious to learn about students' knowledge and opinions of reproductive health and I decided to pursue the topic for my final year Undergraduate Research Project. My central research question was, "What are the perspectives and knowledge of Royal Thimphu College students in regard to reproductive health?"

This was supported by the following sub questions:

1) What knowledge do the students have about reproductive health and where did they get it? What factors influence this knowledge?
2) How does the perspective of students impact their reproductive health behaviors? What factors influence their behavior?
3) What is the relationship between what students know about reproductive health and their perspectives on it?
4) What is the impact of reproductive health education on the sexual behavior of the students?
5) What factors influence students' willingness to discuss reproductive health issues?

Literature Review

From a global perspective, peers (Story and Gorski 2013) and the internet (Manjoo 2016) are important sources of information about sex for many young people. However the accuracy of these sources is less than assured. The AIDs crisis in the 1980s was, in part, responsible for schools in nations like the Unites States of America increasingly becoming more involved in providing reproductive health education (Huber and Firman, 2014). Lindberg and Zimet (2012) were able to demonstrate that receiving formal reproductive health education before the first sexual encounter promotes safer sex. It also delays the first sexual encounter for both genders. However, religious (Tabatabaie, 2015) and gender norms (Runhare et al. 2006) can diminish or even derail the effectiveness of reproductive health education. Additionally, in studying the effectiveness of reproductive health programs in a non-Western context (Tanzania in their case), Mkumbo and Inghams (2010) found that surveys were better than interviews at collecting data on more sensitive topics, such as contraceptive use and masturbation. This points to the fact that reproductive health education often has to overcome cultural discomfort around the very topics that it deals with. Unlike many other countries in the region, Bhutan does not have strict taboos around premarital sex. Early marriages and pregnancy were the expected norm in Bhutan's agrarian past. According to the most recent Bhutan Living Standards Survey (National Statistics of Bhutan, 2017), the mean

age of women's first birth is 21.7, around the age when many young women are either completing their studies or entering their first job.

Additionally, other research on sexual practices in Bhutan, such as studies of Bhutanese college students (Gurung et al 2016 and Sherab et al 2017) and a study of two rural Bhutanese communities (Norbu et al, 2013), have found consistently low condom use despite accurate knowledge of STIs. Additionally, both Gurung et al (2013) as well as a study on adolescent sexual health (Dorji, 2009) have found that one reason for deciding not to use a condom was the inability to convince, or even ask, a partner to use one. Coupled with studies that note a recent increase in STI rates in Bhutan (see for example Tshokey 2017) and evidence that botched abortions in border towns (since they are illegal in Bhutan) are not uncommon (Dema, 2014), this suggests that young Bhutanese are regularly putting themselves at risk of both unplanned pregnancies and contracting STIs.

Additionally, Dorji (2009) and Gurung et al (2016) suggest that young women and young men have very different experiences of sex. This means that gendered notions about who can initiate sex and what it means to be sexually active can place young women at a significant disadvantage. There is an expectation that men will be the pursuers and "convince" young women to have sex as well as an assumption that some girls enter sexual relationships in order to gain economic benefits (see Gurung et al 2016 and Dorji 2009). This means that issues around consent and sexual equity are often ambiguous and contradictory.

Research Methods

To understand the students' knowledge and their perspectives on reproductive health education, I collected both qualitative and quantitative data. I used interviews because they provided detailed information that allowed me to learn what students know about RH, and how it influences their sexual behavior. The survey allowed me to check students' knowledge on reproductive health and to ask personal questions about sexual behavior. The survey was in the form of options to choose from: A), B) or C). All student quotations in this paper are from the interviews conducted.

As a result of the time constraints and the difficulty of recruiting participants, I used a convenience sample. My participants were a mix of both male and female students at RTC.

I had initially planned to do 30 interviews but I was only able to complete 20 as 18 students rejected my request for an interview, while 7 other students dropped out of the

study halfway through the interview. As for the survey, I was able to get 52 participants and all the students I asked completed it.

Data Analysis and Findings

Sample description

In terms of the 20 students who completed the interview, 12 were female and 8 were male. 13 respondents were in their 3rd year and 7 were in their 2nd year. There were no 1st year students in the sample, as all the ones I approached rejected my request for an interview. Of the respondents, 18 were Buddhist and 2 were Christian. All 8 males claimed to have had sexual encounters, while 3 females said they had had sex and 9 said they had not.

For the survey there were 53 participants, 28 males and 25 females. The participants for both the survey and the interview were different and they did not overlap. There were 7 1st year respondents, 16 from the 2nd year and 30 in their 3rd year. 1 respondent answered that he was atheist, 3 followed Hinduism, 4 were Christian and 45 were Buddhist. In the survey I found that 25 students claimed to have had sex of whom 13 were male and 12 were female. Five salient themes emerged from the data. The first theme was the extent of students' knowledge and their source of information about reproductive health issues. Secondly, I looked at how religion plays a part in why students do not have sex, and, thirdly, at how students' knowledge helps to shape their perspectives. Fourthly, I examined the impact of having RHE knowledge on the sexual behavior of the students, and, lastly, I looked at the factors that made students unwilling to talk about sex.

Reproductive Health Education Knowledge

To a certain extent, most of the respondents to both the interviews and survey seemed to understand reproductive health: all of them could talk about safe sexual encounters, STIs and different contraceptives for avoiding pregnancy. In the interview most students chose the correct answer, when asked to explain how to avoid STIs and pregnancy. The most commonly known contraceptives were the condom and the I-pill. The STIs that they were most familiar with were HIV/AIDS and gonorrhea. One of the female respondents from the interview said, "Reproductive health education is for girls as girls have to know how to avoid pregnancy because if we become pregnant we have to leave school and are labeled in society." A number of students of both the genders mentioned

that it would be harder on women if they had a baby during their school days, showing how the female students are recognized as needing to bear the brunt of responsibility for safe sex.

When asked to describe the process of proper condom use during the interview, only 2 of the respondents were able to give an accurate description, and both said they had engaged in sex. Three female respondents said they depended on their male sexual partners to know the way of using condoms safely. All the male students claimed to know how to use a condom. However, they were often inaccurate or unable to be specific in describing the process. For example, one male student noted, "I just take out the condom from wrapper and put it on my thing directly." When I asked him to be more specific about the process, he answered, "That is the process I am talking about earlier." This shows a possible gap between the respondents' knowledge and their actual sexual behavior.

When asked if they had attended a reproductive health talk at college, out of 13 respondents from the 3rd year only 5 had attended and 8 had not. But from the 2nd year, 6 had attended the talk while only 1 had not.

Sources of Student Knowledge

School and friends were both significant sources of students' knowledge of reproductive health. All 20 interview respondents said that they were first introduced to sex at school, and that the questions they had about sex were answered by their close friends sharing their experiences. The data from the questionnaire showed similar findings. Even though parents and the government of Bhutan do not hold schools responsible for providing RHE, 44 students at RTC said school was the most important source of RHE, which shows a similarity to the USA where schools are responsible for providing RHE to the students (Huber and Firmin, 2014).

Story and Gorski (2013) argue that it is important for RH educators to provide factual information because of the tendency for students to turn to their peers for information about sex. In line with this argument, RTC students reported that they depend, firstly, on schools, and, secondly, on close friends for information about sex. For example, a female student noted, during the interview, that 'My friend said that her boyfriend once ejaculated inside her vagina when they had sex during her menstruation and she did not become pregnant.' During the RHclass I attended as an observer, a female student asked a similar question of the counselor. The counselor responded that the possibility of becoming pregnant depends on the individual's menstrual cycle. She

advised that unless the girls know their menstrual cycle well they should avoid unsafe sex during their period as there is a chance of pregnancy. This example clearly shows that students who rely on peer information face the possibility of being provided with inaccurate facts.

6 students who were interviewed said they turn to the internet for information about sex, but the information online is variable in quality so the students need to be aware of how to evaluate online information (Manjoo, 2016). Only 3 students had received some RHE from their family, which supports Dorji's (2015) argument that in the Bhutanese cultural context the family does not discuss sex at home. Giving formal RHE at college might help students more freely discuss sex as well as gain access to accurate information.

Reported Relationships between Students' Knowledge and Their Perspectives

According to students' self-reports, how they feel about their sexual behavior is based on their RH knowledge. A female interviewee said, 'RHE is important as it is education that can help us protect our body. After learning it has caused me to delay my sexual behavior and if I ever have sex I think I am going to use the condom to protect myself from disease and pregnancy.' Her decision to delay sex and decision to use a condom were based on the knowledge that she already had of RH. All the students received formal RH during their school days and also through subjects like biology during class 10. 19 other respondents, similarly, stated that they would prefer using condoms as a contraceptive to avoid both pregnancy and STDs.

Religion as a Factor

Two of the interview respondents who were Christian had not yet had sex; they both said that this choice was influenced by their religion. One respondent explained, 'It is sin [*sic*] to engage in sexual behavior before marriage in our religion as stated in the Bible, so we avoid having sex before marriage and even our parents do not talk about sex as I feel they fear it will promote sexual behavior.' Similarly, the 4 Christian students who filled in the questionnaire also reported that they had not had sex. Tabatabaie (2015) and Runhareetal (2006) found that religious and gender norms which advocate abstinence until marriage can cause young people to indulge in unsafe sex practices

because they do not receive RHE. In contrast, we can see that the students themselves claim to delay sex in the Bhutanese context due to their religious beliefs.

However, Buddhist students, too, do not receive RHE at home. For example, one of the interviewees noted, 'My father did not discuss RH with me and my sibling as we are a conservative Buddhist family who does [*sic*] not talk about sex in our home at all and that's why I find sex talk as a kind of taboo to mention to my family.' While Buddhism does not promote abstinence, still, our cultural norms discourage the discussion of sex within the family.

Impact of RHE on Sexual Behavior

RHE has a positive impact on sexual behaviors likely to reduce unwanted pregnancy or STIs, according to respondents' self-reports. Many students said that after receiving RHE they started using condoms to avoid sexually transmitted infection and pregnancy. In the survey when students were asked to state their purposes for using contraceptives, 31 students reported wanting to avoid both STIs and pregnancy while 7 students wanted to avoid STIs only and 3 students wanted to avoid pregnancy only. Yet the responses of 17 students during interview hinted that avoiding pregnancy is actually their priority, as they mentioned avoiding pregnancy in their answers to each and every question I asked. Likewise, two of the male respondents said they used the 'pull-out method' which is the withdrawal of the penis before ejaculation to allow the sperm to be deposited outside the vagina (Department of Public Health, 2009), saying their sole motive was to avoid pregnancy.

In addition, there was a gap between self-reported behavior and students' actual behavior and knowledge. 31 students stated that they wanted to avoid both pregnancy and STIs, but their knowledge of how to avoid pregnancy was significantly higher than their knowledge of how to avoid STIs. During an interview one of the female students from the 3rd year said, 'The most important thing I take care of is to avoid pregnancy and STIs.' But when I asked her about the contraceptives she used, she said, 'I have used the condom, pull out method and the I-pill during an emergency.' Her use of I-pills can only protect her from pregnancy but not STIs, and the withdrawal method is risky and cannot reliably protect against either. Yet she claimed that avoiding STIs and pregnancy were equally important.

Lindberg and Zimet (2012) found that RHE promotes safer sex and avoids pregnancy, prevents STIs and delays the first sexual encounter. It is true that respondents mentioned that they chose to delay their first sexual encounter as a result

of RHE. One of the male interviewees from the 2nd year stated, 'The knowledge of RH has made a greater [*sic*] impact in my life. It taught me how I can protect myself when I have sex, to avoid both fatherhood and STIs. It would be knowledge that I can use even during my life for family planning and would be *[sic*] avoiding STIs even in future.'

Newby et al. (2012) found that British students prefer the condom. In the same way, I found the condom to be the preference of RTC students in both interviews and the survey. 43 out of the 52 students who participated in the survey preferred to use the condom, and, similarly, in the interviews I found that 13 respondents out of the 20 wanted to use condoms during sexual encounters.

All three of the female respondents who stated that they had had sex, said they were initially pressured by their male partner into sex. In contrast, the 8 males who reported that they had had sex stated that both they and their partner agreed to have sex. This shows a possible gap between how the male and female students feel about having consensual sex. One of the female interviewees said, 'During my first sexual encounter my partner asked me for a week to have sex with him which I denied doing but after a while he said that for a relationship to last long and for it to become stronger both of us need to show commitment and love through sex. That's why I had my first sexual encounter with him.' A male interviewee, however, said, 'Obviously I asked her to have sex first, you know how girls are, they need the man to carry out the first step, they are just shy to ask for it and you know in love we need sexual intimacy too.' He chuckled as he made the last part of his statement. These statements show how the female students can be pressured to have sex in the name of love and commitment. The male student did not understand that sex should be consensual; he seemed to be comfortable with exerting a lot of pressure on his female partner. This seems to suggest that while the idea of consent is known, men feel that in a Bhutanese cultural context it is always the man who should take the first step while the woman remains silent. They do not consider the idea that a woman's silence is also a way of saying no. So we can see that the idea of consent is murky to many students at RTC.

Factors That Affected Willingness to Talk about Sex

In the course of recruiting participants for the interviews, 18 students declined and 7 others dropped out of the interview midway, feeling that the questions were too personal and sensitive. When I asked if they had had sex or not 5 of them refused to talk any further. One male said, 'Woah, that's too personal to talk with a stranger [*sic*] and your research topic is too sensitive to discuss it openly in the college! And you said

I can walk out if I want right?' That numerous students at RTC are not willing to talk about RHE, even to their peers, is significant. It shows that we have a long way to go before it become an acceptable subject to be discussed with family and in public. As long as it remains a sensitive topic, students at college are not able to talk about safe sex, consent and rape openly.

The students mentioned, in interviews, how their parents avoid talking about sex with them. This, in turn, causes them to feel embarrassed to speak openly about sex. This suggests that parents' discomfort about discussing sex with their children at home and their remaining in denial of their children's sexual behavior, may have led students to also feel the same way outside the home. According to a female final year student in interview, 'My mother told me not to get pregnant but she did not tell me how I can avoid pregnancy. She always tells me not to bring a bastard home, which would ruin us.' The statement shows parents might not have enough knowledge or confidence to discuss contraceptives and RH with their children, as well as the presence of discomfort around discussing sex with the family.

Holmes (2007) argues that gender is a social construction. The male is supposed to act in a masculine way while a female should be feminine. In this way, gendered norms are reproduced causing people to act in a way that is consistent with them. Gender roles and expectations appear to have played a part in the interview. Males tended to claim that they had already engaged in sex, perhaps in an effort to show their masculinity. Women, however, may have claimed virginity due, in part, to the stigma attached to young women who are sexually active. For example, a male student from the 3rd year during the interview said, 'I don't want to discuss if I had sex or not because I want to protect my girlfriend. You know it is okay for guys to admit to having sex but my girlfriend would face consequence [*sic*] if I said yes.' This claim demonstrates that males who admit to being sexually active face fewer consequences than females who admit the same. Out of 20 interview respondents (which included 8 males and 12 females) only 3 females admitted that they had engaged in sex, while all of the 8 males claimed that they had. In other words, there appears to be a gap between the genders in terms of whether they are willing to admit to sexual encounters or not.

One of the factors contributing to the students' reluctance to talk about their personal sexual behavior might be the way in which Bhutanese society defines masculinity and femininity. In a Bhutanese context, sex before marriage is more acceptable for males than females and females may face more consequences for sexual behavior. This could include being labeled with names such as 'prostitute' or as a 'sure goal' (a label used by young adult Bhutanese males for femaleswho will agree to have sex

with any man). Furthermore, women who have not had sex prior to marriage are seen as a more suitable future match for marriage (Chuki, 2013). Additionally, the only three females who did admit to having had sex were close friends I had known for a long time, which might have made them more willing to admit that, they were sexually active.

However, the results of the survey showed that out of 25 respondents who engaged in sex, 12 were female and 13 were male. This is a significantly smaller gender difference than was found through interviews. The number of students admitting to having had sex in the survey compared with the interviews might be the result of the two different data collection methods I chose similar to Mkumbo and Inghams (2010). As the interviews were face-to-face there was less room for the participants to feel anonymous. That might have caused fewer female students to admit to having sex, while more male students might have felt pressure to claim that they were sexually active.

Limitations

To gain a better understanding of the context of RHE at RTC it would be useful to interview faculty and staff who are involved in giving RHE to the students, such as the college nurse and counselors. This would help in better understanding the type of RHE provided and how students respond to it. For example, the most common questions students ask as well the topics they most frequently have difficulty in understanding. Also, it would have been helpful to interview a larger sample of females who reported having had sex, to explore the issue of their actual contraceptive behavior and consent issues in more depth.

Another limitation of this project is that it has focused mainly on heterosexual behavior. Expanding the scope by considering the experience of homosexual students would help to better understand the full range of sexual behaviors of RTC students.

Conclusion

This study of the current sexual knowledge, practices and attitudes of RTC students has found 1) there are large gaps in students' knowledge as reflected in their actual behavior and safe sex practices, 2) that there is a tendency for sexually-active students to be more concerned about the risk of pregnancy than they are about STIs, which manifests in low condom use, and 3) that sexually-active male students have a murky understanding of consent, while female students describe how sexual relationships often begin under pressure. RH is an important topic to teach in college because it is

conducive to informed decisions both in the present and in the long run, and this information is something that students can share with peers, siblings, and their community. College is a period of experimentation which involves independent decision making, in contrast to high school. This makes the need to provide young people with accurate information about their reproductive health even more urgent.

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ཡུཿབཀྲལ་ བསོད་ནམས་སྟོབས་ཀྲས།[1]

རྩོམ་ཤོག་འབྲི་དགོ་བའི་ཁྲངས།

རྩོམ་ཤོག་འབྲི་དགོ་བའི་རྒྱུ་མཚན་དེ་ཡང་ ཨོ་རྒྱན་གུ་རུ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་དང་ མཁས་གྲུབ་གཉིས་པ་ནགས་ཚལ་དང་ཁོངས་ཚུ་གིས་ བྱིན་གྱིས་བླབས་གནང་བའི་ སྒས་གནས་ཁྲད་པར་ཅན་གྱི་ས་གནས་ སྤགས་པའི་ཕུ་ལུ་སྦྲེ་ མཁའ་འགྲོ་ཟེར་བ་འབྱམ་གྱི་ ཐུགས་ཀྱི་སྒས་ཨོ་ མི་དབང་ཚ་ཞེ་སྐལ་བཟང་དབང་ཨོ་དབང་ཕྱུག་གིས་ ཐུགས་རྗེའི་སྤྱན་གྱིས་གཟིགས་ཏེ་ ང་བཅས་འབྲུགཔ་གིས་མ་ཚད་པར་ རྒྱལ་སྤྱི་ལུ་ཕན་ཐོགས་པའི་ ཤེས་རིག་གི་འབྱུང་གནས་ སྔར་མེད་པའི་མཐོ་རིམ་སློབ་གྲྭ་ཆེན་ཨོ་གཞི་བཙུགས་གནང་སྟེ་ དུས་ཅི་ སྤྱི་ལོ་༢༠༡༤ལས་ མི་ལོ་བཅུ་ཕྲག་གཅིག་འཁོར་བའི་ དུས་སྟོན་བཅུ་སྐུང་ཞུ་ནི་དང། མི་དབང་ཚ་ཞེ་སྐལ་བཟང་དབང་ཨོ་དབང་ཕྱུག་དང་ དགོས་བསྟན་འཛིན་ཡོན་ཏན་རྣམ་གཉིས་ལུ་ བཀའ་དྲིན་དགའ་ཚོར་བསམ་སྟེ་ གུས་བཏུད་ཞུཔ་དང་འབྲེལ་ སྒས་གནས་ཁྲད་པར་ཅན་ཅིག་ ཞིནམ་ མི་དམངས་ཀྱིས་མཉེན་ནི་གི་དོན་ལུ་ ཞེབ་འཚོལ་འབད་དེ་ བྱིས་ཡོད་ཟེར་ཞུ་ནི་ཞིན།

[1]ཞེབ་འཚོལ་དང་རྩོམ་སྒྲིག་འབད་མི་ ཡུཿབཀྲལ་བསོད་ནམས་སྟོབས་ཀྲས་ངར་ སྐང་སྟེང་མདོ་སྒགས་ཐོས་བསམ་རབ་ཀྲས་གྲིང་མཐོ་རིམ་བཤད་གྲྭ་ཆེན་མོ་ལས་ མཐོ་རིམ་གོང་མའི་ཤེས་ཚད་མཐར་འཛུལ་ཡོད་པའི་ཁར་ མཐོ་རིམ་བཤད་གྲྭ་དང་གྲྭ་ཚང་ནང་ སློབ་སྟོན་པ་འབད་ཡང་ཕྱག་ཞུ་ཡོད། དེ་ལས་ ཐིམ་ཕུག་ཀྲལ་འཛིན་མཐོ་རིམ་སློབ་གྲྭ་ནང་ སློབ་སྟོན་པ་སྒེ་ཚོ་ངོ་བཙུ་ཐམ་གྱི་རིང་ལུ་ ཕྱག་ཞུ་སྟེ་ཡོད་ཟེར་ཞུ་ནི་ཞིན། འབྲེལ་བའཐབ་ནི་གི་དོན་ལུ་ stob@rtc.bt

སྟོན་བརྗོད།

༄༅ ཨོཾ་སྭསྟི། ཨ་རྒྱན་ངཡབ་གླིང་ནས་བྱོན་པའི། །སྲིད་གསུམ་ཟིལ་གནོན་པཎ་འཛུང་གནས། །མཁྱེན་བརྩེ་ཟུས་པའི་མཐུ་སྟོབས་དཔུང་གིས། །རྐོལ་ངན་ཚར་གཅོད་ཞབས་ལ་གུས་བཏུད། །ཟེར་བའི་མཆོད་པར་བརྗོད་པའི་ ཚོགས་གིས་མདུན་བསུ་ཞིནམ་ལས་ ལུང་པ་རེ་ལུ་ལུགས་སྲོལ་རེ། བླ་མ་རེ་ལུ་ཆོས་ལུགས་རེ། ཟེར་བའི་དཔྱེ་དང་འདྲཔ་སྟེ་ ལུང་སྡོགས་སོ་སོ་ལུ་ སྒས་གནས་ཡངས་སོ་སོ་སྟེ་ ཡོད་མི་གི་གྲལ་ལས་ ད་དེས་ སྤགས་པའི་ཕྱུ་ས་གནས་ཀྱི་སྐོར་ལས་ རེ་མ་ལས་ སྐྱེས་ཆེན་དམ་པ་ཚུ་གིས་ མཛད་གནང་མི་ གནས་ཡིག་དང་རྣམ་ཐར་དུས་ཆ་ཚུ་ལུ་ གཞི་བཞག་པའི་ཁར་ འབྲེལ་ཡོད་ གནས་ཚུ་གི་སྐོར་ལས་ ཤེས་མཐོང་ཅན་དང་ རྒྱས་ཆ་ཡོད་མི་ཚུ་ལུ་ འདི་གཏུགས་འབད་དེ་ སྤགས་པའི་ཕྱུ་གི་ཆགས་རབས་ ཟེར་བའི་ཀི་དེབ་འདི་ རྩོམ་སྒྲིགས་འབད་འབདཔ་ཨིན་ཟེར་ཞུ་ནི་ཨིན།

སྤགས་པའི་ཕྱུ་ས་གནས་ཀྱི་བཀོད་པ།

སྤགས་པའི་ཕྱུ་གི་ བཀོད་པ་དེ་ཡང་ ཆོ་འདི་ཕྱི་གཉིས་ལུ་ཕན་པའི་ ཧོར་བུ་བྱི་སྐྱིང་དང་འབྲ་བའི་ཤེས་ཡོན་ འབྱུང་ས་ ལྷེ་བ་ཨིན་པའི་བརྡ་མཆོན་ལུ་ མཐོ་རིམ་སློབ་གྲྭའི་ རི་མཁྱུ་ལུ་ རྒྱལ་བ་ལོ་རས་པའི་སློབ་མ་ རྩོགས་ལྡན་མཁའ་སྤྱོད་དབང་པོ་ ཉི་ཟླ་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཀྱིས་ བྱིན་གྱིས་བླབས་པའི་གནས་ བྱི་སྐྱིང་རི་དང་སྐྱུབ་ ཕུག་ཡོད།

སློབ་གྲྭའི་མཇུག་ལུ་ མཇོས་ཆ་དང་ལྡན་པའི་ མེ་ཏོག་གསར་པོ་གིས་གང་བའི་ གསེར་བའི་ཐངཡོད་པའི་ ཁར་ མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཞབས་རྟེས་དང་ གཏེར་བཏོན་འཕྲིན་པ་གླིང་པའི་གདན་ས་ སྐང་ཆེན་ ཉི་ཟེར་སྐང་གི་ གཙུག་ལག་ཁང་ཚུ་མཇལ་ནི་ཡོད།

གཡས་ཁ་ཐུག་ལུ་ བླམ་གནས་སྐྱིང་པ་གི་གདན་ས་ རྟ་ར་ཁ་ཤྲ་ཉང་ཁ། བཀྲ་ཤིས་འབྲུག་རྒྱལ་གླིང་གི་ ལྷ་ཁང་དང་གནས་ཚུ་ཡོད།

གཡོན་ཁ་ཐུག་ལུ་ སྤྱི་ལོ་༡༩༡༤དེ་ཅིག་ལུ་ བར་པའི་ཆུ་ཕུགཔ་དང་ བྱི་སྐྱིང་རི་བཅོན་ བྱམ་པ་རི་པའི་ གནས་བདག་གཞི་བདག་ ལ་སོགས་པ་གིས་ གདན་འཇེན་ཞུཔ་བཞིན་དུ་ ཆོས་རྗེ་འགྲོ་བའི་མགོན་པོ་ ཨ་ཇོ་འབྲུག་སྐྱོམ་ཞིག་པོ་གིས་ ཞབས་ཀྱིས་བཅགས་ བྱིན་གྱིས་བླབས་གནང་པའི་ གནས་དེ་ཚུ་གིས་ བསྐོར་བའི་སྤུག་ལུ་ཆགས་ཏེ་ཡོད།

ཙོ་རྒྱན་གྱུ་རུ་རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་གནས་ཡིན་པའི་ཁུངས།

དེ་ཡང་ དུས་རབས་བརྒྱད་པའམ་ སྤྱི་ལོ་༡༩༤ལས་འགོ་བཙུགས་ཏེ་ མ་འོངས་པའི་འགྲོ་བ་ སེམས་ཅན་ ཆ་ཚུབ་ཀྱི་ མཐའ

དོན་ལུ་གཟིགས་ཏེ་ ཙོ་རྒྱན་གྱུ་རུ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་མཆོག་ འབྲུག་ལུ་སྤྲ་ཕྱི་བར་གསུམ་སྤེལ་ཐྲོན་ཏེ་ ཤར་ནུབ་དབུས་ཕྱོགས་ཀྱི་ ས་གནས་ཁག་གི་ འདེ་སྤིན་སྤྱག་པ་ཅན་ཚུ་ དམ་ལུ་བཏུགས་ཏེ་ བཏུལ་ཞིན་མ་ལས་ བྱིན་གྱིས་བླབས་ཏེ་ ཞབས་ཀྱིས་བཅག་གནང་པའི་ གནས་ཁྲད་པར་ཅན་ ལེ་ཤ་ཅིག་ཡོད་པའི་ནང་ གསེས་ལས་ བར་པའི་ས་གི་རི་མགོ་ སྤུགས་པའི་ཕུ་ལུ་ བྱང་ཆུབ་མཆོད་རྟེན་དང་ རྩ་གསུམ་གྱི་ས་བོན་ ཡི་གུ་ཙོ་ཡུ་ཧྲྀ་ཚུ་ རོ་རང་འབྱུང་གུ་ མཐོ་རིམ་སྒོབ་གྲྭའི་གཡོན་ཁ་ཐུག་ལུ་ བྱི་སྐྱིང་རི་གི་མཇུག་ལུ་ དངོས་སུ་སྒེ་མཐལ་ནི་ཡོད་ཟེར་ ཞིང་གཤེགས་བློམ་གནས་བརྟན་བགྲེས་པ་ གཱ་ཏ་པ་ཏྲི་གིས་གསུངས་ནི་ ཡོད་རུང་ སྐལ་བ་ཅན་གྱི་མ་གཏོགས། རེ་བ་ཅན་གྱི་མི་ཐོབ་ ཟེར་བའི་དཔྱེ་དང་འདྲཔ་སྤེ་ ང་བཅས་ར་ སེམས་ཅན་ཆ་ཚུབ་ བསོད་ནམས་དམན་པའི་སྡུབས་ཀྱིས་ དུ་རིས་ནངས་པ་ གནས་དེ་གི་སྐོར་ལས་ ལོ་རྒྱུས་ཙམ་མ་གཏོགས་ ཀ་གིས་ཡང་ དངོས་སུ་སྒེ་མཐལ་ནི་གི་ གོ་སྐབས་མེད་ནི་དེ་གིས་ སེམས་ཤམ་པའི་གཞི་ཅིག་ལུ་གྱུར་སོ་ནུག།

ཨ་ཇོ་འབྲུག་སྒོམ་ཞིག་པོའི་གདན་ས།

སྤྱི་ལོ་1212་དེ་ཅིག་ལྟ་ཆོས་རྗེ་འཕྲོ་བའི་མགོན་པོ་ ཨ་ཇོ་འབྲུག་སྒོམ་ཞིག་པོ་མཆོག་ ལུང་བསྟན་དུས་ལྟ་བབས་ཏེ་ འབྲུག་ལྟ་བུན་པའི་ཤུལ་མར་ དཔལ་ཆེ་ཡོད་མི་ ལྷ་ཁང་རྒྱ་འདི་ ཅེ་མ་སྟགས་པའི་ མི་སེར་ཚུ་གི་ གདན་འདེན་ཞུཔ་བཞིན་དུ་ བྱི་སྐྱིང་བཅཅན་དང་ བྱམ་པ་རི་པའི་གནས་བདག་ གཞི་བདག་ཚུ་གིས་ ཅི་གསུངས་བཀའ་བཞིན་དུ་ འགྲུབ་ནི་གི་ དམ་བཅའ་ཕྱལ་ཏེ་ གཙུག་ལག་ཁང་བཞེངས་ཞིནམ་ལས་ སྒོམ་སྟེ་དང་ ཞ་ཅེམ་གི་གླ་ཚང་བཙུགས་ཏེ་ དམ་པའི་ཆོས་ རྒྱ་ཆེཔ་འབད་ད་ སྤེལ་གནང་པའི་ལོ་རྒྱས་འདུག།

ཨ་ཇོ་འབྲུག་སྒོམ་ཞིག་པོ་གིས་ སྔགས་བརྒྱད་སྟེ་བཞི་གི་ ཉམས་ལེན་གནང་སའི་ ས་གོ་གཅོ་པོ་ཅིག་སྤེ་བཟོ་སྟེ་ གླ་ཚང་བཙུགས་གནང་པ་ལས་བརྟེན་ ས་གནས་འདི་གི་མིང་ཡང་ སྔགས་པའི་ཕུ་ཟེར་ དང་ ཁྲབ་རྒྱ་ཆེཔ་སྤེ་ར་སོང་ནུག། རྣམ་ཐར་ནང་ བར་པའི་ཚུ་ཕུ་ཟེར་ ཨ་ཇོ་འབྲུག་སྒོམ་ཞིག་པོ་མཆོག་ བར་པའི་ས་གི་རི་མགུ་ལུ་བཞུགས་ཅི་ཟེར་ གསུངས་ཏེ་ཡོད་མི་འདི་ དཔེས་ནདས་པ་ མཐོ་རིམ་སློབ་གྲྭ་ཆགས་སའི་ ནུབ་ཕྱོགས་ཁ་ཐུགས་ལུ་ སྟོང་ཕུ་ཤེལ་གྱི་སྤུངས་ཀྱི་ཡུལ་ ལྷ་ཁང་དང་མཆོད་རྟེན་རཕ་ཚུ་ དཔྱོ་ཡང་དོངས་སུ་སྤེ་མཐལ་ནི་འདུག།

ལྷ་ཁང་ནང་གི་ནང་རྟེན།

སྔགས་པའི་ཕུ་གི་ ལྷ་ཁང་ནང་ ནང་རྟེན་གཅོ་པོ་རང་ ཇོ་བོའི་སྐུ་འདྲ་དང་ དགོན་ཁང་ནང་ རྒྱལ་པོའི་ བཀའ་འཁྲབ། དར་རྒྱ་ གཟའི་ཞོ་བྱང་དང་ སྔགས་པའི་ལྷ་ཁང་འདི་ སྤྱི་ལོ་1989་ཚུན་ཚོད་ར་ ལྷ་ཁང་གི་ ཕྱིའི་བགོད་པ་དང་ ནང་རྟེན་ཚུ་ཡང་ མཐལ་ཚུགསཔ་ཡིན་རྒྱང་ ལོ་འདི་ནང་ར་ མེ་མཆོད་བཞེས་ཡོད་མི་ འདི་ ཞབས་ཏོག་ཤུ་མ་ཚུགས་ནི་དེ་གིས་ དཔེས་ནདས་པ་ ཉམས་ཆགས་ཤོར་ཏེ་ གྲུབ་ཁོག་སྟོངམ་ལུ་ གྲུར་སོ་ཡི་ཟེར་ སྒོམ་ཆེན་དཔལ་འབྱོར་གྲྭས་ བཤད་ནི་འདུག།

ལྷ་ཁང་ནང་གི་སྐུ་མཆོད།

སྔགས་པའི་ཕུ་གི་ གཙུག་ལག་ཁང་ནང་ ཁོང་སྔགས་པའི་ཕུ་གི་ཁུལ་ཁ་ཚུ་ བསྐོར་རྒྱབ་འབད་དེ་ ལོ་ལྟར་བཞིན་དུ་ རང་ཟླ་དགུ་པའི་ཉིར་དགུ་ལུ་ གཏོར་ཟློག་རྒྱབ་དོ་ཡོདཔ་དཔ་ དེ་བསྒང་ཆོས་བཙུགི་ རྒྱ་ཆ་ཁུབ་ཀྱིས་སྔགས་པའི་ཆོས་བརྒྱུད་ཀྱི་ཁྱིམ་ནང་ མི་གཅིག་ལུ་ ལྷོའི་སྐལཔ་རྒྱབ་དགོཔ་མ་ཚད་ ཐ་ན་ སྐོ་ཁར་སྟོད་མི་ རོ་ཁྱེ་དང་ བྱི་ལི་ཚུ་ལུ་ཡང་ ལྷོའི་སྐལཔ་ རྒྱབ་དགོ་པའི་སྒོལ་སྟོད་ནུག། སྔགས་པའི་ གཙུག་ལག་ཁང་གི་སྤྱིན་བདག་འདི་ གཅོ་བོ་ སྔགས་པའི་ཆོས་བརྒྱུད་ཨིན་རྟུང་ སྔགས་པའི་ ཁུལཔ་གཱིན་མི་ཚུ་ཡང་ ཕྱག་དང་མཆོདཔ་ཕུལ་ཏེ་གསོལཔ་བཏབ་ས་དེ་ཡང་ གཙུག་ལག་ཁང་འདི་འབདཔ་ལས་ ཁོང་ཚ་ཁུབ་ སྟོད་སུ་གཏེ་སྟོད་རྟུང་ ལོ་གཅིག་ལུ་ཚར་རེ་ འདི་ནང་འོང་སྟེ་ ལོ་ལྟར་དུས་རྒྱུན་གྱི་ དཀོན་མཆོག་མཆོད་དགོ་དོ་བཟུམ་སྟེ་ དཔེས་ནདས་པ་ཡང་ སྔགས་པའི་ཕུ་གི་ ཆོས་བརྒྱུད་དང་ ཁུལཔ་ཚུ་གི་ མི་བརྒྱུད་ཨིན་མི་ ཤར་ན་ཉིདཔ་དང་ ན་སྒྲི་ས་ལུ་ སྟོད་མི་ཚུ་ ལོ་ལྟར་གྱི་དཀོན་མཆོག་ མཆོད་པ་ སྔགས་པའི་ཕུ་ལུ་འོངདགོ་ཟེར་ སྔགས་པའི་ཕྱགཡོ་གི་མི་རྒྱུད་ སྐོམ་ཆེན་དཔལ་བྱོར་གྱིས་ བཤད་དོ་བཟུམ་སྟེ་ དཔེས་ནདས་པ་ཡང་ མ་ཚད་པར་འོངནི་འདུག།

སྔགས་པའི་ཕུག་གི་མི་རྒྱུད།

དཔལ་ སྔགས་པའི་ཕུ་གི་ མི་བརྒྱུད་འདི་དང་འདི་ཨིན་ཟེར་ མི་བརྒྱུད་བརྟན་བརྟན་སྟེ་ གཅིས་ཡང་སྣུབ་ནི་མིན་འདུག། ཨིན་རྟུང་ སྐོམ་ཆེན་གྱིས་སྣུབ་དོ་བཟུམ་འབད་བ་ཅིན་ ཉེ་མ་ སྔགས་པའི་ཕུ་ལུ་ ཁུལཔ་ལེ་ཤ་སྟོད་ཡོད་རྟུང་ ཁོ་ཚ་ལོ་ཅིག་སྟེ་ སེམས་ཀྱིས་ཤེས་པའི་བསྒང་ལས་ ཁུལཔ་གུང་གངས་ ཟུརུམ་ གཅིག་གུ་ ལྷོད་སོང་ནུག་ཟེར་ཨིན་མས། དེ་ཡང་ དུས་ཚོད་ཐུང་གུ་གཅིག་གི་རྒྱབ་ལས་ ཁུལཔ་ཟེར་རྟུང་ ཚ་རྐས་སྐོམ་ཆེན་ཁོང་ངའི་ཁྱིམ་གུང་ གཅིག་རྒྱབ་གཅིག་གུ་ ལྷོད་ཅི་ཟེར་ཨིན་མས། དེ་སྒེ་ཁུལཔ་ཚུ་ སྔགས་པའི་ཕུ་ལུ་ སྟོད་མི་མེད་པར་ ཁྱིམ་དང་མི་བརྒྱུད་མར་ཉམས་འགྱོ་མི་དེ་ཡང་ ཁོང་ཚུ་གི་སྟོད་གནས་ གཅོ་བོ་ཅིག་ དབང་འདུས་ཁོ་ཐང་ཆའོག་ ན་ཉིངདན་སྒྲི་ས་ལུ་ ཨིནམ་མ་ཚད་ འཆོ་བ་གཅོ་བོ་ བྱ་

ལུ་བསྟེན་སྟོད་མི་འབདཔ་ལས་ སྟོད་གནས་གཞན་ཁང་ སྟོ་འགྱོ་ནི་དེ་གིས་ ཞིན་མས་ཟེར་ འབྲུག་གི་རྒྱལ་པོ་དང་པ་།གོང་ས་ཡུ་རྒྱན་དབང་ཕྱུག་ལས་འགོ་བཙུགས་ཏེ་ མི་དབང་འབྲུག་རྒྱལ་གསུམ་པ་ཚུན་ཆོད་ ཕྱག་ཞུ་སྟོད་མི་ སྒོམ་ཆེན་དཔལ་འབྱོར་གྲྭས་བཤད་ནི་འདུག།

ཞབས་དྲུང་རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་བཞུགས་གནས།

མཐུ་ཆེན་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ ཞབས་དྲུང་ངག་དབང་རྣམ་རྒྱལ་མཆོག་གིས་ ར་བ་འབྲུང་།།པའི་ས་སྤྲུལ་ ཕྱི་ལོ་།།ཤ།ལུ་ སེམས་རྟོགས་ཁ་རྩོད་བཞེངས་ཏེ་ བཞུགས་པའི་སྐབས་ མི་ངན་གྱིས་གཡུས་དགྱུག། ཁྲ་ངན་གྱིས་མདངས་དགྱུག། ཟེར་བའི་དམྱེ་དང་འདྲཔ་སྦྱི་ ཁྲམ་ཁག་ལྟ་གི་ རྒྱུད་པ་འཛིན་མི་ཚུ་གིས་ དམག་འོངས་སྟེ་ རྩོད་བཞེངས་མ་སྟེར་བར་ གནས་སྐབས་ཅིག་གི་དོན་ལུ་ སྐུ་དལ་གནང་བཞུགས་སའི་ས་གནས་ཡང་ སྤུགས་པའི་ཕུ་ལུ་ཞིན་མས། ཁྲམ་ཁག་ལྟ་གི་ དམག་ལས་ཟུར་ཏེ་ འདི་ན་བཞུགས་མི་ལུ་བཏེན་ སྐུ་སྲོག་ལུ་བར་ཆད་ གཅིག་ཡང་ མ་འབྱུང་མི་དེ་ཡང་ ས་གནས་འདི་ཁར་ བཞུགས་ནི་དེ་གིས་ ཞིན་ཟེར་ ཁྲམ་གནས་བཏུན་བཟེསཔ་ ཞིང་གཤེགས་ གཅ་པ་ཏེ་གིས་ ཏེ་མ་སྦྱི་ལོ་།།ཀཀ་ལུ་ དེ་སྒྲ་ཞིན་མས་ཟེར་ ཞིན་ངལ་གསུངས་ནི་འདུག།

རྩོགས་ལྡན་ཉི་ཟླ་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཀྱི་གནས།

སྟོན་མ་ ཁྲམ་རྩོགས་ལྡན་ཉི་ཟླ་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཟེར་བའི་ གྲུབ་ཐོབ་དེ་ཡང་ བྱི་ལི་ལ་ཟེར་ཀ རྣམ་ཐར་ནང་བྱི་སྐྱིང་དེ་ཀྲུགས་པའི་ཕུ་གི་རི་མགྲ་ལུ་ སྐུབ་པ་གནང་སྟེ་ བཞུགས་པའི་མཐའ་མ་ལུ་ རྩོགས་པ་ནམ་མཁའ་དང་མཉམ་སྟེ་ འགྲོ་བ་སེམས་ཅན་ཆ་ཚུབ་ཀྱི་ མཐའ་དོན་ལུ་གཟིགས་ཞིནམ་ལས་ བྱི་ལི་ལའི་རི་མགྲ་ལས་ ཕར་བྱ་ལྷིང་ཁ་ལུ་ འཕུར་བྱོན་སོ་ནུག། དེ་བཟུམ་སྟེ་ སྤུགས་པའི་ཕུ་ལུ་ ཆགས་ཏེ་ཡོད་པའི་ ཐིམ་ཕུ་རྒྱལ་འཛིན་མཐོ་རིམ་སློབ་གྲྭ་ནང་ སློབ་སྦྱོང་འབད་དེ་ མཐར་འཚོལ་ཏེ་འགྱོ་མི་ཆ་ཚུབ་ཡང་ མ་འོངས་པའི་ནང་ འཕལ་འཕལ་སྟེ་རང་ གོང་འཕེལ་འགྱོ་སྟེ་ཡོད་མི་ ཕྱི་རྒྱལ་ཁབ་ལས་ཕར་ གནམ་གྲུ་ཆུ་ནང་འཛུལ་འགྱོ་ནི་གི་ བཏེན་འབྲེལ་ཡང་ སྒོམ་འདུག་ཟེར་མཛོལ་ཚུལ། བར་པའི་མི་རྣམས་ཤོས་ཆུ་གིས་

བྱེ་ལི་ལ་གི་ས་ཁོང་ཚུ་ནང་ ལྷགས་ཅིའུ་བཏང་ས་ཡང་ ལེ་ཤ་ཡོད་ཟེར་སླབ་ནི་ཡོད་མི་འདི་ དངོས་སུ་སྦེ་མཐོང་ནི་འདུག།

མི་དབང་ཞིང་ཤེགས་འབྲུག་རྒྱལ་གསུམ་པ་མཆོག་སྐུ་དལ་གནང་སཱ།

དཔལ་མི་དབང་ཞིང་ཤེགས་དམ་པ་ འཇིགས་མེད་རྡོ་རྗེ་དབང་ཕྱུག་མཆོག་ སྤྱན་མར་ རྒྱལ་ཁབ་ཁྱབ་སྤྱོད་སྐྱོང་སྟེ་ཕྱག་ལྟ་མཛད་དེ་བཞུགས་པའི་སྐབས་ འཕལ་འཕལ་སྐུ་དལ་དང་འདྲཕ་སྟེ་ ཁམས་བསང་ བྱོན་པའི་སྐབས་ ས་གནས་འདི་ སྤྱི་ལྷང་དང་ལྡན་པའི་ཁང་ མེ་ཏོག་དང་ཤིང་རིགས་མའདྲཕ་ཚུ་གིས་ ལྷེམས་ཏེ་གང་སྟེ་ཡོད་ས་ལུ་གཟིགས་ཏེ་ ཐུགས་མཉེས་པའི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་ཚུ་ རྩོད་དཔོན་བགྱིས་པ་ དཀའ་མདོག་གིས་བཤད་ནི་འདུག

མཁའ་འགྲོ་མའི་གནས།

དེ་ཡང་ མཁའ་འགྲོམ་ཚུ་གིས་ མ་འོངས་པའི་འགྲོ་སེམས་ཅན་ཚུ་གི་ དོན་ལུ་གཟིགས་ཏེ་ དཔྱོ་མཐལ་ནི་ཡོད་མི་ རྟོ་འདི་གུ་ ཞབས་རྟེས་བཞག་ཞིནམ་དུ་ ནམ་མཁའ་ལས་སྟེ་ འཕུར་བྱོན་ཞིནམ་ལས་ ཉི་ཟེར་གྱི་ཤྲི་ཅོག་ལུ་ སྟི་ཚོགས་དང་པའི་ མི་རྟེ་བློན་ཆེན་བཞེས་པ་ འཇིགས་མེད་འོད་ཟེར་འཕྲིན་ལས་ཀྱི་ གཟིམ་ཆུང་ཡོད་ས་ལུ་ ཆགས་ཆགསཔ་ཙིན་ཟེར་ བློམ་ཀཱར་གིས་གསུངས་ནི་འདུག། དེ་འབདཔ་ལས་ ངཱིས་བལྟཔ་དཔྱགས་པའི་ཕུ་གིས་མ་ཚད་པར་ མི་རྟེ་བློན་ཆེན་མཆོག་གི་ གཟིམ་ཆུང་ཡོད་ས་ལུ་ཡང་ ལུང་བསྟན་གྱིས་བཀོད་པའི་ ས་གནས་ཁྲད་པར་ཅན་ཅིག་ ཙིན་མས་ཟེར་མནོཔ་མས།

སྤྱགས་པའི་ཕྱུགཔོ་གི་ལོ་རྒྱུས།

སྤྱགས་པའི་ཕྱུགཔོ་གི་ ཁྱིམ་ཤུལ་འདི་ སྤོ་བཏང་ད་ལུག། གཅིའི་ གཏམ་སྐྱན་གཏགས་ཡོད་པའི་ སྤྱགས་པའི་ཕྱུགཔོ་འདི་ ཁང་འཚོ་ཆེན་བརྒྱད་ཀྱི་ ཕྱུགཔོ་ཚུ་གི་གྲལ་ལས་ ཕྱུགཔོ་དོད་དག་ཅན་ཅིག་ཙིན་མས། དེ་འབདཔ་ལས་ ཁང་གི་མི་ཉམ་ཆུང་དེ་ཚུ་ སྤྱགས་པའི་ཕྱུགཔོ་འབད་སར་ རེད་སྐྱི་བ་འགྱོཔ་དང་ སྤྱགས་

པའི་ཕྱག་པོ་གེས་དང་པ་ར་ མི་ཚུ་གི་ལགས་སྟོན་ཅིག་ཟེར་ ཕྱག་པོ་གི་གདོང་ཁར་ ལགས་སྟོན་བཙུག་ ཞིན་མ་ལས་ ལགས་སྟོན་པའི་སྐབས་ ལག་པའི་གུ་ ལྟ་འབད་འབད་ཕུ་གི་ཤུལ་ཡོད་པ་ཅིན་ དོས་ལེན་ ཡང་ ལེགས་ཤོམ་འབད་ཕུ་མ་ཚོད་ རེད་སྐྱི་བ་ཡང་སྤྱིན་མ་ཨིན་མས། གཅིག་ཅིག་སྤེ་ ལགས་སྟོན་ པའི་སྐབས་ ལྟ་འབད་འབད་ཕུ་གི་ཤུལ་ཟེད་པ་ཅིན་ དེ་འཕྲོ་ལས་ རེད་སྐྱི་བ་འོང་མི་གི་གདོང་ཁར་ཁྱོད་ལྟ་འབད་སྤྱི་ དཀའཕ་སྤུད་དེ་ བཟའ་མི་གི་མི་མེན་པས་ ཁེད་ཚ་ཁྱབ་ལུ་ རེད་སྐྱི་བ་སྤྱིན་པ་བ་འདི་ ཆུ་ནང་བསྐལ་བཏང་ན་ག་ ཆུ་ནང་འབད་ན་ སེམས་ཅན་ལེ་ཤ་ཡོད་ཟེར་ སྤྲབ་ཞིན་ལས་ རེད་ཚུ་ སྤྱས་པའི་རོང་ཆུ་ནང་ འབའ་ཞྱེ་གིས་འཛལ་ཏེ་ ཆུ་ནང་བསྐྱལ་བཏང་པའི་ལོ་རྒྱས་འདི་ ཞི་གཡོགས་ བགྲེས་པ་ ཚེ་རིང་དཔལ་འབྱོར་གྱིས་སྤྲབ་ནི་འདུག། སྤྱས་པའི་ཕྱག་པོ་འདི་ ཡོངས་གྲགས་ལུ་ བསོད་ པའི་ཕྱག་པོ་དང་ སྤྱས་པའི་ཆོས་བརྒྱད་ ཟེར་ཡང་སྤྲབ་ཨིན་མས།

སྤྱས་པའི་ཕྱག་པོ་གི་དབང་ཚད།

ཐིམ་ཕུག་ ཕང་འཚོ་ཆེན་བརྒྱད་ཀྱི་ མི་མཁས་པ་ གཏམ་སྐྱན་གྲགས་ཡོད་མི་དང་ རྒྱ་ཕྱེ་གམ་ གཅིག་དོད་དག་ཡོད་རུང་ གནམ་དགུན་ ཁོང་ཚ་ཁྱབ་ ཐིམ་ཕུག་ལས་ སྤུངས་ཐང་ཁ་དང་ དབང་འདུས་ ཚོ་བྱང་ལུ་ གཞིས་སྤོ་འགྱོ་ནི་འབད་བའི་སྐབས་ ཉིན་མ་གཅིག་གི་ཉེ་མ་ལས་ ཐིམ་ཕུག་རྩོང་དཔོན་ལུ་ དགོངས་སྐོང་ཞུ་ཞིན་མ་གཏོགས་ འགྱོ་མི་ཚོགཔ་ཟེར་ཨིན་མས། ཨིན་རུང་ སྤྱས་པའི་ཕྱག་པོ་འདི་ ཁོ་རའི་གནམ་དགུན་གྱི་གཞིས་གནས་ དབང་འདུས་ཚོ་བྱང་དང་ སྤུ་ན་ཁ་ལུ་ འགྱོ་བའི་ནམ་དུས་ལུ་ དེ་ ཚེ་གཞིས་འགྱོ་བའི་ཉིན་མ་རང་ རྩོད་དཔོན་ལུ་ དགོངས་བཀུར་ཞུ་ཞིན་མ་ལས་ འཕྲོ་བསྒྱངས་ཏེ་ འགྱོ་ ཚོགཔ་ཟེར་ཨིན་མས། དེ་འབདཔ་ལས་ དམྱེ་གཏམ་ལུ་ཡང་ སྤྱས་པའི་གོངས་རང་མགྱོགས་ ཟེར་སྤྲབ་ སྒོལ་འདུག།

སྤྱགས་པའི་ཕྱུག་ཏུ་རྒྱར་མཛོད་ཚེནམ།

བར་པའི་ས་གི་ མི་ཏཱས་ཨོས་ཚུ་གིས་ སྒྲབ་དོ་བཟླམ་འབད་བ་ཅིན་ སྤྱགས་པའི་ཕྱུ་འདི་ ཏེ་མ་ལས་ ཙོ་ཆུན་གུ་རྩུ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་མཆོག་གིས་ སྤྱིན་གྱིས་བླབས་གནང་པའི་ ས་གནས་ཅིག་འབད་ནི་དེ་གིས་ ནམ་ཡང་ ཟད་ནི་མེད་པའི་ གཏེར་མཛོད་ཚེན་ ཟེར་བཤད་ནི་འདུག། དེ་སྤེ་ཚེན་པའི་ཁྲངས་དེ་ཡང་ འབྲུག་ཆུལ་ ཁབ་ཀྱི་ནོར་བུ་ དབང་ཕྱུག་བཙུད་འཛིན་གྱི་ཆུལ་པོ་ རིམ་བྱོན་ཆ་ཁྲབ་དང་། ཆོས་ཀྱི་དབུ་ཁྱེད་དམ་པ་ ༸སྐུབས་རྗེ་མཁན་ཆེན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་མཆོག་གིས་གཙོས་པའི་ འཕགས་པའི་ དགེ་འདུན་པ་ཚུ་གི་བཞུགས་གནས་ ཐིམ་ཕུག་བཀྲ་ཤིས་ཆོས་རྗོང་འདི་ སྤྱི་ལོ་༡༩༤༢ལས་འགོ་བཙུགས་ཏེ་ ལོ་ངོ་བདུན་ཀྱི་རིང་ལུ་ ཉམས་གསོ་ཞུ་བའི་སྐབས་ རྗོང་གི་ཤིང་ཆས་ཚུ་ གཅ་ར་སྤྱགས་པའི་ ཕྱུ་ལས་བཏོན་ཏེ་ བཞེངས་བཞེངས་ཡིན་མས། ཤིང་ཆས་ གཅེ་ཅིག་ར་བཏོན་རྟུང་ རྗོགས་ནི་མེད་པར་ དེ་སྤེ་ར་སྤོད་ས་ དཔལ་མི་དབང་ཞིང་གཤེགས་ འཛིགས་མེད་རྡོ་རྗེ་དབང་ཕྱུག་མཆོག་གིས་ གཟིགས་ཏེ་ ས་གནས་འདི་གི་མིང་ གཏེར་མཛོད་ཡིན་མས་ཟེར་ གསུངས་པའི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་འདི་ ཉམས་གསོ་ཞུ་མི་གི་གྲལ་ཁར་ རོ་བཙོ་པའི་ལྟ་ འགན་འབག་མི་ ཡཁ་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱིས་བསྒྲབ་ནི་འདུག།

མི་དབང་ཚ་ཞེ་སྐལ་བཟང་དབང་མོ་དབང་ཕྱུག་མཆོག་གིས་མཐོ་རིམ་སློབ་གྲྭ་བཅག་གནང་ཚུལ།

སྤྱིར་བཏང་ མི་དམངས་དང་ ལྷག་པར་དུ་ འབྲུག་པའི་མི་སེར་ཡོངས་དང་ ན་གཞོན་ཆ་ཁྲབ་ཀྱི་དཀའ་ངལ་ བསལ་ཐབས་ལུ་ ཐུགས་བརྩེ་བས་གཟིགས་ཏེ་ མི་དབང་ཚ་ཞེ་སྐལ་བཟང་དབང་མོ་དབང་ཕྱུག་མཆོག་གིས་ སྤྱི་ལོ་༢༠༠༤ལུ་ གཟའ་སྐར་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚོགས་པའི་ ཉིམ་དང་བསྟུན་ཏེ་ ཁྲིམ་རྩྭ་ནི་གི་ལྟ་ འབད་ནི་ཚུ་ འགོ་བཙུགས་གནང་ཞི་བའི་དུ་ སྤྱི་ཚེས་༡༣/༣/༢༠༠༥ལུ་ སློབ་ཁང་དང་བཅས་ སྒྲུབ་པའི་བཀྲེན་འབྱེལ་ བཀའ་ཤིས་པའི་རབ་གནས་འདི་ སྐུབས་རྗེ་ཞེ་ཆེན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་དང་ མདའ་སྟོང་སྤྱལ་སྐུ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་མཆོག་གིས་ གནང་མི་དང་འབྱེལ་ མི་དབང་འབྲུག་ཆུལ་བཞེ་པའི་ རྩུལ་ཡུམ་སྐུ་བསྟེས་ཞ་ཞེ་

སྐལ་བཟང་ཆོས་སློབ་དབང་ཕྱུག་མཆོག་གིས་ སློ་འབྱེད་མཛད་གནང་མི་དང་འབྲེལ་ ལེགས་སྦྱར་བ་ ༡༩དང་སློབ་ཕྲུག་༡༧པ་ཞེ་ འགོ་བཙུགས་ཏེ་ ཤེས་ཡོན་ཚུ་སྦེལ་ནི་གི་ འགོ་བཙུགས་གནང་ཡོད།

རྒྱལ་སྤྱི་མཐུན་འབྲེལ་ལུ་ཕན་ཐོག་ཡོད་པ།

ས་གནས་འདི་ ཕྱི་རྒྱལ་ཁབ་ཀྱི་མི་དང་ འབྲུག་མི་གུ་གིས་ར་བཤུ་རྒྱང་ མཇོས་ཆ་དང་ལྡན་པའི་ ཐིམ་ཕུག་ རྒྱལ་འཛིན་མཐོ་རིམ་སློབ་གྲྭ་འདི་ནང་ མཁན་རྒྱ་ཆེ་བའི་ ཕྱི་ནང་གི་སློབ་དཔོན་ མང་རབས་ཅིག་ བཞུགས་ཡོད་པ་གིས་མ་ཚད་ སློབ་དཔོན་ཆ་ཚུབ་ཀྱིས་འབད་རྩྭང་ ཐུགས་འཛམ་པ་དང་བརྩེ་བའི་སྐོ་ལས་ ཤེས་བྱའི་ཡོན་ཏན་ཚུ་གཞན་དང་མ་འདྲཔ་སྦེ་ སྟོན་གནང་ནི་དེ་གིས་ ཕྱི་རྒྱལ་ཁབ་དང་ ཁྱེམ་འཚེས་རྒྱལ་ཁབ་ཚུ་ནང་ ཤེས་ཡོན་སྦྱངས་ནི་གི་དོན་ལས་ འབྲུགཔ་གིས་མ་ཚད་པར་ ཕྱི་རྒྱལ་ཚྭ་མི་རི་ཀྲ་ལུ་ཡོད་པའི་ ཁེ་ཏྲན་མཐོ་རིམ་སློབ་གྲྭ་དང་ ཇ་པྲན་ལུ་ཡོད་པའི་ སྤྲ་ས་མཐོ་རིམ་སློབ་གྲྭ་ གཞན་ཡང་མཐོ་རིམ་སློབ་གྲྭ་ཁག་ལས་ ཤེས་རབ་ཅན་ཕྱི་ན་གཞོན་ ལེ་ཤ་ཅིག་ར་ ལོ་ལྟར་བཞིན་དུ་འོང་སྟེ་ དགཉ་སྐྱིད་ཀྱི་ངང་ལུ་ སློབ་སྦྱོང་འབད་བའི་ཁར་ འབྲུག་མི་སྟོང་ཕྲག་ལས་བཅད་མི་ཚུ་གིས་ དཀའཁ་ག་ནི་ཡང་ སྤྱད་མ་དགོ་པར་ ཕྱི་ནང་གི་ཤེས་ཡོན་ལུ་ སྤྱང་བཙོན་འབད་དེ་ རང་མཁོ་རང་འདྲོངས་སྤེ་བཟོ་སྟེ་ མི་སྟེ་དཔལ་འབྱོར་ གོང་འཕེལ་གཏང་ནི་ལུ་ ཕན་ཐབས་སྤོམ་བྱང་ཡོད་མི་དེ་ཡང་ ཐིམ་ཕུག་རྒྱལ་འཛིན་མཐོ་རིམ་སློབ་གྲྭའི་བཀའ་དྲིན་མཁོ་ན་ཚེན་མས།

ཉི་ཟེར་སྒང་།

ལྷ་ཁང་འདི་ གཉེར་བཀོན་འཁྱུག་པ་གྲིང་བའི་གདན་ས་ ཉི་ཟེར་སྒང་ཟེར་ གནམ་དགུན་གྱི་བཞུགས་གནས་ ཤར་ཉི་ཟེར་སྒང་དང་ གནམ་བྱ་གི་བཞུགས་གནས་ ཉི་ཟེར་སྒང་ཟེར་ ཁག་གཉིས་ཡོད་ས་ལས་ སྒང་ཆེན་ ཉི་ཟེར་སྒང་ཟེར་མི་འདི་ གཅིག་ཚེན་མས། བར་སྐབས་ཅིག་ལས་ མེ་ལྷ་གིས་བཞེས་ཀྱ་ ཡུན་རིངམོ་ སོང་བའི་ཤུལ་ལུ་ གཞུང་ལས་གྲོགས་རམ་ཞུ་སྟེ་ སྤྱི་ཚོགས་དང་བའི་ བློན་ཆེན་བགྲེས་པ་ འཛིགས་མེད་

འོད་ཟེར་འཕྲིན་ལས་དང་ བར་མ་མི་སེར་དམར་ མཉམ་རྩྭ་ཀྱིས་ཐོག་ལས་ ཉམས་གསོ་ཞུ་སྟེ་ ཙ་རྒ་ཀ་ལུགས་ བཞེངས་གནང་སྟེ་ སློབ་གྲྭའི་སྟེ་བཙུགས་གནང་ནུག།

མཇུག་བསྡོ་བ།

བསྟན་བཅོས་རྩོམ་པའི་རྒྱུ་རྐྱེན་མ་ཚང་ཞིར། ཁོག་དོན་མ་དག་ནོར་འཁྲུལ་ཆ་སྣིད་ན། །མཁྱེན་ལྡན་ཡོངས་ལ་མཐོལ་བཤགས་བཟོད་པར་གསོལ། །གལ་ཏེ་དགེ་བའི་དངོས་པོ་མཆིས་སྙིད་ན། །མ་འགྲུར་འགྲོ་རྣམས་ཕན་བདེའི་རྒྱུ་རུ་བསྡོ། ।

ཁྲངས་གཏུགས་རྒྱབ་རྟེན་ཡིག་ཆ།

༡ ལྷོ་འབྲུག་ཆོས་འཛུང་ཨྱོ་གསར་རྩ་བའི་རྒྱུན། ༢ ཨ་ཇོ་འབྲུག་སྒོམ་ཞིག་པོའི་རྣམ་ཐར། ༣ གྲུབ་ཐོབ་སྒྱིན་པ་རྒྱལ་མཚན་ཀྱི་རྣམ་ཐར། ༤ དད་པའི་ས་བོན། ༥ འབྲུག་གི་རྒྱལ་རབས་འབྲུག་གསལ་བའི་སྒྲོན་མེ།

རྣ་རྒྱུན་བཤད་མི་ གནས་བཤད་པའི་མཚན་ཐོ།

༡ གླ་ན་པ་ཀྱི། ཁྱམ་གནས་བརྟན་ ཞིང་ཁེབས། ཀོང་གསར་རྫོང་།

༢ ཀཱམ། ཁྱ་མ། བར་པའི་ས།

༣ སྒོམ་ཆེན་དཔལ་འབྱོར། སྒོམ་ཆེན། བར་པའི་ས།

༤ ཚ་རིང་དཔལ་འབྱོར། ཞི་གཡོགས་བགྲེས་པ། སྤྱགས་པའི་ཕྱུ།

๔ ཀུན་བཟང་འཕྲིན་ལས། རྩོམ་སྒྲིག་པ། ཀེ་ཛེམ་ཀྱི།

๕ རྫོང་དཔོན་བགེས་པ། དཀར་མདོག

๖ སངས་རྒྱས། བཀྲ་ཤིས་ཆོས་རྫོང་གི་རྡོ་བཟོ་པ

Environmental Humanities in the Anthropocene: A New Paradigm

TSHEWANG DORJI[1]

ABSTRACT. How does rethinking the environment inspire us to rethink being human? How can we transform our relations with other species and the planet? We ask these questions in more than one way in the age of the Anthropocene. For the last two and a half centuries, humanity has been relying on a singular scientific body of knowledge in understanding nature and in devising measures required to address environmental challenges. Did scientific knowledge on the environment serve us well? Science views the environment through utilitarian aspects largely dictated by a human-centered (anthropocentric) approach. In contrast, humanities views nature from humanistic aspects upholding biocentrism guided by the values and ethics. Notwithstanding their differences, science and humanities have equal strength and prowess to deal with the environment. Environmental Humanities brings a new and holistic understanding of nature by integrating science and humanities. This is critical to environmental problem-solving in the age of Anthropocene. This article attempts to unravel fundamental differences between science and humanities in terms of understanding nature and the way they approach environmental issues. Thereafter, this article argues how the harmonization of these two disciplines as "Environmental Humanities" can produce a new form of environmental knowledge required to address contemporary environmental challenges and issues.

[1] Tshewang Dorji, Associate Lecturer, Royal Thimphu College. He can be contacted at tshewangd@rtc.bt

Introduction

We live in one of the most turbulent times in human history. Never did our predecessors witness the kind of environmental instability we now experience. The planet earth has been deteriorated at a far more rapid pace, in the last 300 hundred years, than the 1000 years that preceded it (Zalasiewicz, 2008; IPCC, 2018). The concept "The Anthropocene" was coined by Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer who regarded the influence of human behavior on Earth's surface in recent centuries as a significant transformer of the biophysical conditions of the Holocene epoch (Castree, 2014). The concept provoked grueling debates and conversations among geologists, environmentalists and humanists—mooting questions whether humanity is to be blamed for diminishing the biosphere. The key characteristic of the Anthropocene is the human domination over other species, so degrading the conditions of life on earth and causing unprecedented global environmental crises (Zalasiewicz, 2008; Castree, 2014). This points to the fact that human activities are altering the biosphere of the earth like never before. Human activities cause major planetary upheavals such as global warming, climate change, air pollution, biodiversity loss, ocean acidification, aerosol loading and nuclear fallout, leading to severe environmental challenges (Steffen, 2011; Sörlin, 2012; IPCC, 2014). Humanity has not only jeopardized the life of other species on the planet but also seriously endangered themselves. A certain course of human action, which is inimical to the environment, pushes humanity towards the precipice of self-destruction. Chief Seattle (1780-1866) said:

> All things are connected, like the blood that unites one family. Whatever befalls the earth, befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself. (Chief Seattle's Speech, 1852, pp.3)

Modern society relies on scientific knowledge, in fixing environmental problems, be it at the local or global level, too often disdaining social and cultural intelligence (Heise, 2016). For centuries, humanity has been depending on a singular scientific body of knowledge in understanding nature and in devising measures required to address environmental challenges (Schmidt, *et al.,* 2010). In what ways are we advancing environmental wisdom? The world has seen no actual progress in combating climate change, notwithstanding the rapid science and technological advancement in the recent decades. Many international conferences have been convened in the name of sustainable development. Several international agreements and protocols are already adopted and signed by many countries in the name of "global consensus" for

environmental wellbeing. However, we are never sure whether our environmental wellbeing is going to get any better. Our faith in scientific knowledge is shaken when the global temperature rose beyond the threshold limit of 1.5°C established by the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) (Sörlin, 2012; IPCC, 2018) and the climate continued to become unpredictable. Climate scientists have become increasingly frustrated with the slow pace of reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (Heise, 2016). Science and technology, in this sense, have failed us and we cannot think of a better environment, in any sense, if we continue with business as usual.

Can we humans not understand the environment in more holistic terms? Shouldn't we adopt different ways of thinking and understanding the human and non-human world? What we lack in scientific technical knowledge is the ability to understand the complex ways that nature, humanity and culture are intertwined. Environmental problems are complex because they are irreducibly entangled with social and cultural practices and politics. The Environmental Humanities brings humanities, sciences and social sciences together, in harmony, into discussions about approaches to today's environmental issues. Thus, it offers a space for alternative approaches to initiate, support and further a wide range of conversations on environmental issues amidst the growing awareness of the ecological and social challenges in the age of the Anthropocene (Rose *et al.*, 2012). It promotes an inclusive and challenging dialogue on the ethical, moral, visual, and human dimensions of environmental topics.

In this context, this article dwells on how rethinking the environment and environmental issues from environmental humanities perspectives would help humanity to rethink its relationship with nature and the environment. I argue that integrating traditional ecological knowledge and scientific knowledge on the environment, both in equal measures, can shape a new environmental knowledge and approach required to deal with contemporary environmental dilemmas. This paper is comprised of three sections. The first section deals with different approaches of science and humanities in viewing the environment and environmental challenges. The second section explains why environmental humanities offers hope in the age of the Anthropocene. The last section of the paper explores how a new environmental knowledge can be forged by combining traditional ecological knowledge (which is based on environmental values, ethics and morals) and scientific ecological knowledge.

Fundamental Difference between Science and humanities/Arts

The Arts are often associated with subjectivity in the way it expresses knowledge, which is most often in the form of subjective representation, while science is often understood as being objective and it is a system of acquiring knowledge. Natural science deals with the study of natural world and lifeforms while social science deals with the study of interactions between lifeforms, mostly focusing on the dynamic interface between people, their societies or their cultures. The two fields differ fundamentally from each other, in terms of understanding the environment and evaluating environmental issues. However, each discipline brings essential perspectives, viewpoints and unique approaches at varying levels to understand environmental aspects. Table 1 below shows some basic differences between science and humanities and their approaches to the environment. Table 2 illustrates how science and humanities take different approaches to environmental problem solving. For instance, water pollution is examined from different perspectives and as a result the problem is being approached using different techniques, skills and knowledge.

Table 1. Different Approaches to Environment and Environmental Issues

Component	**Natural science**	**Humanities/Arts**
Essential subject	Biology, geology, chemistry, physical geography, statistics	Language, arts, philosophy, beliefs, culture
Methods used for environmental assessment	Objective and quantitative	Qualitative and subjective
Basis of Environmental argument	Data, scale, measurement, data analysis	Perceptions, life experience, beliefs, culture (Heise, 2016)
Environmental problem solving tool	Scientific, technological, ecological and analytical	Cultural, indigenous knowledge, narratives, arts and history, philosophy, ethics, religion (Rose *et al.*, 2012)

Science view nature as a separate entity from human world, in the process often imagining humans as situated outside the natural world. Science brings objective and quantifiable variables to explain how nature works. On the other hand, humanities

focus on culture, religion and experience to explain how nature works. It recognizes that how one perceives the environment is largely shaped by our upbringings, culture, beliefs and ethos. For humanists, nature and the environment is a cultural construct. Ingold (2000, pp 15) in this book: *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skills* wrote:

> People from different cultural backgrounds perceive reality in different ways since they process the same data of experience in terms of alternative frameworks of belief or representational schemata… Thus the distinction between environment and nature corresponds to the difference in perceptive between seeing ourselves as beings *within* a world and as beings *without* it.

The argument here is that based on how one perceives the environment, it shapes how one responds to environmental problems.

Table 2. Different ways of examining and responding to environmental issues: water pollution

Component	Natural Science	Humanities/Arts
Examination	What are the various pollutants?	What leads to water pollution?
	What is the pollution level?	What does water pollution mean to you? What is your perception?
	How can we solve water pollution and the risks associated with it?	How can we reach out to the communities about water pollution and its effects on the environment?
	How can we prevent water pollution in the future from a scientific standpoint?	What policies, laws, and regulations, system do we require to prevent oil spill in future (Heise, 2016)
Approach	Utilitarian /practical	Humanistic and philosophical

Why Environmental Humanities "in the Anthropocene"?

We are now living in the Anthropocene which is inundated with a multiplicity of environmental crises (Zalasiewicz, 2008; Sörlin, 2012,). Solving these problems entails

the integration of different disciplines and techniques (Heise, 2016). Environmental Humanities seeks to bring wider perspectives in deepening our understanding of complex interrelationships between humankind and the environment. Climate change, species extinction and air pollution are profoundly social, cultural and political issues, perhaps as much as they are 'environmental' issues. Neither natural scientists nor sociologists alone can fix these problems. Amitav Ghosh, an Indian novelist, notes that climate solutions can't be left to scientists, technocrats, and politicians alone (2016). Further, Ghosh goes on to say that the climate crisis is also a crisis of culture, and thus of imagination. He asserts that humanity needs new ways of thinking and a new paradigm to tackle human-induced environmental problems. Sverker Sörlin, a professor of environmental history at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Sweden made a similar remark (Sörlin, 2012, p 788):

> Our belief that science alone could deliver us from the planetary quagmire is long dead. For some time, hopes were high for economics and incentive driven new public management solutions. . . . It seems this time that our hopes are tied to the humanities. . . . in a world where cultural values, political and religious ideas, and deep-seated human behaviors still rule the way people lead their lives, produce, and consume, the idea of environmentally relevant knowledge must change. We cannot dream of sustainability unless we start to pay more attention to the human agents of the planetary pressure that environmental experts are masters at measuring but that they seem unable to prevent.

These complex problems and issues call for a wide range of disciplinary wisdom to productively rethink the environment and environmental problems. This means we have to reimagine and ultimately rebuild the relationship between nature, culture, sciences, and humanities. Science and the humanities together produce a new environmental knowledge which is a more accurate knowledge vested on this complex intertwinement of nature and humans (Robin *et al.,* 2018). It is equally important for us to be cognizant of the way in which human culture shapes environmental impacts. How does human activity (historical, contemporary, and imaginary) shape the world around us? How can the tracing such activity contribute to a deeper understanding of the environment? Particularly, we need to find new forms of environmental knowledge through scientific knowledge and traditional ecological narratives to understand ourselves, each other, and our place in the world in interdependent ways.

A New Form of Environmental knowledge: Blending of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Scientific Knowledge

A new form of environmental knowledge is being advanced when we combine traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge. A diverse ecological narrative which is important to understand ourselves, the physical world and other sentient beings, shapes the foundation of this traditional ecological knowledge. Traditional ecological knowledge is crucial to garner new strategies to tackle complex environmental challenges confronting humanity in the modern world. Berkes *et al.*, (2000, pp.1251) argues that "traditional knowledge on environment and ecology has become relevant in recent decades partly due to recognition that such knowledge can contribute to the conservation of biodiversity, rare species, ecological processes, protected areas and sustainable resource use." Tibetan's traditional knowledge, for instance, relates ecology with local culture, social institutions and belief systems.They believe that local deities (*Neydeg and Zhideg*) reside in mountains, trees, lakes and river. Their belief in local deities and spirit powers help them maintain a sense of awe and respect for the natural environment, restraining them from destroying nature. They believed that if someone defecates or cuts down trees near water source, the local deities will be upset and they may send misfortune (sickness, death, and accident) to the entire community. This traditional knowledge has helped them to live in harmony with nature, thereby promoting biodiversity conservation and natural resources governance (Berkes *et al.*2000). Traditional knowledge counts on a particular system of knowledge and a set of beliefs and traditions. Huber and Pedersen (1997, pp. 588-590) aptly state:

> Modern scientific knowledge represents the environment as an ensemble of global, quantified interrelationships, whereas, traditional Tibetan knowledge represents it as a system of local, qualitative interrelationships of humans and spirit powers. Weather conditions were systematically linked to social life and correlated with a code of proper conduct. Nature and society were conceived to interact, thereby creating a 'moral climate' or, as we might say, a moral space.

For Tibetans, knowledge on weather is a local knowledge, something founded on shared local experience as opposed to scientific knowledge of weather which often refers to a state of the atmosphere which can be further separated into various quantifiable variables like temperature, humidity, wind, pressure and so forth. Furthermore, traditional knowledge attributes local weather patterns to deities and spirit powers, and

encourages rituals to propitiate tutelary deities for support and blessings. The local deities' blessing and favour manifest in the form of good harvest, good weather and the lack of natural calamities. Modern science relates climate change or weather with toxic chemical loading in the atmosphere such as carbon dioxide and methane gas due to fossil fuel burning in automobiles and megafactories. To mitigate climate change, modern science seeks scientific methods and technological solutions as opposed to Tibetan's traditional knowledge which emphasize correcting human code of conduct.

The Himalayan glacier melt is viewed as a deleterious effect of global warming in scientific communities, however, there are remnant human communities on earth, who still hold their tradition knowledge of glacier melt. These communities perceive pollution and environment degradation to be a signifier of moral corruption which are degenerate behavior and unethical conduct. They believe that if humans can overcome their moral shortcomings, the glaciers would surge again. They believe that the environment will redeem and heal itself if humanity can abide by specific morals (Drew, 2012). On a similar note, Drew (2012) recorded a different perception of ecological change and glacier melt among the residents of the Indian Himalayan state of Uttarakhand. The natives living near the river Ganga vehemently denied the scientific knowledge that was used to explain the drying of river Ganga. Further, the native populace asserted that the river could not be threatened or completely disappear from the earth because it simultaneously flows in three levels: in the heavens, in the riverbed, and beneath the surface of the earth. They singled out river Ganga and claimed its independence from other river systems. Further, they warned that Ganga's disappearance would signal the end of the world (Drew, 2012, p 352)

New environmental knowledge helps to resituate humans in ecological terms and non-humans in ethical terms to garner a greater affinity and harmony between the two. It draws essence from both scientific knowledge and traditional knowledge and balances both in order to generate a holistic view and approach towards contemporary environmental challenges. Drew, (2012) and Break *et al.,* (2000) both supported that ecological narratives enhance environmental awareness and help communities to adopt new adaptation strategies to bulwark against the effects of climate change and global warming thereby building community resilience in 'the Anthropocene.'

Combining traditional ecological knowledge with modern scientific knowledge has produced synergy paving new ways to environmental problem solving. For instance, the study of caribou ecology in the Sahtu region of Canada's Northwest Territories involved both the Dene traditions, language and modern biology to help determine caribou population dynamics (Schmidt, 2010):

> Dene hunters can distinguish between caribou varieties on the basis of morphology, tracks, and even behavior; woodland caribou, for instance, will loop back around on their own path to throw off predators. That the Dene have developed different terms and hunting tactics for each type…paying heed to indigenous language, in other words, advances science's grasp of evolutionary history and helps researchers identify subtle but crucial differences between subspecies. (*https://theconversation.com.*)

Why do we care about the environment? Why do we worry about harmful consequences for nature? According to Stern and Dietz (1994) the reasons for environmental concern are often rooted in a person's value system. People's attitudes and behaviors are based on the value they place on themselves, other people, and plants and animals. The value basis of environmental concern fosters a sustainable relationship with the environment. Each value provides different reasons for concern to different people. For instance, two people could express the same level of concern about air pollution or water pollution for fundamentally different reasons. The reasons for concern could be either on the basis of costs and benefits the value attributed to all living beings or it could be based on self-centered reasons. A study carried out by Moktan *et al.,* (2008) titled '*on Ecological and Social Aspects of Transhumant Herding in Bhutan*' reported that rural communities place immense value on nature and its biodiversity. Rural livelihoods are contingent on natural resources (for example timber for house materials, wild fruits and vegetables for food, firewood for fuel and other natural products like medicinal herbs, wild flowers for domestic income). To destroy nature is to destroy themselves.

Valuing the environment helps to promote societal beliefs, attitudes, and behavior towards environmental protection and conservation. In this way it indorses sustainable consumption and promotes a long-lasting relationship between human and non-human worlds. Livestock rearing has always been an important source of livelihood for the Bhutanese living in high altitude regions, along the northern border. Many yak-herders say they cannot imagine their life without yaks and the grassland. The difficulty in imagining their life without the yak demonstrates both the socio cultural and economic value attached to the yaks and the grassland.

Similarly, there are people who attach value to the existence of a species or a habitat that is not based on any form of economic return. For them, natural species, like flowers, waterfalls, birds, and a whirlpool are symbols of peace, equilibrium, stability and freedom in themselves. They embrace these natural species as their 'immediate neighbors.' Some people can receive enormous joy and satisfaction simply from

knowing that a wild river flows unspoiled through a remote and spectacular wilderness. The nomads living in the high altitude mountain ranges of Bhutan poignantly relate their relationship and sense of belongingness with their local mountain ecosystems far beyond economic terms. They are deeply intertwined with the natural ecosystem and relates to each other in multiple ways. The loss or deterioration of their 'neighbors' would make them feel a sense of loss and lead them to anguish and despair (Dorji, 2010).

Conclusion

We are now living in a new geological epoch—the Anthropocene—the contemporary global environment dominated by human activity (Zalasiewicz *et al.*, 2008; Bonneuil, 2015). This human-induced environmental problem is the biggest problem that humanity is facing today and it will continue to be a challenge in the future too, unless humanity calls for a paradigm shift in the way we perceive and understand the environment and ecological problems of today. In this sense, there is an urgent need to revisit our modus operandi in dealing with pressing issues of the environment like climate change, global warming, ocean acidification and species extinction. The modern society's idea of viewing the earth as a dead and inert destructible from outside, and exploitable for profit (Huber & Pedersen, 1997) is obsolete.

A complete rethinking of what it means to be human is important to transform our relations with other species and the planet. A better relationship between humans and the physical world can be established under two conditions: if we understand a complex intertwinement of the earth and humans and if we can engage environmental issues from humanistic approaches (Robin *et al.*, 2018). To this end, we need to acquire a new environmental knowledge—best suited for the age of the Anthropocene—a blend of modern scientific knowledge/techniques, traditional ecological knowledge, humanities and social science. Environmental Humanities brings new environmental knowledge and also provides a wider participation in conversations about the greatest challenges of our time (Robin *et al.*, 2018).

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Influence of Family Dynamics on the Prevalance of Substance Use Among Emerging Adults in Bhutan

TENZING CHODEN[1]

ABSTRACT. In Bhutan rising rates of substance use among emerging adults has become a societal issue. Family structures disintegrating from two parents into single parent families, the increase of blended families and divorces are leading to low emotional connectivity in the parent-child relationship. This study explores these dynamic in substantial depth. Several studies have shown how disrupted families tend to produce youths who are a more likely to indulge in substance use (Jenkins et al., 1998). The findings of this study, obtained through qualitative methods, subscribe to this view and further suggest that a rehab setting can be planned by making the family a vital tool in the process of recovery. It also illustrates that family structures have a very definite role to play in the development process of an individual. The results attained from this study may therefore act as a reference to future addiction studies in Bhutan.

Introduction

The Bhutan Narcotic Agency made a total of 817 arrests between the years 1989 and 2005. In the year 2009 alone, 531people were arrested for drug use. In the year 2010, the police arrested 328 drug users. The Royal Bhutan Police (RBP) further arrested 154 youth in the year 2012 (Tenzin, 2012). *Kuensel*, the nation's national newspaper reported that 555 people were arrested for narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and

[1] Tenzing Choden is a Mental Health Therapist holding a M.Sc. in Counseling and has clinical experiences in dealing with people having depression, anxiety, trauma, personality disorders and addiction. She can be contacted at tenzingctobgyal@gmail.com.

other substance abuse in the year 2017, which was an increase of about 75 percent from 2016. The report added that while 245 people were arrested for offences of substance abuse, 200 were arrested for illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, 58 for illegal possession of cannabis and its derivatives, 41 for illegal trafficking of cannabis and its derivatives and 11 for illegal possession of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. More than 4,942 youth (people below 24 years) were arrested in connection with drugs, alcohol and other crimes in the last five years, going by records maintained by the RBP (Dema, 2018). These figures substantiate the observation that the use of substances by youths have been rising dramatically in Bhutan.

With more and more Bhutanese youth abusing drugs, a study on this topic has become imperative. Therefore, this study aims to explore the influence of family dynamics on the prevalence of substance abuse among emerging adults. Drug addiction is very chronic in nature and involves a very complex brain disease generally characterised by uncontrollable, compulsive and drug craving behaviour in seeking and use of drugs, even in the face of extremely negative consequences such as increasing tolerance, a condition in which the user requires more quantity of drugs to acquire the same effect. This leads them to forcefully increase the amount of drug intake and dependence. Put differently, it creates a situation in which the user becomes psychologically and physically dependent on drugs and starts becoming uncomfortable without it. Withdrawal symptoms occur when a user stops taking drugs and such symptoms are often intense in their physical and psychological manifestations (Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, 2013).

Runeson (1990) claims that among adolescents and youth suffering from the substance use disorder, a disproportionate number have divorced parents. Ganong and Coleman (1993) also argue that depression and anxiety were more common among children belonging to step families as compared to a nuclear family. This finding is important because depression and anxiety have been identified as factors that can lead young adults to resort to using drugs. Similarly Bray, Hetherington and Cox (1985) discovered that socioemotional and behavioural problems generally seemed to emerge with the introduction of a step parent into the family. Jessor and Jessor's (1977) problem behaviour theory proposed that deviant behaviours like the intake of drugs may be the result of family problems such as divorce. Therefore, the literature is unambiguous in drawing a relationship between family influences and the intake of drugs among youths.

A study conducted among 2121 randomly selected adolescents from seventeen school districts in northeastern Ohio. In order to investigate the relation between family

structure and drug use. They found that single family structures reported more usage of drugs as compared to the adolescents from intact nuclear families (Newcomb and Harlow, 1986). They concluded that young adolescents often used drugs as a coping mechanism in the face of stressful life events. Another study found that a youth will be more prone to substance abuse if he/she is raised by a single father compared to a single mother (McArdle, 2001). However, the study found no difference in behaviour when families were headed by a father or a mother, but in which there was no divorce

A study by Partridge & Kotler (1987) further revealed that family processes play an important role in determining the self-esteem and adjustment pattern in relation to the use of substance among emerging adults, it was observed that alcohol and substance use were directly associated with low parental support, it was seen that the father figure varied between sons and daughters, while the lack of good quality father time led to problematic behaviour (such as marijuana use, cigarette use, delinquency) in male and resulted in problems of psychological well-being (anxiety, depression) among females (Salem et al.,1998). A study that investigated the associations between family structure and substance use among Asian families reported that off springs from non-intact families were seen to indulge in higher use of substance, where there seemed to be an increased use of substance in paternal than maternal families due to poor communication with the father (Mak et al., 2010). These various perspectives will be useful to frame and interpret data collected in Bhutan for this study.

Methodology

This study used qualitative methods to obtain data, and subsequently to interpret their significance and meaning. This study was conducted in a Rehabilitation Centre for Drug and Alcohol Dependence (TRCDAD) located in Serbithang, Thimphu. The sample size for this study consisted of 8 participants of whom 2 were female and 6 were male. The sample size was limited to only 8 as many of the participants did not fit into the inclusion and exclusion criteria of this study. The age of the target participants were young emerging adults aged between 15 and 24 years old.

Data was collected through semi-structured interview, so that the participants attending the interview process would have the liberty to express their views in their own terms. A focus group discussion was also held. Formal permission for this research was granted by the rehabilitation head. The languages used during the interview process was primarily English and Dzongkha. Ethical considerations were also explained to the participants beforehand and in case of emotional distress the interviews were either paused or discontinued.

Understanding the Emotional Bond Among Different Family Structures and its Influence on Substance Use.

Different family structures in relation to the individual were studied here in order to see the differences between family structures and their impact on an individual's coping and growing mechanism in relation to substance use.

Nuclear family. The participants who came from a nuclear family type typically showed slightly higher well-being and emotional connectedness and closeness as compared to those who came from an extended family, the step family and the single mother family. One participant from the nuclear family structure stated thus: "There are many others in this rehab with more complicated problems and have not received even an inch of family support and some have no parents at all. In comparison to them I do feel fortunate enough, hence personally feel that family plays a major role in a substance abuse users life" (Participant 1, personal communication, October 30th 2015). Those coming from a single parent family had this to say:

> We were really close with one another in the family when our father was living together with us. Now we have become distinct, separate and not so close. We have fallen apart from one another and do not share the same bond anymore after my father left home (Participant 5, personal communication, October 30th, 2015).
>
> I feel my parents' decision of separating and my father leaving the house was a major decision which made my addiction more strong (participant 4, personal communication, October 30th, 2015).

It was seen in this study that young adults were more prone to emotional instability and distress while facing parents' separation and divorce. Some individuals were forced to live with a single parent at times and they found it very difficult to cope up with the new family transformation. Such family changes lead to negative behaviours and often lead to substance abuse. The final sub-theme that emerged based on the family structure was the extended family structure. Some participants described how they lived far from the family of origin since a very young age and that they did not feel emotional connected to their own biological family due to this long separation. An addict coming from an extended family stated:

> I don't feel comfortable with my family members back at home even a little bit I feel like an outsider a lot and not a part of the family that is

why I use drugs. I feel more adjusted with my uncle's family but when I go back home I don't feel happy or good (Participant 7, personal communication, October 30th, 2015).

Emotional Bond with Family

Lack of emotional bond with father and mother. The participants described very strong experiences and emotions in view of their relationship with their parents, which were often characterized by low forms of attachment. One respondent stated:

> They don't bother much about me like what I am doing which makes me feel hopeless and worthless so at times I used to feel that if I use substance my problems would get immediately solved. (Participant 6, personal communication, October 30th, 2015).

The participants discussed how their lack of effective emotional bonding led to their increased level of substance use across time. Participants described feeling neglected and ignored by their family, often making it hard for them to emotionally express themselves. It was also seen that as compared to the mothers, there was more likely to be a lack of emotional bond with their fathers.

Distressed Family Environment

One participants narrated as follows, "I was really hurt a and felt neglected and alienated by my father that is why I started using substance" (Participant 6, personal communication, October 30th, 2015). Family environment can be of various types, out of which there can be various negative family aspects such as neglect and low family emotional closeness that can lead to substance abuse. This finding subscribes to an existing study that concluded how participants who reported maltreatment from their families were more likely to engage in some level of substance use (Mackenzie et al., 2013). Two participants stated:

> I was really hurt and felt neglected and alienated by my father that is why I started using substance". (Participant 6, personal communication, October 30th, 2015).

> I would receive a lot of negative vibes from my family like I did not belong in this family and they did not want be here…it would engulf me with feelings of being isolated by my own family so I would feel

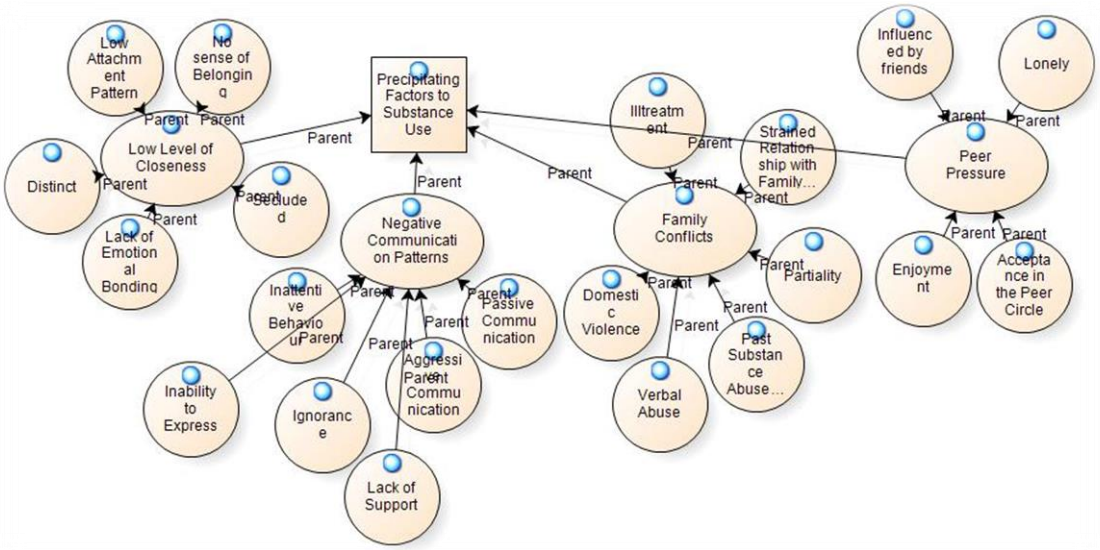
rejected by them ...it would hurt at times (Participant 5, personal communication, October 30th, 2015).

All 8 Participants were seen to come from a very hostile family environment according to the statements provided by them. They described constant fights at home, especially between parents and that this had a psychological and emotional impact on them/others reported perpetual verbal taunts from their parents. Some of them reported to having begun using substances to cope up with anxiety caused by such and similar family dynamics. The experiences of the majority of the participants showed a 'lack of family support' to be an essential factor when it came to substance use problems. Some even postulated that had their parents not divorced, or their family situation been stable, they may had never begun using substance abuse. The same logic pervades the success rate of persons within the rehab. Families that showed higher amounts of support as compared to disengaging family were seen to be recovering sooner from their substance use at the rehab. Neglect was also a very strong factor among the participants where the parents refused to take any responsibility towards the participants leading to the youth being discarded by their own biological family with no basic needs provided to them.

Exploring the Adjustment Pattern of Different Family Dynamics and its Relation with Substance Use

Adjustment pattern of different family dynamics in relation to substance use was deliberated across within several themes and sub themes.

Figure 1 **Precipitating factors to substance use.**



Precipitating factors to substance use. Research has shown that children who live in punitive family atmospheres face lower forms of emotional adjustment impacting their social adjustment, behaviour adjustment and academic adjustment problems (Ronstein et al.1993).

Family conflicts. This was the first organising theme that was studied under the precipitating factors to substance use. The sub-themes that amalgamated under this category were chiefly domestic violence, partiality, ill-treatment, verbal abuse, strained relationships with family members and past substance abuse history in the family.

It was seen in this study that few of the participants revealed that they were facing a lot of verbal abuse either by their parents or siblings. For instance one the participant mentioned that "they keep pressurising me a lot with their taunts" (Participant 4, personal communication, October 30th, 2015).

In this study negative family communication pattern were also seen among families of participants. As recounted by numerous participants the patterns of communication in the family were mostly either of passive communication or aggressive communication. Most participants also expressed that due to the lack of closure with their family they found it really hard to bond and express their feelings to them. Studies have confirmed that parents who were close to their children and openly discussed issues formed more positive relationships with their children as compared to families who used punitive

methods of parenting and were detached from their children. Families with low level of closeness and were there was lack of warmth, the risk to problematic behaviour and substance use were also reportedly high (Kandel, & Denise1990). Therefore, communication pattern greatly impacted their behaviour. This is what some participants of the study had to say:

> Coming to the family portion fights between my mother and father also influenced me to taking drugs as my mother was a substance user and as well as my father (Participant 3, personal communication, October 30th, 2015).

> When I used to initiate conversation regarding my addiction with any one of my family member they would get really angry ,and no one would listen to me they completely used to ignore me ,in turn making my relationships with them go bad and strained . My step father would shout at me and we would end up fighting (Participant 6, personal communication, October 30th, 2015).

The participants in this study were seen to have less close emotional bond with their family members. Participants described feeling lonely and secluded from their family members and often felt that they had no one emotional support available for them within the family. They also referred to feeling distinct from their families due to low levels of emotional bonds and poor attachment patterns present in the family. It was seen that participants that came from unstable family environments reported higher disregard from their families and often did not have feelings of belonging to their respective families.

Family Response to Substance Use

Emotional distress was seen as most common among families as a responsive factor to substance use by the individuals as stated above. A large number of participants believed that they experienced emotional distress from their families in the form of frustration of their parents, getting pressured by their family members in an attempt to quit substance use, scolding from their parental figures and crying, which put them in a very awkward position in turn making the participants take a step back from their families and increase their intake. Said one participant:

> They kept pressurizing me a lot with their taunts asking me not to use substance time and again. At times they cry would cry and break down in front of me, which would make me feel awkward. I personally feel that it actually led to increase of my intake .I hate it when people shout at me, it makes me more frustrated.(Participant 5, personal communication, October 30th, 2015).

Participants that had been given assistants and for whom attempts were made to understand their situation of substance use better usually fared better in the rehab. It was also seen that participants sensed feelings of disregard, lack of concern and avoidance from their family members as a response to their substance use. These participants also said they were neglected by their family members and alienated due to drug use which in turn drastically increased their substance intake as they were seen getting strongly affected by their families inattentive behaviour patterns. Avoidance behaviours from family members in this study was seen to be due to low emotional support from their parents, uncaring attitude from their family members, low parental desires for their children, lack of proper parent-child monitoring, lack of child acknowledgment leading to negligence, seclusion and unhealthy patterns of emotional adjustment of the youth. Such issues resulted in substance use which in turn affected the level of substance usage as was observed in this study.

Abuse. This is one principal factor which in this study was seen to greatly increase the use of substance. A large number of participants was found to be exposed to physical abuse and emotional abuse in the face of learning about the youth's substance use problems. One respondent said thus:

> Physical violence ...yes my mother and my step father used to beat me a lot, had they reacted otherwise instead of beating and shouting at me I would have stopped using drugs.(Participant 5, personal communication, October 30th, 2015).

Participants noted that had these physical violence and emotional abuse not occurred they would have been in a healthier place today. It was seen through this study that a strong linkage could be drawn between family violence and substance use as violence increased substance use too went up relatively.

The way families respond have an important effect on the result of coping with the stressful situation. Family's coping mechanism often plays a significant role in the initiation of drugs, the intensity of substance use and the kind of substance use.

Avoidant coping style. A Lack of communication was also evident in this study among the participants' families. Additionally lack of good interpersonal relationships also played a significant part in this study, since there were no proper healthy family process among family members in face of such problematic situations the only learned way of overcoming a stressor were seen to be by adopting the avoidant style of coping. One participant said:

> Actually when you become an addict people stop bothering about you and there is no one to look after you ...relatives also keep ignoring. And no one would listen to me they completely used to ignore me. (Participant 1, personal communication, October 30th, 2015).

Studies confirm that conflicts in interpersonal relationships may also lead to the avoidance coping styles in the family (Holahan et al., 2006). It was reported by the participants that the avoidance pattern adopted by their families provoked their substance use.

Problem-focussed coping style. Participants whose family adopted the problem focussed coping pattern recounted that on becoming aware of their substance issue, their families responded by looking for alternatives in order to deal with the participants substance use behaviours. The families offered assistance by opting to send the participants for detox and by accessing information regarding their substance use. Their families also responded by giving advice and isolating the participants in order to help curb their substance use patterns. These kinds of families had a more practical approach to the participants' substance use which surprisingly very subtlety decreased their substance use as claimed by the participants in this study.

Emotional focused coping style. Emotional focussed coping style includes self- reflection and taking control of one's emotion. This coping mechanism generally focusses on expressing and processing emotions as an approach to reassessing unalterable stressors as reported by Cameron et al (2010). It was observed that participants whose families used emotional focused coping patterns were seen to relatively decrease their substance use as compared to those whose families embraced avoidant coping style. The participants described that they felt the presence of family support which helped them curb their substance us to a certain degree. These participants felt that their parents' unhealthy outburst of emotions on them led them to using substance although they felt guilty for using it.

Emotional Adjustment

Family environment is said to be significantly related to emotional adjustment among children. In a major study it was recorded that family acceptance and family control were significantly related to family adjustment patterns (Fine 1994). A large number of participants expressed that they experienced a high amount of negative affectivity in the family. They believed that their family members were not accepting of them and showed a lack of regard towards them which according to these participants led to a higher toll of substance use. In this study it was seen that the majority of the participants were experiencing high level of negative emotions within their families. Few of the participants described that they were often consumed with feelings of disgust and distrust from their families which reasonably increased their substance use as compared to before the onset of these experiences. Parent-child communication is said to play a major role on the impact of substance use among youth. The quality of parent child relationship said to have affect rates of substance use (Luk et al., 2009). The types of communication patterns that surfaced in this study were inattentive parental pattern, low conversational, low conformity, and lack of interaction, rigid pattern and consensual pattern. The most common theme of communication across participants families that was seen were low conformity and low conversational pattern of communications. One participant confided:

> I could never get myself to share anything with them …my father would always be out and hardly at home, my elder sister too works in another state so at home it was more like we were living together just for the sake of it ,there was no good attachment or communications ..It was too awkward to share anything or I felt like it was looked upon like a burden and hence overall the family interaction pattern was really low and almost nil in my family" (Participant 7, personal communication, October 30th, 2015).

Participants viewed that their families as having a very low level of interaction which made it difficult for them to openly communicate with their family members. Some participants believed that their family was too rigid to be open to any communication with other family members. Inattentive pattern of communication were reported to increase difficulties in sharing of emotions which often affected the participants' sense of fit in the family. It was seen in most families that there were strong parental absence and lack of closeness in the family which often made the participants feel unheeded within their families. Lack of mutual understanding and non-involvement or over-

involvement in the family dynamics were seen to affect the use of substance among the participants.

Perceptions About the Position in the Family and its Relation to Substance Use

Discrepancy and Negligence were two sub themes that emerged in this theme.

Discrepancy. In this form of decision making three themes emerged based on which families followed their specific style of decision making process. These included strict parents, adamant style and hampered decision making process. "My parents were too strict and I feel that it contributed to my substance use" (Participant 6, personal communication, October 3oth, 2015). Participants of this study was seen to perceive their parents' decision making process as very rigid and forceful which according to them had an escalating impact on their substance use. Participants expressed how the authoritarian pattern of decision making process due to strict parental figure had a hampering effect on their problematic behaviour and social behaviour development process, which lead to substance use. Some families in this study was seen to adopt the authoritarian pattern of decision making which may be due to parent's difficult expectations and low feedback. Parents who were seen to be high on demandingness and low on responsiveness in their decision making process seemed to impose their own wishes either by persuasion or force on to the youths in the family (Pong et al., 2010).

Negligence. Participants reported that their family's decision making process involved a lack of understanding from their family members. It was seen that the participants felt the presence of high parental negligence in the process of acceptance of other's perspectives made them feel unwanted in their family environment. This may be possibly because of wide-ranging reasons as participants stated that there were "lots of unexpressed emotions". One respondent stated:

> My addiction more strongly there are lots of unexpressed emotions and they look up to me like I am some addict and not bother at all about me ,coming to making decisions in the family my idea and perspectives was never taken into account. ...Hence my relationship with them has been very complicated (Participant 8, Personal communication, October 30th, 2015).

Lack of emotional bond maybe a trigger for these pattern of negligence as the patterns of bonding and adjustment was seen low there is presence of lack of indulgent behaviour from parents.

Positions in the Family

Position in the family was taken as a major global theme under which two organising themes were lack of recognition and perceived discrimination.

Lack of recognition. Participants reported that they felt a high sense of disregard and blame from their parents, which made them feel alienated by their own family members. High feelings of "No sense of belonging" were observed across family patterns which seemed to have significant increased participant's substance intake. Some respondents explained:

> They have never treated me equally ,I always felt neglected ...specially after using drugs they started completely ignoring me and they threw me out of the house .(Participant 5,Personal communication, October 30th,2015)

> There is a difference in the way my parents talk to my sibling is totally different as to how they talk to me, their tone, their voice, everything .All the privileges and opportunities are given to him first I have my younger brother and my step fathers child who is my step brother ...So there is a lot difference...they are always praised for what they did do while I am always looked down upon .they always kept shouting at me for everything I did and blaming me .I feel I am not treated fairly as compared to my siblings they are treated with more love and respect so I don't feel I like I am an equal part in the family (Participant 4, Personal Communication, October 30th, 2015).

The majority of the participants reported that they had experiences of discrimination by their parents between their siblings and themselves. They expressed how most of the privileges and opportunities were given to their other siblings while they were accused by their parents for everything that went wrong in the family which often led them to feeling lonely and neglected to which they admitted using substance as a coping mechanism. Children who are not biologically related to their parents may experience higher forms of discrimination between their step sibling and themselves as was noted in this study among participants from stepparent and single mother families.

Conclusion

Low emotional bond among family members were seen to be chiefly due to varied family structures. Participants that came from step parent families, single mother families and extended families showed higher use of substance as compared to intact families. This was seen due to lower emotional closeness between parents, siblings and spouse and higher conflictual relationships which led to an escalating increase of substance use. As such, this finding subscribes to existing studies that show how instabilities in family structure such as divorce and remarriage were seen to be one major reason for various substances being used as a coping mechanism (Needle, 1990).

A number of participants described feeling extreme levels of ill treatment especially in the non-intact family structures which resulted in these participants using higher amounts of substance. It was detected in this study that the decision making process in the family had a strong influence on problematic behaviours. Participants who were reported to be coming from an authoritarian style of decision making was seen to be using substance more often due to mental stress and parental rigidity. These participants also reported higher violence accompanied by substance use. A study showed that young adolescents used drugs as a coping behaviour in the face of stressful life events where they felt loss of control and meaningless during these family circumstances (Jenkins et al., 1998).

This study revealed dominant themes among the use of substance and family in context of young emerging adults. I showed how higher use of substance associated primarily with higher family conflicts. This study indicates that family process inclusive of emotional bonding, emotional adjustment have strong effects on youth substance abuse. Since this is one of the first research on substance use and family dynamics in context of the young emerging adult population in Bhutan, interventions at a rehab setting can be planned accordingly by keeping the family as a vital tool through psych education and engagement of the family in the recovery process. This research can act as a strong ground for theoretical knowledge on substance use in context of Bhutan.

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Book Review

SAPIENS: A BRIEF HISTORY OF HUMANKIND

Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind, by Yuval Noah Harari, New York: Harper Collins, 2015, vii+464. ISBN: 0062316095

PEMA YANGCHEN[2]

"Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind" by Yuval Noah Harari is engaging, thought-provoking, and a good read. The book takes its readers on the historical journey of one of the human species - the Homo Sapiens - the only species of humankind that exists currently. A recurring and binding idea of the book is the very idea of ideas; 'imagined realities' (p. 32) that govern the way humans think and behave. Everything from religion to limited liability companies are stories woven by humankind that enables us to survive and to cooperate in larger numbers than any other known living being. This ability of 'myth-making' is the very reason, according to Harari, that humans are able to dominate the Earth instead of any of the other species.

Harari divides the history of Homo Sapiens into three main revolutions: The Cognitive Revolution; The Agricultural Revolution; and The Scientific Revolution. The Cognitive Revolution began around 70,000 years ago and with it began a new way of thinking. Homo Sapiens gained the ability to create myths - stories about things that did not actually exist in the natural world. These myths served a purpose, which was allowing humans to cooperate in larger and more cohesive groups, different from any other animals on earth. Sharing common myths and believing in the same "imagined realities" created trust amongst the people. During this period, humans were able to spread rapidly, wandering and settling in new ecosystems which would sometimes result in the extinction of some animal species that had been living there. Harari refers to this as 'the First Wave Extinction' (p. 82).

Around 10,000 years ago, the Agricultural Revolution began and somehow sprung up independently in all parts of the world. Harari bravely goes on to state that 'The Agricultural Revolution was history's biggest fraud' (p. 90), which might seem overtly sensationalistic. Harari does tend to romanticize the lives of the hunter-gatherers to prove his point and does not acknowledge that though hunter-gatherers did not face the

[2] Pema Yangchen is a BA Anthropology student at Royal Thimphu College. She can be contacted at: 105083pem@rtc.bt

same problems as farmers, it did not mean they did not face problems of their own. But his argument is nonetheless convincing. Permanent settlements allowed humans to increase their population by leaps and bounds but it also caused suffering for humankind at the individual level. He points out that the practice of farming brought with it longer, harder working hours, and malnutrition paired with increased risk of contracting infectious diseases. He states that humans were not the domesticators of plants; it was the other way around as plants benefited more greatly from the revolution than did humans. With humans permanently settling in large groups, culture and imagined realities became stronger, especially ideas of money, politics, and religion. Politics meant power and the pursuit of that power led to much of what is known as human history. According to Harari, empire is the most stable form of political organization and also the most common form of it for the last 2,500 years. Empires united cultures and sometimes formed new ones. Much of the cultures in the world today are the ones formed by the empires of yesterday. Harari believes that with globalization, humankind is once again moving towards becoming a single global empire. The idea of money helped smoothen transactions and it solved problems associated with barter. Although it started as something that had value, like Sumerian barley money, it developed into something that did not have much intrinsic value but was easier to transport and store, like the silver shekel. This worked because of the shared trust of the people on the imagined value of money. Religion acted as both the unifier and the divider of men. People believed in a religion and this belief comforted them and gave meaning to their lives, providing them with what they believed was the absolute truth. It also sowed the seeds of resentment between people who believed in different religions, however.

Then came science, and humans started to accept their previous ignorance. The Scientific Revolution began 500 years ago and with it came unprecedented leaps in technology and the thought patterns of humankind. With the advent of genetic engineering, humans may well be able to overcome the laws of nature. Here Harari brings up the theme of happiness. Has technology and all the changes we have been through so far really made us happier? Are humans really doing better now than our hunter-gatherer ancestors? With the ability to manipulate the environment in unimaginable ways, humankind may well be on the path to becoming gods themselves yet we are still unhappy and indecisive about what we desire. Even if we were able to achieve eternal life, would that be enough to bring us happiness?

Harari tends to make sweeping generalizations at times and make exaggerations that connect his ideas of the cause-effect relations of events all too well, making one to

wonder about the extent and usefulness of his simplifications. As vast and complex as some topics were, Harari moves quite quickly past them, leaving one with the desire for just a bit more detail. This can, however, be accounted by the fact that the book is barely 464 pages long, while it tries to cover 13.5 billion years worth of history.

The book tackles many riddles of human history and one of the most intriguing questions Harari asked was why patriarchy is almost universal. He discusses some common theories, such as male strength, male aggression, and male ambitiousness as possible reasons explaining how the male species of humans were able to oppress and dominate the female species. Harari explains how none of these theories are convincing enough. He remarks that these supposed male traits do not make much of a leader and that traits associated with females - superior social skills, ability to cooperate and manipulate - are much more suited for leadership. This question is left unanswered, making this one of the most memorable questions asked by the book.

Harari does an overall impressive job at explaining history and evolution in a way that is not only interesting but also comprehensible for a more general and broader audience. For anyone who wants to learn about the long journey humankind has taken thus far, this book is highly recommended.

Book Review

The Circle of Karma

The Circle of Karma, by Kunzang Choden, Zubaan Publishers, New Delhi, 2015, vii+316. ISBN: 9788186706794

AAKANKSHA SINGH[1]

Set in approximately, 1950s' and 1960s Bhutan, *The Circle of Karma* has the unique distinction of being the first English novel to be published in Bhutan by a woman. The novel's publication positioned Bhutan in a unique situation where, contrary to more British and Western literary and canonical traditions, there does not seem to be a lack of representation of female writers. The publication of *The Circle of Karma* inspired many other female writers to pen down stories. Whereas in the west, the discourse has centered on the dearth of female writers and female characters, Bhutan's English literary scene began with a female novelist writing about a novel that focused on a female, Tsomo, as the main character.

The Circle of Karma traces Tsomo's story from being a child in Tang Valley, Bumthang to her old age in Thimphu. The novel is written and narrated using a simple third person point of view, in a linear and chronological order and highlights the various events and experiences that Tsomo goes through, throughout her life.

Though the form may not be experimental, the central theme that is at the crux of the story and i.e. her journey and her self-development shows the importance of individuality and self-reflection as a way to always improve oneself. The novel moves from giving a general glimpse of Bhutan's cultural and social aspects, told through a child's (Tsomo's) perspective at the beginning to the more specific events of Tsomo's life and journey.

Tsomo grows up in a "tax-paying" household in Tang Valley along with several siblings and her mother and father, who is a *gomchen*. Through her family, she internalizes several gender roles (doing household chores, gardening, and weaving, to

[1] Aakanksha Singh is a lover of literature and all things poetic. She holds a Masters in English literature from Delhi University. She can be contacted at asingh@rtc.bt or akisabookworm@gmail.com.

name a few) and the oft repeated myths associated with female gender, namely that of female suffering and endurance. From her father, she learns the cruel truth that girls, because of their gender, are not supposed to get educated and learn to read and write and despite being a *gomchen*, her father never teaches her that skill, sticking to the belief that a religious education is meant solely for boys.

As Tsomo grows older, being the eldest, she takes in more responsibility around the house and her mother makes sure to teach her the various skills, be it weaving or cleaning, or other household chores. After several tragedies befall on her and her family and after the severe blow of losing both her baby with "no baby breath" as well as her husband, Wangchen, because of his affair with her younger sister, Kesang, Tsomo, decides to run away from her childhood home to free herself from the restrictive ideas of belonging and relationships. This assertive decision, which is the major turning point of the story, makes the foreshadowing at the beginning of the novel associated with her *key tag khorlo* (birth mark), being on the knee and how she would always be restless and wanting to travel, come true. This turning point also places her on a path of several obstacles and ordeals, but in turn those very ordeals also give her the space and independence to grow and stand on her own two feet.

After running away, she travels to Thimphu to meet her brother but after realising that he had moved further away to Kalimpong, she becomes a road construction worker, despite her swollen belly, which had not healed since she had her still born baby. She meets many more women sharing the same dreams and struggles. She finds a new sister in another fellow worker, Dechen Choki. Both even travel to Kalimpong in search for Tsomo's brother. The reconstruction of the Thimphu *Dzong* and the construction of the roads provide a good idea about the setting, which is around the time when Bhutan had chosen the path to modernization and was opening up to the world, slowly but surely.

After a chance encounter with her brother in Kalimpong, she lives with him and is able to find support and solace in his company. She sustains herself through Dechen Choki's weaving skills and her gardening, the products of which they consume and even sell. Slowly, she becomes accepted by the community and gets involved in a group going for a pilgrimage to Dorjiten aka Bodh Gaya in Bihar, India. This group then goes on several other related pilgrimages to Nepal and Tso Pema. All these visits further broaden Tsomo's way of thinking, enrich her experiences, and give her an exposure to several other cultures and peoples. But this also forces her to face a burning conflict that has been consuming her since she ran away: whether to have a normal life (with a husband and children) and be a good wife and a good woman as her parents had taught her or

to pursue a life of religion. Being still young, she craved for male attention. Yet, she was also driven to go on these pilgrimages by her desire to pursue religion.

While at Tso Pema, in Himachal Pradesh, she meets Lhatu (through a suspicious matchmaker, Ap Thinley) and by a strange coincidence, they end up living together and carrying out the roles of husband and wife. Tsomo soon immerses herself in being resourceful and trying to make ends meet through weaving, after her surgery to remove her swollen belly was successful.

This other major turning point in Tsomo's life, which was meeting Lhatu, takes her away from Kalimpong and from her religious desires. But if they were fated to meet because of their *karma*, they were also fated to separate because of their karmic connection. Their marriage eventually falls apart when Lhatu cheats on Tsomo and Tsomo finds out about it. In her anger, when she is about to mutilate Lhatu's mistress, she learns an important truth about the patriarchal society and how it has taught women to always have hate and suspicion towards each other and not to hold the men accountable. She realizes that she needs to relearn everything that society has taught her about gender roles. This portrayal of an epiphany and self-realization on Tsomo's part is the crux of the novel.

Although Lhatu's loss is not something that Tsomo could easily comprehend, she still had her own determination and support from others to rely on to help her get through this trying phase. Furthermore, she was finally free to also pursue her desire to practice religion whole heartedly, now that she was no longer tied down by any filial bonds. Rinpoche also blessed her and in a ceremony marked by simplicity, he ordained her as a nun.

After that blessing, there was no looking back for Tsomo and she took on the role of a nun by shaving her head and donning a simple *gho* that would be suitable for a nun. Finally, now at the far end of her life, Tsomo returned to Bhutan, to Thimphu and practiced religion while circumambulating the Memorial Chorten.

The novel begins and ends with Lham Yeshi, Tsomo's friend, commenting about Tsomo in the present and her friendship with her. The prologue begins in the present with Lham Yeshi meeting Tsomo, who is now seventy years old, after a long time and asking her to share about her life. The novel ends with an epilogue in which Lham Yeshi is reminiscing about Tsomo, about how she had met her five years ago, and about how she had then decided to go to a pilgrimage to Siliguri to meet the Dalai Lama. Now at the end, she looks for Tsomo in and around the Memorial Chorten but she only feels her strong presence. The novel thus ends on an ambiguous note where we do not know about what happened to Tsomo. The story is thus framed by Tsomo narrating about

her life to her friend, Lham Yeshi and perhaps the entire novel is the narration that Lham Yeshi seems to be reminiscing about in the epilogue.

By tracing Tsomo's growth from childhood to adulthood and finally old age, *The Circle of Karma*, qualifies as a female *bildungsroman* as it traces both Tsomo's physical and psychological growth and journey. The story thus highlights the manner in which girls experience the world and how societal and parental ideas shape one's early notions about gender. One example being the *tshangma* ceremony that her friend, Chimme, had to endure and how that taught Tsomo about shame and other disturbing yet revered female qualities of suffering, endurance and resignation to one's gender's fate.

In doing so, the novel throws light on deeply ingrained gender roles that both men and women are expected to follow. It focuses on how one's gender shapes one's identity. Yet in making Tsomo, someone who has chosen to not be defined by relationships that burden a women's identity, the author has also deftly both questioned those gender roles as well as depicted the conflict that Tsomo faces in wanting to fit in to society's expectations of a woman, yet trying to carve her own identity at the same time.

The novel also focuses on female friendships and female solidarity and how women can support each other in times of need and deed, which is the exact opposite of the internalization of the predominant idea about women being enemies to each other. We see how Tsomo connects with her fellow road construction workers and partakes in their dreams and struggles. We see how Pema Buti in Kalimpong helps Tsomo to set up and sustain herself in her house with dignity. Later on, we see how it was Tsomo's circle of friends in Kalimpong that gave her some distraction from Lhatu's deceptive behavior. It was also her friends and neighbours who supported her when she finally left Lhatu. The novel thus showcases the strength hidden in female bonding.

The other important themes are the pursuit of religion and the idea of *karma*; the latter being reflected in the title of the novel. The concept of *karma* permeates the story; we see it in everyone's thoughts and how this religious concept is used to justify one's fortunes or misfortunes. But the idea of *karma* as a journey is what stands out as Tsomo's life comes to full circle at the end of the novel, where she is also able to fulfill her childhood dream of becoming a religious person and is able to come back to Bhutan as well as get a chance to meet her family members, towards whom she holds no grudges anymore, even Wangchen and Kesang. Her action of letting go of the past shows both her self-growth, as she is unwilling to remain a slave to the past, and how she successfully takes up a more spiritual mindset and fulfills her role as a religious practitioner.

Thus more than the religious overtones, the novel's use of several nuanced interpretations of travel as a motif should be commended - be it in the *key tag khorlo* or

in Tsomo's actual physical journey, or her spiritual and mental journey, or be it the abstract concept of *karma* itself which travels with you in the present and in the afterlife, walking together as you wander on the path of *karma*'s circle.