

CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRACY IN RURAL BHUTAN

LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN PROMOTING DEMOCRACY

LITERACY IN KANGLUNG GEWOG

Karma Wangchuk

Royal University of Bhutan, Lhuentse, Bhutan

wangchuk.karma7@gmail.com

Abstract

Studies have shown that there is a high correlation between local governments' roles in promoting democracy. Rural people are less educated and their understanding of democracy is very less. As the urban people also believe that rural people are less intelligent and assume that they are incapable, a concise about the role of promoting rural democracy and erasing the urban tales becomes immense. The study aims at finding the relation between the local government's roles in promoting democracy to the rural people. The study is expected to accept the assumption (or a hypothesis) that there is a need for an extremely in-depth analysis of participatory democracy in Kanglung with an aid from the local government's inclusion.

Keywords: Democracy, local government, participation, rural, development

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The report from the conference on Bhutan Today: Challenges of Participatory Democracy (Conference held on 23rd October, 2009 at New Delhi, India; organized by Indo-Bhutan Friendship Society) saw the speakers unanimously agreeing that democracy instituted in Bhutan in the year of 2008 existed only on paper. They also warned that continual denial of genuine democratic rights of people will pave a way for ascendancy of radical outfits (Duptho, 2009). So, the primary problem that rests here is that the rural people (who form the majority of the population) are not well informed about democracy and their role in decision making process at grass roots level is minimum.

Further insights to democracy being instituted in paper only have taken numerous tolls. This is the lingua franca spoken by many if the urban dwellers and the educators [including students, teachers and academicians] that democracy in rural Bhutan is still a marginal phenomenon. Ad hoc collection of money for various purposes of which serve no real public interest is still 'compulsory' in many rural areas (Democracy in Rural Bhutan?, 2013).

The logic or the common sense that the "rural people are less educated" have been significantly been lodged in the minds of many. However, this phenomenon is not new in Bhutan. Bhutan was a feudal society [debate about feudalism; Tashi Wangchuk (2000)] a long time ago that included the role of the landlords and the local leaders. As the Hindus did have the Panchayat system of governance at local level, Bhutan followed a similar tradition of being governed by the local leaders. This is evident from the authoritative rule exemplified by the two monarchs since 1926 and prior to that Bhutan was literally divided into factions and federal rulers that ruled each county until then. In addition to this, the influence of the regions by the ecclesiocratic (Kinga, 2009) leadership has been a constant feature in nurturing a Bhutanese society.

The third DrukGyalpo, JigmeDorjiWangchuck began a campaign of modernization and expansion of Bhutan's government and society based on the accomplishments of his two predecessors in uniting the country under a strong central authority. Hence, the National Assembly consisting of representatives of the people, the Monastic order and civil administration was reestablished in 1953 (Gallenkamp, 2010; Kinga, 2009; NSB, 2012). Until then, Bhutan has observed numerous growth and development, aligned with the ill effects of modernization. The period of isolation was over that led to the inflow of modern education and technological development but the development has only touched the minority or if we may assume, benefitted immensely to the urban legends. This has left the rural people unaltered and the process of development left untouched to this group of population. This is the reason why traces of a Panchayat rule or the local autonomic leadership (Ardussi, 2001; Bhuyan, 2010) can still be seen prevalent in the rural areas. Bhutanese local leaders are called with these names: *Gup, Mangmi, Chimmi, Drungye, Chhupoen, and Tshogpa.*

For the need of a proper legislation and improvement in the lives of all the Bhutanese people, then fourth DrukGyalpoJigmeSingyeWangchuck transformed his powers into a decentralized form that curtailed the powers to be devolved into the hands of the people. Tremendous improvement has been observed with the establishment of *GewogYargeyTshogchung* (GYT) in 1981 that was followed with *Dzongkhag YargeyTshogchung* (DYT), a decade later in 1991. But the evolution or the devolution has not attained much of significance. It has been observed that more power has been devolved in the

hands of the local leaders proving the prevalence of autonomy and an autonomous body of power vested body. Thus, still the prevalence of rural phenomenon.

This concept and phenomenon of democracy has been engraved in other societies such as in America, in Europe for a long time. But this is a new phenomenon in Bhutan. Whether to directly implement its ideals to the whole population randomly or to a selective people in Bhutan is hence, another major challenge. This retro concept in a new nation-state like Bhutan has observed now-and-then loopholes. Firstly, because democracy beyond the ballot box has been a bizarre knowledge in many of the minds. The many of the minds includes both the people who have been elected to run the government and also the ones who votes for them. How to erase this problem has been the biggest challenge in Bhutanese society lately. Nonetheless, generalizing such statements about low level of democratic participation and knowledge is not feasible.

With the first five year term of democracy already over, the drop in the voter percentage is yet another concern. Out of 379,819 registered voters in the 20 Dzongkhags, 171,544 voters exercised their franchise and of those who voted, 147,577 of them cast their votes in person on the Electronic Voting Machines in the 850 Polling Stations and 23,967 voters through the Postal Ballots, a drop in 45.16% compared to the previous years (Election Commission of Bhutan, 2013; Kuensel, 2012). And only one common reason attributes to this phenomenon that the rural people whom the candidates targeted earlier had been misguided that has led to dissatisfaction over their choice of candidates who have promised various manifestos. And the role of local government in implementing proper democratic ideals and parameters has become necessary. Again, a lack of research in this field is necessary to see if my justification is true.

The prior stated accounts have proven to strike various factors that have led to a taken-for-granted assumption towards the rural people. Often, Bhutan being predominantly governed by its history of feudal lords and the aggressive role that the local leaders played, how the rural community is developing has a profound nature to be studied at this period of time. The rural people still do not have adequate idea about the changes in government legislations and what are the resolutions that are being implemented and amended. What is the degree of their participation in such local decision making rules hence needs further scrutiny.

Since Trashigang has the second highest estimate of almost 40,000 eligible voters after Samtse, where does this population fall in development and enrichment is also very necessary. This is in line with the constant debates about regionalism and the centralization of development models in the capital, Thimphu. The role of rural people in decision-making process and how effective the local government have been in implementing and educating the rural masses about literacy and democracy since the rural people still do not have adequate ideas about the

changes and implementation in government legislations and procedures rectified by the parliamentarians is a prerequisite towards harmony.

Observing all these factors and reasons, it is time that we explore what actually is affecting these phenomenons of the gap between the rural and the policy makers. The target is aimed to one body that acts as a bridge between the rural population and the policy makers, the local government bodies. The attitudes of rural people, the level of knowledge that has been provided to them, happens not only a single phenomenon but a double phenomenon: the attitudes of the local government and the level of knowledge that the local government can execute. Having awareness about democracy literacy is significant if we are to know more about democracy and in this New Time with New Ideas (also the slogan of DrukNyamrupTshogpa). An understating of the rural situation and rural phenomenon may help us find out why rural people are not well informed or either do not participate in this essentially contested concept. It can have other considerable impact on holistic development and achieving Gross National Happiness.

Hence, this study intends to explore the relationship between the rural participatory democracy and the role of local government in implementing it to the rural people. A focus has been developed on the assumption (or a hypothesis) that there is a need for an extremely in-depth analysis of participatory democracy in Kanglung with an aid from the local government's inclusion.

Research Question

The study was designed to address the following two major research questions along with their subsidiary questions.

1. How do the rural people signify their level of rural democratic literacy?
 - 1.1 How well do the respondents say they are satisfied with democracy?
 - 1.2 How well do the respondents say they are not satisfied with democracy?
 - 1.3 How well do the respondents say they are satisfied with local governance?
 - 1.4 How well do the respondents say they are not satisfied with local governance?

2. What are the competencies with regard to rural democracy?
 - 2.1 What are the advantages to you?
 - 2.2 What are the advantages to your family?
 - 2.3 What are the advantages to the society?
 - 2.4 What are the advantages to the nation?
 - 2.5 What are the disadvantages to you?

2.6 What are the disadvantages to your family?

2.7 What are the disadvantages to the society?

2.8 What are the disadvantages to the nation?

Purpose of the Research

The majority of the people on earth live in villages and rural areas and follow patterns of occupation and life some-what different from those living in the urban areas. Bhutan is no different then. We are still an agrarian society dominated by a huge number of eligible voters living in rural areas. Their behavior, way of life and beliefs are conditioned and deeply influenced by their rural environment.

The impression of the 'village fool' is too well imbedded in the minds of the urban people. Often, the urban people believe that rural people are less intelligent than urban people, they assume that rural people are all brawn and no brain, and are incapable of initiative, leadership, and wise action, have criminal tendencies, are immoral and are in ways inferior to the city dwellers.

The researchers are primarily dwelling to construct a study about how well the rural people are educated on the basis of participatory democracy in Kanglung (*The nomenclature of Kanglung, 'bkang lung' suggest that it means the land of prosperity*). Since Bhutan has transformed into a constitutional democracy five years ago and this year being the end of the first democratic elected government, the role that the ruling government has played on the lives of the rural people and the local governance participation for the progress of participatory democracy is a must to consider. Hence, a greater study and research to know about the challenges of participatory democracy is very important.

Hence, this research is an attempt to explore the realities of rural phenomenon that can be an important tool for effectively implementing the knowledge of participatory democracy at a rural level or in the local bodies because rural people are not well informed about democracy and their role in decision making process at grass roots level is minimum.

Often, Bhutan being predominantly governed by its history of feudal lords and the aggressive role that the local leaders played, how the rural community is developing has a profound nature to be studied at this period of time. The rural people still do not have adequate idea about the changes in government legislations and what are the resolutions that are being implemented and amended. What is the degree of their participation in such local decision making rules hence needs further scrutiny.

Our pilot research includes various study and reviews. One such review is the analysis of the definition of the participatory democracy that the fourth king graciously gifted to the

people of Bhutan. Since democracy was a 'top-down' procedure in Bhutan, some of the current activities of the ruling government have questioned the liability of this top-down procedure. Few examples could be the implementation of Pedestrians day and the Tobacco Act without any national referendum. This leads us to only one direction that voices of the rural are not heard because by fact of statistics, we have majority of eligible voters living in Samtse and Trashigang that are still 'rural' in a sense.

Decentralization of power is nothing but the transfer of power from one segment of population to another, from one tier of government to another and forms any segment of society that includes men, women, and children. Mind you that power will not move on its own but it has to be made move, meaning, a driving force is needed. 'Driving force' here then means (in democracy) a political party fulfilling the social needs of the people and the community. However, when we question that rural participation is at minimum, questions arises as such that are the political parties and local government leaders reluctant to fulfill the formalities? Or is that they are working only when there is a pressure from Civil Society Organizations/or international attention?

While we are in due process of understanding what the political party (ruling government) should do, we are also in due process of what the local government is adhered to. This leads us to an understanding to know whether the lack of information to the rural people is because of the growth in the rural community where the government feels that the rural community growth will erode the power of government and weaken their status. Additional queries namely, how to make rural institution multi-dimensional? How can it play an effective role in social welfare, economic development, social life, political life and also religious and cultural life? Is there modernization and development oriented village leadership? Are there arrangements of necessary housing for the poor people? To name some few have been included in the research to supplement our research.

People are less informed and have not been mobilized to participate in the process of development and governance, as was the case five years ago when maximum of the votes casted went 'invalid.' Whether if people are ready for the coming election this year and prepared with necessary tools is a paramount in our research. The first figure has already said it so.

Scope such as 1.)Social life and social reforms 2.)Public welfare 3.)Economic welfare and 4.) Political life has been carefully studied by the researchers that include these parameters:

- A. Social life and social reforms focusing on participatory in terms of knowledge and information based on:
 - Enough knowledge about women and children empowerment

- Child care system
 - Educational reforms
 - Reduction of bonded labor
 - Production of liquor
 - Settling controversies and disputes
- B. Public welfare
- Public health
 - Family planning
 - Transport facilities
 - Entertainment facilities
 - Fresh water
 - Aid during natural calamities
- c. Economic life
- Improvement of agriculture
 - Irrigation facilities
 - Development of handicrafts and artisans
 - Improving breeds of animals
 - Development of industry
 - Maintenance of public property
 - Afforestation
 - Encouraging animal husbandry
- d. Political life
- Developing village leadership
 - Political awareness among the villagers
 - Political literacy
 - Media literacy
 - Educating the meaning of citizenship
 - Creating awareness amongst the villagers about democracy
 - Training them to solve their problems by themselves
 - Helping administration
 - Developing feeling of peace and security
 - Population census

Gathering a data about these parameters will be a 'ground breaking' achievement for the researchers. Sadly, gathering a data for all these parameters is not the purpose of this research.

Excluding these parameters at the moment, the researchers instead focuses on the political development parameters that includes village oriented development policies because as Emile Durkheim puts it;

“Although individuals perform different tasks and often have different values and interest, the order and very solidarity of society depends on their reliance on each other to perform their specified tasks” (Wangchuk, 2012),

The reliance of the village people to the local government and vice-versa seems to be the only bridge that can mold all the parameters of development noted above. As Tocqueville (*Tocqueville as quoted in Crick, 2006: Democracy a very short Introduction*) has noted in the 1830s about the dangers of the tyranny of the majority, a strong government and governance is deemed necessary.

Significance of the Research

This may be one of the pioneer studies in Bhutan’s recent transition towards democracy and the state of democracy now. The exploratory nature of this research can be considered one amongst the many to be undertaken across the nation in understanding the state of democracy and the people’s attitudes towards it.

The research is about finding the challenges to rural participatory democracy. Here the word ‘participatory’ has been added for the very nature of democracy means participation and organization that includes all the people.

The study attempts to alleviate the impression of the ‘village fool’ that is too well imbedded in the minds of the urban people. Often, the urban people believe that rural people are less intelligent than urban people; they assume that rural people are all brawn and no brain, and are incapable of initiative, leadership, and wise action, have criminal tendencies, are immoral and are in ways inferior to the city dwellers. This concept has been applied in the rural people of Kanglung here

Albeit the reason that our research will somewhat focus on these issues, that is not the sole purpose of this research. We are primarily dwelling to construct a study about how well the rural people are educated on the basis of participatory democracy in Kanglung hence the hypothesis that there is a need for an extremely in-depth analysis of participatory democracy in Kanglung. Since Bhutan has transformed into a constitutional democracy five years ago and this year being the end of the first democratic elected government, the role that the ruling government has played on the lives of the rural people and the local governance participation for the progress of participatory democracy is a must to consider. Hence, a greater study and research to know about the challenges of participatory democracy is very important.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The usefulness of a literature review is a necessary tool in any research paradigm. Take note of the usefulness of literature review as noted by Creswell (1994) – “The literature in a research study accomplishes several purposes: (a) it shares with the reader the results of other studies that are closely related to the study being reported (Fraenkel&Wallen, 1990). (b) it relates a study to the larger, ongoing dialogue in the literature about a topic, filling in gaps and extending prior studies (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). (c) It provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study, as well as a benchmark for comparing the results of all other findings.”

Three ideas were taken into consideration with the placement of the literature review. Whether to discuss it in the introduction of the study, or review the literature in a separate section or may be place it in the final section of the study. Considering that both the introduction placement and final section placement provides quite a fast preview of the study, placing it in a separate section method have been used here.

Since the literature has been placed in a separate section, describing the literature whether as integrative summaries, theoretical reviews, or methodological reviews is also taken into consideration. The authors have considered describing the literature as a *theoretical review* integrating the theories and interpretation drawn from the sources to implement it into the study. This section has initially a short introduction about democracy and its elements. Followed by this is a review about what does local governance and democracy mean.

DEMOCRACY: A SHORT INTRODUCTION

As every nation curtails its own proponent and its own interpretation for democracy, what democracy is and what not has become totally ambiguous. It is as Plato might have said that stored up in heaven but yet, unhappily has not been communicated to us (Crick, 2006). While the definition remains quite a contrary for many of the nation-states, yet, democracy is seen as the best form of government up until now and the basic premise of democracy, i.e. the respect and protection of individual autonomy and equality of all the people.

This chapter intends to present the readers about what democracy is and how it has been described until now. The author himself has not been able to conclude a concrete definition of democracy as to be similar in all the nation-states. The chapter presents a wide array of facets of democracy such as citizen's rights, accountability, freedom of the press, the rule of law, and the political parties (Becker & Reveloson, 2008 cited in Wangchuk 2012; Crick, 2006; Fukuyama, 2009). As provisions of democracy and its proponent feature could be as many as one could, these are some of the basic fundamentals that have been addressed in the paper.

New nation's transition to a democratic state through the lessons learned from other countries (old democracies) and the sustainability of the guarantee of democracy and its proponent features has been an important tool to study. Because new nation-states and those nations wanting to transform to democracy, being informed about what democracy really stands for is an important attitude to consider. Without understanding the true essence of what democracy is, achieving it in a complete sense is impossible. Hence, learning it from a pre-primary level and understanding it has become a vital key.

As a whole, this chapter provides a comprehensive study about democracy and its unique feature, the applicability of democracy to eradicate inequality, imbalance and authoritarianism. It explains how democracy is the government of the people, for the people and by the people.

What Democracy is and what Not?

Once upon a time there was a stork and a fox. The fox invited the stork to its house for dinner. Food was served in a dish, so the Stork with its long beak could not eat it.

The following day, the Stork invited the fox to its house for dinner; Food was served in a long vase, so the fox with its short tongue could not eat it.

The tongue of the fox and the beak of the Stork, which are both used for eating but have different shapes and require different methods, represent different needs of the people (Principles of democracy cited in Wangchuk, 2012). This story illustrates that sometimes even when equal opportunity is available, the outcome may not necessarily be just and fair or equitable. Specific equity measures are necessary for achieving equity. Democracy is hence, based on this basic premise to provide all people with equal, free and a fair sustainable development.

Democracy stands to eradicate this imbalance of equity and the dissatisfaction amongst the people. It stands for the equal representation in the offices, despite any sex, gender, race and education. Democracy is an outmost projection of the people's participation in any matters of political, social and cultural, so to be.

Among the 193 countries recognized by the United Nations, 123 countries are democratic. (www.freedomhouse.org cited in Wangchuk, 2012). There is such a massive number of turnouts towards democracy; it is aspiring to know what this democracy is all about. While democracy is concerned, various thoughts are in question as what really is democracy? What democracy is composed of? What are the required elements in a democracy? And what are the advantages and disadvantages of Democracy?

The Greeks are credited for the first ever use of democracy in the history of mankind and it is in Greece that Democracy was born. They termed it as '*demos*' meaning people and '*kratos*' meaning to rule (Becker & Raveloson, 2008; Clack et.al, 2005; Crick, 2006). 'Democracy' can then be literally translated in the following terms as: Government of the People or Government of the Majority. Putting it in the famous words of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Speech, '*Democracy is the government of the people, by the people, and for the people.*' Democracy works on the basic principle where the government comes from the people and is exercised by the people for their own interests. Democracy also works on one of the basic premise of '*Social Contract*' as postulated by Thomas Hobbes: that majority of the people would be willing to surrender their rights and responsibilities to one single leader and that single leader should adhere to the people's problems and should look after them in all matters of health and security. While Hobbes social contract conjoins with the concept of monarchy, it is however similar in terms where people collaborate to offer their rights and responsibilities to a *party* in rule that would in return initiate all matters of health and safety for the people.

However, democracy could mean a wide variety of concepts. Different commentators and proponents have a wider array of demarcations and dynamics about democracy. The fact lies in the three different concepts for which the term is employed: They are:

1. *Democracy as a doctrine*: gives the precondition mechanisms of elections, procedures and formalities of running a political party, and the eligibility to cast a vote in any elections.
2. *Democracy as a state*: conveys the message that democracy itself forms the basis as a state where all procedures and formations rests upon. Democracy as a state
3. *Democracy as an outcome*: is generally about putting into effect of those policies and practices which are agreed upon by the governed. It may or may not be the outcome of a state practice, or it may or may not be the product of a democratic process.

What come may be the definition of democracy and the contents given to the term democracy, but what essentially distinguishes it in essence from other forms of government is the right to popular participation in governance, and the legitimacy and the legitimating of government and governance.

The Vienna Declaration on Human Rights states: "Democracy is based on the freely-expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives." (Inter-parliamentary Union cited in Wangchuk 2012).

Churchill instigated it as most difficult to achieve because it requires a delicate balance between opposing terms. The system of democracy becomes synonymous with the idea of

justice as the glorious words of Daniel Webster thus indicate: "Justice is the greatest interest of man on earth. It is the ligament which holds civilized beings and civilized nations together. Wherever her temple stands, there is a foundation of social security, general happiness and the improvement and progress of our race. And whoever labors on the edifice with usefulness and distinction, whoever clears its foundation, strengthens its pillars, adores its entablatures or contributes to raise its august dome still higher in the skies, connects him in the name and fame and character with that which is and must be durable as the frame of human society." (Inter-parliamentary Union cited in Wangchuk 2012).

Whatever the distinctions, interpretations, and provisions may be owing to democracy in itself being *democratic*, Democracy rests on the two important fundamental principles: 1) Individual autonomy 2) Equality. The principle of individual autonomy rests on the principle that no one/ no person shall be subjected forcefully to rules and regulations imposed by others. And the principle of equality entails that everyone should have the same opportunity to influence the decisions that affect people in the society. It emphasizes that all people are equal. Equal in terms of valuing every individuals equally despite their sex, gender, and race, equal in terms of opportunities. In any democracy, an individual can also maintain their right to have different cultures, languages, and the freedom of religion guaranteed.

The proper working of a democratic life or a democratic political regime has other important facets too. They are:

a. Citizen participation

One of the basic signposts of a democracy is the citizen's participation in a democratic government as it builds a better democracy. Participation guarantees transparency, it guarantees the vibrancy through engaging the citizens in decision making process. Citizen's participation not only provides the right as a democratic citizen but it also provides the duty from the state to uphold those rights. Citizen participation may include any forms including voting in elections, forming a political party, standing for election, paying taxes, being members of private voluntary organizations, and even protesting.

It is evident that no society can advance without open conflicts. Open conflicts could mean opposing interests between different political and social groups, and can also mean clash of different ideas. Whatever may be the case, it is in democracy that rational claims and clash of ideas are mediated in a peaceful way and is ordained in a free and responsible manner. However, to create an atmosphere of mediated clash of ideas in a free and responsible manner, it is important that the citizens are made aware of the freedoms and right to which they are entitled. In a democracy it is possible to provide trainings and educating the citizens about the rights to which they are entitled. Democratic countries such as the Scandinavians have shown a

massive increase in the development of the living standards of the citizens and the maximum human index that they enjoy. As of now, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Poland and United Kingdom enjoy very high human development as per the human development index study and its report submitted on 2011.

The role of school and education plays an important role then. Schools do not favor only for training and educating the citizens but it also forms as a basis for the best possible instrument for socialization and social integration. Investment in education and schools must be a priority then; so as to foster the basic premise which runs on the philosophy that democracy means citizens participation.

b. Political Parties

Presence of a political party system guarantees the possibility for the delivery of various think tanks. A multi-party system, one of an active and vibrant form of political party system provides us with the understanding that citizens are aware of the situations around them and different approaches to problems and solutions are being emphasized so as to foster peace and security. A multi-party system also provides the voters with the choice of candidates, parties and policies to vote for. Because of one-party system leading to dictatorship and authoritarianism, it is important that in any democratic society, formation of a multi-party system to be guaranteed.

Political parties not only guarantee the power (not corrupted) attained by means of free, fair and transparent elections, but they form the basis where legitimization and applicability of these promises that they hold to the people are ordained and also work in collaboration with the government to set alternative programmes and solutions to the government.

Political parties are also the body of the people representing the people's direct needs from the government, a body through which the individuals may influence public affairs, express either the support or the discomfort against the government. As David Beetham and Kevin Boyle rightly points out that "While open competition between political parties in the framework of elections is one of the indispensable characteristics of representative democracies, it is also their Achilles heel. Open competition between parties vying for the management of a country's affairs is a socially and politically divisive factor and the stakes are generally high for those involved in this competition. It is therefore important - and this is one of the conditions for democracy's survival - that the cost of defeat is not unbearable for those parties and their followers who find themselves on the sidelines of power." (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 1998).

c. Accountability

The elected and nominated leaders in any democracy have to be accountable to the people in terms of politics and finance. Accountability is further enhanced through the principle of benefit for the all and not self-motivation. Whatever their obligations may be, performing the duties and

making decisions should always be in adherence to the political, social and cultural will of the general people. Without the people being satisfied, democracy would be a disaster.

d. Rule of Law

One fine maxim of democracy states that no one is above the law, and all individuals must adhere to the rules and regulations. If any one individual violates the set laws and regulations, they are required to be accountable for the violation. This is known as the rule of law. While the rule of law is concerned, democracy accepts that the laws to be enforced equally and fairly to all the people.

While other forms of government violate both these principles, for example, an oligarchy is ruled by a group of small, wealthy, and military powers. In a plutocracy too, government is controlled by a single powerful individual. Though a communist would mean to create a classless, moneyless, and stateless social order structured upon common ownership of the means of production, Chinese and Russian Communism has never been a true success in its implementation for a successful communism.

So that any nation does not grow to become a Police State or a Despotic State, the notion of the rule of law is hence very important. The rule of law also guarantees the separation and the independence of the powers of the government, i.e. the judiciary, executive and the legislature. The executive responsible for enforcing laws, the legislative is derived with the power to put forward the bills and then pass it into laws and the judiciary responsible for proper jurisdictions and justifications through courts and judges. So that there would not be misgivings about

Another principle of the Rule of law is the security right. It is the will and the responsibility of the state to inform its citizens about the rights conferred on them to exercise to the citizens, what the state themselves could do and most importantly, what is forbidden for them to do. No single individual is subject to be sanctioned without a legal firm and in general, laws should not be retroactive. The notion of the *justifiable condition* of the administration is also put in place where the administrations would in turn be in control initiated by the judiciary and the administration stays within the jurisdictions set up by the judiciary. This provides the fact that even the administrations are *subject to laws* when deemed to be. Not only this, any citizen can have an absolute right to protest against an administration and can call on the judiciary to verify its incriminated act. Thus, the rule of law bonds politics to law and right, surrenders any expression of the power under the judiciary control and guarantees in this way the citizens' freedom.

e. Freedom of the press

How does one know what is happening around the world? What is it that people are aware about? And how do people react to such situations? As far as all these opinions are concerned, it is the media, such as internet, television, radio and newspapers that play a decisive role. The current era is bound by interchanging of information's and communications, only through media. Political parties depend on the media to interpret and convey the messages for the citizens. The democracy as of now is not an absolute character of direct communication, but in fact, it is through media communication that democracy takes place.

Elections, one of the basic premises of any democracy would not be possible if there was no media communication. Hence, it has become precisely important that what would media actually convey to the people deems to be important and informative because it is only through media that every possible information and true democracy works. Media by no doubt constitute the most important controlling tools of the public opinion. Because of these reasons, media is often considered to be the *'fourth power'* in line with the judiciary, the executive, and the legislature.

It is through the freedom of press that an irreverent attitude towards the public authorities has been pointed out by the media. In some countries this has then seen a heavy repellant from the authority and heavy penalties has been imposed on the journalists to silence them or if not, then bribery would certainly be an absolute case. A growing skepticism about the role and power of media has hence become a *necessary evil* then.

While citizens are aware of such massive role that media is vested upon, it becomes necessary that the freedom of the press is guaranteed. Though the freedom of the press is a necessity, the distinctions often become hazy when the media represents a danger particularly in the monopoly of the delivery of messages. One can notice a recrudescence of monopolies because often the press, radio, television and broadcasting stations are under the management of the same company. Owing to the fact the nowadays, a large quantity of capital assets and technical knowledge is required to set up broadcast stations and print materials, there is often a dilemma as of whether if there lies the freedom of the press and if it does, does it function for or against the functioning of the government.

The information that the press provides to the people does not depends on the number of newspapers or any rich private broadcasting company, but it is to do with the quality of information that is been provided to the public. It is also important that the separation of powers, i.e. the executive, the legislature and the judiciary keep a proper track of information's' provided by the media so as in order for the media to not turn into *freedom to misinform*.

f. Elections

Elections constitute another important premise of democracy (be it representative or direct democracy). *Electoral law* in any democracy defines and assigns the requirements needed so as in order to undertake how an election should be carried out, what are the general criteria's necessary to fulfill as an eligible voter and what come may be the provisions in an election. Electoral law is further classified into active and passive electoral law. Active electoral law classifies the right to vote whereas passive electoral law signifies the right to be elected. However, the mere provision or practice of an election does not qualify to be directly termed as democratic. There are also other forms of government where elections are also practiced. To distinguish democratic elections, certain necessities are hence to be taken into consideration. They are:

- ❖ *Confidentiality* of voting to a political party is guaranteed. Citizen can freely cast a vote to the choice of his/her candidate through the secret ballot box, without having being watched over. In democratic elections, every possible ways shall be put in place where there must be no way of knowing for which political party or for which political candidate the voter has voted.
- ❖ Every votes casted in a democratic election should be *equitable*, meaning that no one shall be discriminated based on their sex, religion, gender, possessions, job, language, class and the political convictions.
- ❖ Democratic elections provide with the *freedom to choose* from several different parties that they wish to vote for. Citizens are by no means to be coerced to compulsory vote and their abstentions shall not be questioned.
- ❖ Democratic elections are *public and transparent*. While any citizen of a particular nation can participate in a democratic election, it is also possible in a democratic election that in order to be transparent, the public can attend and witness the whole process of election and its results, until the end of the counting of votes from the secret ballot box.
- ❖ In a democracy, it is also important that elections are held in *regular intervals* so as to correct, question and empower the political parties. This is mostly done in tenure of five years as in most of the democratic states and a mid-way election, as in the United States.

The meaning and concept of democracy is still an ambiguous definition owing to its interpretation as many users may use it to be useful. Nevertheless, it is based on the basic premise of the fundamental of individual autonomy and equality owing to the knowledge that all people are born equal and depriving rights from the people is not really a democracy.

Democracy rests where there is free participation from the people. And where does this free participation of the people emerge? It emerges out of the free administration that has vested its own power not for any self-motive mission but to promulgate development and well-being for *all* the people. While the arbitration of misconducts are concerned, democracy installs the rule of law so as to exercise fair and equal justice through the judiciary to all the people, whatsoever be the sex, religion, caste, social status, languages they speak, and the lifestyle that they live in. Democracy does not guarantee absolute freedom and for some it may be anarchy, such as for the communist, yet, it is in democracy that rests maximum participation of the people and the people's own powers in action. Thus, in a democracy, it is not the ideologies and provisions that play an important role, but it is the people in it, responsible for *everything* what democracy stands out for.

Classifying it as a representative or a guided democracy, all of these would function well, only when the promises and the principles that the office holders promise to hold onto. This brings into the question of checks and balance. Checks and balance in line with being accountable for one's own actions and fixing the atrocities of morals and values. It is not only about the length of the press conference or the maximum number of pages of report that you present to the audience, i.e. 'the citizens', it is actually the quality of the content that counts the most. What I mean to say is that, in a nutshell, democracy includes every sphere and provisions of the everyday life as I expect and that various spheres of social, political and moral values are guided by democracy. Successful social and political reform is a sine qua non of any nation's development. For the present research paper, let us define democracy in a narrow sense as a political system in which the supreme power lies in a body of citizens who can elect people to represent them. Recalling Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg speech, democracy is in fact the government of the people, for the people, and by the people.

Local Governance and Democracy

Participatory democracy enhances local participation and decision-making process, thereby contributing to bigger and important decision making process (Bhuyan, 2010; Jonathan, 1992; Robertson, 2002; Sitakanta, 2006; Snyder, 2008; Swanson, 2001). However, in this light or the era of industrialization and development, rural populations have been sidelined for they are considered to be illiterate and unproductive. Various researchers agree on this assumption because though the rural population would in fact represent an extremely high number while in voting, their representation in terms of decision-making and policy implementation are always less. Since the rural population's consideration as illiterate and unproductive, underpinning them out of decision making is a precarious stage for development. As Toole (2006) notes that letting

the people establish or re-constitute in local community associations, the people in these small towns have begun to participate in local community action. Bhuyan (2010) has a similar argument to this stand.

Bhutan's democracy though new has already entered five years of the phase and completed its first tenure of democratic rule where *people's* government for some, has proven preferable, and for some has yet to be convinced as a best form of government. Various articles and news entries have made these assumptions true. Forget knowing each of the candidates of all five political parties, villagers said they do not even know the names of the political parties was reported a repeated problem in Bhutanese democracy (Dema, 2013; Namgyel, 2013; Pokhrel, 2013). With over 41,238 voters in Trashigang alone and 41,596 voters in Samtse and fact that these areas are pre-dominantly rural, providing more insights to rural population in Bhutan has even become more important.

Excerpts from various researches conducted reveals a common understanding of the formation of a Representative organizations or a local government, what come may be to be appropriate (Imai & Sato, 2011; Kennedy, 2002; Richards, 2001; Sitakanta, 2006; Snyder, 2008; Swanson, 2001). To conceive about the formation of such organization has become imperative such that these organizations have reinforced local economies, cultural patterns and deviated development paradigm towards sustainable development. *The Farmers' Support Programme (FSP)* as it is called in the black population of South Africa, *The Ministry of Local Government* as in Tanzania, and Rural Alleviation Programmes such as *Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)* and *Rural Public Works (RPW)*, are some of the important rural prospects of local government making maximum rural population participate in implementing and executing decision making process. This has become significant in Bhutan – namely because of the rise in the corruption and the results of extreme poverty (National Statistics Bureau, 2004 & 2007). Whether if the Bhutanese society does need separate and autonomous bodies in local government so that democratic literature prevails is an important consideration.

Aristotle in his, *The Constitution of Athens* (Kennedy, 2002) have pointed out that “When the people become masters of the vote, it becomes the master of the government.” However, such deprivation or the feeling of being excluded have sociologically and politically attempted to show the consequences that have led to conflicts and skirmishes leading to deviance and disproportion in the society (Harris, 1998; Kohn, 1992; Yaffe, 2009). Durkheim's' and Merton's functionalism shows a significant relevance then (Appelrouth & Edles, 2011). Karl Marx would not be much afar in explaining what constitutes an equal society. Such becomes the fact that when rural population are deprived of the resources that are preordained to be made available to them too, this will exhibit the consequences of deprivation and will subsequently result in

polarization that will further garner conflict (Appelrouth & Edles, 2011; The Sociological Perspective, n.d).

Locally based policies and infrastructures will then contribute to dismiss such imbalances and shape the ways in which organizational structures actually distribute power. Behaviors and roles would then be enhanced when exchange and rational choice are garnered. Homans, Blau and Coleman would prove justifiable in this context where the realization of distributive justice and balanced exchange would aid the people to know of their identities and the Personality figure as proposed by Mills to come into existence. Region-wide channels for member participation are thus especially important, because without horizontal linkages across communities there is little to prevent domination by the central leadership (Appelrouth & Edles, 2011; Collingwood, 2006; Jonathan, 1992; Fleming, 2002; Flyvberg, 1997; Lizee, 2000). The formation or the importance of civil society and its vitality is what these authors agree upon from their understanding of region-wide channels. Predominant of all these is Jurgen Habermas whose understanding of *public sphere* and the *colonization of the life world* are should not be underestimated. What Baudrillard would then add about the society believing in *hyper-reality* in addition to Habermas's theory confers some mind-breaking insights that it is those uneducated and the illiterate that are most effected by such phenomenon (Appelrouth & Edles, 2011).

It is with this idea that educating and empowering people and the institutions at all levels is very necessary. This is the meaning of good governance then. Educating and empowering the citizens at all levels promotes citizens participation, partnerships at local level, multiple flows of information and pro-poor orientation. Success of local structures depends on the investments in capacity development and how well the central authorities can facilitate the sharing of resources and power. More attention should be paid to making sure that local elites and leaders do not capture power and exercise authority over marginalized groups. However, another major challenge is to ensure that local awareness of needs and preferences are known and taken into account at national decision making levels and that local officials have the authority and resources to respond to those needs.

METHODOLOGY

The Study

The study IS set out to explore the challenges to rural democracy in Kanglung gewog and the role that the local governance ought to play in developing and implementing democratic ideals.

This research will focus on addressing a qualitative research or also known as interpretive approach about the role of rural people in decision-making process and how effective is the role of local government in implementing and educating the rural masses about

literacy and democracy. Paradigm used here is a qualitative research and the specific method used in this paradigm is the case studies method. The researcher in the case study explores a single entity or phenomenon (“the case”) bounded by time and activity (a program, event, institution, or a social group) and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1989).

The authors have resorted to various distinctive features that provide synthesis and scrutiny for the study to be conducted in the aforementioned stated research paradigm. In addition to this, features such as choosing a natural setting where human behavior and events occur, the realization of the tacit knowledge, the focus on the participants’ perceptions and experiences and the way that they make sense of their lives (Fraenkel&Wallen, 1990; Locke et al., 1987; Merriam, 1988) contributes to making this study a qualitative research paradigm. Marshall and Rossman (1989) suggests that this entails immersion in the everyday life of the setting chosen for the study and is largely an investigative process where the researcher gradually makes sense of the social phenomenon by contrasting, comparing, replicating, cataloguing and classifying the object of study (Avelson, 1996; Bryman et al, 1998; Conger,1998; Miles &Huberman, 1984). It focuses on the process that is occurring as well as the product or outcome (Frankel &Wallen, 1990; Merriam, 1998). Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman (1987) have pointed out that qualitative research paradigm helps in understanding a particular social situation, event, role, group, or interaction. The attempt here is to understand not one, but multiple realities (Lincoln &Guba, 1985). The fact that the researcher enters the informants world through ongoing interaction, seeks the informants’ perspectives and meanings, gets a first-hand experience to interact with those being researched, provides an inductive knowledge about the process ongoing in the society that will help in deducing more information from it. Miller (1992) has pointed out an in-depth structure of the qualitative research paradigm and its significance. Parry (1998) as cited in Goethals et.al (2004) makes a claim that quantitative methods are insufficient to theorize sufficiently about the nature of leadership, understood as a social influence process. Similar claims has been justified by Louis (1981) that entails quantitative research as “inquiry from outside”. A succinct definition to the usefulness of qualitative research has been further provided by Nueman (1991) that: “the interpretive approach is the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds” (Neuman, 1991).

The primary stance as noted by the proponents of qualitative researchers is that the social world or the environment where the subject lives can only be understood by interacting with the subjects themselves or what might the symbolic interactionism theorist like Mead would

say looking at yourself from the perspective of other, “taking the attitude of the other”. According to Mead, “We divide ourselves up in all sorts of different selves answering to all sorts of different social creations” (Mead 1934/1962, cited in Appelrouth & Edles, 2011). Hence, a qualitative research paradigm or interpretive approach use is necessary here.

However, the role or the application of positivist or quantitative research paradigm cannot be excluded because of numerous reasons. Albeit all the reasons, the view that the environment can be studied subjectively seems to be one of the common understanding in most of the scholars. The purpose of conducting research then is to learn more about how the world works so that events can be controlled or predicted (Neuman, 1991).

Positivist data or the quantitative research exemplifies the description of the fraction of the population – the sample – through the data collection process of asking questions to the people (Fowler, 1998). What this data collection in turn does is that it enables the researcher to generalize findings from a sample of responses to the population. This saves resources and attains a more feasible manner of conducting a research by gathering an almost true data (from a random sample) for the whole population.

But note that more consideration has been placed in the qualitative data formulation and only the element of quantitative research that is, measuring the significance and competence on a Likert Scale is used in the research. Hence, quantitative techniques such as the use of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science), ANOVA Test (Analysis of Variance Test) or QSR NUD^{IST} (Qualitative Solutions and Research, Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing) amongst others have been excluded here.

The Population

This study will be conducted in Kanglung, a regional district in Trashigang. The gewog rests under the figure with an area covering around 63.62sq km, having a population of 6332 living in approximately around 600 households (and still more under construction), and somewhere around 3300 eligible voters.

Actors

The informant in this study is the new Gup of Kanglung who is the also the GewogYargayTshogchung (hereinafter as GYT) Chairman.TheGup’s office includes the *Drungyi*, *Mangmi*, and other local government officers. Various other rural people will also act as actors for this research.

With an additional 4 people interviewed (40 minutes interview for one person) during the *Tse-Wang* at *Yongphulhakhang*, in addition to the existing 30 people from the vicinities of

Kanglung, and the Kanglung Gup as our main resource person for the research, our research has geared significant support over our hypothesis. Firstly, because the people interviewed had less knowledge about what democracy is; And secondly because the Gup himself has been encountering various challenges towards participatory democracy at the local grass roots level.

Data collection processes

(a) Questionnaire

Questionnaire was divided into two Parts, Part 1 and Part 2. Part 2 is further divided into Section A and Section B.

Part 1: Biographical data

This includes the biographical data of the respondents that was intended to collect personal data variables namely: name, sex, age and occupation. As explained earlier in Ethical Consideration about the anonymity of the respondents, the choice to which the respondents felt comfortable in revealing their identity or assigning a code was a respondent choice phenomenon.

Part 2

Section A: Significance towards democracy

This section aimed at exploring the satisfaction towards local government's role from the respondents. For each question a scale was provided with 5 as the highest and 1 as the lowest in the Likert Scale (1 – 5). The values for the scale 1 – 5 are indicated to show the respondents level of significance or the degree of satisfaction towards the local government's role in promoting democracy.

Section B: Democracy competence

This section explores the questionnaire regarding the local government's role and the attitudes towards their role from the respondents. For each question a scale was been provided with 5 as the highest and 1 as the lowest. The values for the scale 1 – 5 are indicated to show your level of significance or the degree of satisfaction towards democracy. The definition of Likert Scale is the same as described above.

(b) Interviews

The interview schedule compliments 16 open-ended questions that were assigned to our random samples from the generalized population. The interview questions explored the role of local government in promoting democracy and inhibiting the role of rural people in grassroots decision making process.

It has a sub-section that starts with a note to the respondents about the role of the researchers in formulating this interview questions and the role that the respondents would play. It was thought necessary that since we were using materials to gather data such as transcribing their verbatim and the recording their audio, a proper explanation in the first hand seemed very necessary.

Field Research

The field research includes some important first hand data's that has been gathered by the respondents. It involved spectator observations and everyday experiences of the observer where the data was generated from work places and leisure places such as restaurants and agricultural field works. In addition to this, secondary data maintained by public agencies and local government offices and the accounts of earlier work in Social Sciences has been used to make it legitimate.

Sampling

Since this study is an exploratory research, including all the population of Kanglung (approximately 6000) was difficult. Hence, a random sampling has been taken into consideration. Coupled with random sampling (simple random sample), a purposive or judgmental sampling has also been used in this research. Hoschild used this technique and comments as "Obviously, one cannot safely generalize from a sample of this kind to a national population: it would be worthless, for example, for me to point out what percentage of my sample sought more or fewer government services....intensive interviews are a device for generating insights, anomalies, and paradoxes, which later may be formalized into hypothesis that can be tested by quantitative social science methods" (1981: 23 - 24).

Going in line with random sampling, the researchers have used the post-grouping of the respondents into a quota sampling method. This was done after the questions were asked to the respondents. The respondents were then arranged accordingly to their age as follows: 18 – 28 years, 29 – 39 years, 40 – 49 years, 50 – 59 years, 60 – 69 years and 70 – 79 years. The oldest respondent was 77 years old. Hence, quota sampling is not completely excluded but an element of such king of sampling is to be found.

Computation of the Data

As an easily available program, MS Excel was used to compile the data and calculate the percentage and the total results that were provided by the Likert Scale.

Ethical Considerations

Cohen and Manion (cited in Singye 2003) comments about the ethical consideration as follows: Ethical considerations encountered in educational research in particular can be extremely complex and subtle and can frequently place researchers in moral predicaments which may appear quite irresolvable. One such dilemma is that which requires researchers to strike a balance between the demands placed on them as professional scientists in pursuit of truth, and their subjects' rights and values potentially threatened by the research.

Since, this is a curriculum oriented capstone research, no complex consideration or review by a professional organization was not needed here. But this does not mean that the optimum care was negated or not taken into consideration.

Prime focus and care was taken while asking sensitive questions from the researcher and opinions from the respondents. Since the respondents form the core of the research, a voluntary participation coupled with anonymity and confidentiality shall form the locus of this research ethics. Holloway and Wheeler (1996) states:

Informed consent should also be based on an understanding that participation is voluntary - an issue that may require particular emphasis where research is conducted by people who also have a professional relationship with sample members which may lead to feelings of obligation or gratitude.

The informant's rights, interests and wishes was considered first when choices were made regarding reporting the data. The decision to maintain anonymity rests with the informants. Take into note that the purpose of the work was also clearly mentioned and clarified.

Taking into consideration the medium of communication or the use of language because of the use of English in writing and processing the survey questionnaire and interviews, the researchers have made it possible to find every ways to state the real nature of question as it was in English by translating the questions into *sharchop*(or *tsanglakha*). The research objective was articulated verbally and in writing so that they are clearly understood by the informants' intention in collecting the data, including a description of how the data will be used.

The researchers here initially drafted a written permission to proceed with the study as to be received from the informant, but taking into consideration about the *population* and *sample* as purely rural, this step was excluded in the next draft.

The researchers initiated clear information and providing a manifest function of the verbatim transcriptions and written interpretations and reports that was used during the research. Another consultant that was approached and consolidated was the use of data collection devices and activities such as verbatim transcription and written interpretation and mobile recording (audio recording).

RESULTS

Actors

As discussed in above section, rural people and the local government leaders participated in this study. This section presents the sex and status of the interviewees and participants of the observations.

Sex

Table 1: Respondents' representation through their sex

Sex	Total
Males	33
Female	17
Grand total	50

A total of 50 respondents were randomly interviewed. Out of these 50 respondents, only 1 respondent was a product of systematic sampling, meaning that this respondent was deliberately chosen to be interviewed in a systematic manner. However, most of the questions that were asked to the respondents were also asked to this lone respondent.

Age

Table 2: Respondents' representation through age

Sex / Age	18 – 28	29 – 39	40 – 49	50 – 59	60 – 69	70 – 79	Grand Total
Male	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	7 (14%)	10 (20%)	7 (14%)	4 (8%)	33(66%)
Female	3 (6%)	4 (8%)	5 (10%)	2 (4%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	17 (34%)
Total	6 (12%)	6 (12%)	12 (24%)	12 (24%)	9 (18%)	5 (10%)	50 (100%)

Note that this process of Quota sampling, as explained earlier was not *pre-coded* or pre-arranged but it was only prepared only after the researchers finished interviewing the

respondents. The researchers calls this as *office arrangement* because this was done while in the process of research formulation.

Findings of Interview

Particular attention was paid to the role of the local government office in initiating change, relationship building, decision making, providing leadership and vision.

It is interesting to note that leadership in Kanglung seems to be radical and welfare oriented working to achieve human development in terms of community vitality, agriculture, and local governance in Kanglung. This is what the Gup [ID1 - male] has to say about his development paradigm that –

“I am trying my very best and also encouraging people to actively participate in development process and the results show that there has been an increasing partnership amongst ourselves working for the development of our community.” [ID1]

However, though the development figures and examples portrays that there has been an increase in the livelihood of the rural people through the availability of farm roads, electricity supply and water distribution, there is also a need for the improvement of “quality” development especially in terms of democracy literacy, an ingredient necessary for good governance and community development. This is where our research attempts to challenge the development paradigm that

The meaning behind why they really did not want to express freely about democracy was a constant challenge [Shown by ID6 - female]. ID6 was ‘totally’ tentative to express what she felt about democracy. This is what she replied when asked about the interview schedule and our intent to conduct an interview.

“I have no idea at all about what politics and democracy means” [ID6]

Though constant additional knowledge was poured in by the researchers, ID6 showed negative interest in providing her views and opinions about democracy and the local government. However, as exemplified in Chapter 3 about the ethical considerations, her volunteerism was respected.

Similar responses were shared by five other respondents who were tentative to add to our research or comment on the topic. Amongst the five, 2 were male and 3 were female. Views shared by these respondents were as follows:

“My responsibility is to vote, so I just go and vote for the party that I think is capable of doing good work and that I have been hearing often. I am always busy with my work and I have to work to feed my family.” [ID11]

“I don’t have ideas about politics and democracy. I am satisfied with what I have so, I don’t feel the change in our society” [ID29]

Female respondents were continuously tentative to respond to our research and often time’s male respondents assisted them to add to their responses. This resulted in a mixed response from two respondents at a time.

This was evident from the interview that was conducted in *YongphuLhakhang* during the *tse-wang*. Coming across 5 other women who were not ready to provide an interview, the respondents chose to interview 5 other men. In one of the respondents who was a female [ID18] who was asked about the interview questions and the researchers intent to conduct an interview, a direct response arose from the respondent-

“I don’t know what it means by democracy” [ID18]

However, when further asked that if she had voted during the 2008 elections, the answer was ‘yes’. When further asked about the significance of democracy then, with regard to the ones you elect because you are an eligible voter and plays an important role in making up the government, then the response from the respondent was as such –

“2008 elections was a new experience for me. But after I voted, nothing happened. And nobody came and explained to me what it was all about” [ID18]

The male respondent that was sitting at her back was interested in making a conversation with the respondents, so the respondents opted to go for this respondent.

“I have voted in the 2008 elections and at that time I have very less knowledge about what democracy is. Now I have little idea about what democracy is because of media, friends and people around that have been talking about it. But I feel that in our gewog in Kanglung, there aren’t any programs to learn about what democracy is. Hence, this is why people are not ready to share their view” [ID19]

Those educated, as is one of our respondents, [ID8- female] did not show a keen interest to express her feelings about democracy because she was convinced that the politicians do not work for the benefit for the people but that they work for themselves. To remember exactly what she commented about challenges to democracy from the notes that we maintained, “dirty politics” was the word that she used time and again to de-motivate herself to engage in this topic. Since most of the people dwelling in Kanglung are farmers and business oriented people, democracy beyond the ballot box was something very new to them while inquiring to them about democracy. Meanings about concepts such as NC (National Council) and NA (National Assembly) is a necessity for them to juxtapose if they want to know what democracy is, which seems to be a minimum knowledge to these people. Same response was shown by other

respondents as follows: ID 2, ID 3, ID 4, ID 5, ID 7, ID 9, ID 10, ID11, ID12, ID13, ID14, ID 16, and ID 17 – ID 50. From the excerpts of one of the respondent who had the same view – “All the *kabneys* that I see them wearing in television is same. I can only distinguish about King and JeKhenpo” [ID44]

This is not only a rural phenomenon. The review from the newspapers makes it explicit for the readers that it is even the educated population that lacks a proper understanding of these confusing and similar terms (Dema, 2013; Pokhrel, 2013; Gyeltshen, 2013).

In all these spheres of interviewing and collecting views and opinions, a constant feedback about how the people would benefit from the research that we were conducting was continuous. Since most of the respondents believe that once the elections are over, the politicians that they themselves elected does not intend to turn their smiling faces back to them. In this way the respondents conveyed that this is what “demotivated” them to trust the politicians and did not care much about voting. Newtonian laws would be applicable here that an equal and opposite reaction from the respondents was portrayed in terms of not voting for them again.

“Quite often I used to receive calls from our elected leaders before but now I don’t receive it. I don’t know why but I am losing trust in those I elected. But I think that since democracy is like a new born child, the characteristics and nature of this new born child is uncertain. A proper regulation should be implemented to nurture this new born child.” [ID15]

It is quite interesting to know that the level of knowledge about democracy is minimum in rural areas. This is because of what the local government has in papers. The reports suggested which the researchers collected that there are 100% farm road connectivity, 100% mobile connectivity, 100% electrical connectivity and 100% water availability. The researchers initially deduced the knowledge that it may be because of various reasons such as access to roads, the geographical terrain and the availability of the resources that is impeding the will to know what democracy is but it seems from the report that rural people are satisfied with what has been provided to them. Hence, an extra learning from their part is very less.

When asked about the nature of *zomdus*(from Section B), the researchers have come across the general idea that since all the respondents, from ID 2 – ID50 replied that they

“Do not initiate *zomdus* amongst themselves and attend it only when they are called by the gup or the tshogpa.” [ID 2 – ID 50]

This has posed another query that either the rural people are not made aware of the rights that they deserve or either that they are not allowed to initiate a *zomdu*. However, this projection proved wrong when the same query was asked to Gup [ID 1]:

“...in fact it is true that not many people come forward and initiate such programs. It is as you stated that an initiation from the people themselves means that they are interested. Rural

people here depend on the daily livelihood through farming and agriculture. This is the reason why they even don't come for a *zomdu* when they are called. Hence, what the local government does here is make people pay fine of Nu.100 if they fail to attend a *zomdu*". [ID1]

This logic gives us the understanding that the very nature of an agrarian society impedes vibrant democracy in rural areas. This process seems correct to make people participate in rural participatory democracy, but the researchers conclude that the nature of democracy itself is destroyed here, owing to imposition and the nature of no referendums or acceptance from the people.

The infringement of one's right is a tyrant of democracy. But the Gup [ID1] had his own response to this justification stating that

"...well, what you said is true in regard of imposing fine and imposing people to come to attend a *zomdu*. But it should also be taken into consideration that if we do not do this, not many people would come to attend a *zomdu*. And it will be the rural people who will be affected in the end. To protect one's right is also not always necessary." [ID1]

This lets us go back to what Justice Posner, of the US Court of Appeal commented about Civil Liberties in response to combating terrorism that "it is wrong on our part to prioritize civil liberties but rather the Judiciary should be able to repress it. Of course when the situation seems normal, the judiciary can prioritize civil liberties to enhance one's rights".

Diverting this question to the rural people, respondents were of different opinions:

"...I think that since it benefits me, imposing fine is totally ok because if we are not made aware about the changes, then we are the ones who will suffer." [ID 2, ID 3, ID 4, ID 5, ID 7, ID 9, ID 10, ID11, ID12, ID13, ID14, ID 16, and ID 18 – ID 50].

ID15 though rejected this stand, stating that –

"We are no more like before. We have a new form of government and democracy is all about giving rights to the people. Whether they come or not is their choice". [ID15]

Right after she said this, the respondents mother interrupted in between and said that –

"If these kinds of rules are not imposed, people are not ready to be responsible. Even if I was the organizer, I would do the same thing so that it benefits the people themselves in the end."

[ID15's mother]

It was observed from the interview that the mother attended the *zomdu* as the representative.

However, when asked if the *zomdu* are about discussion platforms to learn and clarify about doubts with regard to the confusions relating to democracy and democracy literacy, the response was a 'NO' from all the respondents listed above.

Only one of the respondents ID 17 was of the opinion that she had the knowledge that the *zomdu* can also be discussed about one's doubts and discussion pertaining to the new regime

that we have around and not only to discuss issues such as new water source, regional visit by the King or other guest of honors, or with regard to a dispute.

“...I feel that the local government should play an important role here in making people aware about what democracy really is. *Zomdusare* the only platform where a lot of people come together, hence this is the best platform to let us get engaged.” [ID 17]

It was also this same respondent, the lone one who responded to the Interview Schedule Question 9 that in ways to foster democracy,

“...I think that the Local Government from the Parliaments support should initiate dramas and skits to make people aware about what democracy is about. Dramas, skits and programs not only during the election time but during the off-election period, meaning within the five year period. In this manner, people will stay on track.” [ID17]

Commuting this with the Interview question no.6, it is noteworthy that not many of the people feel that there is a vibrant democracy in Kanglung. This question was asked in line with the knowledge about the legislations and resolutions passed by the parliament.

“...I am not aware about new legislation and resolutions passed in the parliament.” [ID2 - ID50, excluding ID23, ID 30 and ID 8, ID15]

“...I have seen in BBS and heard in radio, but I find it difficult to understand.” [ID 2 – ID 50, excluding ID 8, ID 17, ID 15]

Interview question 15 was quite of an experience to the researcher. When asked this question to the rural people, many of them shared positive development in Bhutan. But there were some difference,

“...I think that 15 years from now, Bhutan will become like Indian Politicians and there will be riots in the streets and protests. This is because already, the politicians have lost our faith because they are not working for what they tell us that they will” [ID15].

“We have been blessed with a good king. So, I feel that our society will become much better because every year we have intelligent people born who can contribute much better to the development of the society. SonamKinga is one person I know.” [ID 49 and ID 50].

However, while such interpretations show that there needs an in-depth analysis if democracy literacy is to be made abundant to the people, an extra responsibility from the local government head and the Election Commission is also equally and vastly important.

“Once the elections are over, the Gup, Gewog ADM and any other people who came to brief us actively about what democracy is initially during the election time do not manage to come back again within the 5 year period. When they do come and talk, it is at the end of the party’s tenure and the next round of elections. What needs to be done is a constant learning process about what democracy is.” [ID17]

Similar views were expressed by other respondents, namely ID 8 in precise who was very rigorous in giving this response and describing Bhutanese democracy as 'dirty politics' [ID8].

"I don't like politics and I hate those who are practicing it because once the elections are over, they forget their promises that they made a long time back" [ID8]

ID 20 – ID 30 had the similar views. Similar question when asked to ID 49 and ID 50, they responded by saying that "they don't know". [ID49 – ID 50]

Further interview with the Gup revealed various innovative ideas and plans for future development. He commented that

"...every program is in lieu of human development like the new pilot project: READ Bhutan Library at Rongthong, Washing machines and solar water facilities. We have been focusing on these things at first because these are the immediate necessities I think. But I do accept the fact that it has been a lacuna from our part to inform the people about what democracy literacy is all about." [ID1]

It is interesting to note that the present Gup sounds radical and committed. With the figures that he provided such as 100% farm roads, 100% electricity, and 100% water connections in progress in all the villages, the Gup expressed his concern over the lack of support from the other local administration so as in order to bring about community development changes. As a chairman to the Trashigang Dzongkhag Gup, he feels that the lack of support from the other Gups has 'demotivated' him. But the demotivation has not halted him in his pursuit of his development paradigm; he says that in support from the villagers in Kanglung, he has been actively collaborating with the people to bring community development.

"...I tried to share these ideas with other Gups from other villages but not many of them seemed to be convinced and provide me with full support in achieving this target. That's why I have started to work on my own with the support from the people." [ID1]

But when asked to the respondents about Interview question 3 if they feel that they have the platform and atmosphere to express their views and opinions 51% responded with a 'YES', 30% with a 'NO' and '19%' with 'Don't know'. This is what the respondents shared,

"Whenever I attend a *zomduit* is either the Gup or the rich people from the Village who speaks a lot. I think that this is what favoritism is about. If we are given chances, we would like to speak." [ID17]

"I don't have any issues with the local government and the Gup, they have been working towards our welfare until now." [ID49 and ID 50]

"Whatever I want to say is being said by the Gup during the *zomdus* and hence, it becomes not necessary for me to speak" [ID41]

“We don’t discuss much about democracy and the change in political system during the *zomdus*. The topic is already decided and we just go to attend and listen what the others have to say” [ID17]

It means that though the people might have responded with a ‘YES’ or the average of agree and disagree from the Likert’s scale, it seems that not many of the respondents get to feel what would an open debate like to be. This is true with respect to ID41 who is satisfied with what the local government says because that is what he expected. But when asked about the briefing about the legislations and resolutions passed by the parliament these very respondents said that they did not have a taste of what it actually meant except ID8.

“I have an idea about what the parliament is doing. I also have an idea about the new laws and legislations made but there are so many of them and not even a single is being discussed during the *zomdus*” [ID8]

The next question from the interview schedule was quite interesting because it deals with the “essentially contested concept” of what democracy means. Interview question 8 generated variation in differences amongst the respondents –

“For me it is the people’s government but there should be a bridge for the people to let them get educated. Then only the people can know what right can they deserve. But it is also important to know that your rights to be mandated in a proper manner so that you do not hurt others feelings too. People feel like they have the power like a King with the concept of democracy but this is wrong and is not true. It should be important for the people to know that democracy at first means learning to respect others and then cry for your rights.” [ID1]

“I feel that even though it is a free society as you have explained, but doing whatever one would like to do is not feasible. There are laws, norms and traditions in our society that binds us together. For example if I happen to play a loud music because I like, the very notion that this will disturb others should also be taken into consideration. This is how we can live in harmony.” [ID26]

“I feel that doing whatever you like to do is not okay. There are so many talented people nowadays. Students like you are very intelligent and times have changed now. Doing whatever you like to do is not democracy I guess.” [ID46]

“I feel that since it is one’s own right, depriving people of what they can and cannot do is not what the government can impose upon us.” [ID17]

It seems that most of the respondents are of the opinion that doing whatever is not possible because of the ‘laws’ and ‘rules’ that has been prescribed. The respondents are also not free to express their opinions because of this restriction.

In order to erase this lacuna if the respondents feel this led us to ask another important question with regard to schooling that can play an important role in fostering democracy. When interview question 10 was asked, almost all the respondents provided with a positive response.

“Since education is very important, I believe that schooling can help a lot in promoting whatever we have around. This can also make one understand more and better”. [ID46]

“Yes. Schooling is an important tool in our society and the education that one cannot get from home can be acquired from schools. To have a good life, schooling is important”. [ID 49 and ID50]

“I don’t know what they teach at school about democracy, but I believe that once a student can read and write, that gives them the basis to learn about democracy”. [ID33]

“For College students like you, it will be okay to say that education can play an important role in fostering democracy. But for the rural people, since we are totally depended on agriculture and farming and a small business, schooling would not be of much importance because we have already grown old. So, we would not care much about learning again. We will always go for ready-made resources”. [ID15]

This gives us an idea that respondents view towards education and democracy revealed a mixed picture. On the one hand, many suggested that education will play an important role in fostering democracy but on the other hand, few suggested that it will not be necessary for them because of aging and the lack of interest. But when asked about the next question in line with Interview question 11 and interview question 12, a high correlation was expressed by the respondents showing the want of a local government in a village as a must –

“No, we don’t have community organizations formed by the Villagers ourselves. And the local government has also not briefed us about such availability. But until now, the Gup has been a good friend. He provides us with financial support if we are in need. A good leader like him encourages me.” [ID11]

“I have no idea about people like us can also form organizations. The local government did not inform us about such criteria’s. But the local government has been helpful.” [ID4, ID7, ID10]

“I know about this but I haven’t thought about it. May be the local government can inform us during *zomdus*”. [ID8]

“I have no idea about forming associations but I believe that local government knows more about this. Local government is very important for me if I have any financial need and private disputes. Other than this, about democracy, I think that there is not much knowledge and awareness about democracy. I think that the local government can play an important role in fostering democracy then.” [ID49, ID 50, ID 20, ID 22, ID 31, ID 25]

Thus, a mixed picture of local governance is expressed by the respondents showing the need for an active inclusion from the local government or either in terms of being totally satisfied with what one has until now. However, a considerable number of opinions shared suggested that most of the respondents lacked democracy literacy and what democracy was all about. Interview questions such as what is democracy beyond the ballot box and the rights and obligations were a mere chimera in the notion of the rural people.

In addition to this, interview questions suggested that not many people seemed to be interested in politics and democracy. The opinions shared from the respondents and the Gup can be of a justifiable reason here. The analysis of these results is presented in Chapter five under analysis of the results.

Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire has been divided into two parts – Part 1 and Part 2 with part 2 further sub-divided into Section A and Section B. Part 1 has been excluded but a proportion of males and females have been shown from Table 1. Data's from the Table 1 and Table 2 are interpreted as follows:

Table 3: Evaluation of respondents' views about democratic significance from the Likert Scale

Age	Male (M)	Female (Fm)	<i>f</i>						
			<i>Q</i>	<i>Likert Scale</i>					
This section is used to only show the proportion of male and female	total	total	<i>Q</i> (DS)	<i>Likert Scale</i>					
				1 (SD)	2 (D)	3 (DK)	4 (A)	5 (SA)	Total (Out of 49)
18 – 28	3	3	1	2	20	13	10	4	49
29 – 39	2	4	2	1	39	5	4	0	49
40 – 49	7	5	3	0	0	3	0	46	49
50 – 59	10	2	4	1	10	3	34	1	49
60 – 69	7	2	5	5	15	19	10	0	49
70 – 79	4	1	6	0	34	9	6	0	49
Total	33	17	7	0	10	5	32	2	49
			8	0	20	8	18	3	49
			9	0	20	18	10	1	49
			10	0	3	7	24	15	49
			11	0	0	49	0	0	49
			12	0	49	0	0	0	49

13	2	23	7	15	2	49
14	0	3	6	33	7	49
15	0	13	4	27	5	49
16	0	0	3	27	19	49
17	0	25	3	21	0	49
Total	11	284	162	271	105	

Table 3...

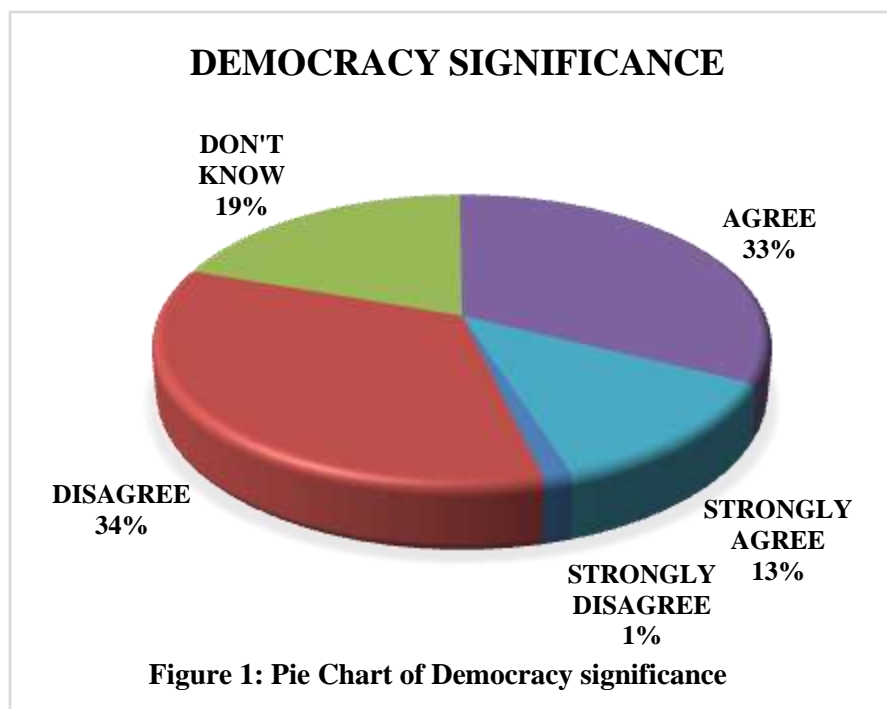
A total out of 49 samples was evaluated here because the Gup was excluded in the Likert Scale.

Q represents the Survey Questionnaire

f represents the frequency of degree in the Likert Scale shown by the respondents (1 – 5)

[Similar variables are to be considered in Table 4].

Since the researchers have observed a high response in terms of the scale 'DISAGREE' (34%) followed by the scale 'AGREE', it is noteworthy to know that the *significance of democracy in the rural people is minimum*. This means that the respondent's degree of satisfaction as exemplified in the Likert Scale about the significance of democracy with regard to the Local Government as the promoter of democracy is minimum.



There is also a high turnout for the Likert Scale 'AGREE' (33%) but the responses were solely based on parameters outside democratic significance such as the Gup helping the people in need of financial aid and other resources. This is evident from what the Gup himself has commented - "Since financial constraint is one of the dire need in rural areas, here in Kanglung, what I do is provide the people with a financial aid so that it can help them during *rimdrosand* if they wish to travel to other places around". (ID1)

While the researchers compliment such philanthropic morals, however, this has not been included by the researchers as the *Significance of Democracy*.

However, another striking feature to be taken into consideration from the data is that there is a high turnout from the respondents who claim that they 'DON'T KNOW'. This is evident from the data that has shown 162 total responses from all the respondents. This means that still significant numbers of people are lagging in what would be called as delivering a proper significance of democracy. This is an alarming situation as the focus of Local Grassroots development has much been focused on the 'Social and Economic' development skills that is again initiated by the Gup himself. As noted earlier in Chapter One under the Purpose of Research that gathering a data about these parameters [social and economic development parameters] will be a 'ground breaking' achievement for the researchers. Sadly, gathering a data for all these parameters is not the purpose of this research. Excluding these parameters at the moment, the researchers instead focuses on the political development parameters that includes village oriented development policies because as Emile Durkheim puts it;

“Although individuals perform different tasks and often have different values and interest, the order and very solidarity of society depends on their reliance on each other to perform their specified tasks” (Wangchuk, 2012),

The reliance of the village people to the local government and vice-versa seems to be the only bridge that can mold all the parameters of development noted above. As Tocqueville has noted in the 1830s about the dangers of the tyranny of the majority, a strong government and governance is deemed necessary.

Table 4: Evaluation of Democratic competence from the Likert Scale

Age range	Male (M)	Female (Fm)	<i>Likert Scale</i>						<i>f</i>
This section is used to only show the total proportion of male and female			Sec B (DC)	1 (SD)	2 (D)	3 (DK)	4 (A)	5 (SA)	Total (Out of 49)
18 – 28	3	3	18	2	33	8	6	0	49
29 – 39	2	4	19	0	0	0	40	9	49
40 – 49	7	5	20	0	7	37	5	0	49
50 – 59	10	2	21	0	6	40	3	0	49
60 – 69	7	2	22	0	45	3	1	0	49
70 – 79	4	1	23	0	0	35	14	0	49
Total	33	17	24	0	4	45	0	0	49
			25	0	0	8	41	0	49

Table 4...

26	0	0	46	3	0	49
27	0	0	46	3	0	49
28	0	7	0	16	26	49
29	41	4	1	3	0	49
30	0	4	7	27	11	49
31	0	43	3	3	0	49
32	0	42	0	7	0	49
33	0	2	44	3	0	49
34	0	1	13	35	0	49
Total	43	198	334	210	46	

All the variables or the abbreviation used in the table are similar as in the previous table. Here, DC means democratic competence. As projected by the table, a turnout for the scale “DON’T KNOW” was the overarching issue in this data projected.

As projected by the data, about 40% of the respondents claim that they don’t know when subjected to 17 other different questions with regard to democracy competence.

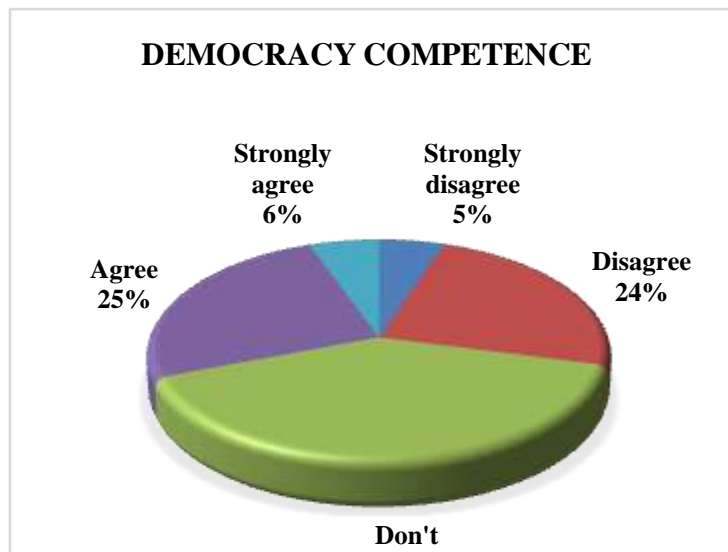


Figure 2: Pie chart showing the level of democracy competence

The Questionnaire in this section dealt with the people’s knowledge about democracy, hence the title democratic competence was used.

The previous report suggested a high turnout in terms of disagreeing as well as agreeing with the significance of democracy. But measuring the democratic competence from this diagram exemplifies that what the rural people think about democracy is not really what it is true. The previous section dealt with the level of

significance that democracy through the local government had on their lives. It was due to this reason that the respondents projected an equal proportion in the Likert Scale.

Hence, the concept of democracy is quite different in the rural areas what it might be in the urban legends or the educated population. This differences was readily observed from the respondents themselves. The very nature of the respondents who provided a succinct

responses are those respondents who have had tertiary education but settles in Kanglung taking care of their family business, some married here, and the rest with a purpose to make good life here.

Almost 40% of the respondents feel that they “DON'T KNOW” about the democratic competence. Such a high number like this was scored in the total of 7 questions out of 14 that was provided to the respondents. These questions were survey questionnaires 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27 and 33. And out of these questions, the respondents have scored equally high proportion in question 26 and 27.

Out of the total evaluation, the respondents have expressed a total of 24% “DISAGREEING” about their democratic competence, 25% “AGREEING”, 6% “STRONGLY AGREEING” and 5% “STRONGLY DISAGREEING”.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As discussed earlier, this study employed two grand questions to explore the challenges to rural democracy though the significance and competence of democracy inclusion by the local government:

1. How do the rural people signify their level of rural democratic literacy?
2. What are the competencies with regard to rural democracy?

These questions, as reported earlier have been answered through a qualitative approach with a slight quantitative approach used to signify the data obtained through a mathematical formula obtained in MS Excel. The discussion presented here is in line with the data's obtained from tables c and d. A comparison and contrast with the literature review is also conducted here to prove the general assumption or the hypothesis that we began with, that there is a need for an extremely in-depth analysis of participatory democracy in Kanglung with an aid from the local governments inclusion .

SUMMARY THE RESULTS

Firstly, letting the people establish or re-constitute in local community associations, the people in these small towns have begun to participate in local community action because even an adverse impact on the well-being of the poor when there is a large amount of inequality and the governance structure for accountability is weak (Bhuyan, 2010; Behar, 1999; Bardhan, 2002; Toole, 2006). The key lies in the existence of encompassing and embedding community solidarity groups that are able to confer higher moral standing on local officials who act in the interest of the groups. Villages with those groups are found to enjoy a higher level of government provision of public goods, regardless of their economic situations, of the

effectiveness of bureaucratic control, or of the development of local democracy (Tsai, 2007; Toole, 2006). This means that if the population are provided a space or if awareness to these uninformed people is made abundant to form their own associations or let them initiate *zomdusand* not the local government, local community actions will see an increase in the people's participation. What this can eventually mean is that the rural people will automatically produce a will to attend the *zomdusand* and the local government need not have to formulate an extra effort to make the people pay 'fine'. This is also evident from the data as provided with respect to question 11 that scored a 'full-house' of 49 participants stating that they have no idea about local community associations. And hence, they have no idea about the local government's encouragement to form local associations. Thus, as exemplified in the literature (Snyder, 2008; Sitakanta, 2006; Swanson, 2001; Kennedy, 2002; Richards, 2001; Imai & Sato, 2011) studies, an understanding about the formation of a further representative government within the local government seems appropriate and important.

If people are not made aware about such rights that are guaranteed in the Constitution of Bhutan, Article 7, section 12. Brugue and Valles (2005) notes that as consumers, citizens have the right as individuals to express their concerns but they have little or no access to the policy making processes of service provision, other than through periodical elections. But this does not mean that a complete lack of association is prevalent in Kanglung. Tshogpa as the name suggests is the representative of the people from a particular area under the Chiwog. In Kanglung gewog, there are five Chiwogs and these Chiwogs are headed by a Tshogpa, which then presents to the Gup. From a particular area, about 5 tshogpas would represent the people. What we observe here is a hierarchy of the devolution of power within the local government for the benefit of the people. But compare what democracy means – it means putting the people first. This leads to the understanding that what has been provided is not what the 'really' wants but what the government thinks would be 'needed' in the rural communities. An information and awareness about such rights and also projecting the cons of such facility can be very beneficial to the rural masses because if this is not fulfilled, a notion about 'central leadership' becomes a necessary tool in educators like us. And the conveniences of the central leadership have numerous disadvantages, one of them being corruption and malfunction. (National Statistics Bureau, 2004 & 2007). As the literature review suggests, region-wide channels for member participation are thus especially important, because without horizontal linkages across communities there is little to prevent domination by the central leadership (Appelrouth&Edles, 2011; Collingwood, 2006; Jonathan, 1992; Fleming, 2002; Flyvberg, 1997; Lizee, 2000).

The next analysis was the common phenomenon observed during the interviews: tentative at first and then answerable slowly after the proper understandings about the

questions were revealed. For instance, the survey questionnaire 5 in Part 2: Section A asked the respondents if they had any power during the *zomdu*. The answer was a straight 'don't know' from the respondents. But when explained to the respondents that power means if your opinions and views that you shared were being respected during the *zomdu*. Then there was the change in the stand with 5 people 'strongly disagreeing', 15 'disagreeing', 19 still a 'don't know' and 10 people agreeing. When classified into what was the nature of these respondents, the researchers have encoded that the agreeing ones are those who had slightly greater awareness about democracy than the other respondents. But the ones who responded with a 'don't know' were the ones who did not have a clear-cut idea about what democracy is. However, the 15 respondents who agreed and the 5 respondents who agreed were the ones who were very tentative at the beginning to supplement what is the role of local government in fostering rural democracy. Thus we see a pendulum of significance towards democracy. What we see in the rural community in Kanglung is that only after the people are forcefully made to attend a *zomdu*, and then the local government or the rural people themselves feel or comment that there is an increase in the likeliness or dislikes towards the local government. A pre-initiation of such programs is hence very necessary. This was also observed during the field research. While observing their conversations, it has been noticed that a rigorous discussion about democracy was lacking. People were convinced to either vote for the two previous parties rather than discuss about the two new political parties. This either means that the people were not informed about the new parties, or either they did not want to know about it. The data from the competence of democracy in Table D and figure 2 proves this stand. Almost 40% of the respondents scored a "Don't know" scale when asked about the various parameters relating to the competence of democracy. But it is also noteworthy to consider and accept with no doubt what the Gup and other respondents has commented – "...in fact it is true that not many people come forward and initiate such programs. It is as you stated that an initiation from the people themselves means that they are interested. Rural people here depend on the daily livelihood through farming and agriculture. This is the reason why they even don't come for a *zomdu* when they are called. Hence, what the local government does here is make people play fine of Nu.100 if they fail to attend a *zomdu*". [ID1]

With the recent transition towards democracy and modern development promoted since the 1960s, the dependence towards a traditional form of life is highly prevalent in Bhutan. That is the reason why Poverty Analysis Reports (2004 & 2007) concluded that "poverty is a rural phenomenon in Bhutan".

Another important result that was derived from the study was the definition of democracy or the understanding about democracy to the rural people. It has been observed throughout the

study that the rural people have a sense of likeliness towards the local government even though the level of democracy literacy that they had to know was very less. 21 people agreed to this statement that they are satisfied with the local government's role even though if the researchers might have added about the lack of democracy literacy initiation from the local government. But for the other 25 who disagreed to this stand, it must be noted that they first a direct statement aroused which said they were satisfied with the local government's role, but when conjoined with the fact that the local government's role here is put in line with how successful has the local government been in implementing grassroots democracy, they then responded a 'No'. A circle was marked against 'disagree' in the Likert's scale.

It is intriguing to know that people's opinion and the satisfaction towards the local government's role is still very high. One reason for this may be found from the interview data as responded by the Gup – "Since financial constraint is one of the dire need in rural areas, here in Kanglung, what I do is provide the people with a financial aid so that it can help them during *rimdrosand* if they wish to travel to other places around". (ID1)

The Gup has often come across many instances where people lack sufficient fund to carry out necessities. And the village people are of the opinion that "only the Gup can be of some help to me". Hence, this creates a 'gap' between the Gup and the rural people. This gap is noticed with the tentativeness from the respondents when inquired about their intention to comment about the local government's role in promoting democracy. In the first data provided in Table C (fig.1), there is a significant number of rural population who responded with a 'don't know'. This is in view of the 19% of the respondents. However, note the fact that this is not just in Kanglung. Articles and entries in *Kuensei* have made these assumptions true. Forget knowing each of the candidates of all five political parties, villagers said they do not even know the names of the political parties was reported a repeated problem in Bhutanese democracy (Pohrel, 2013; Dema, 2013; Namgyel, 2013).

The eradication of such lacunae is hence very important. And this is only possible if the rural people are made aware of their basic rights. As Toole, (2006) notes, through collective action, citizens can thus ensure enhanced governability which, in turn, strengthens democracy itself. Furthermore, governability can be strengthened through the *principle of subsidiary* where collective decisions are devolved to the lowest level of the organization or community.

The deprivation or the feeling of being excluded have sociologically and politically attempted to show the consequences that have led to conflicts and skirmishes leading to deviance and disproportion in the society (Appelrouth & Edles, 2011; Kohn, 1992; Harris, 1998; The Sociological Perspective, n.d; Yaffe, 2009). This may not be much of a true instance in Kanglung or in any other parts of rural Bhutan. We cannot directly deduce that such deprivation

or the feeling of being excluded might lead to conflicts and skirmishes. This is because of two main reasons. Firstly, from the data generated, the opinion of the rural people in terms of good governance is totally different than what an urban legend would deduce. For the urban populations, having a road is viewed as one's fundamental 'right' but for a rural people, it means 'satisfying' their desires and their happiness. Hence, a mixed feeling was observed when asked about their satisfaction towards the local government's role in Kanglung. The data reveals that people either tend to be tentative and avoid the conversation or comment about the queries without much criticism to the local government. Secondly, since the knowledge about democracy is totally a new phenomenon in a small nation-state like Bhutan, confusions about the concept is at a high. This is also evident from the data where 33 respondents 'disagreed' in saying that they can understand what democracy is. A further 40 respondents 'agreed' in commenting that democracy is complicated and 9 respondents 'strongly agreeing' that democracy is complicated. Such level of variance in the democracy literacy amongst the rural people in Kanglung is seen to deprive their active participation towards promoting rural democracy.

All these data's and analysis combined gives the final conclusion in accepting the assumption (or the hypothesis) that there is a need for an extremely in-depth analysis of participatory democracy in Kanglung with an aid from the local government's inclusion.

CONCLUSION

While the field report has brought an idea that the villagers in Kanglung are not well informed about democracy literacy, the role of the Gup should be to encourage more participation and practice in a healthy debate with the people. Without this, there will not be a free and fair society in a proclaimed democratic nation like Bhutan. People should be provided spacious platform where they can suggest and ask for conformity about the views and opinions that they have about development policies. Not only this, the field report has strongly urged to construct a similar medium of instruction as an important tool for communication mainly because most of the villagers do not understand *dzongkha*, which the Election officials use to communicate. Those responsible to attend the village communities for elections briefing and election literacy conducted under the auspices of the Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB) should strongly consider all these suggestions.

While all responsibilities are pointed towards the authority, it should be noted that the excerpts from the report analyzed gives us an understanding that the people are too reliant on "dependency" where spoon-feeding of information's and any development related paradigms must be taught to them like from tip of the head to the tip of the toe. In a democratic society like

Bhutan, it is the responsibility of all to know how to take responsibility about any matters. But the presence of restrictions to know-how by the self is also another major challenge.

As noted earlier that democracy is not just a mere concept of what the Greeks used as *demos* and *kratos*, but as a doctrine or a process, a state and as an outcome, it should be noted that democracy does not really mean by what the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights states: “Democracy is based on the freely-expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives.”(Inter-parliamentary Union cited in Wangchuk 2012).

The researchers instead agrees to earlier noted lines by some of the respondents and the local leader himself that – “For me it is the people’s government but there should be a bridge for the people to let them get educated. Then only the people can know what right can they deserve. But it is also important to know that your rights to be mandated in a proper manner so that you do not hurt others feelings too. People feel like they have the power like a King with the concept of democracy but this is wrong and is not true. It should be important for the people to know that democracy at first means learning to respect others and then cry for your rights.” [ID1]

“I feel that even though it is a free society as you have explained, but doing whatever one would like to do is not feasible. There are laws, norms and traditions in our society that binds us together. For example if I happen to play a loud music because I like, the very notion that this will disturb others should also be taken into consideration. This is how we can live in harmony.” [ID26]

“I feel that doing whatever you like to do is not okay. There are so many talented people nowadays. Students like you are very intelligent and times have changed now. Doing whatever you like to do is not democracy I guess.” [ID46]

“I feel that since it is one’s own right, depriving people of what they can and cannot do is not what the government can impose upon us.” [ID17]

When people are informed about wrong decisions, tyranny arises. This may be one of the very reasons why the Right to Information (RTI) is still not a Right put in practice even though the Constitution guarantees [Article 7, section 3]. Since democracy is a new phenomenon, proper channels towards nurturing it and grooming about it are necessary. But it is also necessary to know what the people feel. And this is only possible through opening-up platforms for the people. Reasons curtailing that it might ‘harm’ the culture and tradition, protecting the harmony of our nation, or protecting other people’s rights does not prove sufficient though it may seem necessary. Divestment or market decentralization, which transfers functions from the government to voluntary, private, or non-governmental institutions through

contracting out partial service provision or administration functions, is a necessary tool in promoting democracy at grass roots level.

The Farmers' Support Programme (FSP) as it is called in the black population of South Africa, The Ministry of Local Government as in Tanzania, and Rural Alleviation Programmes such as Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and Rural Public Works (RPW), are some of the important rural prospects of local government making maximum rural population participate in implementing and executing decision making process. These frameworks are some positive examples that the local government in Bhutan should adapt to. Further, with these initiatives and frameworks implemented, it is necessary that guiding documents and initiatives with relevance to decentralizing decentralizations such as Comprehensive Decentralization Policy, Rural Development Policy, Sanitation Policy Strategy Plan, Municipal Finance Initiative, Guidelines for Capacity building, Training and Education in the Local Government Sector can be of much importance in decentralizing and developing democracy in the rural areas. Similar to what Balasubramanian and Nidup (2009) have commented that a major challenge for media in Bhutan will be *"how to get the people out this whirlpool of consumerism?"* another major challenge that the researchers focuses for democracy in Bhutan is 'how to get people out of this whirlpool of ignorance and tentativeness?'

Developed nations who are responsible to provide aid for the under-developed and least developed nations have now scrutinized their policy of aid programs. On July 7-8, 2005, the G-8 leaders met on Gleneagles in Scotland (Mendel, 2009) to discuss combating poverty in Africa where a common understanding was developed such that poverty reduction in these regions should be focused on democratic, accountable, and transparent government and to sound public financial management to reduce poverty. Millennium Challenge Account, a major new US initiative in development effectiveness has adopted principle of *"providing aid to those countries with sound policies, strong leadership and capacity to absorb resources"* in allocating aid resources to the developing and underdeveloped nations. Bhutan is no exception here. A small nation still working towards sustainable development and growth and an aid receiver from the developed nations, sound policies and strong leadership must be a prerequisite in Bhutan's developmental progress. Let Gross National Happiness benefit us all.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire Items

Part 1: Biographical data

Your response is highly appreciated and every possibility has been adopted by the researcher to maintain secrecy and anonymity of your identification. For this, the first initiation begins from your name, which you can choose to keep it anonymous with symbols such as A, B, C... or X, Y, Z. But the researchers find it much feasible if you could mention your Sex (either male or female). Other information such as telephone numbers can be noted as for the future reference that the researcher will explain you in detail. But this is also not necessary. [Please note that the understated questions are solely for research purpose]

1. Name: 2. Sex: 3. Age 4. Occupation

Part 2:

Section A. Significance towards democracy

The understated questions will explore the satisfaction towards the local government's role from the respondents. The values for the scale 1 – 5 are indicated to show your level of significance or the degree of satisfaction towards local government's role in promoting democracy.

Rating scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=don't know, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. Local government aids me in learning about what is democracy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Issues and queries about democracy is being discussed during <i>zomdus</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. <i>Zomdus</i> are initiated by the Gup only | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I think that <i>zomdus</i> should often take place | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I have no power during <i>zomdus</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. <i>Zomdus</i> do not help me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. <i>Zomdus</i> are time consuming | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. I am satisfied with the process of <i>zomdus</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. <i>Zomdus</i> only benefit few selected people | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Local Government is the bridge between the rural people and the Government | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. Local Government encourages the formation of associations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. Local Government initiates the formation of Community Associations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. Local Government tells me what my right is | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. The local government is a place where I can seek refuge for queries regarding any policies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. There are enough educated people in the local | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Government office

20. There is a high correlation between local govt. and the rural people 1 2 3 4 5

21. I am satisfied with the Local Government's role 1 2 3 4 5

Section B. Democracy competence

The understated questions will explore the satisfaction towards the local government's role from the respondents. The values for the scale 1 – 5 are indicated to show your level of significance or the degree of satisfaction towards democracy. Rating scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=don't know, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

22. I can understand what democracy is 1 2 3 4 5

23. Democracy is complicated 1 2 3 4 5

24. I prefer monarchy over democracy 1 2 3 4 5

25. I feel that Bhutan should not transform into 1 2 3 4 5

Democracy

26. I feel that there is well awareness about democracy here in Kanglung 1 2 3 4 5

27. I think that democracy is beneficial for our nation 1 2 3 4 5

28. I think that democracy has not benefitted me 1 2 3 4 5

29. Democracy benefits only certain communities 1 2 3 4 5

30. Democracy has greater demerits 1 2 3 4 5

31. Democracy has greater merits 1 2 3 4 5

32. I would like to know more about democracy 1 2 3 4 5

33. I am informed about the laws and regulations that is being made in the parliament 1 2 3 4 5

34. I feel that democracy is only about voting 1 2 3 4 5

35. I get incentives during elections 1 2 3 4 5

36. I initiate amongst peers to learn about democracy 1 2 3 4 5

37. My views are respected during *zomdus* 1 2 3 4 5

38. I like democracy 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

Exploring the role of local government in promoting democracy and inhibiting the role of rural people in grassroots decision making process.

Introduction

Kuzuzangpola. Nice to meet you. We are students studying at Sherubtse College in our final semester. This is a project that is aligned with our final semesters course work and we have chosen to explore the democratic literacy here in Kanglung and how democracy has been affecting your life. This is a capstone

project that will include 50 people (including you), so you are not the only one who is interviewed. If you feel that your identity will be disclosed, we have adopted to only mention your sex and assign you through a code (ID). Our primary aim is to make this study legitimate and beneficial for all. Thank you for your participation and your time.

1. How has the first five year of democracy benefitted you?
2. Many reports have confirmed that there are a lot of confusion with regard to democracy in Bhutan. What kind of confusions did you face?
3. Do you feel that you have a free atmosphere to express your views and opinions? If yes, please describe.
4. What kind of benefits do you think would democracy bring in a society like Bhutan?
5. Do you believe that the society has got closer or departed because of democracy?
6. As per your opinion, is there a vibrant democracy in Kanglung?
7. What are the kinds of rights that you have been briefed about?
8. Democracy means absolute freedom where you can do whatever you like to do?
9. What are the ways to foster democracy if you feel the need?
10. Do you believe that media and schooling can play an important role in fostering democracy? If so, how?
11. Do you believe that the local government can play important role in encouraging people to form community organizations?
12. What can you say about local government acting as the bridge between the rural people and the Parliament?
13. What kind of roles can the local government play in fostering democracy?
14. What do you understand by democracy beyond the ballot box?
15. What do you think will happen to Bhutan 15 years from now?
16. Please list down any suggestions if you feel with regard to fostering democracy in Bhutan.

Appendix C: Map of KanglugGewog



Total area: 63. 32 sq. km **Current population:** 6332
Eligible voters: approximately 3300 (not an exact figure though because of the variation in the census record)
Number of households: 698 (but this can vary because of new houses being constructed every year)
Mobile coverage: 100% mobile connectivity
Electricity coverage: 100% connectivity
Water connectivity: 100% availability
 Also, all Chiwogs are connected with farm roads
Image generated by Karma Wangchuk, Political Science and Sociology, VI Semester, 2013
Data provided by Kanglung Gup
Map of Kanglung Gewog as maintained by the Election Commission of Bhutan ©