

Politics of Ethnic Conflict in Bhutan: A Nepalese Perspective

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BY

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Declaration

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**Politics of Ethnic Conflict in Bhutan: A Nepalese Perspective,**” has been prepared by me under the guidance of Dr Bawa Singh, Assistant Professor, Department of South and Central Asian Studies, School of Global Relations, Central University of Punjab. No part of this dissertation has formed for any award of any degree or fellowship.

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ABSTRACT

Politics of Ethnic Conflict in Bhutan: A Nepalese Perspective

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Driglam-Nam-Za, Gross National Happiness Bhutan is one of the most contemporary additions to the world's democracies. For over a century the nation had been run by kings of the Wangchuck dynasty. But, in 2001, a fundamental change was announced by the fourth king. Bhutanese society is multi-ethnic, being composed of several distinct communities whose differences rest on ethnicity, profession, social structure, beliefs, and values. The people consist of so-called indigenous groups as well as immigrants from neighbouring countries, namely Nepal, India, Myanmar (Burma) and Tibet (China). The Bhutanese people (Ngalong) have been imposing their own culture as the core value of the nation and also dominate the socioeconomic and political elite and decision-making institutions of the country. The King's family belongs to this ethnic group. Lhotshampa, an ethnic group of Nepalese origin, had been migrated to Bhutan since the 19th century. These people have been practising the Hinduism. This ethnic group has been facing discrimination from Bhutan's ruling class for decades. The ethnic crisis has been constitutionalized given the adoption of discriminatory policies such as one nation one people policy, one language policy, Citizenship Act (1985), assimilation of the culture, depriving of socio-economic opportunities for *Lhotshampa* ethnic group. The policy promoted the ruling class's language and religion Lamaistic Buddhism favouring the Ngalong Drukpa ethnic group over the ethnic group in question. As a result, the tension has risen between the native and ethnic groups led to a Bhutanese ethnic crisis. It left indelible imprints on the Bhutan-Nepal relations. Later on, these two countries engaged in diplomatic engagements to sort out the ethnic crisis. Now the current status of the *Lhotshampa* refugee has been sorted out. However, a small number of refugees are still a bone of contention between both the countries.

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Name & Signature of Student

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List of Abbreviations

Sr. No.	Descriptions	Abbreviations
1.	Association of Medical Doctors of Asia	AMDA
2.	British Broadcasting Centre	BBC
3.	Armed Police Force	APF
4.	Bhutan Communist Party	BCP
5.	Bhutan Gorkha National Liberation Front	BGNLF
6.	Bhutan National Democratic Party	BNDP
7.	Bhutan Peoples' Party	BPP
8.	Bhutanese Refugees Assisting Victims of Violence	BRAVVE
9.	Bhutanese Refugees Representatives' Repatriation Committee	BRRRC
10.	Bhutanese Refugee Women's Forum	BRWF
11.	Community-based organization	CBO
12.	Camp Management Committees	CMC
13.	Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist Leninist)	CPN UML
14.	Rights of the Child	CRC
15.	Centre for Victims of Torture	CVICT
16.	Core Working Group on Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal	CWG
17.	Government of Nepal	GON
18.	Human Rights Watch	HRW
19.	Human Rights Organization of Bhutan	HUROB
20.	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	ICCPR
21.	International Institute for Human Rights Environment and Development International Organization for Migration	INHURED
22.	Joint Ministerial Committee Talk	JMLT

23.	Jantrantrik Mukti Morcha (Goit)	JTMM-G
24.	Jantrantrik Mukti Morcha (Jwala Sing	JTMM-J
25.	Legal Permanent Residents	LPRs
26.	Lutheran World Federation-Nepal	LWF-Nepal
27.	Non-governmental Organization	NGO
28.	No Objection Certificate	NOC
29.	National Unit for the Coordination of Refugee Affairs	NUCRA
30.	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights	OHCHR
31.	Peoples Forum for Human Rights	PFHR
32.	People's Forum for Human Rights in Bhutan	PFHRB
33.	Royal Government of Bhutan	RGOB
34.	South Asia Forum for Human Rights	SAFHR
35.	Save the Children Fund- United Kingdom	SCF-UK
36.	Students Union of Bhutan	SUB
37.	Universal Declaration of Human Rights	UDHR
38.	United Nations Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees	UNHCR
39.	World Food Program	WFP
40.	Youth Organization of Bhutan	YOB

GLOSSARY

1. Religion and politics (temporal and secular)	Chhoe-sid
2. Dual system of religion and politics (temporal and secular)	Chhoe-sid-nyi
3. A ceremonial procession to receive and honour distinguished personages and personalities	Chibdrel
4. A unit under a Gewog	Chiwog
5. Award of rank and responsibility	Dakyen
6. Scarf that symbolizes the conferring of rank	Dar
7. Judge or Justice of a Royal Court of Justice	Drangpon
8. Monastic Body	Dratshang
9. The Commission for the Monastic Affairs	Dratshang Lhentshog
10. Bhutan	Druk
11. The King of Bhutan	Druk Gyalpo
12. The tradition of the Drukpa Kargyu, established by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal	Druk-lu
13. Sub-district Court	Dungkhag Court
14. Fortress, which is commonly used as an administrative centre and traditionally is the abode of monks	Dzong
15. District Administrator	Dzongdag
16. The National Language of Bhutan	Dzongkha
17. District	Dzongkhag
18. District Council	Dzongkhag Tshogdu
19. County	Gewog

20. County Committee	Gewog Tshogde
21. A monastic community	Goendey
22. Head of a Gewog	Gup
23. Agreement	Gyenja
24. Legal Counsel	Jabmi
25. The Chief Abbot of the Central Monastic Body of Bhutan	Je Khenpo
26. One of the four orders of Mahayana Buddhism	Kargyu
27. A written order	Kasho
28. Stages of development and completion in Vajrayana practice	Ked-dzog
29. Benefits granted by the King or the Government of Bhutan	Kidu
30. Temple	Lhakhang
31. Ministerial position	Lhengye
32. Council of Ministers or Cabinet	Lhengye Zhungtshog
33. Commission	Lhentshog
34. Teacher	Lopon
35. The holy relic of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, who unified Bhutan in the 17th century	Machhen
36. An elected representative of the Gewog, who is also a deputy Gup	Mangmi
37. Sacred pilgrimage site	Nye
38. Conferring a red scarf (rank and honour with the title of Dasho)	Nyi-Kyelma
39. One of the four orders of Mahayana Buddhism	Nyingma
40. Glorious Bhutan or an illustrious Bhutanese person.	Pelden Drukpa

41. Monastic bodies in dzongs other than Punakha and Thimphu	Rabdeys
42. Prayers for fulfillment of good wishes and aspirations	Tashi-mon-lam
43. Three types of sacred treasures comprising of images, scriptures, and stupas	Ten-sum
44. Municipality	Thromde
45. Municipal Committee	Thromde Tshogde
46. Municipal Administrator or Mayor	Thrompon
47. Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha	Triple Gem
48. The Supreme Constitution	TSA Thrim Chhenmo
49. The King, Country, and People	Tsawa-Sum
50. An association or committee	Tshogpa
51. Satellite town	Yenlag Thromde
52. Traditional ceremony for the acquisition of the triple attributes of grace, glory, and wealth during a formal and auspicious occasion	Zhug-drel- phunsum tshog-pai ten- drel
53. Central Monastic Body	Zhung Dratshang

1. Introduction and Review of Literature

1.1 Introduction

In the world history of human race, ethnicity or ethnic conflicts have been playing a major role in the making the destiny of various nations. It has taken many regions and nations in its grip. It has become a fundamental component of socio-economic, civilizational and political structures of multi-ethnic regions in every part of the world. In this context, South Asia has also been facing multi-ethnic conflicts due to its cultural and social diversity. However, the politicization of ethnic segments of the societies and ethnicization of politics have sharpened the conflicts between the states in Indian sub-continent like Indo-Pakistan, Indo-Sri-Lanka, Nepal-Bhutan, Pakistan-Afghanistan, and Indo-Bangladesh, etc.

Being close neighbours, Nepal and Bhutan relations have been tied down with the ethnic commonalities. However, the ethnic commonality has been turned into a bone of contention between the two countries and hence in the present scenario; both have been feeling the heat of ethnic conflicts. It has not only drastically affected bilateral relations but also their relations with India. In the present scenario, the politicization of ethnic conflict in their respective territories has been shaping their socio-political structures which lack the clear understanding of government response to these conflicts.

Bhutan, a country on the borderline of Tibetan and Indian cultures, has been the land of a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-religious communities and currently under the process of homogenization. But, it is quite far to do with the process of cultural globalization because the process *Bhutanization* is distinct from Westernization. In fact, it is just opposite the process of globalization by restricting the flow of human labour, imposing one particular ethnic culture and so on. Historically, the cultural formation of Bhutan is effected by the people who came from its neighbouring countries.

For maintaining its unique identity, Bhutan has been imposing the *Drugpa* tradition to the other ethnic community. The supremacy of *Drugpa* tradition is also known as *Drugpanization* and *Bhutanization*, considered similar to be a cultural

imperialism. Homogenization means that two or more peoples consider the culture interacted and intermingled in such ways that they become one unified culture that does not show any trace of the diversity of different cultures among the people. The same thing can be seen in present-day Bhutan, where the ethnic Nepalese community does not have the right to practice their culture and tradition

Bhutan has accepted as a new entry on the scene of world democracies. As far as its history is concerned, it had been ruled by Wangchuck dynasty till 2001, but after that era, a drastic change was declared by its fourth king Jigme Singye Wangchuck (Dorji, 2008). He made some political changes in the country and made some declarations in this respect. First of all, he made it very clear that constitution should be made in such a way that which gives the ways to establish a constitutional monarchy in which people will select their government, and all the institution would run with the help of elected government.

Bhutan's political periods can be categorized into three broad types (Dorji, 2008). First, the time from 1616 to 1907, second- the monarchy under the rule of Wangchuck dynasty till 2007, and the third period started from 2008 when Bhutan became the part of the democratic institution after passing a new constitution, and the country held the election for the government (Wolf, 2012). A conventional monarchy of Bhutan was recognized in 1907, started from a 250-year-old dual system of administration (*Chhoesi*) which was based on two types of power, the first one was the secular and the second religious headed by the *Shabdrung* (head of state).

At the end of the 19th century, the political power was lied with the governors of *Paro* and *Tongsa* districts. However, various features of the *Chhoesi*¹ still exist and continue to contribute a major role in the country's advancement, especially the *Je Khenpo*,² who also represents the Council on Religious Affairs. In spite of the growing control of the state on the religious sphere, it keeps on playing an important role not only in the spiritual and cultural life of the people but also in administrative institutions. Bhutan had been facing the challenge of integrating the growing number of people of Nepali origin (Wolf, 2012).

¹ Dual system of administration religion and politics (temporal and secular).

² The Chief Abbot of the Central Monastic Body of Bhutan.

The '*Lhotshampa ethnic issue*' is one of the major problems which Bhutan has been facing. There is an ethnic struggle among the *Lhotshampa*,³ people of Nepalese origin residing in Southern Bhutan, and the *Ngalong* (of Tibetan stock) who dictates the ruling class and state institution. The *Lhotshampa* being felt exploited and discriminated and began to think this integration as harmful to their cultural and socio-political identity and felt the need to oppose this process of immersion into a dominating and exclusive *Drukpa* culture (ibid).

1.2 Bhutan's Monarchy Rule (1907-2007)

The Wangchuk dynasty was recognized in 1907 with its great King Ugyen Wangchuk (1907-1926) declared first hereditary emperor of Bhutan on Dec 17, 1907. Ugyen Wangchuk was a famous diplomat and able of handling the impact of British on the Bhutanese strategy (Dorji, 2008). The people of Bhutan appointed him as their first king as they saw their bright future into his hands in 1907 (Wolf, 2012). The nation was united under their first king and tried their best to enhance their culture, religion, good governance. They held their strength together and governed by one central government. His eldest son King Jigme Wangchuk (1926-1952) takes over the control and becomes the king after the death of King Ugyen Wangchuk (ibid).

Although, some changes have taken place when the third king, King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk (1952-1972) reformed the administrative policy (Dorji, 2008). The king took it in his hands to establish assembly known as the *Tshogdu* in Bhutan in 1953. After the death of King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk in 1972, King Jigme Singye Wangchuk from 1972 to 2006 who continued to reform the government. Various changes were happening in 1998 when the king decided to reformulate the government through the procedure of election by *Tshogdu*. The most significant decision was taken when most of the powers of the ruler were assigned to the administrative and granted authority to the *Tshodgu* to remove the king through the vote of confidence (ibid).

On December 14, 2006, major changes had happened when Jigme Singye Wangchuck abandoned the throne and handed over the reign to his Oxford-

³ It means the Bhutanese of the Nepalese origin inhabiting southern foothills.

educated son, Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuk (Dorji, 2008). This period is known for the complete transformation of the monarchy to the democracy. For the awareness of people aware of the democratic system, different types of programs were started, and country's first general election was conducted for seats in the National Council, the upper house of a new bicameral parliament was held on Dec. 31, 2007. Elections for the National Assembly, the lower house, were held in March 2008, completing the transformation of Bhutan's politics to a parliamentary democracy. A lot of government enterprises were taken by the new ruler to empower the system in preparing for the democracy in 2008 (Varma, 2015).

1.3 Political Transformation: Dream of Democracy

The emergence of democratic spirit of government in Bhutan can be traced back to 1907. The local leaders and the Lamas with the well-wishing from the British in the form of the presence of John Claude White, choose Sir Ugyen Wangchuck as the first ancestral King of the Wangchuck family of Bhutan on the same date (Gallenkamp, 2010). The movement received its flourishing phase at the hands of Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. Jigme Dorji Wangchuck represented a Himalayan revolutionary formed the *Tshogdu (National Assembly)* in 1953. Jigme Dorji Wangchuck was cautious to safeguard the Wangchuk dynasty, by declaring that a successful vote of no-confidence will result in the succession of the next Wangchuk heir to the throne. However, it is difficult to think this stipulated condition being implemented in Bhutan (Wolf, 2012). Nevertheless, his political changes also included the formation of a Royal Advisory Council (*Lodoi Tshogde*) in 1965 and a Council of Ministers (*Lhengye Zhungtshog*) in 1968 "as a broad-based royal consultative body" to differentiate and institutionalize the executive branch of government. The change of democratizing and decentralizing, the system went on under the Fourth *Druk Gyalpo* King Jigme Singye Wangchuck especially in local governance of Bhutan since the 1980s. In all of these, there was the visible participation of the King as if he was capable of seeing the final transformation of Bhutan into a Democracy system in 2008 (Wolf, 2012). Jigme Singye Wangchuck kept on this process of leading the country in the first democratic election of 2008 (Varma, 2015). This system of democratic order can be characterized as one which is agnatic. The command of Jigme Singye Wangchuck to formulate a script of the

Constitution for the nation, the post-dated consultations by the king with the people, their hesitation and the docile force following them, all this point toward the king's part in helping to establish a democratic order in the nation. Democracy originated solely from the Emperor. It was the first election having over-all adult voting right including political parties (earlier the right of participation to political parties in some local elections was not granted).

The two newly formed political parties and recognized by election commission- first, the Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT, Bhutan Harmony Party), headed by Jigmi Y Thinley, and the People's Democratic Party (PDP), run by Sangay Ngedup, a close relative of the emperor, participated in this election (Sinpeng, 2007). Although both the parties own similar manifesto and ideological differences, which were difficult to differentiate. It becomes clear that the DPT being identified by the electorate as near to the King and won the election with 45 out of 47 seats in the National Assembly where the PDT evidently formed the smallest opposition (Varma, 2015). Summing up, this election was an important movement in the direction of the establishment of a democratic system in Bhutan (Rizal, 2015). Not only general public's participation was successfully achieved with around 80%, but also the observation of the elections by the international community was active about the execution of the elections (Wolf, 2012).

1.4 Bhutan's Ethnic Problem

To contextualize the difficulties of any social, economic and political reformation and modernization, it is important to understand Bhutan's complicated ethnic, regional topography. Bhutanese social system is multi-ethnic, comprising several different communities having a different ethnic identity, occupation, social structure, beliefs, customs, and values. (Hutt, 2005). The people belong to indigenous groups and immigrants who came from neighbouring nations, like Nepal, India, Myanmar (Burma), and Tibet (China) (Wolf, 2012). In spite of the fact that it is hard to categorize the people residing in Bhutan into specific ethnic groups, at least three major ethnic communities can be identified, the *Ngalong*, the *Lhotshampa*, and the *Sharchop*. The *Ngalong* belonged to Tibetan region and inhabited the western and northern areas of Bhutan (Pulla, 2016). The word '*Ngalong*' can be defined as 'those risen earliest or converted first (Hutt, 2005). Fundamentally, they

are the followers of the Drukpa School and use Dzongkha (their mother tongue), which is the national language of Bhutan along with English. At present times the *Ngalong* claim and assert their cultural aspects as the culture of Bhutan and control the social, economic and political institutions of the nation. The emperor's family originated from this ethnic group (Wolf, 2012).

Bhutan's *Lhotshampa* people speak Nepalese, are the followers of Hinduism and has resided in the southern region of the nation since the 19th century (Baral, 1993). They are discriminated by the ruling class of Bhutan from the very beginning. During the time of comparative openness in the Himalayan kingdom's political history, *Lhotshampas* were provided blanket citizenship in 1958, although discrimination in job and marriage continued (ibid).

In the 1980s, the illegal entry of the outsiders re-emerged as a political problem and King Jigme Singye Wangchuk's wish to retain a Bhutanese identity based on "one culture, one people" resulted in the 1985 Citizenship Act. The new act promoted the governing class's language and religion *Lamaistic* Buddhism propagating the *Ngalong Drukpa* ethnic group (Rizal, 2001). The legal order stoooped the use of Nepalese language, put a dress code of the traditional dress, limited the practice of Hinduism, and put other limitations on the people. *Lhotshampas* did not accept these restrictions, and were unable to provide the proofs of their citizenship were declared and defined as "illegal immigrants." By the early-1990s, the Citizenship Act declared that one-sixth of Bhutan's inhabitants were denaturalised; political opposition was dealt by more hostility from the government (Baral, 1993). A great deterrent campaign provided that *Lhotshampas* were forced out, many of them raped, arrested, tortured, and killed. Personal accounts by the victims indicate that thousands of *Lhotshampas* were forced to sign voluntary migration forms at gunpoint before receiving little compensation for their property and left the country. Refugees sheltered in seven camps established in South-eastern Nepal which even today housed over 107,000 *Lhotshampas* (Rizal, 2001)

Quite obviously, situations in the refugee camps are difficult. The healthcare facilities are not sufficient for refugees with dangerous ailments. Every refugee I talked to said that the education system is failing due to low salary for teachers; there is no availability of higher education. Two refugees informed that the briquettes used as cooking fuel resulted in respiratory issues. Refugees get illegal work in

Nepal's private sector (Loescher, 2005). There is a lack of building material and warm clothes for their children which make them exposed to the long winters (Banki, 2008).

Seventeen years of adversity and anarchy have given way to violence and dejection (Pattanaik, 1998). Stress among females is common; the temporary accommodations are built nearby due to which fights among neighbours are practically inevitable, and youngsters are increasingly joining violent political groups.

The title *Lhotshampa*, literally 'those living in the south or southerners,' is for the Nepalese-speaking inhabitants, who belong to Indo-Aryan or Nepalese races, resided in Bhutan's border areas, especially in the southwest and southeast (Kaufman, 2016). The *Lhotshampa* are divided into Hindus, Buddhist or animist and other religious cults. Keeping this in mind, one should mention that although the *Lhotshampa* does not comprise a homogeneous social group, they try to maintain their Nepalese culture, language (Nepali), religion and traditions (Sinha, 1991). Due to which conflicts have arisen between them and the governing Drukpa people who belong to the *Ngalong*, and who claim their culture as the core of a national identity, declaring it as the cultural inheritance of Bhutan. In this regard, the *Lhotshampa* are accepted by some groups of the ruling class as a danger to the unity, culture, and identity of Bhutan (Wolf, 2012).

1.5 Constitutionalizing the Ethnic Conflict

Cultural homogenization can be described as a state-led policy directed at cultural standardization and the convergence between the state and culture (Ruane, 2016). As an aim, it frequently enforced the culture of dominant class on the rest of the people; it is a sort of top-down process where state tries to nationalize the public. Scholte (1993) explains that the dispersal of mass cultures "Westernization or modernization a dynamic whereby the social structures of modernity (capitalism, rationalism, industrialism, bureaucratism, individualism, and so on) are spread the world over, frequently destroying pre-existing cultures and local self-determination in the process (Ferguson, & Mansbach, 2012). This point of discussion is essentially state-oriented and sees globalization as a part of a "Hegemonic Discourse" following American hegemony and imperialism (Thinley, 2001) As Callinicos (1989) understands that the globalization "not as a secular tendency, as a highly specific

political and economic project represented notably by the neo-liberal policies of the Washington Consensus and informed by the drive to maintain and even extend the position of the US as the dominant global power (Hopper, 2007).

The process of globalization has pervaded like a flood throughout the world's different cultures, terminating stable localities, moving the peoples, deriving a market-centred 'branded' homogenization of cultural experience, thus effacing the diversities between local cultures which had made up our identities (Rose, 1994). Cultural homogenization can be defined as a feature of cultural globalization, which leads to a single global and universal culture and obliteration of all other, diverse local cultures (Gilligan, 2016).

1.6 Nepalese Perspective

A primary point of Nepalese criticism of Bhutan has been the emperor, who is liked and respected by most of his public (Phuntsho, 2006). Many even deny *Jigme Singye Wangchuck* as a bodhisattva, Emperor. Nepalese authors, on the other hand, generally depict him as a narcissistic dictator whom his people dread and who punish his opponents ruthlessly.

Both Bhutanese exaltation and Nepalese criticism take the view of the king to dangerous extremes (Smruti 1999). The reality and beneficial realization can be found in between both the views. Emperor *Jigme* is definitely the most inspiring personality in Bhutan who leads a simple life and remains in proximity to his public. He is a kind Emperor, severely examined by the issues of our times, like a Western cultural intrusion, the southern Bhutanese immigration, and refugee issues, and the Indian revolts.

The governing *Ngalong* (Dzongkha-speaker westerners) in Bhutan, these authors said, control power and persistently oppress the other groups of *Lhotshampas* (Nepali-speaker southerners) and *Sharchopas* (Tsanglha-speaker easterners). There was a clash in the late 1980s between the Nepali-speaking southerners and the non-Nepali northerners, who are known as *Drukpas* (although this word can be used for all Bhutanese). Its backlash hovers over even today. However, among the *Drukpas* there never was any stern political division in the *Sharchopa* and *Ngalong* groups. The extremely diverse, varying and interconnected ethnic and linguistic makeup of northern Bhutan resists such simple division. For the

last two decades, almost half the politicians belong to the eastern districts of Bhutan. Easterners possess many important posts in government, and they comprise about half of Bhutan's population.

Bhutan's royal family belongs to *Ngalong* group that is counterweighed to the *Sharcho*. The Wangchuck dynasty is basically from the central districts of Kurtoe and *Bumthang*, which conventionally came in the region of eastern Bhutan (Smruti, 1998). Power is held by the hands of the central Bhutanese from the time of the forefathers of the present king. Power has never been exclusively in *Ngalong* hands. Similarly, the Drukpa opponent, *Rongthong Kuenley Dorji*, is usually described as a Sharcho, to fuel the imagined *Ngalong-Sharcho* struggle. *Rongthong Kuenley* is not a Sharcho or a local *Tsanglha* speaker. He arrives from *Kheng*, a cultural and linguistic group different from both *Ngalong* and *Sharcho*, (Smruti, 1998).

1.7 Review of Literature

Ramakant and R.C. Mishra (1996), Bhutan: Society and Polity, described critical problem facing by the last Shangrila (Bhutan) in modern time. The process of social change, development, modernization, national identity and integration are posing a serious challenge to the ruling elites in Bhutan. The article of B.C Upreti "The Nepali Immigrant in Bhutan: Growing Conflicts between National and Ethnic Identity" deals with the contradiction between national and ethnic identities in the context of the ethnic conflict in Bhutan. The article points out that, despite several steps taken by the Bhutanese Government, conflicts have assumed critical proportions are owing to the emerging contradiction between the interests of northern and southern settlers in Bhutan. The article "Bhutan's Problem of Ethnicity: Causes, Consequences and Prospects" by Parmanand. He examined ethnicity and ethnic conflict in Bhutan. Describing ethnic conflicts as a nation-destroying activity, he makes some critical comments on Nepali ethnic problem in Bhutan. Last is the "Political Economy of Ethnic Conflict in Bhutan" by Mathew Joseph. Joseph deals with the political economy of development and modernization in Bhutan, including its impact on the ethnic conflict between *Drugpas* and ethnic Nepalese settled in Bhutan. He gives details about various Five Year Plans and the extent of progress affecting different sections of society. He also highlights the role of India in Bhutan's progress towards modernity including raising its international status.

A.C Sinha, (2001), Himalayan kingdom Bhutan: Tradition, Transition, and Transformation are useful for the study because it is based on an analytical study of Bhutanese theocratic community turning into a nation-state. The book has been organized, that the tradition examines the environment and ethnic groups, religion and history, and the traditional pattern of administration. Transition refers to incorporation of dynastic rule, Frontier management, and immigration of Nepalese and introduction of modern education in the traditional Drugpa structure. And transformation reports on the emergent political culture, ethnic conflict and the efforts to remove the ethnic statements. Moreover, the book has also provided the information about the origin of the ethnic crisis in Bhutan. This book is a very useful source material as it provides useful information on the history of different ethnic groups in Bhutan and the origin of the crisis that discussed in this study.

A.C Sinha (1998), Bhutan Ethnic Identity and National Dilemma, described the transition process of the Bhutanese community from the theocratic to a feudal one. It examines the ecological ethnic and historical processes through which the Brugpa theocracy was established in the 17th century A.D. After explicating the aspects of conflict between the monks and the regional feudal lords, establishment of the Wangchuck rule under the British patronage, status of Bhutan within the Empire and the impact of the Indian freedom movement on Bhutan, it uncovers the Bhutanese ethnic identity, nation-building efforts and national dilemma of the emergent nation-state. The book traces the roots of the recent democratic movement in Bhutan.

D. N. S. Dhakal, and Christopher Strawn, (1994), Bhutan: A Movement in Exile, examined the situation of refugees and political crisis of Bhutan, a complete history of Bhutan, the present situation of minorities in Bhutan and the refugee camps, and the facts related to the politics of crisis.

Mathew Joseph, C. (1999), Ethnic Conflict in Bhutan, written by elaborates the politico-economic roots of ethnic conflict and their relation to the process of modernization and development. He describes the ethnic community in Bhutan in a detailed manner. In the book, he argues that the modernization and development are suitable for explaining the ethnic conflict in Bhutan. He discussed the process of political development in Sikkim during early 1970's, ended the rule of Chogyal and merger of Sikkim with Indian territory in 1975 and resurgent of Gurkha

militancy in the Darjeeling hills under (GNLF), 1980, indirectly politicized the Nepali in Bhutan. The situation leads Bhutan to become conscious about their security, and the process of Bhutanization is the expression of insecurity.

Daniel Schappi' (2005), Cultural Plurality, National Identity and Consensus in Bhutan, is a comparative study of Bhutan and Switzerland. In this article, the author refers the Lijphart's condition for establishing and maintaining a successful census model in Bhutan. Here, he also brings the problem of ethnic minorities as hurdles for maintaining consensus model in Bhutan.

Mark Turner, Sonam Chuki & Jit Tshering, (2011), Democratization by decree: the case of Bhutan, explained the Democratic conversion in Bhutan by two elements first constructional and second is an agency. They discussed conversion to democracy in Bhutan was not an elite treaty, no suggestion of governmental disunity, no financial crisis, no international compulsion and no popular militarization for democratic rights. There was also no compulsion for democratization from international countries and no from specific nearby countries of South Asia. Bhutan's democratization has primarily based on the force of an active state, and this process has been state-controlled and manipulated. Democratizing spirit largely derived from the Emperor. He understood that the practice of democracy in Bhutan is required and then directed remarkable time and effort persuading the people for this transition. A transactional leadership also provided an important part of Democratization. Their connection was not that of power alone but common needs, hopes, and values of democracy.

Thierry Mathou, (2000), The Politics of Bhutan: Change in Continuity, discusses the prescriptive structure of the Bhutanese plan of action and conservation of the traditional system for confirmation of current restrictions. The convention of consensus has been explained as the "unitary dualisms" derived from Buddhist morals, and the hereditary kingship. These broadened to both of this tradition and modernity which has provided it with a leading part in explaining a national ideology. Furthermore, he describes the cultural impact of faith on politics, and the primary purpose of the bureaucracy has been illustrated as decisive and often contradictory elements of the common attitude towards political modernization. Discovering new consultation mechanisms which are both harmonious with consensus politics and the advancement of a grass-roots participatory polity will be

helpful. Assimilating into the governing class recently mobilized and potentially politically engaged groups coming from the private sector and other non-governmental bodies will assist Bhutan to enhance the endorsement of its singular approach to development.

Fernand de Varennes, (2008), Constitutionalizing Discrimination in Bhutan: The Emasculation of Human Rights in the Land of the Dragon, discussed Bhutanese Constitution taken to progressive achievement set to impel Bhutan towards a democratic system. But from the perspective of international human rights law an intensely disturbing document. Basic rights in Constitution related to International human rights in a number of ways. But a deep analysis elaborates that on the contrary, it is designated to leave large parts of the population of Bhutan from having even the most fundamental of human rights in an effort to secure the authority of specific ethnic groups and the expulsion of others due to their ethnicity. He elaborates Bhutan changed in 2008 towards a protective ethnoreligious, the even racial idea of the state. Legislation uncomplicatedly serves to implement laws on minorities and adopt measures that continue the systematic disregard of the basic human rights of the minority groups, specifically the *Lhotshanpas*. This small realm possesses some of the most ethnically prejudiced rules and executes in the modern time.

Suresh M. Devare (2015) in India-Bhutan Bilateral Relations, explains that India initiated diplomatic connections with Bhutan in 1968 with the nomination of a resident representative of India in Thimphu. The renewed India-Bhutan relationship consort not only analyses the cutting-edge nature of our correlation however along with this lays the muse for his or her future advancement within the twenty-first century. The historically equal relations relied upon confidence and understanding has grown over the years. He further elaborates that the Indian diplomacy had helped to establish strong political and economic links with the Asian countries. The year (2013-14) saw perpetual development in cooperation all told areas of significance health, hydropower, education, transportation, culture, IT trade, communications, infrastructure, and agriculture. The India-Bhutan interrelation is believably the only bilateral involvement in South Asia that has endured long.

Mathew, Joseph C. (2008), Bhutan: 'Democracy' From Above, discussed that as opposite from Nepal, the "democracy" in Bhutan is a present from the King. It is democracy from above, and the outlining of the Constitution clearly elaborates this. The constitution was devised by "experts" and not by a chosen constituent assembly. The much-hyped transition of Bhutan from a solely kingly state to a democratic one is an act by the Bhutanese governing class to delude the international community. The presentation of the image of the "bloodless transformation" of Bhutan from a monarchic to a constitutional system is to divert the focus of the international community from the issue of the refugees and to conciliate the growing political unrest in Bhutan by its governing elite.

N. Kaul, (2008) Bearing Better Witness in Bhutan, explains that Bhutan, despite being a small and relatively poor state, has been able to avoid being a tool in the hands of the larger nations and is a lesson in the (international politics of small countries. There was no specific pressure on Bhutan from the west intending to spread democracy its neighbour, like India, which usually avoids promotion of democracy as a principle of foreign policy. Further, she said that democracy in Bhutan is in the interest of all. It is a well-intended answer to the needs for state-building, national consolidation, human development (with a conscious task to model it on GNH), and cultural particularities of various groups of the population within Bhutan. The process of democratization leads to further openness and examination, and its introduction paves the way for modernization in the country.

M. Bisht, (2012), Bhutan's Foreign Policy Determinants: An Assessment, discussed that describing Bhutan as a democratic country would be an overstatement, yet focus should be on an evolutionary feature of democratization, rather than a revolutionary one. However, efforts towards, democratization, in Bhutan have seen the step-by-step pace of reformation. Bhutan is going through an evolutionary democratic process. Given the strong sense of identity, which is an answer to external and internal forces, however, the march to democracy is caution.

Wolf, Siegfried O. (2012), Bhutan's Political Transition—Between Ethnic Conflict and Democracy, in this article, elaborates Bhutanese political reformation which can be explained as a kind of Monarchical directed democracy. It appears that the last and solitary Himalayan kingdom began a mute transformation from an

absolute to a constitutional system by incorporating democratic parliamentary features. Started by the Emperor rather than a revolution or a national catastrophe, this radical step was unique: a voluntary reassignment of power in the face of noticeable indifference towards democracy by the population. An important political step with growing concerns and hopes not only among the ruling class but surprisingly also among the common people of Bhutan.

YH Ferguson, RW Mansbach, (2012), Globalization: the return of borders to a borderless world? The study explains the concept globalization and its origin, in the light of key recent political and global trends and events. The text identifies different political, economic, technological, and cultural meanings of globalization. It describes multiple attributes and consequences of globalization including its impacts on the nation-state, especially the state sovereignty. It assesses the normative implications of globalization and o analyses the challenges to globalization posed by contemporary events such as the global financial crisis, nation-building, nationalism, and ethnicity. This book is useful for the study as it is helpful to conceptualize cultural globalization and to contextualize it.

Bo Petersson, & Katharine Tyler, (Eds.). (2008), Majority cultures and the everyday politics of ethnic difference: Whose house is this?, has stated the complicated depiction of the 'other' by scrutinizing the multiple ways in which 'majority' Western cultures govern, manage, control and represent established ethnic minorities and recent immigrants. It draws the international case studies grounded within up-to-date reviews of theories of identity, globalization and migration, power, culture and difference, place, space and locality, nationalism, post-colonialism, xenophobia and racism. In short, our focus on the formation of majority cultures sets out to highlight the ambiguities and inequalities inherent within majority discourses, practices and policies of sameness, difference, and otherness. The use of the book in the study is to discuss the ethnic minorities in general and the processes of the creation of minorities.

Fredrik Barth's, (1998), Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference, collections of the essay of this book gives the fact that the ethnic groups are categories of ascription and identification by the actor themselves, and have the characteristic of organizing interaction of the people. It explores the different processes that seem to be involved in generating and

maintaining ethnic groups. In order to observe these processes, it mainly focuses on the Constitution and the history of the separate ethnic boundaries and boundary maintenance.

Sharma, U & S, K Sharma, (1998). Documents on Sikkim and Bhutan, the important documents - text of different treaties, deeds, agreements and other papers - pertaining to Sikkim and Bhutan. The book has deeply focused on the multi-facet aspects like political treaties, covenants/agreements signed between Sikkim and Bhutan and also Bhutan and British India, their history, geography and travels and social and cultural heritage. This book provides the important documents which will help the study to analyse and elaborate the policies, acts, and agreement.

Rogers Brubaker, (2009) Ethnicity, Race, and Nationalism trace the contours of a comparative, global, cross-disciplinary, and multi-paradigmatic field that construes ethnicity, race, and nationhood as a single integrated family of forms of cultural understanding, social organization and political contestation. It then reviews a set of diverse yet related efforts to study the way ethnicity, race, and nation work in social, cultural, and political life without treating ethnic groups, races, or nations as substantial entities, or even taking such groups as units of analysis at all.

Daniel Converse, (2010), Cultural Homogenization, Ethnic Cleansing, and Genocide, described the concept cultural homogenization as a state lead policy. Author traced, that the historical background of the term cultural homogenization and examine the crucial period where it is practised. Describe the involuntary migration, mass population transfers and refugees as a result of state-led homogenization policy.

B.R Giri, (2007), Bhutan: Ethnic Policies in the Dragon Kingdom, discussed the major causes of the ongoing ethnic conflict in Bhutan. He examines the ethnic fears of the *Ngalung* establishment drove them to policies which initially attempted cultural assimilation, then racial discrimination and expulsion policies, which have finally resulted in the creation of a culturally divided Bhutanese society.

Dhurba Rizal's (2010), The Unknown Refugee Crisis: Expulsion of the Ethnic Lhotshampa from Bhutan, discusses how the ruling Drukpa elites perceived the *Lhotshampa* as a threat to their dominance and initiated policies to oppressor force out the *Lhotshampa* and others through ethnic cleansing. He argued

that Bhutan's ethnic conflict and the refugee crisis it has produced are the outcomes of ethnonationalism clothed in the slogan of 'One Nation, One People,' and the contrived mechanisation of the ruling elites.

A.G Naidu's (1986), Bhutan Looks Outwards: Its Search for Identity identifies the problem of Bhutan by considering the fact of its geographical location with cultural and ethnic similarities with India and China. The two big neighbours, China and India, are very vital in the geopolitical term to Bhutan. The book also analyses the dilemma of Bhutan and its search for an identity.

1.8 Knowledge Gap

Though a lot of literature is available on political transformation and the emergence of ethnic conflict in Bhutan, the issue in question has remained underexplored from the Nepalese perspective:

- Ethnic Conflict in Bhutan from the Nepalese Perspective.

1.9 Relevance of the Study

This study is important in the light of the transforming security scenario of Bhutan and its geostrategic significance; research on it would be a relevant contribution in the area of South Asian politics and security. The present conflict in Bhutan has disclosed the internal contradictions in the Bhutanese society. The small kingdom which tries to emerge from isolation and construct a strong nation has been involved in the dilemma of nation-building and the ethnic expectations of a part of the people who and whose ancestors are migrants. In the present context, the whole range of the conflict emerged from various interrelated elements.

The elements which are acquiring significance in the context of Bhutanese multicultural society are national identity in relation to the ethnic identity of the population and different constituents of the concept of national integration and conflict erupting out of executing this integrationist policy in a multicultural society. Bhutan had become the best instance of the emergence of democracy in a peaceful way in South Asia. The scope of this study will provide the help in understanding the changing political transformation in Bhutan and emerging ethnic problem in the 21st

century, the significance of the proposed study lies in the fact that the proposed study would dwell on the contemporary developments to fulfil the desired objectives.

1.10 Objective

- To examine the changing dynamics in Bhutanese politics
- To analyze the ethnic conflicts from Nepalese perspectives

1.11 Methodology

The methodology used in this work is qualitative in nature by using analytical and descriptive methods. The data for the research will be collected from the primary and secondary sources. The primary sources comprised of white papers, external affairs ministry annual reports of respective governments and other international organizations report etc. The secondary sources of data included such as books, journals, magazines, articles, periodicals, and working papers of various academic and research institutions working in respective regions. Web sources will also be used in this research.

2. A Socio Profile of Bhutan: An Overview

2.1 Introduction

Bhutan is a sovereign state with absolute monarchy as a political system. It is a landlocked country, sandwiched between the People's Republic of China on the northern side and India on the south-east and western side. As the country had been followed the isolation policy for a long time, Bhutan had very limited interaction with other countries. Bhutan has different patterns of civilizations, socio-economic life, religion, administration and political institutions. It is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-religion nation. In the past, the nation was a comfortable home for immigrants. People from a different region with different culture and traditions came and settled in Bhutan. They have a great impact on Bhutanese society, culture, and tradition.

The countries of the South Asian region have faced tensions and conflicts of varying nature and degrees during the past few decades, ranging from demands for equitable redistribution of economic resources, liberalization of state structure to autonomy and, even, separatists movements. The ethnic diversities in these countries has emerged as an important challenge to the social fabric and the political systems. It can also be observed that the process of change in these states has affected the social structure to the extent that social tensions and ethnic conflicts have become a major manifestation of the changes and development.

Bhutan is an ethnic mosaic nation. There are three major ethnic groups *Sharchop, Ngalong, and Lhotshampa* resides in the country having their own distinct traditions and cultural practices, language, religion and belief system. In this context, this chapter discusses the concept ethnicity and brings it into the context of Bhutan. Besides, this chapter also has an overview of the socio-political and cultural history of Bhutan.

As in the case of most of the developing societies, the state structure has been playing a critical role in South Asian societies in the process of social change and development. The state has also become a major source of ethnic conflicts and their management. As such, the ethnic conflicts taking roots in these societies are basically revolts against the state or power structure. It is, thus, clear that the ethnic factor has been an important input the social and political tension in South Asian societies. There is evidence which shows that South Asian ethnic conflicts have assumed dangerous dimensions, and are turning into separatist movements and

questioning the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state. In fact, the ethnicity has been a critical variable in the formation and reformation of state structure. This phenomenon has indeed been unique and unprecedented to South Asian societies. It can also be seen that where the concerned ethnic community tends to draw support from its contiguous ethnic community across the state boundary, ethnic conflicts acquire more strength, vitality and even inter-state dimensions. Large-scale migration across the state boundaries is an important factor accelerating ethnic cleavages. In fact, it has added to ethnic diversities within the state. While the migrant communities contribute towards accelerating the processes of socio-economic development in the countries of their statement, they also give rise to various social and political problems.

Till recently, most of the scholars of South Asian Affairs believed that Bhutan was not likely to face ethnic conflicts despite its multi-ethnic nature of the society. But all of sudden, an explosion of ethnic conflict in the country has threatened its integrity and security. Long-standing coexistence between *Drukpas* and *Lhotshmpas* has now developed strong undercurrents of ethnic tension and ethnics owing to the perceived threat by the *Drukpas* to Bhutan's culture, the national identity of discrimination and deprivation on the part of the Nepali immigrants in Bhutan, on the other.

2.2 Bhutan: Ethno-Demographic Characteristics

Bhutan is the least populated country in South Asia. It has a population of 760,000 (2015 estimation). As of 1 January 2017, the population of Bhutan was estimated to be 7, 92,581 people. (BTI 2016) Home to several ethnic communities, Bhutanese population, is broadly categorized into three ethnic groups based on regions they live. The *Ngalong* (some historians also refer as *Ngalop*), from Tibetan stock inhabiting the western region of country dominate the political and economic spheres of the country. The *Sharchop*, belonging to Indo-Burman stock and believed to be the oldest inhabitants in country inhabit the eastern region. The ethnic Nepalese belonging to Indo- Aryan stock is the newest settlers in Bhutan and predominantly live in the southern stretch. The 16 % *Naglong*, 25 % Nepali origin and 45 % *Sharchop* and other smaller group comprised the population.

The political entity of country was founded by Tibetan Refugee, *Zhabdrung Nagwang Namgyal* in seventeenth century. He instituted a theocratic form of government in the country, and it lasted for 257 years. The Wangchuck Dynasty under the powerful warlord Ugyen Wangchuck was established only in 1907 with the help of British India. After 1947, independent India replaced British India, and Bhutan enjoys a very special friendly relationship with India. Bhutan became the member of U.N.O. in 1971. Bhutan has deliberately ignored the power struggle of the world powers by not sharing diplomatic connections with any of five members of the security council of U.N.O.

The geographical features of the country have highly influenced the settlement pattern of population. The typical geography of the kingdom, ranging from of high snow-clad mountains to plains has resulted in population scarcity regions in high concentration regions. Most of the population inhabits the valleys (Upreti, 1996). The population distribution in different geographic regions is as follows:

- Well settled areas in the inner Himalayan valleys.
- The more thinly population area south of the Black Mountain ranges and associated highlands.
- The densely populated southern region which forms the plain belt called the Tarai region. Bhutan is a multi-ethnic society. Karan (1967) has divided the kingdom into three cultural zones.
 1. Northern --Tibetan
 2. South-western and mid-mountain-Nepalese;
 3. South-eastern--Indo-Mongoloid.
- Ethnic communities of the kingdom can be categorized into four groups:
 1. The first group consists of several small communities of Tibetan origin.
 2. In eastern Bhutan, there are related but somewhat distinct communities considered to be of indo-mongoloid origin.
 3. Some small groups such as *Drukpas*, *Lepchas*, *Doyas*, etc., are said to be the original inhabitants of the kingdom.
 4. The people of Nepali origin dwell in Southern Bhutan.

2.3 Bhutanese Social Structure

By tradition, social structure within the Tibetan cultural sphere such as Bhutan was a three-tier system consisting of clergy, aristocracy, and peasantry in the descending order of importance. Firstly, every family was duty bound as far as possible to send an intelligent and physically fit child to the lamasery to be trained as a *gelong* (*lama-monk*). Training to the lama novice included a series of instructions in learning scriptures, religious and secular affairs, manners and etiquettes and the various vocations ranging from bookbinding to specialized theological disputations. Lamas could perform several roles from household priests to the head of the state on the basis of their ability (Sinha, 2001). They could rise in the hierarchy to the highest position in the church-state without a social disability. So much so that it was considered a sin to touch a lama violently or kill a monk, though many lama state functionaries were physically annihilated in the long history of Bhutan. Their theology prescribed an intricate and my mystic cycle of rebirth and incarnations. Such incarnate religious functionaries commanded great respect and extraordinary privileges. They were maintained by the village community (*lake hangs*-temple) or the state (to those who had official status and lived in the *dzongs*). By virtue of their learning, skill, and achievements, some of them commanded extraordinary influence, power, and respect (Upreti, 1996). It must be added that besides *Gelugpa* celebrate monks, there were sects, which permitted monks to marry and lead of a house holding monk. Furthermore, the lama state functionaries residing in the *dzongs*⁴ were permitted to take lesser religious vows with a view to marry and raise their families. Such families with a claim to noble lineage (*chhoje-grihaswamis*) were held in reverence ever after the physical end of the lama functionaries. Such families played significant roles in the strife-torn history of Bhutan.

Secondly, there were secular regional chiefs, who could establish their sway through their marital and strategic skills; carve out their principalities; build *dzongs* and *lakhangs* and patronize monasteries. Descendants of such regional chiefs had an aura of significance in the name of their families (Bisht, 2008). Many of them drew their ancestry from significant monks, even from monks' unusual liaison. Furthermore, the families of the significant incarnations were naturally elevated to the status of nobility and aristocracy. Progeny of such families along with that of the

⁴ Which is ordinarily used as an administrative center and traditionally is the house of monks.

Chhoje would ordinarily rub shoulders with the commoners in everyday life in mundane affairs (Pattanaik, 1998). However, in the case of the descendants of unusual excellence, their family background added to their genealogy from the legendary Lama Phazo (1161-1211 AD) and the ancient “text discoverer” Padma Glingpa (1450-1521 AD) adding an aura of relevance and historical significance. Similarly, Rinzin Dorji, a significant administrative functionary in the state, traces his descent to the legendary monk of *Bumthang* valley, *Pema Lingpa* (Aris, 1979). Finance Minister Yeshey Zimba’s great-grandfather Alu Dorji, who had fought hand to hand with *Tongsa Penlop* Ugyen Wangchuk at Chamli-mithang near Thimphu some hundred years back to contest the Wangchuk’s supremacy.

Thirdly, it goes without saying that the mainstay of the Bhutanese society continues to be as *mirab* (peasantry), from which clergy and aristocracy emerged. In the pastoral economy of almost self-sufficient rural units, agriculture and animal husbandry were inseparable occupations of the peasants (Pattanaik, 1998). Cultivation continues to be strenuous exercise, carried on by ploughing and ranking, terracing intricately and arranging for irrigation channels on undulating terrain. It is the village *zopon* (head carpenter) who helps to build farmhouses or other buildings out of rattle, stones, clay, slate, and shingles. Increasingly the Bhutanese architect is marked by the absence of iron nails (Aris & Hutt, 1994). Normally store-rooms and cattle-sheds are constructed on the ground floor and living rooms on the upper floor. The peasant’s life is marked by joint and extended family and village corporate life. A village normally has a common *Lhakhang* (temple), grazing ground and water stream for irrigation and turning prayer wheels.

2.4 Ethnic Groups in Bhutan

It appears that the pre-*Lamaist* ethnic groups of Bhutan lost much of their identity with their conversion to the Brugpa sect. The religious political and social assimilation were achieved to the extent that now the Bhutanese social structure presents almost the same features from length to the breath at its expense (Sinha, 2001). Only small, isolated and less assimilated tribal stocks are identified as different from the mainstream of the Bhutanese society. However, the primordial attachments of various Bhutanese social groups suggest that at one time, they might have possessed their distinct individuality (Pattanaik, 1998). In this context,

ethnologically the Bhutanese society may be identified at various levels: the pre-*Brugpa* Mons, predominantly found in eastern Bhutan, *Ngalong* (the earliest risen' and converted to Buddhism and thus civilized) of western Bhutan and Koch, Mech and descendants of the other communities from *Duars* in the high hills. Another and perhaps the most easily identified ethnic group are the *Lhotshampas*.

Leo (1977) had identified four broad but not necessarily mutually exclusive ethnic categories in Bhutan: "the first is composed of several groups of people of Tibetan (*Bhotia*) origin, some of whom may have migrated to Bhutan as early as the ninth century and others as recently as 1959-1960. Second, there are a number of distinct but related communities in eastern Bhutan which, according to some observers, are related to similar Indo-Mongoloid groups in the Assam Himalayas and which presumably migrated to Bhutan from that area in the past millennium. A third element in Bhutan's population consists of a number of small tribal groups such as the Drokpas, Lepchas and Doyas, which are sometimes described as the aboriginal indigenous inhabitants of the country, to which can be added the families of ex-slaves, often from similar tribal communities in the areas of India adjacent to Bhutan. (Sinha, 1991). The latter group tends to be concentrated around the *Dzongs* where they once constituted the labour force for the government offices. Finally, there are the Nepali Bhutanese, most of whom have been a resident of Bhutan for only three or four generations, representing a new, still somewhat alien element in the population structure (Rose, 1977).

Among the pre-Buddhist settlers of Bhutan, Mon, Khen, Koch, Brokpas, Doyas, Birmis, etc. are enumerated. Besides them, Wang aristocracy of West Bhutan as well got it assimilated among the *Brugpas*. Western Bhutan besides its northern alpine extensive tracts and southern foothills (*Duars*) is identified with Ha, Paro, Thimpu, *Punakha*, *Wangdi Phondrang* and shar valleys (Rizal, 2004). The inhabitants of these valleys have been able to evolve Dzongkha as the standard tongue, which has been accepted as the national language of the country now. These Dzongkha speakers from the above six valleys are known as the "*Ngalong*" the earliest risen (Shaw, 1992). This identification has a historical background stretched to the pre-*Brugpa* phase of the Bhutanese history (Sinha, 1995). Since then the region has played a significant role in the church-state of Bhutan. With the establishment of *Dharamraj*s theocracy initially in western Bhutan and

subsequently to the eastern and southern regions, his followers came to be known as the *Brugpas* (*Drugpa*). Needless to add that *Punakha*, Thimpu, and *Paro* had been centres of important religious and political interactions not only in the region of the *Dharamrajas* but even before and after the establishment of the dynastic rule.

Though conceptually there is a necessity to separate the term “Bhutanese” from that of the Bhotia, in case one examines the social, organizational aspects, it is found that kingship, genealogy, endogamy, and lineages are rarely maintained among them. It is a fact that there has been no systematic study of the clan organization of the Bhutanese (Kharat, 2003). However, it has been noted that with the conversion of the ethnic stocks to *Lamaism*, the clan organization got lost, as if their genealogy is replaced with their identification with the generation of incarnations and pantheon. In this context, some empirical studies have been made on *Bhotias* of Sikkim, which is an adjoining area of Bhutan. It has been found that Bhotias are not greatly interested in their genealogy and that their genealogical memory is generally poor (Muni, 1991). In addition, there is a strong tendency towards geographical mobility. It is quite rare for married members of three generations to stay in the same community (village). The traceable genealogy among the *Bhotias* was extremely shallow (Nakane, 1966).

2.4.1 Brugpa and Dukpas

Brugpa is one of the sects among the unreformed *Nyingmapa*⁵ identified with the Red Gear (red hat) against the yellow attired Gelugpas⁶ (*dge-lugs-pa*-yellow hats) school of Mahayana Buddhism prevalent in Tibet (Sinha, 2001). Tsampa Jarey Yeshey Dorji (1161-1211) an outstanding monk founded a monastery at Ralung in 1189. While the monastery was being consecrated, “the thunder dragon (*brug* or *drug*) said to have resounded through the sky on occasion.” The monastery, the sect, its followers and in the course of time the land, where its monastery could be established, came to be known as the *Druk* or *Brug*, thus *Brug* or *Drugpas*⁸ (Sinha, 1991) The Brugpa sect follows the ancient teaching of Guru Padma Sambhava (Guru Rimpoche) besides ascetic traditions from a variety of sources. The famous Ralung monastery passed on to the control of the prince-abbots, who turned the sect into an important and powerful school of *Lamaism* in Tibet, which spread up to

⁵ The unreformed Buddhism or Tibet or ‘red hats’.

⁶ Reformed Buddhism or yellow hats.

western Bhutan. It could acquire extensive land holdings, followers, and political patronage, which led to serious factional conflicts.

Shabdrung (*Dharamraja*) Ngawang Namgyal⁷ (1594-1651) was consecrated as the 18th prince-abbot of the Brugpa in 1606. He has driven away from his ancestral monastic seat at Ralung at the age of 23 years because of political strife. Once he was in *IHO-Mon* (Present Bhutan) he did not look back to Tibet (Sinha, 2001). He consolidated his Brugpa monastic estate in the new land into a unified, organized and dynamic order to counteract all types of Tibetan incursions. Various friendly monastic estates and establishments were taken over by the Brugpa fold, and hostile ones were simply vanquished. With establishments of a series of defensive forts at strategic locations and raising an effective fighting force, the *Dharamraja* unified *IHO-Mon* into the Brugpa people and nation. His followers, the country, his religion-all came to be known as the Brugpa, a real tribute to his charismatic personality and magnetism of the religious order. Thus, today the dominant ethnic group is the Brugpa, who follow Brugpa sect of Lamaism in the dragon kingdom (*druk-Yul*) of the Wangchuk rulers.

With the signing of the Sinchula treaty in 1865, the Duar⁸ War between India and Bhutan came to an end. A side effect of this development was the large-scale immigration of the Nepalese, first to Darjeeling, then to Sikkim and then to the *Duars* (Rose, 1977). The Nepalese, expansion to Bhutanese southern foothills could not wait long since these were the regions inhabited by a few Mech tribesmen⁹ (Bodos) with a distant Bhutanese control. This was the time, when Kazi Ugyen Dorji emerged as a significant person in Bhutanese power structure, indo-Bhutanese relationship and in the authority system of western and southern-western Bhutan. Ugyen's father, the *Kazi* of jungta was an influential figure in western Bhutan and the Bhutanese court in the 1860s. It appears that his services were frequently commissioned by the Bhutanese rulers to settle matters of importance relating to the south-western borders. As a mark of recognition of his services, he was known as the *Kazi* (the one who settled the disputes). Sarat Chandra Das had noted a

⁷ For example like Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, The first Dharmaraja, who unified the entire Bhutan into the single Drugpa as a national religion, he had fled from Tibet due to political strife and take exile in Bhutan.

⁸ Door- narrow valleys on southern Bhutanese foothills.

⁹ The Bodos living in West Bengal, Nepal are called Mech.

similar practice on the Indo-Sikkimese frontiers, and such officials were designated as the *Kazi* on the Muslim fashion of Purnea and Dinajpur courts in adjoining Indian plains (Das, 1969).

The Bhutan Government deputed Jungta Kazi to the Eden Mission in 1864 (Sinha, 2001). His young son, Ugyen accompanied him on this mission. After the cessation of the hostility, Ugyen Kazi settled down at the emerging trading mart of Kalimpong with his estates in the British territory of Kalimpong as well as western Bhutan. The British made all possible efforts to cultivate Kazi Ugyen Dorji, as he was related to the then Bhutanese strongmen, the *Tongsa Penlop* (Ugyen Wangchug), through his grandfather (Aris, 1994). In 1898, he was appointed *Ha Thrungpa*, with rights over the whole of Southern Bhutan and vested in him was the authority to settle immigrant Nepalese in his territory. He was also made the Bhutanese agent in Kalimpong, besides being the official Bhotia interpreter of the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling on the customary practices among the settlers within the district. Sir Charles A. Bell, (1918) had cultivated the agent of Bhutanese government and used him to carry the Viceroy's letters to the Dalai Lama in 1903 during Lhasa expedition. Kazi Ugyen Dorji had provided valuable services to the British during the young husband expedition to Lhasa, 1903-1904. As a recognition of his services rendered to the British, the title of Raja was conferred upon him (Sinha, 1991). By 1910, he had already been made the title of Raja was conferred upon him. By 1910, he had already been made the chief of King's household (*Deb Zimpom*), the chief chamberlain (*Gongzim*) and Governor (*Jongpon*) of western Bhutan. The *Druk-Gyalpo*, Sir Ugyen Wangchuk, the *ex-Tongsa-penlop*, left the entire administration of western Bhutan and Indo-Bhutanese relations in the able hands of his trusted ally, Kazi Ugyen Dorji.

2.5 Bhutanese Political Structure

The political entity of country was founded by Tibetan Refugee, Zhabdrung Nagwang Namgyal in seventeenth century. He instituted a theocratic form of government in the country, and it lasted for 257 years. The Wangchuck Dynasty under the powerful warlord Ugyen Wangchuck was established only in 1907 with the help of British India. After 1947, independent India replaced British India, and Bhutan enjoys a very special friendly relationship with India. Bhutan became the member of

U.N.O.in 1971. Bhutan has deliberately avoided the power play of the world powers by not having diplomatic relations with any of five permanent members of the security council of U.N.O (Gallenkamp 2010).

Bhutan embraced democracy with the promulgation of its written constitution on 18 July 2008. The first ever General election was held in 2008 with two registered parties, People's Democratic Party (PDP), headed by Mr Sangay Nidup, maternal uncle of King, and the second, Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT) Mr Jigme Y Thinley, a matrimonial relative of King. The DPT won the election and formed the government under Mr Jigme Y Thinley. Since then Bhutan has conducted two successful elections based on multi-party politics (Ibid).

In 2013 general election, four parties contested the primary election. The three new parties are - Bhutan Kuen-Nyam Party (BKP) headed by Sonam Tobgay, Druk Chirwang Tshogpa (DCT) headed by Lily Wangchuk, and Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa (DNT) headed by Dorji Choden. During the election, BKP failed to field the candidates from Gasa District and thus was disqualified to participate in the primary election. The election in Bhutan is conducted in 2 rounds, viz. primary and the general round. In the primary round, all registered political parties are allowed to participate in the election, but only two parties that secure the highest and the second highest votes in the primary round qualifies to contest in the General Round. In 2013 primary election, the DPT, won 33 constituencies, PDP 12 Constituencies, and DNT 2 Constituencies. However, in the general round between DPT and PDP, the latter won 32 seats and the former 15 seats. The PDP formed the government under Tshering Tobgay (Varma, 2015).

The registered political parties are not allowed to either enlist the new members or espouse their party aims and objectives except during the stipulated election campaign. The political parties inside Bhutan are only active during the election period. The candidates are funded by the state during elections. The fourth King of Bhutan in 1992 declared to National Assembly that he will abdicate if he did not find a lasting solution to the "Southern problem" /refugee problem." He did abdicate in 2006, and the lasting solution to refugee problem is still not found. Lyonpo Jigme Y.Thinley, the first prime minister of 'democratic' Bhutan, stated that refugee problems will be resolved by 2015 (ibid).

The current Prime Minister of Bhutan, Tshering Tobgay didn't give the timeline for the resolution like his predecessor. He, however, met Nepali Deputy Prime Minister, Prakash Man Singh at New York on September 26, 2015, and discussed to end the problems of Bhutanese refugees in a friendly manner as it was in the interests of both the countries (Varma, 2015).

2.6 Bhutanese Economic Structure

The economic structure of Bhutan is mostly dependent on agriculture and other traditional means. Bhutan's economy is greatly reliant on some special sectors, like government services, hydroelectricity¹⁰, and investments. The Bhutanese comers could be divided into two: the farmers and the serfs, who were further divided into a number of local variations. Furthermore, various districts (*dzongkhags*) had different land tenure practices. For example, Tashigang *dzongkhag* paid taxes to the King. There were regions, which paid taxes to the queen mother, Queen, king's sisters, uncles, crown prince and other relatives (Sinha, 2001). There were aristocratic families with free land grants, dependent peasants and hundreds of serfs. The important monasteries had their estates for their maintenance. Then there were tracts of land, which paid taxes directly to the state treasury (Upreti, 1996). It has been noted that southern Bhutan was in charge of the Dorji family, who depended on the Nepalese people for revenue collection. Furthermore, incarnate Lames with estates were a special charge of the king. For example, Tulku Gangtey, (1906-1949) a constant companion of the second Druk gyalpo, had died in 1931 (Mathou, 1999). His estate in Bhumthang valley lapsed to the royal household because of delayed discovery of an incarnation.

All the households in a village were subjected to an obligatory labour tax (*chunidom or woola*) to the state, which could be allotted for a number of assignments decided by the local level functionaries (Sinha, 2001). There could be three types of households in a Dukpa village: *trelpa* (liable to pay taxes), *Zurpa* (splinter households not yet liable to pay taxes) and *suma* (the households paying taxes to the members of the nobility, royal family).there were two types of grain taxes: *wangyon* (levy for blessings) and *thojab* (grain tax on land output).there were

¹⁰ Hydro Power: A New Nepali Model, Nepali Times, (30 August – 5 September, 2000). Available at: http://himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk/collections/journals/nepalitimes/pdf/Nepali_Times_007.pdf.

various other taxes to be paid such as textile tax, butter tax, etc. a typical tax-player would pay the following items annually to the state functionaries: 462 kg of paddy, 28 kg butter, 120 pairs of wooden shingles, besides textiles, baskets, paddy straw, mustered, dry chilies, bark for the paper and ash for the field (Zurick, 2006). They had to till the land for monasteries and local officials in varying man-days between summer and winter without payment. On an average, a Bhutanese farmer spent half of his time working for the state without an express benefit to himself.

These herdsmen had to provide butter, calf, wool, hide, meat and yak tails in taxes. Though there were regional variations, in effect, there were two types of slaves: *drabas*- who worked for masters in lieu of land granted to them for their upkeep and *Zaba*-who worked only for the sake of food and cloth (Sinha, 1994). *Suma* was privileged serfs, who paid taxes in kind to the aristocracy. *Key, Jou, Joam, Pongyer, Zaden*, were a select group of indentured slaves and servants. It was an extremely violent, unequal and exploitative system in which commoners had a hard time. No wonder, many of them turned to monasteries for a life of clergy (Mathur, 1996). Legendary Lama Phazo very aptly summarized the traditional Bhutanese social scene.

As the conventional theocratic pattern of administration was not abrogated at large in spite of the establishment of the monarchy, there existed a number of law and religious officials at the district level, who consumed the bulk of the revenue paid in kind. For example, there existed till the 1960s in every *dzong* the post of fodder master, a chief of stable, a cattle master, a chief attendant, a guest master, a fort governor and so on (Karan, 1963). Needless to add that all these significant functionaries had an impressive array of staff under them to help them perform their official duties. Evidently, any tax reform intended to alleviate the suffering of the peasantry equally demanded an administrative reform.

Interestingly, the *Lhotshampas* were subjected to a classical tenancy pattern. As the 'hot' humid and malarial region was assigned to the Dorji family since 1890s to develop through the migrant Nepalese labour, these newly settled tenants did not have to pay the taxes in kind. However, they were also not free from labour tax (Coelho, 1971). The Dorjis collected the taxes from the heads of the families through their contractual officials in cash on the basis of cultivated land, number of cattle,

fruit trees, and other consideration. Even Dorjis did not regularly transmit the collected taxes directly to the king (Hasrat, 1980). However, they were supposed to provide cash requirement of the ruler, and his establishment as and when desired. The entire region was unsettled and unexplored 'frontier' in which newly immigrant tenants led the life of chattels.

The third Wangchuk ruler Jigme Dorji (1952-1972) is rightly called the father of modern Bhutan. He had initiated the tax reforms in the 1960s from Bhumthang valley through a small but dedicated band of officials directly working under him (Dorji, 2008). The variety of taxes paid by individuals tenants were calculated and rationalized. The taxes in kind were abolished, and when some of them were to be continued on a temporary basis, they were converted into cash. The cash payment of tax was introduced as a rule and rates were lowered considerably (Sinha, 2001). Slavery was abolished, and serfs were freed and settled elsewhere with state support so that they did not suffer from social disability in future. The administration was as well rationalized, and a number of redundant offices were abolished. After watching the pace of tax reform in Bhumthang valley, the king got it extended to Tongsa dzongkhag, then to tashigang and ultimately, to the entire country. The country was divided into 15 dzongkhags (districts) for revenue and development administration, which have turned into 20 districts and 196 developments blocks (*geogs*) at present (Sinha, 2001). Every taxpayer was provided with a "tax circular" (*cheta kasho*) on 2'5 by 2'5 bark paper containing details of his tax liabilities in cash, kind and labour.

2.7 Bhutanese Cultural Practices

Culture implies the linkages between the past and present in various forms of human life like dance, painting, printing, arts, crafts, and architecture (Aris, 1979). Bhutan is very rich in the sphere of art, architecture, paintings, etc. Among the chief religious works of Bhutanese literature, the Kangyur and the Tengyur are included (Tsongkhapa, 2005). These are the two great Lamaic encyclopaedias. Moreover, a vast mass of historical and biographical literature grew up in Bhutan during 17th and 18th century A.D. these includes Lhoyichhoejung, Namthar Sindhu Gyab, Namthar of Phajo Drugom Shigpo, a book of Dung Chhoeje, Gyalrab Selvimelong.

In Bhutan, the traditional costume used to put on by the men and Kira for the women. The eastern and the central regions of Bhutan have a strong tradition of weaving which have no equal in the Himalayan world (Aris, 1979). Cotton and silk used in the east while in central Bhutan wool were prevalent. Bhutanese fabrics are known for the intricate pattern woven into the cloth with either supplementary-wrap or supplementary weft techniques and sometimes both. In Bhutan even before the king's edict, all *Drukpas* wore traditional dress and majority of the population weave them in the home.

Both India and Tibet have influenced Bhutan's art and craft. Almost all the Bhutanese art is symbolic, non-secular, and rare blending of Tibetan, Indian, and traditional Chinese styles in characteristics in Bhutanese setting (Ghosh, 2013). It mostly derives lore and Tantric mythology. It is highly decorative and ornamental, and it's particularly located in its monastic centres: *Dzongs*, *Lhakhang*, *Monasteries*, *Temples*, and *Chortens*. Religious theme dominates all Bhutanese forms of art (Rizal, 2001).

Bhutan is very rich in the sphere of architecture (Maxym, 2010). Chortens, Mani walls, temples, monasteries, fortresses, palaces and village house constitute a landscape, much unique to Bhutan. Bhutanese classical dance is reflected by their religious mask-pageants and ritual dances¹¹, (Wangchhuk, 2008). Traditionally, most of these were initiated first by the Terton Padma Lingpa in the 15th century and thereafter by Shabdrung Rimpoche in the mid-17th century as accompaniment to prayers of the protector's God Mahakala in the Punakha Dzong, which is famous as Puna-Domchhoe and later Kunga Gyaltsen, reincarnation of Jampel Dorji started a pattern for prayers to the protectors Goddess Shri Devi in the Thimpu Dzong (Rizal, 2001).

¹¹ Amongst the celebrated religious dances are the ShangChham , DegyedChham , the SinjeChham , the Le-Geon Chham , the LhamoTsokhorChham , the SherdengBer-Kor , the GeonpoMang-Cham , the Dur-dagChham , TumNgamChham , GuruTshengyed .

The most popular ritual and festival dance are *Chhoe-Je*¹², the *Dam-Ngen*¹³ *Chham*, the *Ragsha Chham*¹⁴, *Damitse Nga Chham*¹⁵, the *Sau Shachi*¹⁶, *Pa cham*¹⁷, *Achara Chham*¹⁸. Almost all the Bhutanese dances are symbolic and represent religious and folk traditions of the countries past (Pattanaik, 1998). The distinguishing food habit comprises rice, dried beef or pork and chillies in west and east and typical Indian (north-east) and Nepali dishes in southern Bhutan the official dress is *Gho* and *Kira* worn by male and female respectively. Women are fond of various kinds of necklaces. People from the west, east and central Bhutan mostly wear this type dress pattern. In southern Bhutan, which is predominated by Lhotshampas, they wear typical Nepalese costumes or shirt and trousers and sari and blouses and Salwars and Kameezes akin to Indian dress (Smith, 1990).

Bhutan's society does not isolate or disenfranchise females. Dowry has not been in Bhutanese marriages. Property is equally divided between sons and daughters. Girls have almost equal educational opportunities, and, while accorded a lower status than boys, they are loved because they are the ones who take care of parents in old age. Men and women mostly work side by side in the farms. Women possess most of the nursing and teaching professions (Saul, 2000).

Marriages may be arranged by the parents or by the individuals themselves (Aris, 1994). To get married, a certificate is required from the Court of Law, but most marriages are performed by a religious leader (Evans, 2010). The Bhutanese are essentially monogamous. Polyandry (multiple husbands) has recently been abolished; the practice of polygamy is legal provided the first wife grants her consent.

2.7.1 Bhutanese Religious Practices

Religion always remains in the important place of Bhutan's spiritual and material life. Bhutan is well-known as the outpost of the Tantric Buddhism of the kind Tibet practice (Aris, 1994). Bhutan is the land of demons, serpent divinities, flesh-

¹² Semi religious ritual dance

¹³ Guitar dance

¹⁴ Yamraj dance

¹⁵ Drum dance

¹⁶ Dance if deer and hunting dogs

¹⁷ Hero dance

¹⁸ Yogi dance

eating Raksha, evil spirit and so forth until the taming of the land by the great figures of Buddhism, such as Shandrung Ngawang Namgyal, Drukpa Kunley, and above them Guru Rimpoche, Padmasambhava, the Lotus-born Guru, he is the main Buddhist tamer (Aris, 1979). His main shrines at *Tasang* in the *Paro* valley and Kurje Lhakhang in the central valley of Bhumthang virtually define the scope of Bhutan as a land of the Buddhist religion (Smith, 1990). The fact for the act of Guru's taming of Bhutan as a land of Buddhist religion is the conversion of the king of *Bhumthang*, Sindhu Raja was enacted at Kurjei. Padmasambhava's figure is frequently the central one in temples and shrines when the people of the large village of Ura in central Bhutan recently reconstructed their temple; it was a huge statue of the Guru that formed its Centre-piece (Pelzang, 2010). The major festival of the monastery fort- *dzongs*- is called tsechu¹⁹, the name of the Kurje temple in *Bumthang*, central Bhutan which is central to the cult of guru, means "body traces," for it believed that Padmasambhava left marks of his body to the rock itself (Rizal, 2001).

Mahayana or Vajrayana Buddhism is the state religion of Bhutan. It is based on the doctrine of *Bodhisattava* (Smith, 1990). It is also known as Tantric Buddhism, Esoteric Buddhism, and the Diamond way or the Thunderbolt Way. It has brought in Bhutan by the first religious king *Shabdung Ngawang Namgyal* around 16th century from Tibet. In Tibet, the Vajrayana Buddhism was established when the Tantric Mahasiddha *Padmasambhava* visited Tibet from Afghanistan at the request of Tibetan Dharma King Trisong Detsen somewhere around 767 AD (Tsongkhapa, 2005). It had led two important transmissions, first transmission anchor the lineage of Nyingmapa School. The second transmission occurred in 11th and 12 century, which lead the lineage of another school of Tibetan Buddhism, they are Sakya, Kadam, Kagyu, Jonang, and Gelug²⁰.

The Sanskrit term 'Vajra' means the 'thunderbolt,' the legendary weapon and divine attribute which were made from indestructible substances and which could, therefore, pierce and penetrate any obstacles (Rose, 1969). It is the weapon choice of the Indra the king of Devas in Hinduism. As in its secondary meaning, the 'Vajra'

¹⁹ literally "the tenth day of the month", which is the day on which the guru was born and on which he subsequently carried out his most famous deeds in his eight manifestation

²⁰ The school in which his holiness Dalai Lama belongs.

refers to those indestructible substances is compared to the 'adamantine' or 'diamond.' So, Vajra is rendered in English literature as the 'The Adamantine Vehicle' or 'The Diamond Vehicle.' Hence, in standard Tibetan language, it called 'Dorjee'²¹. The goal of Vajrayana tradition is to become Bodhisattva²² (Smith, 1990). The *Ngalong* people, those who are descendent of Tibetan immigrants, comprise the majority population of the central and western Bhutan mostly follows the Drukpa or Kagyugpa lineage of Vajrayana Buddhism. The *Sharchops* decedents of the country, those who consider as the original inhabitants of Bhutan, mostly concentrated in the eastern part of the country. They follow the Nyingmapa sect of Vajrayana Buddhism (Das, 1974).

Apart from Buddhism, there is evidence for the presence of other religion in the country. In southern Bhutan, the ethnic Nepalese *Lhotshampa* who migrated to Bhutan in some hundred years ago mostly follows Hinduism (Pattanaik, 1998). Most of the Bhutanese people used to practice Bon before the advent of Buddhism. It is an animist and Shamanistic belief system, revolve around the worship of nature is still exist in Bhutan. The Royal Government of Bhutan supports both Nyingma and Kagyu Buddhist monasteries and practice the combination of Nyingma and Kagyu, and most of the people believe in the concept of "Kanyin-Zungdrel," meaning "Kagyupa and Ningmapa" as one.

2.7.2 Language

About twenty- three local languages are being spoken in Bhutan, and three major language groups are dominant. Dzongkha spoke by the *Naglung*, Tsangla, the language of the *Sharchop*, and Nepali spoke by the *Lhotsampas*. Dzongkha is the national language, Tsangla is often the lingua franca in the Sharchop, dominated East, and Nepali playing the same role in the South (Rizal, 2015). The Lhotsampas had lived in Bhutan, up to five generations. As a result, most members of the Lhotsampa refugee community are multilingual (Newar, 2010). At home, Nepali (a language related to Sanskrit) is spoken, but comfortable communicating in English,

²¹ A sceptre like ritual objects which has a sphere at its centre and a variable number of spokes like 3, 5, and 9 at each end and enfolding either end of the rod.

²² Attainment of a state in which one will subsequently became Buddha after some further reincarnation.

although they note that American English, especially when spoken quickly, can be very challenging for them to understand (Pattanaik, 1998).

In the refugee camp, many *Lhotsampas* most Lhotsampas also use the Bhutanese language, Dzongkha. Although not all Lhotsampas can attend school in Bhutan, those who joined were introduced to English at an early age, since it is the national language of education in Bhutan (Giri, 2004). Even younger Lhotsampas, who mostly brought up in the refugee camps in Nepal, have been regularly introduced to English. Thus, many Lhotsampa refugees feel relatively acquainted with Indian culture and language via radio and geographic intimacy to India. Social circles commonly comprised Indian friends who didn't understand the Nepali language, and so communication would happen in Hindi.

2.8 History of Nepalese Settlement

Rather than going into the detail of the recent scenario, firstly the Nepalese settlement in the foothills of Bhutan should be taken into consideration as they were called as illegal immigrants in Bhutan (Pattanaik, 1998). One must come to the logical conclusion that they were an integral part of the Bhutanese society and their identity is similarly matched with the Bhutanese national identity (Sinha, 1991).

The arrival of Nepalese to Bhutan was started in the 19th century more specifically after the Treaty of Sinchula in 1864.²³ Nepalese migration can be seen as migration from Sikkim, Darjeeling, Duars of Assam to Bhutan. First of all, Nepalese started work as plantation workers and engaged in various developmental projects started by British administration (Upreti, 1996). In the very early stage, there was a shortage of labour in Bhutan, and the efforts have been made by the then prime minister Kazi Ugyen Dorji (1907-1926) to recruit Nepalese in Bhutan. The growth of their economic and progress was taken up by a worker of Nepalese in Darjeeling, and for the development of southern Bhutan, Nepalese were employed so their annual rent to central Bhutan can be paid (Dhakal, 1994). All these collective

²³ Treaty between His Excellency the Right Honourable Sir John Lawrence, G.C.B., K.S.I., Viceroy and Governor-General of Her Britannic Majesty's possessions in the East Indies, and the one part by Lieutenant Colonel Herbart Bruce, CB, by virtue of full powers to that effect vested in him by the Viceroy and Governor – General, and on the other part by Samdojey Deb Jimpey and Themseyrensey Donai according to full powers conferred on them by the Dhum and Deb Rajahs, 1865.

efforts of Bhutan as well as the reluctant Nepalese to settle in southern Bhutan go in favour of Nepalese.

Even the British and its empire endeavour to look towards the Tibet for trade felt the Nepalese presence in Bhutan since the 19th century (Pattanaik, 1998). The presence of Nepalese even noticed by the very early British political officers in 1903. The British diplomat Charles Bels writes about the presence of 14,000 Nepalis on the Torsa River bordering India. In 1932, Captain C.J Morris²⁴ (Army recruitment officer) observed some 60,000 strong population of Nepalis in Bhutan. The history of *Lhotshampa* settlement in Bhutan is older than the history of monarchy which came into being in 1907 (Collister, 1887).

It is quite clear from the official records that British had not any role in bringing the Nepalese to Bhutan, but it was the efforts of prime minister Kazi Ugyen Dorji who was pressurised by the Britishers for Nepalese migration (Sinha, 1991). There were some recorded data that Nepalese went to Bhutan for the construction of monasteries. There were 108 monasteries in which they did work, and the most significant are Paro Kiyachu and Bumthag Jamphel Lakhags (Dhakal, 1994). The settlement of all these artisans is considered in the valleys of eastern and central Bhutan. There are sources that when Guru Padmasamb has come to Bhutan to preach Buddhism, he brought an entourage of Nepalis who later settled in Bhutan. There is also an assumption that when first Shabdrung had requested to the Nepalese King Ram Shah (1606-1633) to arrange troops to guard the frontier of Bhutan.

The sources of Bhutanese govt records revealed that various craftsmen across Nepal were called for the construction of the various building in Bhutan (Pattanaik, 1998). In the reign of Deb Minijier Tempa (1667-1680), there were Newari craftsmen who were popular for their technique and artistic skill in metal work were called for the execution of religious statues but unfortunately, there were no historical records where their settlement and their rehabilitation proved. Therefore, the claim by the refugee about their settlement is not supported by any historical facts. Then, the only British reports were considered reliable. It is very important that before going into any conclusion about the ethnicity and identity of the two nations,

²⁴ It is based on the survey made by the Morris for Gurkha recruitment, where he recorded the presence of Nepalese population.

one should be very aware of the concept of their separate identity for both the communities in Bhutan emanates from their religion and culture (Dhakal, 1994). As Nepalese upper elite class was strongly hated beef, polyandry and widow remarriage but it was commonly found in Brugpa Lamaist as there are differences between both the communities.

2.9 Lhotshampas Migration and Assimilation in Bhutan

Bhutan has two major ethnic groups *Drukpas* and *Lhotshampas*. *Drukpas* are further subdivided into *Ngalongs* and *Sharchops* (Sinha, 2001). *Ngalongs* and *Sharchops* have been residing in the Northern and Central regions respectively (Ghosh 1998). Political power is historically in the hands of the *Ngalongs*.

Lhotshampa means southerners in Dzongkha language (national language of Bhutan), they live in six southern foothills districts, speak the Nepali language, practised mostly Hinduism and migrated from Nepal, Darjeeling, and Sikkim in India. The Nepalese Commonwealth comprises of three important social groups, like the *Thakuris*²⁵, of predominantly in western Nepal, the *Newaris*²⁶, and the *Kiratis*²⁷, of eastern Nepal and Sikkim. The Nepalese in Bhutan belong predominantly to the Kirati stock consisting of Rai, Gurung, and Limbu tribes (Rizal, 2001). *Lhotshampas* practice Hinduism as their religion. However, many of them, including the Tamang and the Gurung are largely Buddhist; Kirati group including Rai and Limbua are largely animism followers of Mundum²⁸. Their main and common festival Desain and Tihar are similar to the festival of Indian called Dashera and Diwali.

There is another group of Nepali origin, who are presently living as refugees in Jhapa (Nepal). They are those *Lhotshampas* who are living still in refugee camps seeking a solution for their problem. They are known by the name of Bhupalis²⁹, and they claim themselves as Bhutanese citizen. The term is basically used by the Indian officials in and around the Indo-Bhutan and Indo-Nepal regions. Due to the agitation

²⁵ They strictly divide themselves on the Hindu Verna system with the concept of purity and pollution.

²⁶ They divided among themselves into a number of occupational castes and follow the Hinduism and Buddhism and both.

²⁷ Kiratis is a generic term for a number of animist, Lamaist and Hindu tribes.

²⁸ These group are mainly found in eastern Bhutan.

²⁹ The term is used by the Indian officials in and around the Indo-Bhutan and Indo-Nepal region.

for democracy in Bhutan which was begun in the 1990s, people who once lived in southern Bhutan are now in a major chunk of them living in the refugee camp of Jhapa (Nepal). Most of the leaders of that democratic movement belong to this segment of Bhutanese population. The movement which they started for democracy was ended up in refugee camps in Nepal. They are considered as the illegal immigrants by the Royal Government of Bhutan. The Bhupalis also lives in the refugee camps in Bagrakot, Kalchini, Looksan and Bipara tea gardens in Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal in India (Rizal, 2001).

Since the early 1980s, Bhutan has been following a policy of inter-ethnic assimilation (Hutt 2003). The National Council for Social and Cultural Promotion which was established in 1980 tried to ensure that Drukpa and *Lhotshampa* children studied together in schools and there were inter-ethnic marriages for which even cash incentives were provided (Baral, 1993). But these policies were soon supplanted by a majoritarian approach when in 1985 or 1986 the National Council for Social and Cultural Promotion was replaced by the Special Commission for Cultural Affairs. It not only made the citizenship laws stricter, but it also tried to streamline the Bhutanese people on the lines of Drukpa cultural norms (Giri, 2004). Bhutan's new cultural policy that was enshrined in *Driglam Namzha* lay at the heart of the country's distinctive national identity. The *Lhotshampas* were made to wear the traditional Bhutanese dress, *Gho*, and *Kira*, in all public places and *Dzongkha* language was made compulsory for all. In 1999 a 260-page bilingual (Dzongkha/English) manual of *Driglam Namzha* enumerated in detail the prescribed cultural norms.

Given the cultural policies of Bhutan vis-à-vis *Lhotshampa*, the relations between both the ethnic groups of Drukpa-Lhotshampa had been remained enervated since the early 1980s (Ghosh 1998; Hutt 2003). As a result of discriminations and discords, Nepalis were obligated to leave Bhutan and refuge in Nepal. The first group of refugees had arrived in Nepal towards the end of 1990 and for many years it During the next few years, there was a constant flow (Evans, 2010). By 1991, thousands had started to flee to Nepal via India by truck. Soon the UNHCR was involved in the refugee care. In 1992 UNHCR established the first camps in Eastern Nepal. By 1995, according to the UNHCR and the Government of Nepal, there were about 90,000 Bhutanese refugees in Nepal, particularly in Jhapa and

Morang districts, besides there were about 15,000 who did not stay in the camps. In India, they were about 20,000, scattered in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Sikkim and West Bengal. In June 2007 there were 106,690 Bhutanese refugees in Nepal sheltered in seven camps.

2.9.1 Ngalong

The group known as *Drugpa*³⁰, live in the central and north-western regions. They speak *Dzongkha* language and wear robe-like dresses (Shaw, 1992). Their ancestors migrated from Tibet. The *Ngalong*³¹ comprise the largest ethnic group in Bhutan, and they control the government political power and the culture/social power of the country (Dhakal, 1994). They were often called as *Bhote*³², meaning as they come from Tibet or *Bhot*. They practice Tibetan Buddhism, and grow mountain potatoes, rice, barley, and other temperate climate crops, and build large fortress monasteries (*dzongs*). The king and most of the government officials belong to this ethnic group (Khanal, 1998). However, the policy of *Driglam Namzha* (one nation one culture) adopted by the Royal Government of Bhutan, which claims that it is mandatory for all the Bhutanese citizen to follow the national dress (*gho* and *khira*) code and speak national language (*Dzongkha*), is specifically *Ngalop* in origin (Bisht, 2008).

2.9.2 Sharchops

Sharchops are inhabited in the eastern and central region and practice *Nyingmapa* sect of Mahayana Buddhism and belongs to *Tibeto-Burman* ancestry (Sinha, 1991). They speak *Sharchopkha* also known as *Tsangla*³³, *Kurteop*, *Kheng* and *Brogpa* dialects³⁴. Their ancestry can be traced to the tribes of northern Burma and north-east India. Although as being the biggest and earliest ethnic group of Bhutan the *Sharchops* have been largely assimilated into the Tibetan *Ngalop* culture (Hutt, 1993). They have largely adopted the cultural practices of the Tibetan-derived culture of central and western Bhutan and also shares a linguistic heritage with Tibetan and *Dzongkha*. They practice slash-and-burn and *tsheri* agriculture, planting

³⁰ They are called Drugpa as they follow the Drugpa Kargyupa school of Tibetan Buddhism.

³¹ They are also known as Ngalongs or Ngalops.

³² This term is basically used to the Tibetan people, but now it is rarely used.

³³ Tsangla is also spoken by the Menba national minority across the border in China.

³⁴ Some of them speak Assamese and Hindi because of their proximity to India.

dry rice for three to four years until the fertility of soil will be exhausted and then moving on to another area (Bisht, 2008).

In this chapter, we have identified the Shangri-la image of Bhutan, an image of being other-worldly *Lamaist* monarchy on the snowy Himalayan ranges and forested ravines free from the maddening crowd of other South Asian countries. Further, we have delineated the ethnic complexity of Bhutan in which the Drukpa, the *Sharchokpa*, and the *Lhotshampa* have their distinct locales of north-western, eastern and southern part of the country respectively. However, we can say that the dominant image of Bhutan is the only *Lamaist* country in the world, an issue wrapped with myth, legends, and hoary past.

3. Changing Political Dynamics in Bhutan: A Journey from Monarchy to Democracy

3.1 Introduction

Until recent times, Bhutan (Drukyul - Land of the Thunder Dragon) had not tasted the global triumph of democracy. Not only its birth but also the process of democratization was very unique for Bhutan. As a land-locked country, its north bordered to Tibet and on the south to the Indian states Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Turning from monarchy to democratic it has been argued that it had a belated experiment in the experiment of nation-state building. Nevertheless, it seems that the last, reclusive Himalayan kingdom had moved from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy by introducing the democratic process afresh. This was an experiment which was initiated by the king rather than a revolutionary or by any violent means. A voluntary reallocation of power in the face of a remarkable indifference towards democracy by the people. It has taken a great political leap with rising concerns and hopes not only among the ruling dynasty but also among the citizens of Bhutan.

Normally, Bhutan's political development is composed of three major periods. Firstly, the theocratic era from 1616 to 1907; secondly, around 100 years of the monarchy under the rule of the *Wangchuk dynasty*, and thirdly, the era since 2008 when Bhutan became the world's youngest democracy after passing a new constitution and holding the first National Assembly elections. The hereditary monarchy of Bhutan was established in 1907, emerging from a 250-year-old dual system of administration (*Chhoesi*) based on two realms of power which included a secular and religious one, and headed by the *Shabdrung* (head of state). This system comprised the *Druk Desi*, responsible for the temporal administration of the country, and the *Je Khenpo* (lord abbot), who is responsible for religious matters, representing the Buddhist clergy of the country, and heading the central monastic body (Dratshang Lhentshog or Council/Commission for Ecclesiastical Affairs). The *Chhoesi* system, which was established by *Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal* (a Tibetan monk and considered as the founder of the state) in the mid-seventeenth century, can be considered as one of the most crucial landmarks in the development of Bhutan's structure of governance. Earlier, without centralized rule from the mid-seventh to the 19th century, Thimpu had a rule-based system which was served the different clans.

In order to secure Bhutan's identity as a Drukpa state Drukpa, the five wars had been fought with Tibet and the Mongols, the last ending in victory for Bhutan, allowing a *Shabdrung* to become the king in 1734. However, the ensuing system of religious and political authorities had been proved unstable (especially after the death of *Namgyal* in 1651), characterized by inner conflict and power concentrated in local rulers. In 1774, a peace treaty was signed with the English East India Company. From the late 18th century onwards, Bhutan had come under the legacy of British-India. Following a war in 1864, it gave away its *Duar* territories, an area which is considered as bordering India and controlled by Bhutan since the 18th century, to the British in return for annual compensation under the Treaty of *Sinchulu* (1865)³⁵ which led to the territorial consolidation of the country. In 1910, this treaty was revised in *Punakha* and signed with the British, which granted autonomous status to Bhutan. This arrangement was completely endorsed by independent India in 1947, which recognized Bhutan as a sovereign country. Towards the end of the 19th century, the real political power had become concentrated in the governors of *Paro* and *Tongsa* districts and regional rivalry continued to prevail.

Till 1907, Bhutan has remained a theocratic state. Despite the increasing control of the state over the religious and cultural life of the people but also exercised political control as well. Therefore, one can state that Buddhism was not only the unifying force in the original process of state building but also in maintaining the country's ideational foundation until today.

3.2 Theocracy (1616-1907)

Ngawang Namgyal (1594-1651) is counted in those few charismatic leaders of Bhutan, whose life and death are an immortal saga, which has linked intimately linked to the history of Bhutan. It is this king, who united the monasterial districts in this remote Himalayan region in a land named Drukyul, which is known today as the Kingdom of Bhutan. He had been forced into exile from Tibet and soon brought the monasteries with their clergy and influential families under his control (Sinha. 2001). The government system, which he started, has been continued to exist for nearly three decades. *Namgyal* became the head of state, giving upon himself the title of

³⁵ The Treaty Concluded at Sinchula on the 11th Day of November, 1865 <https://bangaloregorkha.Wordpress.com/documents/treaty-sinchula>.

Shabdrung, presiding over a dual administrative system, composed of a religious and civil branch, with the religious branch of the system was headed by the Je Khenpo (lord abbot) who had authority over the Buddhist monasteries in Bhutan. The *Druk Des*³⁶ headed the civil branch of administration. The Privy Council made up of regional leaders, and the *Shabdrung*'s confidants used to elect him every three years. The country was divided into three regions - West, Center, and East. The region was headed by a *Penlop* (governor), who had been assigned to perform the administrative functions. The reign of the first *Shabdrung* also saw the construction of well-fortified monasteries (*dzongs*), which became centres of trade and administration, reaching into the present time.

Although *Namgyal* became very successful in centralization and consolidation of his power within Bhutan, the country had faced serious existential challenges in the centuries that followed. Tibetans, Mongols and finally the British had invaded or threatened to invade Bhutan. The country had fought numerous wars, not all of them in self-defence that helped to increase its sphere of power. However, although it had to give up parts of its territory in Sikkim, Assam, and Bengal; Bhutan was able to maintain its independence vis-a-vis the British. This is perhaps the most important achievement, despite the fact, conflicts with the colonial power of the Indian subcontinent. Bhutan never came under British rule and thus, was able to sustain its administrative system and Buddhist culture.

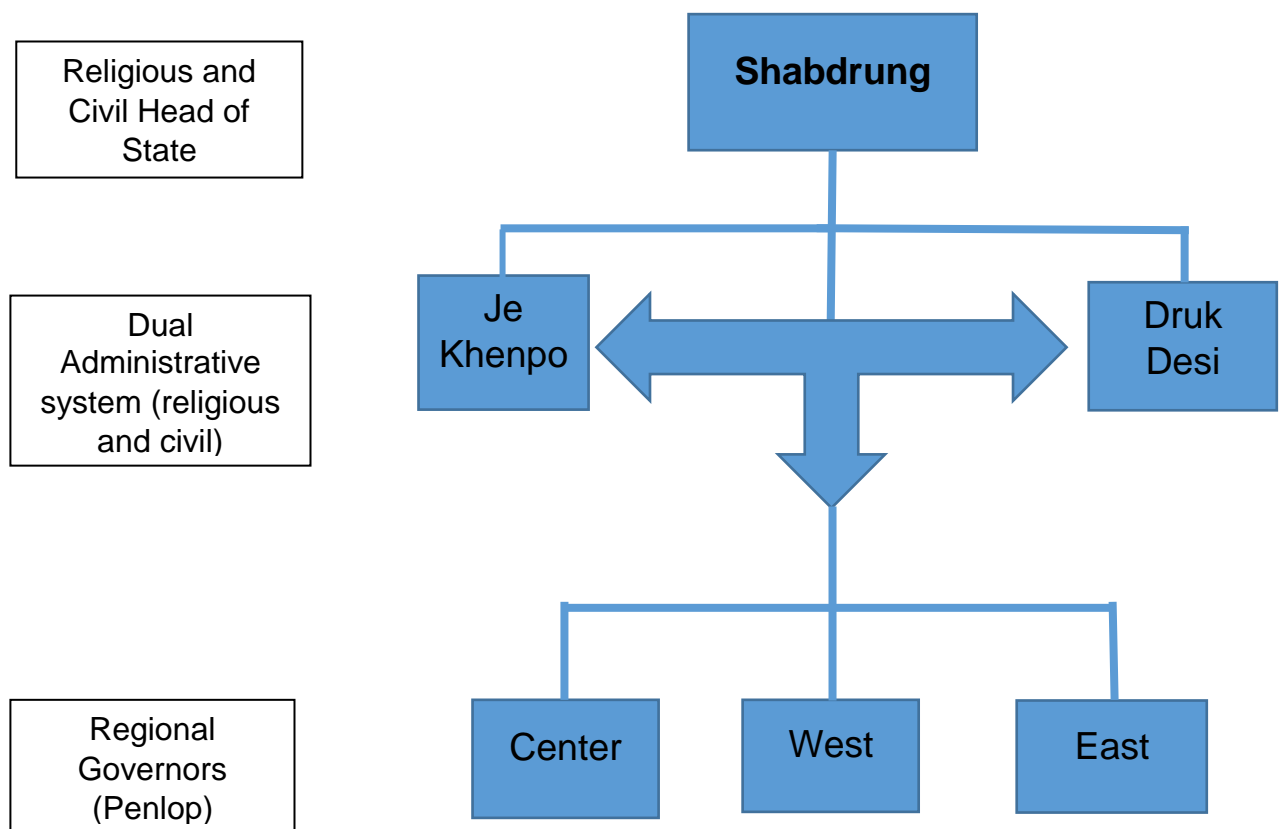
The major weakness of the system manifested itself 1651 onwards, the year *Ngawang Namgyal* died³⁷. As the title of *Shabdrung* was not hereditary but based on the reincarnation of *Namgyal*, his death had left a power vacuum that was gradually filled by the *Je Khenpo*, *Druk Desis*, and the *Penlops*, all of them had become more powerful over a period of time. The civil branch of administration had gained, even more, control of the state apparatus, however, the rivalries among the different levels began to adversely affect Bhutan's peace, prosperity, and stability. Adding to these horizontal and vertical tensions over the distribution of power, were major disagreements on how to handle the British. All this led to constant civil war,

³⁶ Klaus Hofmann. 2006. Democratization from above: The case of Bhutan. P.2. Available at <http://www.democracyinternational.org/fileadmin/di/pdf/papers/di-bhutan.pdf>. Accessed on 26 Feb 2016.

³⁷ Library of Congress. 1991. Theocratic Government, 1616–1907. Available at <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/bttoc.html>.

plots, and counterplots, and no less than 54 Druk Desis held office between 1651 and 1907. At the height of the conflict, the young Penlop of Tongsa, Ugyen Wangchuk, entered the struggle for power. But ultimately, this man changed the country dramatically in the decades and building the foundations for peace, development, and modernization (Tashi, 2004).

Figure 3. 1- Bhutan’s Government Structure from (1616 to 1907)



Source: Marian Gallenkamp. (2010). Democracy in Bhutan: An analysis of constitutional change in a Buddhist Monarchy. Pp 3.

3.3 Wangchuk Monarchy

In the mythical kings of ancient time, Bhutan has no history of the secular monarchy. *Zhabs-drung Namgyal* and his successors consolidated the *Dukpa* theocratic regime from the 17th century for about three hundred years though an intricate process of affairs and personnel’s were intertwined in such a way that the mystic of Dragon policy was universally accepted. Dynasty often was in the hands

of feudal representatives and oligarchic functionaries. After nine decades of its establishment in 1907, Wangchuk monarchy is a firmly ingrained and the most important political institution in Bhutan. Unlike their former Sikkimese counterparts, the *Druk gyalpo* has no role in religious and ritual affairs of their country. Furthermore, the institution of incarnate *Dhareamrajas* and the Deb Rajas have been discontinued. The administration is run from a central secretariat manned by bureaucrats selected and promoted by the royal civil service commission (RCSC) under the control of a council of ministers elected by the national assembly and approved by the *Druk gyalpo*. For the due credit must be given to the Wangchuk rulers, who have achieved this extraordinary feat within such a short time. It will be instructive to chart out the process of consolidation of monarchy through the reigns of the rulers (Sinah. 2001).

3.3.1 First King: Ugyen Wangchuck the Founder (1907-1926)

It will help here to understand by defining the family background of the founder of Wangchuk dynasty. Ugyen's father, Jigme Namgyal Wangchuk (1826-1881), belonged to a family of holy men and mythical herds of Bhutan. He became *Tongsa penlop* in 1853 and aligned himself with the then *Zhabs-drung*. It was he, who organised the most hostile reaction to the British envoy, Ashley Eden in 1863, which led to the Anglo-Bhutanese War, 1863-64. On their part, the British did not hide their desire to drive a wedge between the functionaries of west Bhutan and the *Tongsa Penlop*. However, he could even turn the table against the British for sometimes. The war progressed, there was little choice for him but to accept the provisions of the Sinchula Treaty, 1865 (Tashi, 2004).

However, it is a credit to him that in spite of the British hostility, he was appointed the *Deb Raja* in 1870 and got his brother Kyitselpa Dorji, succeed him in 1873. Jigme Namgyal ruled Bhutan peacefully till 1877 through his brother, when a rebellion broke out again. The *Tongsa Penlop* (Jigme Namgyal) was imprisoned, his allies such as Wangdu Phodrang Jongpen was killed; and the *Dewan* (A Deb Raja's Councilor), *penlops* of Paro and Punakha took shelter in the British territory. But barely two years later, there was another rebellion in which Jigme Nanigyal's secretary, Chhogyal Zangpo, managed to be the *Deb Raja* on March 10, 1879. In this civil war Jigme lost his brother, Kyitselpa, and right in the thick of political

upheaval, he breathed his last in 1881 leaving behind a host of enemies as an inheritance to his 20 years old son, Ugyen Wangchuk (White, 1971).

Alu Dorji, the Thimphu Jongpen and an admitted enemy of Ugyen Wangchuk, who had already been appointed *Tongsa Penlop* after his father's death, withheld the latter's share from the British subsidy. This led to another eruption of civil war in which the *Tongsa Penlop* Ugyen Wangchuk got victorious³⁸. He was pragmatic enough to wait for two decades for an opportune moment to strike a deal in his favour. When the fighting broke out between Britain and Tibet, the Bhutanese through their agent, Ugyen Kazi (Kazi Ugyen Dorji-the Zungta chief), refused assistance to the Tibetans and warned them to the likely consequences of refusing to come to terms (with the British). This agent was deputed to take the letter from the Viceroy Curzon to the Dalai Lama in 1903, a letter which the Dalai Lama refused to open.

During the interval between then and the Tibetan Mission of (Younghusband) 1904, the Bhutanese under the *Tongsa Penlop*, who was the most powerful leader in Bhutan at that time, not only refused support for Tibetans, but also sent a mission, headed by Ugyen Wangchuk himself to Lhasa with the British forces" (Patterson, 1963). The British rewarded the Bhutan agent Kazi Dorji with the title of Raja and the *Tongsa Penlop as the Knight Commander of the Indian Empire* (KCIE) in 1905. The *Tongsa Penlop*, along with the king of Sikkim visited Calcutta on the occasion of the visit of the Prince of Wales, the first occasion for a Bhutanese. Penlop to go to a non-lamaist land as a state functionary. The then *Deb Raja* and the *Zhabs-drung* died in 1901 and 1903 respectively. The rJe-Khanpo, Yeshe dNgo's Grub (1851-1917), briefly held both the offices in 1903-1905. He was reported to be a recluse, devoted more to the spiritual affairs of the country. Perhaps he was not cut for the demanding diplomacy involved in the region during the Indian Viceroy Lord Curzon's 'forward policy to the Himalayas.' *Tongsa Penlop*, with the help of his relatives, associates and Lama Allies, was able to manage all the secular affairs of the state and establish his claim for an unequal status among the Bhutanese.

³⁸ Library of Congress. 1991. Establishment of the Hereditary Monarchy, 1907. Available at <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/bttoc.html>. Accessed on 26 Feb 2016.

In view of the above, the British Indian rulers took the opportunity and posted the Resident *Political Officer* in Sikkim, John Claude White with presents on the eve of installation of *Tongsa Penlop* as the hereditary ruler. White reports on the momentous event not only in the history of Bhutan but also in the annals of the *laniaist Eastern Himalaya*:

There being no hereditary Maharaja over this state of Bhutan, and the Deb Rajas being elected from amongst the Lamas, Lopons, Councillors and the Chinlahs of different districts, we the undersigned abbots, Lopons, and the whole body of the Lamas, the state councillors, the Chinlahs of different districts, with all the subjects having discussed and unanimously agreed to elect Sir Ugyen Wangchuk, the *Tongsa Penlop*, the Prime Minister of Bhutan as the hereditary Maharaja of Bhutan in open Durbar, on golden throne of this day the 17th December 1907 at Punakha Podang. We now declare our allegiance to him and his heirs loyally and faithfully, to the best of our ability. Should anyone (among us) not abide by this contract by saying this and that, he shall altogether be turned out by our company. In witness, these to us affix our seals (White, 1971).

Then the five inches square and the most precious seal of the Zhab-drung was affixed, followed by eight significant heads of the monk bodies and the regional governors. And lastly, there were 41 seals and signatures of what J.C. White termed as the second class officers. One point needs to be noted that Alu Dorji and his associates were not signatories to the hereditary installation. Not only that, even among the signatories to the installation, there were individuals such as Dawa Paljor, the *Paro Penlop* and a distant cousin of the *Tongsa Penlop*, who remained practically independent. He was reluctant to concede the supreme position as the head of the state to the *Paro Penlop*. However, Ugyen Wangchuk could win the loyalty of all the chiefs after the death of Dawa Paljor in 1918. There is another issue of 'election,' a term used by J.C. White 'to display the unanimity of choice.' Perhaps, it was an inappropriate and bias use. Of the term, 'election.' It was certainly an oligarchic conclave of the most effective Bhutanese functionaries of the time, who had no reservation in accepting Ugyen Wangchuk as their hereditary ruler, a contrived but a logical step in the given situation.

J.C. White, an eyewitness to the installation of Ugyen Wangchuk as the hereditary ruler on December 17, 1907, reports that Tango Lama, was the first to pay homage to the *Tongsa Penlop* (Ugyen Wangchuk):

Leaving his mitre and silken cope in his place, he advanced in ordinary monk's garb and prostrated himself twice and then returned to his seat and resumed his vestments. After the Tango Lama came to the councillors in order of seniority (White, 1971).

In the course of time, Ugyen Wangchuk had to permit an incarnation of the *Zhabs-drung* to be found and led to Tango monastery along with the incarnate Lama's mother and brothers. Meanwhile, he had been able to concentrate all the authority in his hands and consolidate his rule on a feudal pattern. However, significant monastic estates and privileges were permitted to continue without posing a threat to his rule.

The coronation of the *Tongsa Penlop* as the *Druk gyalpo* resulted in two significant developments. Firstly, the office of the *Zhabs-drung* was reduced to non-existence formally for the time being. However, the *Zhabs-drung's* functions appear to have been divided into two: while the ritual roles of *Zhabs-drung* were assigned to the *rfe-Khan-po*, his political function was transferred to the *Druk gyalpo*. Secondly, with the abolition of the office of the *sde-srid* (*Deb Desi/Deb Raja*), its administrative and secular functions were assigned to the hereditary ruler. It was claimed that the institution of *Druk gyalpo* is in fact, the continuation of the institution of the *sde-srid*. The Royal Government of Bhutan published. *The Deb Rajas of Bhutan* (1974), which enumerates the deeds of some significant Deb Rajas, and it also includes an account of the reigns of all the Wangchuk hereditary rulers inclusive of the present one (Patterson, 1963).

Charles Bell, J.C. White's successor, as the Political Officer in Sikkim, negotiated and concluded the Treaty of Punakha in 1910. As per provisions of the Treaty, the British Indian Government agreed to increase the annual subsidy granted to Bhutan in 1865 in lieu of the ceded territories from Rupees fifty thousand to one hundred thousand from January 1910. Similarly the British Government undertook not to interfere in the internal administration of Bhutan and on its own, the Bhutanese agreed to be guided by the advice of the British Government in regard to its foreign relations, Charles Bell found the king to be a capable ruler, who had filled up significant state offices with his relatives from eastern Bhutan. Slowly he had a total grip on the secular administration of the country. However, he was astute enough to leave the ecclesiastic administration to the monks and lamas, who could be managed indirectly (White, 1971).

Paro *Penlop* Dawa Paljor and Raja Ugyen Dorji, the *Bhutan Agent*, died in 1918 and were succeeded by the Maharaja's grandson (from his eldest daughter), Tshering Paljor and Sonam Tobgyal Dorji (the son of late Ugyen Dorji) respectively. Ligmi Wangchuk, the eldest son of the king, was appointed the *Tongsa Donyer* in 1918 and the *Tongsa Penlop* in 1923. The Maharaja requested the Government of India in 1922 for financial assistance in training the Bhutanese professionals and an increase in the annual subsidy, which was not acceded to. The Maharaja apprehended that succession to his son, Jigme Wangchuk, might not be smooth on the eve of his death. So he requested the Political Officer Charles Bell's successor, F.M. Bailey on August 13, 1922, to provide moral support of the Government of India in favour of his 17 years old son to prevent potential opposition. The Maharaja expired on August 21, 1926, and succession passed on smoothly. With a view to the legitimate recognition of the changeover, the British India rulers presented a *Kharita* to the new king on October 11, 1926, in the presence of some 800 persons. It was noted that Chimi Dorji and Tshering Paljor, said to be the joint heads of the opposition party, prostrated themselves before the new sovereign (Tashi, 2004).

3.3.2 Second King Jigme Wangchuck (1926-1952)

The second Wangchuk ruler was appointed to the office of the *Tongsa Donyer* in 1918, and the *Tongsa Penlop* in 1923. He succeeded his father as the King on March 23, 1927, at Punakha. It was feared that succession would be disputed and violently opposed by another faction of the royal family itself, but nothing untoward happened. However, F.M. Bailey, the British Political Officer in Sikkim responsible for reporting to the British on Bhutan, noted the process of the legitimacy of the succession on April 28, 1927:

- The importance of the Dharamraja had not suffered by the delay in reincarnation;
- It was of interest that the ceremonial act of which the Maharaja was regarded as having established his succession was the putting on in the presence of the Dharamraja, of a silk scarf from the tomb of the first Dharamraja (Sinha, 1991).

The clash between this incarnate *Zhabs-drung* and the second ruler occurred within five years of latter's coronation, on which we have written elsewhere (Sinha, 1991). Suffice here to record that the ambitious members of the *Zhabs-drung's*

family conspired to reach M.K. Gandhi, the Indian Nationalist leader and the Chinese Amban in Tibet in favour of the *Zhabs-drung* against the Maharaja. The Maharaja and his courtiers panicked on this development and sought the counsel from the British. However, the conspirators including the *Zhabs-drung* were arrested and put behind bars. While other accomplices in the conspiracy were physically eliminated, the Dharamraja "was quietly murdered." On that, not only the Maharaja but also the British had a sigh of relief: "By the death of Shabdrung (*Zhabs-drung*) Rimpoche, a chapter of the Bhutan history fraught with potential danger to the existing rule may be considered closed." Is it so? Not really. An incarnation of the murdered *Zhabs-drung* was born in 1956 to his sister in Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh, India and lives among the Tibetan exiles in Himachal Pradesh, India as a distant and an obscure threat to the Wangchuk rule (Aris, 1979).

A more difficult task for Jigme Wangchuk was to secure an autonomous status for Bhutan away from the democratic Indian Union and also the assurance of financial and political support as provided by the British colonial masters. After 1931 episode, in which the king had successfully eliminated the potential threat from the last *Zhabs-drung*, Bhutan decided to drift away from India. But four decades after the establishment of the Wangchuk dynasty with open British support, the British were leaving India as the rulers and the Indian princely states were advised to join the successor states of India or Pakistan. Bhutan had no experience to conduct itself with the new situation and new set of rulers in New Delhi. Raja S.T. Dorji, the Bhutan Agent in India with his Indian contacts proved to be an invaluable succour to Bhutan at this juncture. Bhutan was still under barter economy, and the state administration required cash revenue. Raja Dorji negotiated with India an enhanced cash payment, an internal autonomy and a future guidance in external affairs. A Treaty was signed at Darjeeling between the representatives of the two states in 1949 and two heads of the states, the king of Bhutan and the Governor General of India, refilled the Treaty. By this act, Bhutan secured a quasi-international status away from India, but it was done with Indian goodwill (Vas, 1986).

3.3.3 Third King: Jigme Dorji Wangchuk: The Nation Builder (1952-1972)

Historical events with far-reaching consequences occurred in the immediate neighbourhood of Bhutan in the 1940s. The British withdrawal from India in 1947 necessitated the appraisal of her relations with the newly independent Indian Union.

The People's Republic of China came into being in 1949 replacing the Nationalist Kuomintang rulers. The Chinese Communist forces took over Tibet in 1951 and abrogated many of the age-old practices of the *Lamaist* theocracy (Mathou, 1999). Those two events were destined to influence the immediate course of the Bhutanese political development immensely (Tashi, 2004).

Jigme Dorji, the third Brug-rgyal-po, was crowned as the king on October 28, 1952. He had married the daughter of the *Bhutan Agent*, Raja S.T. Dorji and took his wife's brother, Jigme Palden Dorji, as his *Lonchen* (Prime Minister). As in the past, the king took direct responsibility for the internal government of the country, and because of their broad-based education and easy familiarity with the English language, the Dorjis were considered best qualified to conduct Bhutan's relations with her neighbours. But apart from their responsibilities in administering the district of Ha and the southern frontier, they had no specific role in the running of the internal affairs of the country. As long as Bhutan remained isolated from the rest of the world, the conduct of foreign affairs constituted a comparatively minor activity of the Government, and the influence and status of the Dorji family were of a proportionately minor dimension. As Bhutan's stature in the comity of nations became gradually enhanced foreign affairs became a major field of activity, and the Dorji emerged as their increasing prominence in the public eye attracted not only attention also envy. There were many who felt jealous of their growing eminence and began secretly to wish their downfall (Rustomji, 1978).

The Wangchuks and Dorjis (the King and his Prime Minister brother-in-law in particular) were probing closely to reorient Bhutanese state to the reality of the mid-nineteenth century world politics. Dorjis with their familiarity with the external environment of Bhutan, managed the monetary and foreign affairs of the state, to begin with. However, they were considered to somewhat peripheral to the Bhutanese traditions represented by the nobility (the Wangchuks) and the clergy. Furthermore, they were as well identified with the *Lhotshampa* ethnic nuisance on the Bhutanese soil. The more Bhutan tried to adjust to the demands of the statecraft and economic development, the role of the Dorjis increased in the same proportion. That made the ill-educated tradition-bound elements more apprehensive of the Dorjis (Mathou, 1999). The apparent informality in routine affairs and oligarchic control of the feudal privileges provided scope for resentment, suspense

and even doubts on the functionaries' motives. So much so that by 1960s smooth informal and easy communication between the King and the Prime Minister turned out occasionally to be rough, formal and different.

By then Yangki, a Tibetan refugee lady of modest background began exerting undue influence in the life of the King. Within no time, she turned out to be a power centre in the *Dukpa* Durbar, with the help of anti-Dorji rabbles around her with the apparent connivance of some elements of nobility. So much so that a conspiracy was hatched to assassinate successfully the Prime Minister J.P. Dorji on April 5, 1964, at Phuntsholing, while the king was away in Europe. As an emergency, the Dorjis took over the reign of the administration in the absence of the king and began investigating the tragic end of the Prime Minister (Gupta, 1974). The early investigation pointed towards certain disgruntled persons in the Royal Bhutan Army in plotting the assassination, in which the role of the above Tibetan lady was suspected. It was alleged that she had provided the fatal pistol to the assassin, which was said to be a gift to her from the royalty. In the fit of urgency and expectancy, the interim administrative arrangement committed accesses on the members of the alleged plotting faction.

Despite his ill-health, the King hurriedly returned to his kingdom. He took over the control of entire administration in his hands from Dorjis and appointed a high-level court of inquiry to investigate the assassination. Meanwhile, the acting Prime Minister (the younger brother of the late Prime Minister) along with his associates ran away to Nepal and sought for a political refuge. The court of inquiry found the alleged assassin, Corporal Jambey and Chabda Naingyal, the army chief, the plotter and the brain behind the crime as the guilty (Das, 1974). They were publicly executed by a firing squad on the army parade ground at Thimphu. It is worth noting that in all these upheavals, the *Lhoishampas* were helplessly standing on the margin and holding their breath. The King took a note of the non-partisan attitude on the events among the *Lhotshwnpas* and as a part of his larger nation-building design granted amnesty to the former Nepali agitators and the leaders of the Bhutan State Congress in 1969 (Tashi, 2004).

Regarding political culture, loyalty to the Drug form of Lamaism and historical evolution of the Bhutanese national identity, the western and central Bhutan (especially Faro, Thimphu, Punakha and Tongsa regions) provide a core to the

various facets of the *Brugpa* identity (Hasrat, 1980). Their religion-ritual and political practices were accepted as the national ones; Dzongkha dialect, developed in the vicinity of these centres, came to be recognised as the national language; their food habit, dress, nomadic-pastoral economic traditions turned to be typically Bhutanese. The most prestigious of the Bhotia families trace their origin to central Tibet or the religious aristocracy of western Bhutan and some legendary aristocrats or monks of repute. However, the bulk of the Bhutanese in the north-eastern parts came from the Kham region of Tibet. The *Sarchhaps* of eastern Bhutan, the Indo-Mongoloid ethnic group, identical to the people of Arunachal Pradesh, did not appear to pose problems, to begin with for the *Brugpa* national identity in spite of their distinct faiths, dialects, local customs, dress, food habits, etc. However, the Bhutanese national identity has posed problems for two ethnic stocks living in Bhutan: the *Lhotshampas* and the Tibetan refugees (Vas, 1986).

The most serious challenge to the *Brugpa* identity is presented by the Bhutanese Nepalese, *Lhotshampas*. They are settled down in a compact region, which they have developed into the most productive part of the country. Southern Bhutan inhabited by them generates a larger share of the Bhutanese revenue. The entire working force, which could be utilised for the purpose of development and the nascent industrial entrepreneurship, is found in this region (Mathou, 1999). This is the region known for its unwelcome climatic conditions, especially the Highlander *Brugpa* dread the hot, humid and malarial Duars. However, even the Nepalese are relatively new settlers to the region. Their recent arrival to Bhutan is not considered sufficient by the *Brugpas* to automatically qualify them to be the natural Bhutanese. In the statistically imprecise land of Bhutan, the size of the Nepalese settlement 'has raised considerable controversy.' While the Nepalese claim that they constitute 64 percent of the Bhutanese population, the Bhutan Government concedes not more than 15 percent of its nationals as the permanent settlers of the Nepalese origin (Rustomji, 1978).

It is a fact that the ban on the organization of the political parties has not been lifted. But it is also a fact that during the most critical hours in the national life of Bhutan in 1964, then the country was plunged on the edge of instability, the *Lhoishanipas* stood solidly behind the various steps undertaken by the king. In fact, the entire crisis and its resolution were around the two factions of the *Brugpa*

oligarchy: the traditionalist conservatives and the reformist-modernisers. The incident can also be viewed entirely as a court squabble. However, this incident provided an opportunity, by which the Brig-rgyalpo's absolute authority was solidly established, and even the day-to-day routine administration came directly in his hands (Gupta, 1974). In a guarded way, slowly and slowly, he took steps to take the *Lhotshampas* into confidence. Many of the discriminatory rules were amended. They were granted citizenship in 1958 and were accepted as the full subjects of Bhutan. Land tenure was adjusted to the extent that the Nepalese own their own land, in case they had developed it. Nepali and Sanskrit teaching in the schools was permitted; the Nepalese were encouraged to dress in the nation who' dress on formal occasions (ibid).

The state took a policy decision to help the couples financially, in case the marriage was between the Brugpas and the Nepalese. The Nepalese were encouraged to participate in the electoral activities of the *Tshogdu* (National Assembly), and, in fact, they represented their constituencies in the Assembly. Some of them were even nominated to the formal government bodies such as the Royal Advisory Council and the bureaucracy. In fact, the first female member of the National Assembly was a Nepali, and the country was once and now is represented in the United Nations Organisation (UNO) by a Bhutanese of Nepalese extraction (Pattanaik, 1998).

The protocol for the Bhutanese functionaries, based on the traditional practices, is strictly followed too. Accordingly, as a society bound by traditional values, the Bhutanese political structure presents a unique example of a dynastic rule backed by theocratic ideology. Many of the institutions in the Bhutanese political system such as the royal advisory council, the council of ministers, the co-ordination committee, the national assembly and even the bureaucracy are passing through this formative phase in the sense that their exact functions have not been defined. In fact, they are still in the phase of experiments and, thus, they appear to be informal bodies devoid of legal sanctions. However, during, the last three decades, some steps have been taken, which have initiated a process of transition from the feudal and theocratic absolutism to an era of broader political and administrative participation. Among such steps establishment of the Royal Advisory Council, the Council of Ministers and the National Assembly may be mentioned (Winderl, 2004).

3.3.3.1 *The Royal Advisory Council*

A regular consultative body of the *Brugpa* theocracy had been established by the first Zhabs-drung *Lhengye Tsok* (*iHan rGyas Tshogs*: the State Council) in 1650. Originally, it consisted of the *Shung Kalong*, the *Shung Doyer*, the *sde-srid*, Zimpon and the dzongons of the Thimphu, Punakha, and Wangdi-Phodrang with the Sluing Kalong as its head. In the course of time, an informal practice emerged through which the Tongsa and *Paro Penlops* could attend its meetings, whenever they happened to be at Punakha, the seat of the Council. The institution continued to function throughout the *Zhabs-drung* period, and indeed it was a meeting of the *Lhengye Tsok*, expanded for the occasion to include virtually all higher civil and religious officials, that approved the establishment of a hereditary monarchy on December 17, 1907. Nevertheless, the first two kings in effect suspended the operation of the *Lhengye Tsok* seeking its counsel and advice on an *ad hoc* basis, when they felt it necessary (Pattanaik, 1998). The third *Brug-rGyalpo* took steps informally to establish the Royal Advisory Council in the late 1950s which were ultimately instituted in 1965 initially with eight members: a royal representative, two representatives of the monk body and five representatives of commoners from various regions. However, since 1977 it has a membership of ten: a royal representative, two from the monk body, five people's representatives, one from the *Lhotshampas* and another representing the women at large (ibid).

The *Kuense*³⁹ reported the election of the six members through the *Tshongdu* on November 26, 1979, for a term of five years. Lopen Yongen Gyeltsen was elected from ' the monk body to the Council. All the then 18 administrative districts of the kingdom were divided into five constituencies keeping in view the six regional population structure so that the constituencies could elect one F representative each (Sinha, 2001). As per the *Tshongdu*'s proceedings in 1979 the following were the constituencies with their elected representatives:

- Thimphu, Wangana, Ha, Paro, Gasa, Punakha and Wangdiphodrang-Rinzin Dorji, *Chimi* (member of the *Tshongdu*) from Wangdiphodrang;
- Bumthang, Mangdeve and Itheng-Dasho Thubchey, *Ramjam Gam* from Tongsa;
- Tashigang, Mongar, Kurtey, and Bumthang---Kesang Chimi from Tashigang;

³⁹ Kuensel, December 2, 1979. (Bhutan's national newspaper) at <http://www.kuenselonline.com>.

- Gaylegphug and Samdrup Jangkhar—Dasho Prahlad Gurung, Ramjam Gam from Gaylegphug, and
- Chirang and Phuntsholing—Dasho Prithviman Ghaley, the member of the Royal Advisory Council from Phuntsholing.

Incidentally, in all the above constituencies there was more than one candidate for election. Besides these, the king nominated the *Shung Kallong* as the ex-officio chairman of the Council and also a royal representative.

The Council has been met every Monday in which the ministers and the heads of the various Government Departments participate. Its basic function is to advise the king on all matters of national importance (Das, 1973). As there was no other administrative body to select the candidates for the various administrative jobs, it also worked as the service selection board for the civil servants. Also the councilors, as the members of the *Tshongdu*, travel extensively to understanding the people's problems and the extent of the implementation of the Government's decisions. In this way, this council of elders has another function of being the watch-dog of the people (ibid).

The critics of the Bhutanese system do not agree with the impact of RAC: Its prestige does not translate into power. The villagers, who are voted into the *Tshongdu* and (get) elected to the RAC, can be taken in by their grade one rank and privileges equivalent to a minister's. Also, the bureaucrats' lobbying, and manipulation of RAC members, the dissidents claim, has unduly influenced RAC members' actions, making them mere puppets of factional politics than effective watch-dogs (Sinha, 2001). The largely ceremonial role of RAC members is shown by the reaction to the first RAC member to actually fulfil the RAC's right of exposing acts "harmful to the interests of the kingdom and the people. At first Tek Nath Rizal (a member of the RAC and currently a *prisoner of conscience* in Bhutan) was given protection by the king, when he tracked down corruption patronised by several high officials in the Government, but when he investigated the 1988 Census and submitted a rather docile report, he was arrested and sacked (Rizal,2004).

3.3.3.2 *The Co-ordination Committee*

After mid-1970s country like Bhutan engaged in economic development and social transformation program, a small cohesive body of experts would be more

functional to taking technical decisions. Successively, a Co-ordination Committee was formed in 1975 with Ashi Dechen Wangchuk, king's sister, fixed so there are possibilities of the Development Ministry as the head. The other members of the Committee were the Ministers of Home, Finance, Foreign, Trade and Industries, the Secretary-General and Secretary of the Development Ministry, the Secretary of the Trade and Industry and Communication ministries, a representative of the Royal Advisory Council and two Indian advisers on economic affairs (Pattanaik, 1998).

According to rule, the committee is used to be meet weekly and invite the specialists when their services were needed. This body is the significant policy-making forum for development programs. It works like the brain trust overall. However, normally, interfere with the routine administrative issues, which are to the Royal Advisory Council. However, functions have not been defined, it is an expert body, who are in a better position to produce a result. This is emerging as a more influential body. In fact, it is being speculated that the Coordination Committee may assume the role of the Cabinet as in the parliamentary system elsewhere, a speculation (Das, 1973).

3.3.3.3 *The Council of Ministers*

The pre-monarchical Bhutanese Council of Ministers was an oligarchic body comprising of state functionaries. Jigme Dorji was appointed the *Lonchen* (the Prime Minister) in 1958 more to receive the Indian Prime Minister at the level of the protocol; this experiment vanished with his assassination in 1964. The king initiated a move through the *Tshongdu* for the formation new Council of Ministers (*Lhengye Tsok*) in 1968. It was a step entirely at the instance of the ruler and possibly to creating the administrative infrastructure required for the on-going development programs. The ministers were directly related to the king, appointments by the king were approved by the *Tshongdu*. There were many significant subjects such as the ecclesiastic affairs, the Royal Bhutan Army, the judicial service, parliamentary (relation to the *Tshongdu*) affairs, etc., which are excluded from Ministers. Then the two elder sisters of the king were made in-charge of the ministries of Development and Finance (Gupta, 1974).

To begin with, only three ministries: Home Affairs, Finance and Commerce & Industry were established. By 1973, two more ministries of Foreign Affairs and Communication were added to, and then another significant addition to the ministry

was that of Development. In this way, while there were only 5 ministries (Development, Trade & Industry, Finance, Home and Communication) and nine departments [Royal Secretariat, Foreign Affairs, Royal Bhutan Army and Royal Bodyguards, Central Monk body, Judiciary, Audit, Tshongdu, “The Royal Advisory Council”] and the Council of Ministers in February 1977 (Vas, 1986). Now there are six ministries organised in the formal administrative structure. Among the departments mentioned above such as the palace secretariat, army, and royal bodyguards, judiciary, audit, *Tshongdu*, etc. remain directly under the king, while the central monk body and the ecclesiastic affairs are under the supervision of the rJe-Khan-po (ibid).

The fourth king, Jigme Singye Wangchuk issued a royal proclamation (*Kasho*) on the occasion of the 76th session of the Tshongdu, which authorized the *Tshongdu* to elect a council of ministers responsible for the administration of the state. So king will remain head of the state. The proclamation not only empowered the Tshongdu to elect the cabinet ministers it also to decide their roles (Pattanaik, 1998). The Royal proclamation stated, it has been my endeavour. To encourage and prepare our people to participate actively decision-making process of our country. It further promotes the people's participation in the decision-making process. Our country must have a system of government, which enjoys the people will, provides clean governance and has an inbuilt mechanism of checks safeguard our national interests and security. As an important step towards achieving this goal, the *Lhengye Shungtshog* (Cabinet) should now be restructured into an elected Council of Minister's full executive powers to provide efficient and effective governance of our country (Vas, 1986).

According to this rule, the old council of ministers was dissolved. The term of the longest-serving foreign minister in the world, Lyonpo Dawa Tshering, along with his colleagues came to an end, a six-member Cabinet was voted to power by the *Tshongdu* for a term of five years, whose members were between 45 and 50 years of age. The elected members of the cabinet constituted of M/s Jigme Y. Thinley (Foreign), Yeshe Zirnba (Finance), Khandu Wangchuk (Trade and Industry), Thinley Gyamtsho (Home), Sangay Ngedup (Education and Health), and Kinzang Dorji (Agriculture). Lyonpo Jigme Y. Thinley, who had secured the highest number of votes, 136, was elected chairman of the cabinet for a year. The young cabinet

ministers are close to the King and active in state affairs. They have all been educated in India and have widely travelled abroad. With this development, the Royal Government of Bhutan has taken a giant step towards a participative democracy (Gallenkamp, 2010).

3.3.3.4 *The National Assembly (Tshongdu)*

The faction-ridden Bhutan major decisions had been taken by consensus. Such consensus used to be derived from prolonged debates in the people's gatherings in which officials and non-officials used to participate. The execution of such agreed steps was left to the officials. Any gathering of the people is called *Jombu*. However, the higher and the bigger assemblies are politely termed as the *Tshongdu*⁴⁰. In occasion of accession to the throne in 1952, the third *Brug rgyalpo* announced his intention to establish a National Assembly. Consequently, the first National Assembly (*Tshongdu*) was inaugurated in 1953 at Punakha (Winderl. 2004). This royal decision caused consternation and apprehensions in the minds of the traditional elite. The *Tshongdu* is composed of;

1. The monastic representatives;
2. The government official body, and
3. The people's representatives for a period of three years.

Any non-convicted Bhutanese of 25 years and above can be a member of the *Tshongdu*. The Speaker, elected from among the *Chimis* (members), is normally a senior and respected state functionary, and it is he, who convenes two regular annual sessions in spring and autumn. The *Tshongdu* members have complete freedom of speech "in the assembly" and can decide on any aspect of the Bhutanese life. All such resolutions require a two-thirds majority and the final seal of approval from the king. It is empowered to (i) enact laws; (ii) approve senior appointments in the Government, and (iii) advice the king on all the important matters of national significance. The king makes all the significant appointments to the functionaries of the state, approval of the *Tshongdu* is duly obtained (Winderl. 2004).

Salaries of the state officials and Privy Purse of the king have been discussed and approved on the floor of the assembly. Normally it is the king, who in his opening

⁴⁰ Like the National Assembly (NA), the Royal Advisory Council was a tripartite institution. Consisting of eight Members, five being elected by the NA, two by the monastic bodies, and one nominated by the King, it was clearly design to ensure the tradition of consensus in the new polity.

address to the assembly, provides the members with the major issues, policies, programs for internal administration, welfare and development or the external, diplomatic, political and commercial relationships. It left to them; the members spend their energy in raising the issues relating to their own constituencies or as a victim of administrative and political inexperience, they remain in eloquent silence. In spite of the above limitations, the *Brug-rgyalpo* and the *Tshongdu* were rightly claimed to be the 'dual' sovereign powers of the land (Pattanaik, 1998).

The 1953 Constitution provided for ten members of the monk bodies, ten from the officials and 110 from the representatives of the people. This number was raised to 150 in 1960 by adding 20 more members from bureaucracy. In fact, there is no fixed number of seats in the *Tshongdu*, and, in fact, the number varies from 140 to 150. As it is not intended to be a democratically elected representative body, there is no 'Election Commission' to conduct the election. However, a limited input of electoral practice is being introduced progressively. The *Dorji Lopon* (the second in command to the *rje-Khan-po*) and representative of the central monk body at Thimphu/Punakha⁴¹, two monk representatives to the Royal Advisory Council and six representatives of the regional monastic bodies represent the *Chho* (religion) in the *Tshongdu*. The king appoints the Advisory Councillors, directors and secretaries of various departments, regional civil servants like the *Dzongdas*, the *Thrimpons*, *Ramjams* and even the *Nyerchens* as members of the assembly, who number about 40 (Dhakal, 1999).

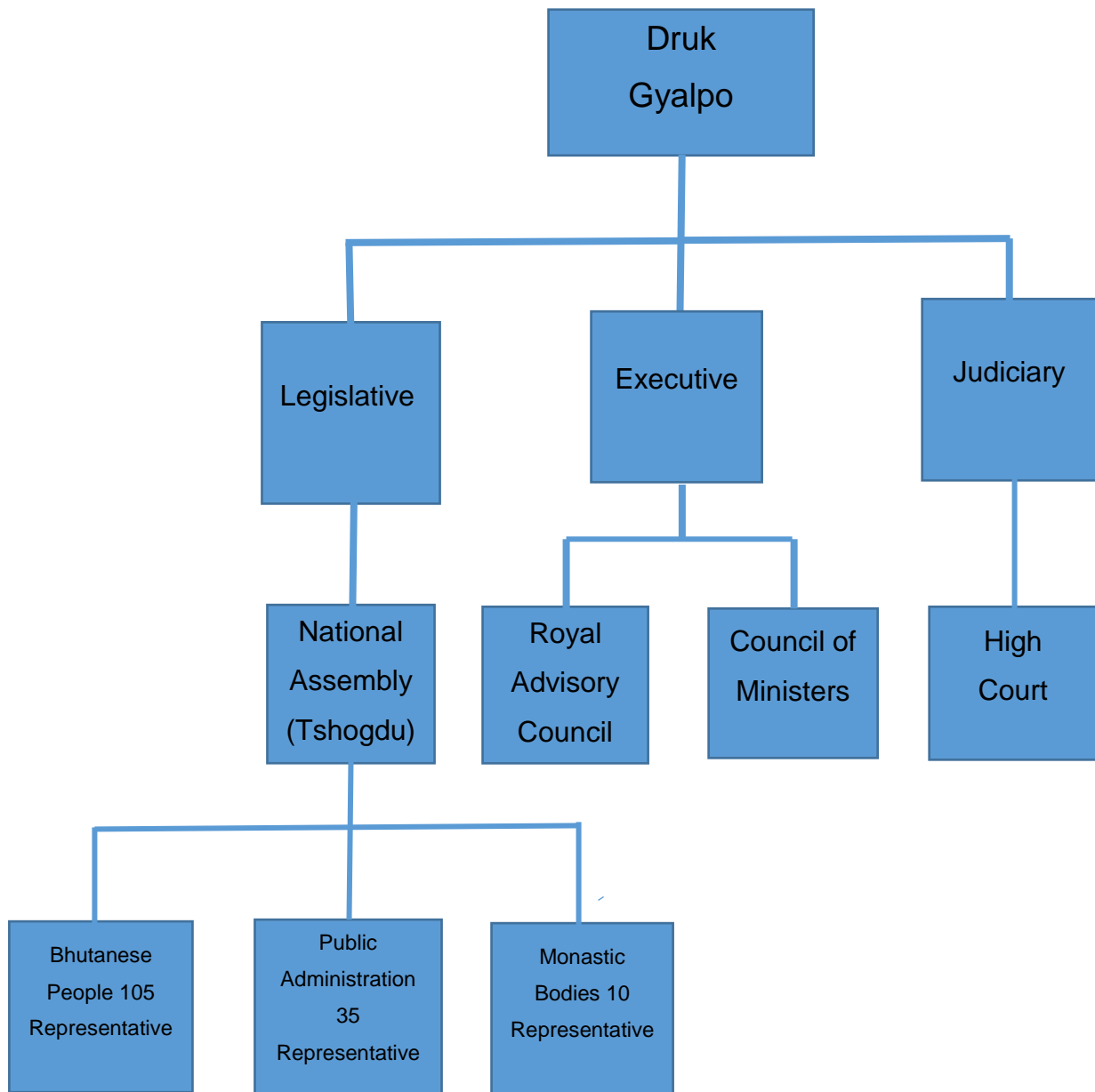
The intricate procedure evolved to elect the people's representatives as this category constitutes a new element in the decision-making process of the country. In fact, the entire country has been divided into fourteen elective districts to elect about a hundred of the *Chimis*. Let's example, in 1976 Punakha, Gasa and Verna Gatshals elected three members each, while Ha and Jakar elected four each for the *Tshongdu*. Similarly, Faro had five, Thimphu six, Wangdiphodrang seven, Daga eight, Mongar ten, and eleven seats each for Shemgang, Tashigang, Samchi and Sarbhang were allocated. The list of the elected members included only thirteen

⁴¹ How to Reform a Traditional Buddhist Monarchy. The Political Achievements of His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuk, the fourth King of Bhutan (1972-2006). Available at [http://www.bhutanstudies.Org.bt/admin/pub/Files/Traditio nalMonarchy.pdf](http://www.bhutanstudies.Org.bt/admin/pub/Files/Traditio%20nalMonarchy.pdf). Accessed on 27 Feb, 2017.

Lhotshampas. Befitting the folk tradition of the country, villages are grouped to institute a constituency for the *Tshongdu* (Sinha, 2001).

Then for the *Lhotshampas* settled southern Bhutan, every head of the household is entitled to one vote for electing representatives in an open gathering at a village, in which the state officials conduct. In such a situation, the relevant question is not how representative a body the *Tshongdu* is regarding population, community or region, but what purpose does it serve in the placid body politic of Bhutan? Its most significant at a time when Bhutan had undertaken a massive task of development programs was to collect and articulate elite from among the legitimatising (ideological), the executive (the officials) and the actual implementing (subjects) bodies. Together. The *Tshongdu*, as the collective body of the monks, officials, and the people, is the real and the only effective national forum, which could be influenced, advised, directed, manipulated and even exploited as the representative one (Mathou, 1999).

Figure 3. 2- The Political System of Bhutan as Established by the Third Druk Gyalpo



Source: Marian Gallenkamp. (2010). Democracy in Bhutan: An analysis of constitutional change in a Buddhist Monarchy. Pp 8.

The fourth Wangchuk ruler made epoch-making edict on the eve of the 76th session of the *Tshongdu* in July 1998 by which he surrendered part of his sovereignty in favour of the *Tshongdu*. Now the *Tshongdu* will elect Council of Ministers to administer the State and even remove the King with two-thirds votes. The Royal edict stated: "To further enhance and strengthen our system of

government, it is my wish and request to the members of the National Assembly to adopt a practice to register a vote of no-confidence by the National Assembly would require His Majesty, the Druk Gyalpo to abdicate in favour of the Crown Prince or the next in line in succession of the Golden Throne."⁴² The members of the Assembly urged the King to revoke the edict (Rustomji, 1978). The King remained unmoved by the fervent pleas and further impressed upon the House to support the edict. The Speaker of the Assembly termed the edict as "the command of the King is heavier than the mountains and more precious than gold" and urged the members to support the edict. Once the National Assembly accepted the edict, the King expressed himself: "I have seriously contemplated these changes for many years and have proposed them keeping in mind the national interest and the well-being of the Bhutanese people" (Mathou, 1999).

3.3.4 Fourth King: Jigme Singye Wangchuk: The Head of the Dragon Kingdom (1972-2006)

The Jigme Singye Wangchuk king acceded to the throne on the expiry of his father in 1972, while he was 17 years old. As the prince of the crown, he was steeped in the affairs of the state under the guidance of his father. For some time, at least up to 1985, he appeared to continue with the policies pursued by his father. The merger of Sikkim with India in 1975 with open support from the Indian Nepalese made 20 years old *Druk gyalpo* worried about the future role of *Lhotshampas* in Bhutan (Pattanaik.1998.).He pursued the policy of ethnic integration more vigorously through a series of populist programs.The *Lhotshampas* were helped to get educated and were provided with significant positions in the administration. But it does not remain for long. The GNLF's (Gorkha National Liberation Front, a Darjeeling-based Nepali outfit), violent movement in Darjeeling, spilt over to the *Lhotshampas*, and now it was difficult for the Druk Gyalpo to ignore the rising expectations of the *Lhotshampas* for an aggressively participative political program. What resulted in since 1985 is an exodus of the *Lhotshampas* to the refugee camps, vandalism of settlements, properties, assaults, suppression and other types of human misery (Mathou, 1999).

⁴² Translation of the proceedings and resolutions of the 76th session of the National Assembly of Bhutan held from the fifth day of the fifth month to the seventh day of the sixth month of the male earth tiger year (June 29th to July 30th, 1998).

The fourth Wangchuk ruler sustained to his father's ethnic policy of integration and institutional modernisation up to 1985, in which incorporation and accommodation were stressed along with the continuity of the *Drukpa* traditionalism. It was rumoured that once more the Dorjis were back to their old glory as the wielders of the power behind the throne. The former asylum seekers were brought back home from Nepal and permitted to rehabilitate themselves in power politics of Bhutan. The Tashi Commercial Corporation owned by a maternal uncle of the King emerged as the barometer of the affluence in the country. So much so that it was reported that a Dorji girl, a niece of the queen mother, was destined to be the next queen of Bhutan, a development which was taken to be a normal development.

The conservative section of Bhutan represented those elements, which are said to have conspired against developments. The clout of the Dorjis was reportedly in conflict with the aspirations of an up-coming business house from Punakha. So much so that this Punaka family provided the royal consorts to the ruler of Bhutan in 1988 (Rizal 2004). The refugee camps claim that the influence of the family has consequently increased in the commercial and administrative circle of the country at the cost of the Dorjis. As this risk in the southern districts of the country, an aggressive ethnic policy was pursued, which alienated the *Lhotshampas* and indirectly decreased the influence of the Dorjis (ibid).

It seems that Bhutan was leaving the integrationist ethnic policy and had withdrawn to the *Drukpa* traditionalism. Privileges, facilities, and incentives provided to the *Lhoishampas* have been withdrawn; an aggressive Drukpa code of conduct (*Driglam Namza*) is being imposed, and an uncompromising public dress code is demanded from all the Bhutanese (Rizal 2004). After, the king who could be approached directly in the past, is more inaccessible to the people, as he is no more the head of the administration. The new set of administrators (the Council of Ministers) has an image of Lhotshampa baiters. In such situation, ethnic reconciliation does not appear to be a good policy, and withdrawal to an all *Drukpa* exclusive policy appears to be on the cards. However, one must give credit to the king that he did experiment with some populist and paternalist programs. Among them, we discuss only the District Development Council (DYT) and Graduate Orientation Programme (Mathou, 1999).

3.4 Accelerated Democratic Reform

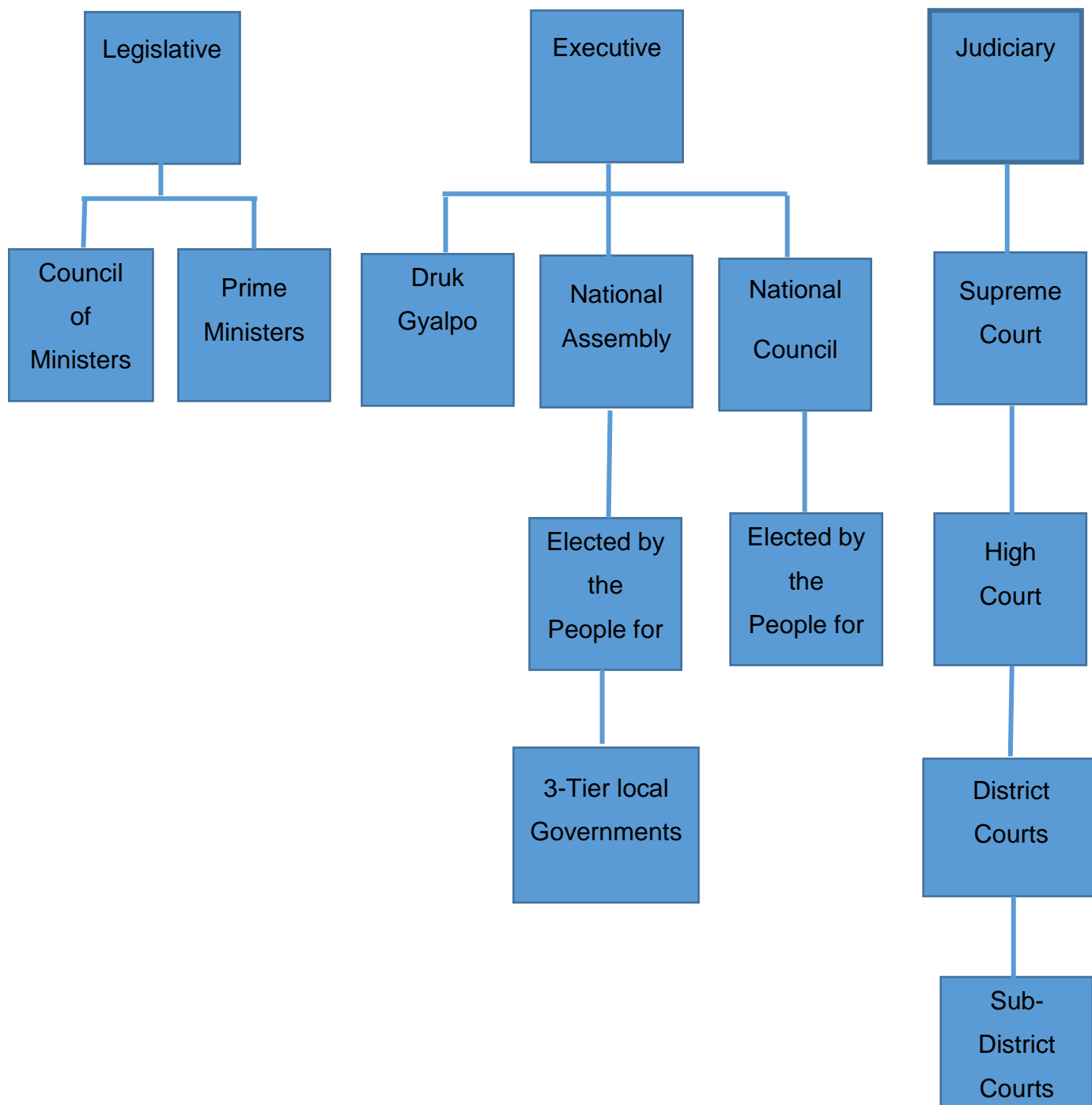
The grave changes in the system of the executive combined with the reintroduction of the King's responsibility in relation to the Parliament and by implication, the people, were only the first steps in a broad agenda of political reformation, declared by King Jigme Singye Wangchuk. Reforms were directed to bringing the administration and bureaucracy in accordance with democratic rules, granting more civil liberties, which finally led to the making of the first written constitution in Bhutanese history.

In 1999, television and the Internet were introduced, modern means of information that had been forbidden before. Along with the Bhutan Information Communications and Media Act 27⁴³ of 2006, the possibilities for the people to receive independent information had increased considerably. After the Act had been implemented in the National Assembly, two new independent broadcasting corporations and two newspapers were introduced, opposing the superiority of *Kuensel*, the state-run daily newspaper.

In March 2005, after three years of efforts, the first document of the new constitution was officially laid out. Members of the Royal Family and the Monarch himself extensively visited the country, introduced the Constitution to the people, 30 and discussed their problems. This makes possible the people's suggestions and concerns to be taken into account during the finalization of the constitution. In December the same year, the King declared that the first democratic elections at the national level would take place in 2008 and that he would then renounce in favour of his son, the Crown Prince. This public announcement marked the culmination of the modernization and transformation of Bhutan's political structure to democracy.

⁴³ All Acts of Law recently approved by the National Assembly and referred to in this section can be found at http://www.bhutan.gov.bt/government/acts.php?av_id=0. Accessed on 13 Feb, 2017.

Figure 3. 3- Structure of the Political System of Bhutan



Source: Marian Gallenkamp. (2010). Democracy in Bhutan: An analysis of constitutional change in a Buddhist Monarchy. Pp 14.

In 2006, the Electoral Commission of Bhutan was established, and it began to prepare for the general elections in 2008 through voter education, promotion of

political awareness and organizing the conduct of the elections. On 14 December 2006, Monarch Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the fourth *Druk Gyalpo*, surprisingly declared his immediate renouncing the throne. "It was the first time in world history that a monarch, who was initially vested with absolute powers, voluntarily reduced the scope of these powers and eventually abdicated with no other reason than his own dedication to political reforms. "His heir Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk took over the official responsibilities but postponed his coronation until after the elections and the passing of the new constitution (Mathew, 2006).

This might be explained as an indication of his commitment to his father's political legacy and also to illustrate that there were more significant things to achieve for Bhutan than enthroning a new Emperor, thus reflecting the new power system and relations in a changing political system (Phuntsho, 2008). Even if only symbolic, this can be considered the first achievement of the new King. The second significant achievement of the new Monarch was the re-consideration and renegotiation of the Friendship Treaty with India. Having settled its boundaries and relations with the People's Republic of China, Bhutan now needs political independence from India. In February 2007, a new friendship treaty was formed, basically resembling the previous one of 1949 with the exception that Bhutan now achieved absolute power over its foreign policy (Wolf, 2012). In June 2007, the ban on political parties was removed to allow for their formation in the face of the upcoming elections.

4. Constitutionalizing the Ethnic Conflict in Bhutan: Nepalese Perspective

4.1 Introduction

Bhutan has a multi-faceted and multi-dimensional society having religious, linguist, and ethnic distinctions. Bhutan has been conceived as the most-happiest state; notwithstanding its entrapping in the ethnic conflict. The *Lhotshampa* ethnic, who has been migrated from Nepal long back, presently have been discriminated in several ways by the present political system. The *Lhotshampa* has become a bone of contention between Bhutan and Nepal. The *Lhotshampa* has become refugees to whom neither Bhutan nor Nepal has been ready to accept them as citizens. In this backdrop, it has become one of the serious South Asian ethnic conflicts. Now the question is what ethnic conflict is?

Ethnic conflicts can also be understood in terms of those conflicts, that has been taking place between two or more ethnic minorities and majorities, or simply one can say the conflict between minorities versus majority. Yagcioglu (1996), has acknowledged that these conflicts used to remain more or less inflexible. As these conflicts can be resolved for a period, but it may or may not has permanent resolution given the discrimination or blocking the satisfaction of other party's regarding their claims. The ethnic groups are usually minorities, who perceive that their identity is not respected and recognized. Apart from identity question, they used to remain apprehensive of the given fewer opportunities for development, challenges to their culture and even sometimes their very existence. Whereas on the other hand, the majorities, may also perceive the minorities as a challenge to their security, opportunities, development and many more other rights essential for the better life. Since Bhutan is multi-ethnic society, the *Lhotshampa* (a Nepalese origin), has been feeling discriminated given the various political and social policies of the Bhutanese government. Hence, it has been entrapped in an ethnic conflict. In this, an attempt has been made to examine the ethnic conflict.

4.2 Ethnic Conflict: A Conceptualization

Why has such a conflicting situation emerged in Bhutan? Where did the Royal Government of Bhutan fail? Why did the Nepalese immigrants fail in assimilating themselves into the Bhutanese culture? Does Bhutan face a threat to its identity?

These are some of the issues which need careful and deeper analysis. In the following pages some of the issues which are apparently responsible for the present ethnic conflict in Bhutan have been taken up.

4.2.1 The Concept of Ethnicity

The word ethnicity derived from Greek word *ethnos*, which in turn derived from the word *ethnikos*, originally means heathen and pagan (Eriksen, 2002). In the general usage, the word ethnicity is rounded by the concept of “minority issues” and “race relations,” (Ratcliff, 1994). In social anthropology, it refers to a group who consider themselves and regarded by others, as being culturally distinctive (Baqai, 2004). The discourse of which concerning with ethnicity tends to concern itself with sub-national units or minorities, but majorities and dominant groups are also no less ethnic than the minority. When explaining the word ethnicity, one indicates that groups and identity have developed through interaction rather than isolation. A certain question like, what kind of relationship called the ethnic relationship; whether it could be the religious contact, cultural or lingual contact; How do we describe an ethnic group; what is the basic feature of ethnicity are important to be discussed?

The distinctive culture, religion, language, and technology does not entail the features of ethnicity; it does not pose that there is an ethnic relationship among them. For ethnicity, it is necessary that the group have some contacts and they must entertain the ideas of each other as being culturally different from themselves. There are some groups, who may seem culturally similar, but there can be an inter-ethnic relationship between them (Ratcliff, 1994). The cultural variation may consider as important, only if there is the ethnic element in the social relationship. The social relationship between the members who consider themselves culturally different from the member of another group with whom they have a regular interaction is considered as the ethnic aspect (Eriksen, 2002). The ethnic element in the social relationship needs that the cultural difference should regularly make the differences in their interaction with the members of other groups.

The term ethnicity has come across or interrelated with the term nationalism; the phenomenon ethnicity and nationalism have become so visible in many societies, and it became impossible to ignore them (Ausenda, 1997). In the early 20th century, ethnicity and nationalism have grown in political importance in the world, especially since the World War-II. In many parts of the world, nation-building

- the creation of political cohesion and national identity in former colonies - is high on the political agenda. Ethnic and national identities also become strongly pertinent following the continuous influx of labour migrants and refugees to Europe and North America, which has led to the establishment of new, permanent ethnic minorities in these areas.

The relationship between ethnicity and nationalism is also complex as in the case of ethnicity and race (Ausenda, 1997). Like ethnicity, nationalism also stresses on the cultural similarity with its adherent, and by implication, it draws boundaries with others, who thereby become outsiders. The nationalist holds on the political boundaries should be coterminous with the cultural boundaries, whereas, many ethnic groups do not demand command over the state (Eriksan, 2002). When the Political leaders of an ethnic movement place demand to this effect, the ethnic movement therefore on definition became a nationalist movement.

4.2.2 Ethnic Conflict

Since there is a lot of diversity in term of religious, linguist and cultural existing among the countries. It has resulted in ethnic conflict in several parts of the world like Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Bhutan are the examples of the ethnic conflicts. Now the question is, what is an ethnic conflict? In order to understand this, an attempt has already been made to give an understanding of the concept of ethnicity.

Several scholars (Jayaram & Saberwal, 1996 and Gove, 1976) have argued that the word conflict usually refers to a fight, collision, struggle, or clashing given the opposite ideas, interests, principles, wills etc. It usually turns into the disagreement or incompatibility. On the other hand, a scholar like Imobighe (2003) had defined the conflict, "As a condition of disagreement in an interaction and usually occurs as a result of a clash of interest between the parties involved in some form of relationship." The University for Peace conceptualised the conflict may be a fight or possible confrontation between two and more parties seeking the incompatible or competitive means or ends. A number of scholars (Goodhand, 1999; Kolbo, 1964; and Coser, 1956) have conceived conflict as a struggle for values or claims to status, power and scarce resource between individuals or collectives, in which involved individual/group seek/s to counterbalance, injure or eliminate their rivals.

Seeing the nature of the conflict, the ethnic conflicts can be conceived as one particular form of such conflicts. The goals of such conflicts generally defined in ethnic terms (exclusively), in which fundamentally, the pivot of confrontation is ethnic distinctions in terms of the political, social, economic and religious basis. Whenever the ethnic conflict emerges, at least one of the parties suffers some discriminations in ethnic terms. That party will claim that given the discrimination that cannot realize its socio-economic, religious and even some time political interests. Against this background, they usually raise the questions that why they are not enjoying the same rights as the other or why their human and civil rights are not satisfied. Wolf (2006) has argued in such a backdrop that the ethnic conflict can be conceived as a form of group conflict, where at least one of the ethnic groups involved, interprets the conflict, its causes, and potential remedies. As per the studies of scholars (Hizkias, 1996; Ahmed, 2003) in simple terms, 'ethnic conflict has come to mean cleavages between groups based on differentiation in ethnic identities.' When a group of people attacks or target for fighting some other group of people because of their membership in the certain ethnic group we can simply call it ethnic conflict.

4.3 The Geneses of Ethnic Conflict in Bhutan

Bhutan goes through a continuous history of ethnic conflicts. After a long time of conflict between Tibetan and Indian political tendencies and religious tensions among Tibetan and Indian Buddhist sub-sects, *Shabdrung* Thu then Nawang Namgyal unified the nation under a theocratic liberal government in the seventeenth century (Rizal, 2004). From then until 1907, Bhutan is ruled by a double system of common civil and spiritual (Buddhist) governance, and the Drukpa sub-sect raised under the Shabdrung family as the major religious force. In 1907, an absolute monarchy held the country under the mighty Wangchuck dynasty, with Ugyen Wangchuck in the status of Druk Gyalpo, or Dragon King. Traditional Bhutanese society did not distinguish between social, political, and religious systems. Bhutanese people were traditionally tribal in the social order, *Lamaist* in a religious order and medieval in their overall system of organization (Rizal, 2004). These historical traditions have now been overshadowed, but they have provided a prestigious heritage upon the contemporary country.

Strong Tibetan impacts over the locale of national power and superior Buddhist order are the causes of ethnic and religious struggle as Nepalese, and people with Indian origins and religion had settled in Bhutan (Upreti, 1996). Nepali people can be traced to the era of Shabdrung reign. There are regular citations in historical literature to the movement of Nepali craftsmen to Bhutan during the rule of Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyel in the seventeenth century, although at the present time it seems that no Lhotshampa clan can find its roots that far. During late-nineteenth century, the Gurung and the Dorjee families were permitted by the government to settle these people in southern Bhutan. In 1887, the then King of western Bhutan in Paro collectively accorded Garjaman Gurung and his father Dalchan Gurung settlement rights in sempiternity to today's Samchi. In the last ten years of the nineteenth century and first few years of the twentieth century, other Nepali settlers inhabited the present district of Chirang, which was governed by the Dorjee family from Haa in western Bhutan, who were Indians (Hutt, 2003).

In 1909, John Claude White, British India's Political Officer for Sikkim and Bhutan, pointed out that the remaining settlers are Paharias⁴⁴ the same as in Sikkim, who are sneaking along the foothills and organized a considerable community covering the whole length of Bhutan where the outer hills have connected the plains of India. Except for Hindu Paharias, Buddhism is the religion practised in Bhutan (Upreti, 1996). In 1932, a British officer claimed to be 60,000 Nepali-speaking people in the southwest of Bhutan. Lhotsampa who came from Nepal to Bhutan deforested in Samchi and Chirang and burned to flame the Gaylegphug and Samdrupjonkhar regions for farmland (Muni, 1991). These regions were highly forested and had been seen as unsuitable for deforesting by the Drukpa because of the lands' malarial situation.

From the time of arriving in southern Bhutan, the Lhotsampa have mostly retained their mother-tongue, religion and other features of the traditional social system. The way of life of Lhotsampa thus differs completely from the other major ethnic clans. During the monarchical governance, the seeds of ethnic tension have been seen in Bhutan from the 1950s. The Lhotsampas have desired an equitable part of Bhutan's economic and political order and established the Bhutan State

⁴⁴ The hill people of Nepal are generally referred to as Paharias. The Lhotsampa migrated to Bhutan from various Hilly regions of Nepal.

Congress in 1952 which is Bhutan's first political party. The Bhutan State Congress comes up with manifestos for democratization, asking for citizenship rights and political representation for Lhotsampa people (Evans, 2010).

The Ngalung minority group saw this change as a threat to its domination over Bhutan and still called this process as 'the first anti-national revolt.' In an accommodation policy, the Bhutan National Assembly ordained the Nationality Law in 1958 and provided Bhutanese citizenship to Nepali settlers. King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck (1952–72), the third Emperor of the Wangchuk family, was aware of the multiple nature of Bhutanese society and the infliction of Drukpa domination on the nation's political, social and cultural systems (Dorji, 2008). He tried to direct the nation in a limited way towards secularization. This was an important step which gives the intricate nature of Bhutan's socio-economic, socio-political and socio-religious moulds and the status of the Emperor in Bhutanese society.

The present king Jigme Singye Wangchuck has directed the country in a different direction. He started his rule with some actions that were in accordance with those of his father. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, he built Hindu temples and Sanskrit Pathshala in southern Bhutan among many measures for national incorporation (Pattanaik, 1998). From the late 1980s, national policy was given a complete turn, with the reaffirmation of Drukpa control and the Emperor apparently providing the Drukpa with his endorsement or at least his approval. Some features of the Drukpa Kargupa sect of Buddhism were accepted in national policy as the essence of the nation's religion, values, symbols, legend, lore, and material and abstract forms of heritage were enforced on other ethnicities as the Bhutanese national heritage (Shina, 2001). In the 1980s, the Bhutanese governing class, believing their identity endangered by assimilation of an emerging Nepalese minority proclaimed a cultural policy of driglam namzha, national customs and etiquette.

The governmental policies tried to maintain and develop Bhutanese cultural identity and support Bhutanese nationalism. For instance, the policy authorized wearing national dress for formal events and needed the Lhotsampa to go through months of training in Drukpa traditional manners and dress as essential requirements for jobs. It came with a change in language policy, demanding the use of the official language, Dzongkha, in schools and offices. In 1989, teaching Nepali as a choice-based language in schools was forbidden. Further government declares

intensified tension with ethnic Nepalese, who tried to retain their own identity and saw these changes as oppressive (Shina, 2001). Against such backdrop, the ethnic conflict continues to grow as the consequence of Nepal's pro-democracy movement pervaded in Bhutan, where Nepalese groups protested the government in order to protect their rights from the driglam namzha and 'one Nation, one People, and one Policy.' Political parties in Nepal and exiled Nepalese groups in India culturally and morally are in favour of these anti-government, repressive movements, which further isolated the Lhotsampa people in Bhutan (Rizal, 2015).

The government in Bhutan has exploited regional and ethnic divisions between north, east and south and has enhanced differences between Buddhist traditions. This type of 'divide and rule' through the ethnic manipulation of the Bhutanese population has forced ethnic Lhotsampa in Bhutan to endure humiliation and adversity (Riggs, 1980). National incorporation programmes had applied in the 1980s to foster the unity and mutual cooperation between these diverse ethnic communities. As the motto 'One Nation, One People' means, government policies sought directly to bring together all ethnic groups into a single cultural pattern. They were to enhance national incorporation and integration, national psyche and consciousness and national identity to greatly reform the Bhutanese society and national identity with Drukpa morals, values and traditions. The government ventured here on a policy of what Smith has termed 'vernacular mobilization,' where the 'genuine membership' of the ethnic country was to be re-educated in the 'true culture, the pristine cultural norms of their forefathers, pure from the contact with modern civilization (Smith, 1986).

The policies followed by the Bhutanese government in pursuit of one nation and one people, by which the cultural, political, social and economic marginalization of the Lhotsampa have been increased exponentially. Lhotsampa reciprocated against this move with peaceful democratic movement to have the newly enforced laws to be replaced with more balanced and humane laws. But instead of providing the dissenters with a sympathetic hearing and trying to solve their grievances, a ruthless national government harshly responded to the demonstrators. It conducted a chain of arrests and cruelties against the Lhotsampa and forcefully expelled them from their homes and land. As the violence and cruelties grow, the Lhotsampa began to leave Bhutan in order to save their lives, even though they had settled in

Bhutan for ages. Problems concerning immigration, population growth, cultural unity and individual liberty coalesced in the elites' rivalry toward the Lhotsampa (Shina, 2001). As a consequence, contemporary Bhutan endures problems caused by ethnonationalism which blend ethnicity with social, political, cultural and religious elements and generate some acts of violence. The efforts for democratic reforms from inside and outside of Bhutan has further intensified the problems facing the ruling class.

4.4 Politics of Ethnic Conflict: Constitutionalizing the Conflict

As the above-discussed issues reveal, the reasons for the current ethnic tensions in Bhutan are complicated greatly entrenched in religion, ethnicity, citizenship, and language. This tension is very much a result of socio-economic and political discriminations and changes in Bhutan since the 1980s. Specifically, from the late 1980s, the ruling classes have manipulated state institutions to set up the trappings of the Drukpa Kargupa group in national identity (Rizal, 2004). They have manipulated political propaganda, scapegoating and exclusivist citizenship to demonize and make the Lhotsampa forcefully leave and acquire support from the Ngalung. But how could a tiny group of orthodox elites get hold over the tools of national power under the monarchical governance and reconstruct a theocracy?

The Bhutanese Government became particularly uneasy about the successful *Lhotshampa* community in the South. Being hard-working farmers close to Indian markets, the *Lhotshampa* had transformed the once disease-prone south of Bhutan into the granary of the entire country (Mathew, 1999). While southern Bhutan had almost all factories and necessary markets, the Ngalung-dominated north had only two resources: conifer timber and tourism (Giri, 2003). The realization that the south had become a potential economic base explains, in part, why the Ngalung elite turned against the *Lhotshampa* community. The Government of Bhutan has employed various methods to evict a large number of *Lhotshampa* people to achieve cultural, economic and political hegemony in favour of the *Ngalung* clergy.

During the 1970s the Bhutan Government sought to 'integrate' different ethnocultural groups through assimilation or intrigue. Soon after assuming the

throne in 1972, the King *Jigme Singye Wangchuck* initiated the National Council for Social and Cultural Promotion to create a homogeneous Bhutanese identity based on *Ngalung* cultural norms and values. For this reason, cash incentives were granted for mixed ethnic marriages (Giri, 2003). In practice, however, the economic incentives were aimed specifically at the *Lhotshampa* population, to alter the demographic structure of Bhutan in favour of the *Ngalung* (Bookman, 2002). The Government used these devious tactics against the ethnics like *Lhotsumpa* and other smaller groups.

In the early 1980s, the *Ngalung* rulers began to impose involuntary assimilation policies through the enactment of a series of laws (CEMARD–Bhutan, 2002). The Drukpa elites were the chief proponent to make changes in the movement and revive it sufficiently, and their action moves towards to keep the safe language, clothing, and custom of the elite. The movement seeks to reawaken *Drukpa Kargupa* faith former Drukpa customs and traditions such as *driglam-namzha*. According to one academic study of this type of policy, assimilation occurs under threat and duress as the dominant group strives to justify its leadership and consolidate its power base by rapidly increasing its numbers (Bookman, 1997). The Bhutan Marriage Act (1980), detailing laws for marriage with a non-national, effectively restricted matrimony from outside. Under this Act, a Bhutanese citizen who marries a foreigner is denied state support in the form of land, seeds, loans, livestock and health benefits. Other assistance from the government, including free school education, is also unavailable. The 1980 Act applies only to the *Lhotshampa*, not to other ethnic groups (Giri, 2003). Many *Ngalung* has Chinese or Western wives but does not have to comply. Five years later, a contentious Citizenship Act was introduced, which stipulates that Bhutanese citizens can lose their nationality if they leave their farmland or break the law (Hazarika, 2001). This was linked to the nationwide censuses mainly affecting the *Lhotshampa* community, which is discussed below.

In 1987, Bhutan started its sixth Five Year Plan, proclaiming the concept of *driglam-namja* or 'one nation, one people.' The Council of Ecclesiastic Affairs (*Dratshang Lhentshog*) had been formed in 1984 and embarked on a program of expanding Buddhist customs and rituals. During the national religious ceremonies of collective blessing and prayer, monks are exhorted to become models for society.

In 1989, the monastic establishment re-imposed the 1970s regulation that civil officials wear a traditional *Ngalung* dress while on duty, according to *driglam-namja* (Giri, 2003). The dress code required all citizens to wear *gho* (a knee-length robe for men) and *kira* (ankle-length dress for women) in places like *dzong* (fortress monasteries now used as centers of district administration), Government offices and schools, Drukpa religious places and at official functions and public congregations (Hutt, 1996). At first, the dress code was required in government offices only but soon applied in all schools, even in *Pathshala*, that provides informal education in traditional Hindu and Sanskrit. Thus, everyone, including children, has to wear the *gho* or *kira* or face a cash penalty and imprisonment (Giri, 2003). This is particularly inconvenient for the *Lhotshampa*, as the *gho* and *kira*, are made of thick fabric and are unsuitable in the tropical climate of southern Bhutan.

The *Ngalung* authorities have carried out some censuses and population projections during the past two decades, each time revealing discrepancies (Hazarika, 2001). The census of 1978 stated that Bhutan had one million inhabitants, and it was estimated at 1,451,000 a decade later. The 1988 census focused mainly on southern Bhutan, and it was stipulated that a person should have arrived in Bhutan at the latest by 10 June 1955 to qualify for citizenship under the 1985 Citizenship Act. In practice, this was targeted against the *Lhotshampa* community, in order to drastically reduce their representation in the national population (Bookman, 1997).

In 1988 the Government officially declared that there were around 100,000 illegal immigrants in the work-force, whereas the World Bank's 1982 estimate reported that some 35,000 non-Bhutanese citizens were working in various parts of Bhutan. In July 1992, Bhutan announced that the total population stood at 660,167. A year later, however, a 'revised figure' reduced the total population to 657,548 (Hutt, 1996). Subsequent unofficial estimations vary between 800,000 to two million. In order to show that the *Ngalung* constitute the majority, the authorities have also included the *Sharchop* people in their group under the 'Drukpa category.' According to this argument, the Sarchhop people share the same cultural values as the *Ngalung*. Moreover, the Government has often employed censuses to show that either the *Ngalung* are the majority or that they are the threatened group. On the one hand, they have made it impossible to declare the proportion of the total

population that is or was Nepali speaking (Giri, 2003). On the other hand, in 1953, the government calculated the *Lhotshampa* population at 25 percent of the total population, which remains the same today. It blames the *Lhotshampa* community for providing a safe haven for illegal Nepal's from Nepal or India. It also alleges that they have the highest birth rate, boosting the national average to 3.1 percent per year.

About 17 percent of Bhutan's current population is under five years old and 45 percent under 15 years. If this youthful age structure and the high birth rate of 3.1 percent is extrapolated, the population is predicted to double every 23 years, resulting in an immense pressure on the scarce arable land and the fragile mountain ecosystem (Hazarika, 2001). However, the *Ngalung* authorities claim Bhutan has one of the highest population growth rates in South Asia because the *Lhotshampa* is a polygamous race and a *Lhotshampa* household with three or four wives and a dozen or 15 children is quite common. Such statements reveal cultural bias or even racist attitudes (Stavenhagen, 1997). Moreover, the *Lhotshampa* community consists of diverse sub-races and religions, but they share the same language: Nepali. The Bhutanese authorities view the *Lhotshampa* as a single racial group which seems to pose a threat to the *Ngalung*.

In 1991, Bhutan's Foreign Minister was reported as saying that "the Nepalese have been settling down in our southern plains from the 17th century; we welcomed them because they were hard-working people, but they cannot swamp us." In 1993, a government's spokesperson made a contradictory statement that there was no Nepali presence in Bhutan prior to the 20th century (Hazarika, 2001). An enduring feature of the *Ngalung* traditionalists' *anti-Lhotshampa* rhetoric is that the ethnic Nepali have a grand plan to render the *Ngalung* a minority in their 'own country' a claim that relies heavily on asserting that the fertility rate of *Lhotshampa* is significantly higher than that of the *Ngalung* (Jeffery & Jeffery, 2002). They also argue that many of the *Lhotshampa* are illegal Nepali immigrants from Nepal or India. Since the families of the elite are likely to be more affluent than members of the ethnocultural minorities and because fertility reflects economic status and educational levels, it would not be surprising if *Lhotshampa* women had a higher fertility rate than those of the *Ngalung* (King, 2002).

Population control has been one of the key political issues in Bhutan. In 1980 the *Ngalung* Government imposed compulsory birth control. If a couple has more than two children, one of them must undergo an operation, such as a laparotomy or a vasectomy. It is compulsory to register births with the local village chief (Hazarika, 2001). As soon as a couple has a third child, the village chief reports to the district medical officer, who arranges an operation. *Lhotshampa* children do not enjoy the same medical provisions as those of the *Ngalung* regarding health prevention and treatment. These drastic birth control measures discriminate against the minorities and contravene human rights (Gautam, 2003). The Government also focuses on the role and status of the Dzongkha language in national life.

The 1985 Citizenship Act states that a person who is either 21, or one who is 15 years old and either of whose parents is a Bhutanese citizen, can be naturalized if the following additional criteria are met: 20 years of residence in Bhutan for the former or 15 for the latter (in addition, the period of residence must be in the census records); a good knowledge of Bhutan's history, culture, religion, customs and tradition; the ability to speak, read and write *Dzongkha*; a good moral character and no criminal record of imprisonment; and no record of disloyalty to the King, country and people (Hazarika, 2001). Local officials and school staff in southern Bhutan have to attend *Dzongkha* classes. The teaching in/of Nepali language was suspended, and Nepali curricular disappeared from schools after the commencement of the school year in March 1990 (Giri, 2003). This was a complete reversal of the policy of 1960, which had encouraged teaching Nepali and Sanskrit as well as sending *Lhotshampa* students abroad for higher education (Rizal, 2015). For the *Ngalung* elite, language policy is important in the process of ethnic and cultural change. Thus, Dzongkha was declared as the only national language of Bhutan, and the Nepali language was downgraded (Bookman, 1997).

The Bhutanese Government demands unpaid compulsory labour from its people throughout the year, irrespective of age and gender (Bookman, 1997). It has instituted four forms of labour service mandatory for every citizen. The 16th session of the National Assembly held in July 1961 passed a law authorizing the police to use force against people refusing to serve. If the Government has a construction project in a village or community, such as a school, bridge or medical centre, it mobilizes *sabto-leyme* (voluntary labourers). This work usually occupies 30 days or

more a year for each household, depending upon the type of project. Another kind of labour is performed by *dzongsey-leyme* (office cleaners) who have to clean the administrative headquarters (*dzongs*) or private homes of state officials and clergymen (Giri, 2004). This involves about a week to 15 days a year per household. In addition, in 1987 the *gyelyong-leyme* (National Work Force system was initiated) which requires people with very little land or unable to support themselves in their villages to register for work wherever available. These people are effectively lifelong labourers who received no provision for education, medical treatment, and insurance during the time of sickness, injury or death at work.

Finally, the Government introduced *gungdag-woola* (Household Labour) in 1988, requiring people to work for a daily payment of 25 *Nu* (€0.80) for men and 22 *Nu* (€0.70) for women (Gautam, 2003). Every year there are censuses in the villages, and people have to show that they have served as *gungdag-woola*. Otherwise, they lose their registration and, consequently, their nationality status. Significantly, rich people who are mostly *Ngalung* can hire a labourer to replace themselves or pay an amount directly to the authorities to avoid this annual duty (Hazarika, 2001). There are many other forms of indentured labour in Bhutan. For instance, when the government officials pay visits to districts or villages, people must provide a pony to carry them, transport personal luggage, cook food and entertain them. In the early 1990s, when Bhutan's armed forces were stationed in every district of southern Bhutan, military officers reportedly forced village headmen and others to provide local teenagers for sexual favours. Furthermore, since the mid-1990s, the *Lhotshampa* people have been forced to cultivate food and cash crops for the newly settled *Ngalung* from northern Bhutan (Gautam, 2003).

In late 1989, the government officially declared the 'green-belt' policy as one of the measures to eliminate malaria, which usually spreads from the slum areas of India. The fear of democratic ideas being transmitted from India by the *Lhotshampa* could have been the real motivation for the green-belt policy (Bookman, 1997). This involved clearing a kilometre-wide strip of land and planting trees along approximately 800 km of the border with India. Even though it seemed an attractive plan, it threatened the livelihoods of hundreds of *Lhotshampa* inhabitants in this densely populated area. Nevertheless, the Government ordered the *Lhotshampa* people whose homes and land fell within this strip to abandon it (Giri, 2004). A flat

rate of about 10,000 Nu (€322) was fixed for each acre of land, irrespective of its quality. When students, teachers and the general public began to appeal and demonstrate in September 1990, compensation for affected families was withdrawn, and those who had taken part in protests were forcibly evicted. In April 1994 the *Ngalung* authorities deported 284 *Lhotshampa* families from the villages of Denchuka and Mayona (Samtse District) alone (Gautam, 2003).

A *Lhotshampa* representative, Tek Nath Rizal, sent a formal letter to the Thimphu (Bhutanese) Government in April 1988, stating that the *Lhotshampa* people opposed their discriminatory policies. The government, however, argued that they had to deal with illegal immigrants and integrate all Bhutanese citizens under 'one national identity.' Subsequently, a small group of *Lhotshampa* took to the streets in September 1990 demanding basic human rights. The authorities dismissed these demands, and the police resorted to force and extreme methods to deal with the conflict (Giri, 2004). The *Ngalung* hardliners in the Government were successful in their campaign partly because ethnic Nepal's in India were demanding autonomy in the north-eastern Indian cities, such as Darjeeling, which borders Bhutan. In these regions, anti-Nepali feelings manifested themselves in the Bhumiputra (Sons of the Soil) movement in India, which persecuted inhabitants of Nepali origin, and the Burmese military regime's expulsion of small groups of Nepal's settled along its north-western frontier (Baruah, 2003). The Bhutan Government exploited these external political developments to suppress and eventually expel thousands of *Lhotshampa*. During this campaign, all kinds of verbal and physical abuse were used. For example, the security forces made people eat beef or pork, which is considered sacrilegious by most Brahmin and Chhetri Hindus (Giri, 2003). Eventually, a large number of *Lhotshampa* were forced to flee Bhutan.

Usually, the major political elements which contribute to ethnic tension came from the failure of the state to produce effective and just political institutions (Brown, 1997). Conflict and violence emerge from clashes of interest when institutional system denies just representation across society and grant control to some political personalities who ignore the voice of others with different requirements and priorities in distribution and redistribution of means and resources. Deliberate neglect of an ethnic group within the public or deliberate action to exclude or oppose an ethnic group by those who dominate the political system is powerful motivators for ethnic

tension. In Bhutan, we observe how from the late 1980s the government's approach changed from years of relative omission to proactive exclusion and suppression (Dhakal & Christopher 1994). Let us understand how these approaches are demonstrated in Bhutanese government policies and have heightened ethnic tension between the Bhutanese people in a bid to sustain the control of the Drukpa elite.

Bhutan 151-member of National Assembly, the southern Bhutanese have only 16 representatives, and only one of them is holding office as a Cabinet Minister. His Majesty, the Emperor of Bhutan, allowed the representation when he said in an interview, "In the south, the representation is not fair. Jigme Dorji Wangchuck established the National Assembly in 1953, no one had an idea about it, and nobody wanted it (Pattanaik, 1998). So, when he forced its creation, the seat representation was done on a temporary basis. The Emperor "is still not only the Head of the State but the ruler of the country, and the decision-making process continues to be focussed in the place" effect of paternalistic and populist postures try to endear the Emperor to some people. The young graduates of the National Voluntary Service are their selection, stipend, maintenance, guidance and ultimate awards, then postings, increments, prom." The lack of mass media for their interaction with the world outside has been systematically delimited. The censorship on satellite television contributes to the survival of the system.

The empower feudal features in policies can be revealed from the following points (Hofmann, 2006). The no-confidence movement in opposition to the King which was initially accepted during King Jigme Dorji's reign by the thirtieth National Assembly in 1969, was developed from two-thirds to 50 percent in the thirty-sixth National Assembly. The decision-making was exclusively controlled by the Thimpu 'boys' who, mostly paid little attention to the opinions of local leaders dispersed all over the nation or even their representatives in the National Assembly." The data of areawise representation in the civil services illuminates a partiality in favour of northern Bhutanese since the Lhotshampas are more literate than other Bhutanese. In twelve dzongkhags (district), there are 120 schools with 36,798 pupils, and admission ratio is 40%, in five southern dzongkhags and one dungkhag (sub-division) there are 80 schools, 31,054 pupils and admission ratio is 81 percent. In public services, the northern Bhutanese comprise 73.50 percent and the southern

Bhutanese 26.50 percent. Lhotshampas retain that "the top positions inevitably go to Drukpas" (Tang, 1998).

4.5 Peaceful Protests in Southern Bhutan

To get the justice and amicable solution to force out Bhutanese living at Garganda tea garden, in India, a political party, "Bhutan Peoples' Party" under the leadership of charismatic Lhotshampa Mr R.K. Burathoki,⁴⁵ was established on June 2, 1990. The party presented thirteen points to Emperor. Due to the lack of any reply from the Government, the protesters decided to conduct peaceful rallies in all the six related districts in southern Bhutan in August-September 1990. The protests were led by the Bhutan Peoples Party (BPP), The People's Forum for Human Rights (PFHR) and the Student's Union of Bhutan (SUB). The mass protestations at Gelephu (then called Gaylegphug) overtook the zonal administration headquarters and obligated the Chief Zonal Administration Officer, Dr Kinzang Dorji to carry the BPP party flag and lift it on in the office building.

In order to express their dissatisfaction, the Lhotshampas, in a strongly worded pamphlet, circulated as the voice of the oppressed people of Bhutan, asserted the ethnocultural distinction and superiority of the Nepalese settled in southern Bhutan. The pamphlet titled, The Gorkhui People of Southern Bhutan, Must Unite and Fight for our Rights stated:

Rather than adopt the Drukpa customs and dress we Gurkhas must insist that, as we are the majority, they the Drukpas must accept our customs and traditions. If this is not acceptable to them, then we must fight for our rights like the Tamils of Sri Lanka and like them we must call upon the support of our brothers and sisters in Nepal and India in our liberation struggle We the Gurkhas must all unite together and create another Gurkha state in Bhutan and extend the borders of Gurkha states along the Himalayas which has always been the rightful home of our people.⁴⁶

We the Gorkhas of Southern Bhutan are not only the majority but we also have seventeen million brothers and sisters in Nepal and over 10 million in India there is every possibility that the borders of the Gorkha state will join we Gorkhas must unite together and create another Gorkha state in Bhutan and

⁴⁵ Party founder and first leader R.K. Budathoki was assassinated in a small town called Damak that lies in Jhapa district of eastern Nepal and a few miles away from Beldangi refugee camps.

⁴⁶ Kinley Dorji, March 22-23. 1993 Bhutan's current crisis, a view from Thimphu: Presented at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, U.K.

extend the borders of Gorkha states along the Himalayas which has always been the rightful home of our people (ibid).

The government began the crackdown on protesters after mobilizing the militia. The government accused those peaceful protesters to be terrorists, economic migrants, anti-nationals, illegal migrants, etc. The security personnel took charge of the situation throughout the day and night. The security force threatened and imprisoned hundreds of innocent people, murdered many in jails by tormenting them, raped many women, burnt down many homes of Lhotshampa, seized gold, silver, citizenship Identity cards, valuable documents and Kashog (decree) and ordered them to evict country immediately (Tang, 1998).

Many scared Lhotshampas left the country mostly in the dark of the night. The people were forced to sign in 'Volunteer Migration' document at the respective district office and were told to leave Bhutan within a short period. Some of such Lotshampas sold their land along with other valuables to officials at a cheap price whereas other were expelled forcefully. From recent disclosure in books by the king's close aide and confidante, Lyonpo⁴⁷ Om Pradhan, the Emperor had granted carte blanche to Army, Militia, and police while dealing with (violent agitators). In an interview, in 1992, the then deputy Home Minister Lyonpo Dago Tshering, accepted to activities such as land seizure and purchase of land from 'emigrants' who were evicting the nation. According to him, "some of the officers of the Royal Bhutan Police and the security forces were also involved in purchasing land and houses".

The Government campaign in international assembly projecting Bhutan as the last bastion of Mahayana Buddhism in the entire world under danger of extinction from culturally different immigrants gained sympathizers. Foreign Minister, Lyonpo Dawa Tshering, initiated the debate in National Assembly of Bhutan and the international arena. He asserted that dissidents were following the Greater Nepal cause with the help of the Nepali diaspora in India and Nepal. He painted Bhutan/Drukpa as the 'endangered species' in the world. His boss, the Emperor, told Reuter's correspondent that "in the next 10, 15 or 20 years Bhutan will no longer be a Bhutanese nation (Tang, 1998). It will be a Nepali state just like Sikkim".

⁴⁷ It means Minister.

In January 1992, then, Foreign Minister Dawa Tshering, said that “radical groups like communist, leftist and Naxalites in India and Nepal were patronizing ‘terrorist’ against Bhutan.” The Government declared that protesting groups were backed up by their kin and kith across the borders. Protesters’ unions, on the other hand, wrote and published articles, leaflets, and booklets about the lack of human rights and democracy in Bhutan along with the misuse of human rights allegedly conducted by the government. In response to dissident claims, the Home Ministry published the graphic booklet about the murders, demolition of schools, hospitals, bridges allegedly carried out by the protesters (Pattanaik, 1998). The Home minister(Lyonpo Dago Tshering) reported: “73 murders, 63 rape, 64 vehicle hijacks, 31 vehicle destruction, 996 injuries due to ambush, and destructions of 12 clinics, 30 schools, 13 police stations, 21 forest offices and 16 bridges⁴⁸” caused by the protesters. Ironically, both parties published same images citing inhuman actions by the other side.

BPP reported that 190 peaceful demonstrators were executed at Sibsoo on September 21, 1990. On September 22, 60 more people were allegedly murdered at Pugli. The Royal Bhutan Police reportedly poisoned the river Diana at Chengmari. On September 20, 1990, some 200 peaceful demonstrators were reportedly executed by Lhakpa Dorji, the District Commissioner of Samchi. He later participated in the execution of an unarmed lay monk Karma in Mongar when eastern Bhutanese staged protestations are asking for the establishment of human rights and democracy in 1997. He was subsequently sacked from the civil service but was not accused of murder in spite of the clear evidence against him. The details of 63 extra-judicial murders and death of 11 women as the result of rape is appendixes in Mr Teknath Rizal’s book published in (2014). The School in southern Bhutan was used as Army/police or militia base then. It was reopened only in 2012.

Tek Nath Rizal, (2009) who spent ten years of torturous life in Bhutanese jails has in his latest book ‘*Torture Killing Me Softly*’ mentioned some of the inhuman activities of Kipchu Namgyal. The witnesses of brutalities Kipchu carried out during (1990-92) period do not regard him a human soul, but a human figure. During this period, he repeatedly travelled between Thimphu and southern districts. He has a

⁴⁸ Keunsel, vol. 11, no. 50, December 21, 1996.

leadership role in arresting and ferrying citizens from southern districts for torture in Thimphu jail. Knowing the capacity of adopting new techniques for torture and suppression, the king had appointed him as the chief of crime bureau. Torture and inhuman torture on prisoners increased manifold forth his promotion (Rizal, 2009).

4.6 Lhotshampas Refugee Crisis: Nepalese Perspective

Both the countries Nepal and Bhutan don't share a border. In order to reach Nepal, Bhutanese have to go through the Indian Territory. The *Lhotshampa* expelled from Bhutan went to India. India permitted only to established temporal relief camps in its areas. The asylum for Bhutanese citizens was not allowed by the article 5 of the India-Bhutan Friendship Treaty of 1949. Along with this, Bhutan is important to its strategic security interest and healthy relationship with Bhutanese government is paramount though India has a policy of permitting 'refugee' to assimilate into the vastness of India.

On the other hand, in 1964 Nepal allowed the immigration of the population of Nepali origin from Burma when Burma implemented the Burmese Citizenship Act of 1964. In 1967 about 8,000 people of Nepali origin escaped from Indian Northeast after trouble erupted between native populations over the use of land (Hall, 1996). Nepal also had experience in handling the refugees as it had permitted refugee status to Tibetans in 1959-60. Nepal became the place for Lhotshampa refugee's camps. At first, a few in number, the movement of Bhutanese refugees to Nepal reached overwhelming proportions with the eruption of terror in southern Bhutan. Nepal was not well prepared in handling with a large number of impoverished refugees. But senior Bhutanese officials who had come forward in Bhutan to support and recommend justice unfairly not provided to fellow Bhutanese requested the Government of Nepal for asylum and security (Paramanand, 1992). The Government of Nepal granted asylum to those destitute Bhutanese only on the humanitarian ground.

At first short-term camp was established on the left bank of river Maidhar, east of Nepal after taking approval from the then chief district officer Mr Kulchandra Shrestha. Refugees have also put forward an appeal to UNHCR, Geneva besides personally approaching Kathmandu based INGOs and NGOs for help. A camp secretary was nominated as the in charge of camp management. The camp was

further classified into sectors and sub-sectors with sector head and sub-sector head respectively for the good running of camp management. Similarly, volunteer guards and workers from refugee community were appointed for security within the camp. Life and property were totally damaged due to this. People faced lots of problems, and they had to make their settlement to the other places. There were people who had to leave Bhutan and took shelter in India, and others were made to settle in the refugee camps in Nepal which were run by United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR). They made it very clear through their words that any person who is the King and his ideology will have to sacrifice from his citizenship. This is also evident from a circular of the Home Ministry that reads:

Any Bhutanese national leaving the country to assist and help the anti-nationals shall no longer be considered as a Bhutanese citizen. The must also be made clear that such people's family members living in the same household will also be held fully responsible and forfeit their citizenship.⁴⁹

Nepal was speechless. In the face of a looming humanitarian crisis, the Nepali Government under Prime Minister G.P.Koirala (1991-1994) invited the UNHCR to set up camps in eastern Nepal to provide humanitarian assistance. Before the arrival of UNHCR, the camp was managed by the assistance rendered by CARITAS, LWF, DANIDA, OXFAM and Nepal Red Cross on an ad-hoc basis. Besides looking after refugee administration.

Mangala Sharma, a Bhutanese-American and founder of Bhutanese Refugees Aid for Victims of Violence, said many ethnic Nepalis protested peacefully against the repression, but a few demonstrations turned into violent clashes. Many of whom came from families that had lived and farmed in southern Bhutan for generations, wound up in refugee camps in eastern Nepal. Sharma (2003) argued "It was very, very devastating" "A whole generation of people was stateless. My family's land was given away to someone in the northern part of the country".⁵⁰ Dr Bhampa Rai (social Activists) had to attend all camps patients along with other Bhutanese paramedics. He was later joined by other Bhutanese doctors. Over a

⁴⁹Report on Cultural Cleansing Denial and Discrimination in Bhutan by INHURED International (2008). Source: [http://inhuredinternational.org/source/Refugee%20Book%20\(Cultural%20Cleansing\)%20FINAL.pdf](http://inhuredinternational.org/source/Refugee%20Book%20(Cultural%20Cleansing)%20FINAL.pdf).

⁵⁰ Erika Schultz (2016) The Seattle Times. Available at: <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/bhutanese-refugee-crisis-a-brief-history>.

thousand children and elderly died of diarrhoea and malnutrition at the makeshift camp at Maidhar, Jhapa.

4.7 Nepal-Bhutan Bilateral Talks on the Refugee Crisis

The Emperor of Bhutan met Nepali Prime Minister Koirala in December 1991 at Colombo and had asked him to dissolve the camps. By the time Bhutan and Nepal organized formal discussions on the refugee issue in 1993, the refugees, who were housed in seven camps in Jhapa and Morang, had reached almost to the population of 100,000. The Government of Bhutan continued to term 'refugee' as non-Bhutanese from India and Nepal. Bhutan relented later on. The Bhutan-Nepal Joint Ministerial Level Committee was formed by the Emperor of Bhutan to Prime Minister of Nepal, G. P. Koirala on 9 May 1993, at the time of the SAARC Summit in Dhaka, Bangladesh, to solve the Bhutanese refugee crisis. On 7 July 1993, they assembled formally in Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan and decided to divide the refugees into four categories:

1. Bona-fide Bhutanese, if they have been forcefully evicted,
2. Bhutanese who have emigrated,
3. Non-Bhutanese,
4. Bhutanese who have committed criminal acts.⁵¹

After ten rounds of Nepal-Bhutan discussions, both governments decided to organize a Nepal-Bhutan Joint Verification Team (JVT) to evaluate refugees. The JVT began interviewing and verifying the Bhutanese refugees, residing at Khudnabari refugee camp in Jhapa on 26 March 2001. The consequence was announced in 2003. The JVT result confirmed that over 75% refugee in Khudnabari camp were indeed genuine citizens of Bhutan as opposed to Bhutanese government decision that 'people in camp' are not Bhutanese. The rules and conditions for repatriation followed Bhutanese Law. The Reapplication of Citizenship has regulations such as, "the Royal Government shall keep the applicant on probation for a period of at minimum two years. On successful completion of the probation period, the applicant will be granted citizenship provided the person in question is

⁵¹ See press releases of His Majesty's Government Nepal, the Ministry of Home and Foreign Affairs, and the Royal Government of Bhutan on bilateral talks from 1993 to 2003. Also check through <http://www.rcss.org>.

not responsible for any activities against the Royal Government.” On December 22, 2003, the Bhutanese JVT delegation were at Khudnabari to declare the rules and regulations of repatriation. The Refugees out rightly refused the terms and condition of repatriation and a fight broke out between them and the Bhutanese JVT members (Affairs, 1993). The Bhutanese delegation left Nepal on the charge of feeling insecurity. At that time, Bhutan and India had started Joint “operation all clear” to make the Indian militants leave the Bhutanese soil. Since then the two nations have not met on the Bhutanese refugee issue in Nepal.⁵²

The Constitution of Bhutan, being proclaimed for the first time in the history of Bhutan in 2008, is still strict on citizenship issue. Article VI mentions under section (1) “A person, both of whose parents are citizens of Bhutan, shall be a natural born Citizen of Bhutan”; (2) “A person, domiciled in Bhutan on or before the 31st December, Nineteen Hundred and Fifty-Eight and whose name is registered in the official record of the Government of Bhutan shall be a citizen of Bhutan by registration”; (3) “citizens by naturalization”. Naturalization needs applicants to have lived in Bhutan for at least 15 years with official and authorial permission; have no record of imprisonment for criminal offences within the nation or outside; can speak and write Dzongkha; have a good understanding of the culture, customs, traditions and history of Bhutan; and have no record of having spoken or acted against the TSA-was-sum (Emperor, Country and People). They must also give up the citizenship if any, of another State on being conferred Bhutanese citizenship; and take an Oath of Allegiance to the Constitution. The grant of citizenship by naturalization takes effect by a Royal Kasho of the Emperor. The Constitution forbids double citizenship. If citizens of Bhutan get another citizenship, their Bhutanese citizenship is rejected. The power to control matters of citizenship is authorized by the National Assembly. Bhutan continues to counterfeit existing Bhutanese into single unity by curtailing citizenship and foreign marriage (Khrat, 2004).

4.8 Refugee Issue and UN

⁵² Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India (2016). Source: <http://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/26284/Third+Joint+Working+Group+JWG+Meetings+on+SubRegional+Cooperation+between+Bangladesh+Bhutan+India+and+Nepal+BBIN+January+1920+2016>.

The Foreign Minister of Nepal Kamal Thapa (1997-1998) participated in the 54th meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Commission held in Switzerland (Geneva). The issue of Bhutanese refugees, which Nepal was trying to solve for the last nine years also figured prominently in the discussions, and they appealed to the international community for positive help, as the Foreign Minister reported. Further, the points which the Foreign Minister reported were that high-level discussions on the refugee issue in Nepal were taken place with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (Sadako Ogata), and they addressed this issue positively with the assurance that whatever the commissions should do would be done (Ghosh, 1998).

4.8.1 Nepal Refugee Problem: Calling for International help to Handling the issue

It was decided by Nepal to call upon the international community to form a favourable climate for the success of the bilateral discussions on immediate return of one hundred thousand Bhutanese refugees lodged in the densely inhabited eastern area of the country in a safe and dignified way. In Charge of Affairs, the permanent mission of the Kingdom of Nepal to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva Dr Shambhu Ram Simkhada (1998-2003) made this request to the international community while lecturing in the 54th meeting of the Human Rights Commission in Geneva, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Dr Simkhada also clarified that the presence of the refugees has resulted in adverse economic, social and environmental issues (Adhikary, 1993).

4.8.2 Bhutan-Nepal: Suffering From Swirling Talks

Bhutan initiated this talk by proposing to discuss the refugee issue. The Kingdom of Bhutan had been sending signals that it wanted to sit down and discuss the Bhutanese refugee problem with Nepali government officials again. That, at least, is what top sources in government were reporting. Recently indicated that it wanted to resume official-level talks. With caution, however, he noted, "the indications have not been concretized. We expect a formal invitation soon". From what could be further derived from two top-ranking government sources, Bhutan was getting ready to invite the Nepalese Foreign Secretary to visit Thimpu (H. E. Mr Ahmed Saleem: 22 to 24 May 2012) in an effort to break the ice. These official level talks, which Shital Niwas called (discreet diplomacy) began in late 1996. But like the

(open diplomacy) involving ministers from both the governments, this one too ran into roadblocks. The ministerial discussions deadlocked in 1996 after seven futile rounds. It has remained so ever since (Katel, 2009).

Asked why Bhutan would be willing to open this channel again after a gap of nearly a year, sources reported it is likely that the Dragon Kingdom was feeling the heat of international diplomatic pressure to resolve the refugee crisis, which has driven nearly 100,000 Lhotsampha Bhutanese to refuge in camps in eastern Nepal. They pointed out that, after news of sackings of 219 civil servants related to Lhotsampa refugees by the Bhutanese government became public early this year, Nepal began a diplomatic offensive to put the spotlight on such great violations of human rights. The Nepalese Foreign Minister Kamal Thapa attended the UN conference on human rights in Geneva. He was reported to have flogged Bhutan again over the matter. He also reportedly provoked donor governments to put pressure on Bhutan during his meetings with ambassadors of donor countries in Geneva. It is difficult to decide if this diplomatic pressure, as well as the Geneva conference, played a major part in the latest indications for talks from Bhutan. But knowledgeable sources in the refugee community here saw this latest gambit as no more than a ploy, again, on the part of the Bhutanese government to deflect further criticism (ibid).

In order to solve the refugee matter and other related issues, a three-member delegation comprising ministers from Foreign Ministry, Law Ministry, Home Ministry, and visited Bhutanese capital in order to revive the Nepal-Bhutan ministerial discussions that remained silenced since early 1996. The last high-level bilateral discussion between the two countries was held in August 1996 when the then Foreign Secretary Kumar Gyawali (1993-1996) visited the Druk regime to indicate a new initiative at discreet diplomacy. Earlier, seven rounds of ministerial sessions had failed to make any headway to solve the refugee crisis, which according to some observers is the largest foreign policy crisis of the post-1990 Nepal. "The officials will basically try to finalize dates for the ministerial talks," said Narayan Sumsher Thapa (2000-2001), Special Secretary at the Foreign Ministry. The Foreign Ministry spokesperson, however, would not comment, when he expected the discussion to take place if at all (Adhikari, 2008).

4.8.3 Intervention of UFD: Building a Road for Talks with Bhutan King

The King Jigme Singye Wangchuk of Bhutan was called upon by the United Front for Democracy (UFD) to initiate dialogue with the organisation to usher in democracy in the country, "if the King is genuinely concerned about the future of the country." It came as a response to the decision of the Bhutanese King to disintegrate the Bhutanese cabinet with effect from 26th of that month. The United Front for Democracy statement claims "the Royal proclamation was undoubtedly influenced by the release on bail of UFD chairman Rhongthong Kuenely Dorji⁵³ by Delhi High Court on June 21." Dorji, a major pro-democracy minister in Bhutan, was arrested in the Indian capital for over a year and the Bhutanese government had been pressing for his extradition to Bhutan under the Indo-Bhutanese extradition treaty. The UFD release said that if the present event of dissolving the cabinet is just a political strategy to restore the same cabinet with the "people's mandate," using the rubber stamp National Assembly as in the past, then it would be a historic mistake committed by the monarchy (Ghosh, 1998).

UFD has also explained to the Tenth Speaker Dasho Passang Dorji (1989-1997) of the Bhutanese National Assembly, the members of the Royal Advisory Council, the monk body and the members of the Assembly to take into account the degrading political system and the hopes of the Bhutanese public for democratic transformation while deliberating on the vital concern of dissolution of the cabinet. A meeting of the Assembly has already been called by the Emperor to hold deliberations on his "proposed changes mentioned in a royal edict to the Speaker of the National Assembly." The Front has impelled the members of the legislature to express their opinions frankly and fearlessly and not to imitate the words of government as practised in the past (Ghosh, 1998).

4.8.4 Refugee Tussle: Discussions with India & Bhutan

The Prime Minister of Nepal Girija Prasad Koirala declared that he would seek talks with his Indian counterpart and the Bhutanese Monarch over the Bhutanese refugees languishing in Nepal during the Tenth SAARC summit (1998, 29 to 31 July), scheduled to begin in Colombo, Sri Lanka, later in that month. During the Sunday session of parliament, Koirala declared that he would talk with both Indian Premier Atal Behari Vajpayee (1998-2004) and Bhutanese Monarch Jigme

⁵³ Rongthong Kunley Dorji, an inveterate Bhutanese democracy and human rights activist.

Singhe Wangchuk to solve the refugee problem. "We are extremely sensitive towards resolving the issue," Prime Minister Koirala reported. "There have been no indications yet that the problem will be solved. But we are still continuing our efforts". The Prime Minister also clarified that though SAARC does not allow bilateral problems to be discussed, he will seek to talk on the refugee matter with Indian and Bhutanese ministers during the second day of the summit when leaders meet informally (Abraham, 2005).

Asked further about government initiatives to resolve the matter, Koirala flatly denied, for the time being, the prospects of internationalizing the refugee issue. "We have the right to internationalize the issue," the prime minister stated. "But first we want to search for a solution through dialogue. To make a final decision to internationalize may cause a setback to resolving the problem. The remark by Koirala on internationalization in its turn forms his previous position. During his first term as prime minister from 1991-94, Koirala had raised the prospect for the first time, tremendously ruffling Bhutanese feathers. But on that Sunday, Koirala was determined to send just the sort of signal Bhutan wants to hear. His statement that he will talk about the issue with Indian Premier Vajpayee is also important. The new Indian prime minister stood for the Bharatiya Janta Party a Hindu Party, and many here will be watching Vajpayee's position on the refugee issue. Most of the nearly 100,000 refugees chased out by Bhutan are Hindus (ibid).

4.8.5 King Jigme Wangchuk and SAARC Summit

The Monarch of Bhutan for the first time remained away from a South Asian summit scheduled to open there next week, diplomatic sources there reported Wednesday. King Jigme Singye Wangchuk, who is a founding member of the seven-nation South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), has participated in all the nine previous summits of the regional grouping since it was formed in 1985. The Bhutanese embassy in New Delhi, the Indian capital, confirmed that the King would be represented at the Colombo Summit by Jigme Thinley who is the Chairman of the new Council of Ministers, and the head of the government. Jigme Thinley is also the Bhutanese Foreign Minister. A Bhutanese official said that his country had introduced "far-reaching political reforms" and that a six-member council of leaders has been appointed with more powers. Jigme Thinley at that time was functioning as the head of the government, and Nepal therefore, he would represent Bhutan at

the SAARC, the official said. In conclusion, the three-day summit opened on July 29, 1998, and the officials of the seven South Asian countries were expected to begin their preparatory work immediately (Niroula, 2008).

About 105,000 *Lhotshampas* refugees had been living in refugee camps in Nepal since fleeing persecution in their own country in 1990. Depression, crime, gambling, suicide, alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence and trafficking of girls grew in the camps. In the early years of exile, however, the general mood in the camps was optimistic as many were of the view that the issue would be sorted out through talks with the international community. But since the collapse of the citizenship verification project in 2003, pragmatism has been replaced by idealism. Most young refugees have left to search for work in different towns of Nepal or India, allured by the possibilities of earning enough money to buy Nepali or Indian citizenship. India, as Bhutan's main development partner, has the power to support the refugees but it has shown little interest in taking action. Bhutan's expulsion of the *Lhotshampas* was influenced, in part, by Indian dread of the formation of a Nepali (superstate) including Darjeeling, Sikkim and southern Bhutan, according to sources. This helps to explain India's inaction (ibid).

Canada, the United States, and some European countries have shown an interest in contributing to solving the issue either through resettlement or local integration. However, it is still vague exactly how many refugees would be allowed immigration by these countries. It seems that the West is also of the opinion that India may be the best negotiator to solve the refugee crisis. In contrast, India has declined to be involved in the citizenship-verification negotiations, by stating that it's an issue between Bhutan and Nepal, and yet it has been involved in defusing the recent protest marches from Nepal to Bhutan at the Indian border. Bhutan and Nepal still disagree on what is being negotiated. Behind that disagreement lies, on both sides, deeper complexities about the whole issue. Nepal is fighting to safeguard its new-found democracy and care about its internal problems, while Bhutan was preparing for its first democratic elections in 2008. The extent to which these new undertakings may transform attitudes toward the refugees was yet to be seen. Most observers and reporters believed the more likely solution lies in a piecemeal approach with a mix of repatriation to Bhutan, assimilation in Nepal and a third-country settlement. But that prospect worried most refugees, who saw leisurely

diplomatic measures as a potential hurdle. They wanted the citizenship-verification to be speeded up (Ghosh, 1998).

At that time Judy Cheng-Hopkins (2006: 24, July) the U.N.'s assistant high commissioner for refugees visited Nepal on a four-day visit. During her stay, she observed the Bhutanese refugee camps in eastern Nepal and talked with high government officials. She requested Nepali authorities to take the initiative in resolving the 16-year-old refugee problem, and she stressed the need to take "alternative" measures if necessary, according to sources. As a result, in a historic move, 16 Bhutanese refugees were allowed to leave Nepal to live in Canada. The leader of the refugees, Teknath Rijal, wondered why the UNHCR and the Nepali government could help only 16 refugees and vowed to continue the ongoing protests. Most refugees and many observers agreed with Rijal because little steps like these won't solve the wholesale refugee problem that has been threatening the region's fragile socio-economic equilibrium. Bhutan was closely watching Nepal and its recent turn of events. The situation was that if that state of affairs was not resolved, Bhutan was to face an uphill struggle (Ghosh, 1998).

4.9 Third Country Resettlement

There was a deadlock in Nepal-Bhutan bilateral discussion to solve the refugee problem. Political chaos within Nepal did not support the matters. With the Maoist Party starting an armed revolution, Nepal was immersed in a civil war that lasted from 1996 to 2006. The international community was hesitant to use their power to pressure Bhutan on refugee repatriation so as to counterbalance seen as India's influence and preclude the "Sikkimization" of Bhutan. The UNHCR plan on the rehabilitation of refugees was formed against this background. It provides three fundamental options 1. Repatriation to the motherland, 2. Assimilation in the host country. 3. Third country Resettlement (TCR). The first option was turning to be impossible because of Bhutanese Government's inactive attitude. The second option was not without issues. Nepal being an undeveloped country has its own share of problems with (Madeshis) who accuse the Nepal Government of ignoring their rights. The easiest thing by core countries with Nepal was the Third country Resettlement option. Along with this, while talking with foreign dignitaries during the

visit to refugee camps, some ministers expressed the willingness of the refugee for the TCR (Dhungana, 2010).

In August 2006, a US delegation talked to the Monarch in Thimphu and disclosed that the US was willing to resettle 60,000 Bhutanese refugees. Bhutan was not prepared and willing to repatriate such a great number of refugees for its dread of demographic imbalance. The then Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee repeated the same line on June 10, 2007, "if these 100,000 people enter Bhutan it would create a demographic imbalance". The then USA Assistant Secretary of State for Refugee Affairs, Ellen Sauerbury (2007-2007), officially declared the resettlement offer at UNHCR office, Geneva on 2 October 2006. Core groups were organized with countries comprising Australia, Canada, Denmark, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, and the USA. Later on, UK became part of the group. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) now deals with the resettlement of refugees on the basis of referrals made by UNHCR. The first expression of interest for resettlement has been made known to UNHCR. The TCR program is still underway. As of 31 December 2015, about 101,222 Bhutanese refugees have been resettled (Banki, 2008).

4.9.1 Chaos in Refugee Camps: An analysis of Post-Resettlement Announcement

The declaration of the TCR plan created disturbance in Refugee Camps. Two opposing factions emerged. The pro-resettlement groups discussed that TRC offered aspiration and a secure future for younger generations. The against-resettlement group discussed that Bhutan was receiving a clean chit for human rights crimes committed by the government against public (refugees). They discussed that the TRC would only embolden the Thimphu government to carry out similar crimes in the future. Refugee leadership was divided. DNC and BNDP greeted the TCR. The Bhutanese Movement Steering Committee (BMSC) under the leadership of Teknath Rizal and Bhutanese Communist parties were strongly against the TCR. The Bhutanese Refugee Representative for Repatriation Committee (BRRRC) also strongly opposed the TCR (Dhungana, 2010).

In 1992, Dr Bhampa Rai, stated, " Our interest lies in as rapid a return as possible because we realize that the longer we stay away, the greater the possibility that the population will give up hope." His words turned out to be a prophecy in 2007-2008. The majority of the population has given up their aspirations of returning.

Adversity and deprivation were still growing. The elder public was uninterested in TRC. They were not inclined to take another journey after suffering the difficult early years in Nepal. They also nourished a hope of returning to Bhutan and have an emotional connection to the surroundings where they grew up. They loved Bhutan and had supported in the formation of present Bhutan when they were in Bhutan. The younger generations, who either have a meager knowledge of Bhutan or have only known camps in Nepal as their abode, were adventurous enough to take a new journey in their life. The TCR gave the younger generation a chance to escape the vicious circle of adversity in camps and find out their full potential as a human being and responsible citizen. They have tolerated the humiliation and suffered their refugee status for a long time. People treated patronizingly when he/she introduced him/herself as a refugee (Rizal, 2004).

The Third Country Resettlement plan not only classified the political views of the refugee leadership, but it also classified families. The leader of the family had to give prior approval to the Declaration of Interest for TCR to UNHCR. The reluctance of the family head or parent to give his /her approval led to disputes within the family. In some cases, the elder heirs even physically attacked aged parents. In a similar way, a difference of views between married couples led to a great number of divorces cases. In most of such cases, the judgment of divorce was arbitrarily managed by the UNHCR field agent and commonly with ex parte rulings. In refugee camps, many committed suicide due to the turmoil of family troubles. The rituals and traditions that have attached the family were shattered. The Bhutanese government had failed to ruin the prevalent family bond in the community which was of course easily broken by TCR plan. In refugee camps, there are thousands of aged people who were abandoned by their children, who in their turn are resettled in eight core nations. These aged parents entertained a hope of returning to their birthplace in Bhutan in spite of the absence of their loved one nearby. Only human being who has gone through the same experience can see and feel the pain and agony of family separation. Dan Maya Timsina, 74 years old and Purni Maya Magar, 73 years, now living at Beldingi II, refugee camps, says their soul will only get peace when they will die on their birthplace in Bhutan, They continue to hope for the return (Dhungana, 2010).

At present, UNHCR asserts Bhutanese resettlement process is one of the greatest and most successful plans undertaken through international solidarity and burden sharing of international humanitarian troubles. Isn't this successful program at the cost of nationality, the dread of lost hope, home, broken families of bona fide Bhutanese?⁵⁴

4.9.2 Refugee Camps: Mapping the Woman and Child Issues

Most of the refugee women were farmers when they were exiled from Bhutan. Most of them were uneducated and relied on husband for a living. They had left behind most of their immovable property in Bhutan. Their little jewellery was either looted by the Bhutanese securities personal or robbers on their way to Nepal. They had to begin afresh in camp. The adversity was rampant in camp. Unlike in Bhutan, in refugee camps, girls at least got equal opportunities to get education and health. The AMDA hospital gives free health facilities to refugees. However, the more serious healthcare and specialist were not available at the hospital and thus, transferred to Birat Nagar hospital where refugees have to pay for their health treatment expenses (Giri, 2005).

Caritas Nepal operated education plan in a refugee camp. After completing their studies, most of boys and girls got jobs outside the camp to earn income. However, boys got better positions than girls to earn a sound wage. Officially refugees are not permitted to work outside the refugee camps. But the thousands of refugee did so in nearby areas. The ration supplied to refugee was not sufficient and didn't fulfil all the needs. Before 2008, thousands of Bhutanese refugees illegally worked in Kathmandu, Shillong (India), Sikkim, Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Ahmedabad. The great numbers of females worked as teachers in Kathmandu and boarding schools of eastern Nepal. To escape the adverse conditions, young refugee girls had also fallen victim to a human trafficker. Some young girls wilfully involved in flesh trade in nearby towns to earn extra cash so that they can fulfil their needs (Poudel, 2004).

The UNHCR field agent is responsible for the protection and wellbeing of females and children in refugee camps. Minor cases engaging verbal violence between husband and wife are solved by internal negotiation through focal point

⁵⁴ UNHCR, 'Refugee Population 2002', an annual report published by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, Geneva and New York, 2003).

personnel. These focal point personal are refugees appointed among them. The more serious issues of domestic violence, physical abuse, rape, and divorce cases injured by the husband or wife are managed by FA, and the Nepal Bar Association serves as a legal representative at court or guide or grants legal advice. In camps, there were some women abandoned by the husband. Husband marries second times without the approval of the first wife. Refugee women were not given relief like their fellow citizens in Bhutan by Paternity law. In Bhutan, the father has to give monthly child support money until the child grows to 18 years of age (Acharya, 2000).

Refugee camps reported suicide case and a great number of an attempted suicide case. Along with this, there are reported underage rape cases in refugees. 2015 saw the marked increase in underage rape and suicide cases from the previous two years. The teenage pregnancy, rape, physical abuse, suicide cases are witnessed in refugee camps. The situation of females and children inside Bhutan is not good either. Bhutan is officially bound to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) since 1981 and also to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) since 1990. The National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC)⁵⁵ was organized in 2004 as an agency to control and manipulate all policies and activities involved in protection and promotion of rights of women and children. Bhutan has approved legislation on the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, 2014 and the Childcare and Protection Act 2011. The legal facilities have failed to discourage the culprits. In 2014, the newspaper reported 13 minors raped in five months. Interestingly, in Bhutan, the culprits also include teacher, father, policeman, army, and monks (Acharya, 1999).

Bhutan Multiple Survey 2010 spotlighted about 70 percent of females said that they deserve domestic violence if they neglect their children, argue with their partners, refuse sex or spoil meals. The high level of approval by a female on male supremacy in Bhutan is institutionalized by superstitions, culture, custom, and ignorance. The legal age for marriage in Bhutan is 18 for both the men and women. People arrange marriage without the awareness of the local authority. The underage

⁵⁵ The National commission for Women and Children (2004) Protecting, Promoting and Reporting on Rights of Women and Children in Bhutan. <http://www.ncwc.gov.bt/en/notification?tpages=11&id=162&page=11>.

marriages are considered now in Bhutan as related to rape case if marriage consummation has taken place. Several examples of cases were reported in media. In Bhutan, rape case invites nine years punishment of imprisonment. In political leadership, it is thought that men are better than women. No woman was selected for Nation Council in 2013 election by Bhutanese electorate that has female voters in the majority. Only four females were elected to National Assembly. Bhutan for the first time got female Cabinet minister in the form of Dorji Choden⁵⁶, who had to forsake her own party to enter the Parliament. In local government as well, the only single female was elected as village headman in 205 village headman elections. Citizenship law is still prejudiced against female (Poudel, 2004).

4.10 Resettled Bhutanese Refugees

The TCR program had drastically decreased the number of refugees in Nepal now, so the few number of refugees might choose for repatriation, and they might wish to have their property back once they are in Bhutan. But, there is the possibility of tension erupting between returning refugees and resettled northern Bhutanese. Before 1990s peaceful protests in southern Bhutan, diverse communities were residing in peaceful coexistence. Equal opportunities were provided to people in spite of race, religion, and caste. The government provoked the people of north and started the hatred between the communities along the ethnic lines and divided the communities. The government sought support from other communities in its dealing with the southern issue by exclaiming that the 'outsider' was trying to uproot the natives from their hearth and home and the very survival of (Drukpa) is under danger.

In this way, the national military was used. Post refugee problem in southern Bhutan, the remaining Lhotshampa in Bhutan were prejudiced. The kinsmen of refugee were mostly suffered. They were fired from the Government jobs (Acharya, 2000). They were not given the (No Objection Certificate). Without this certificate, access to further studies, passport, jobs, state benefits were impossible. The village headman signed the paper which worked as an identity card. This paper requires being renewed every year. If not done so it will invite fine and restriction of movement

⁵⁶ Ministry of Works and Human Settlement, Bhutan (2013).

within the country. The immigration officer at check posts is instructed to strictly constraint the movement of people who either failed to show the identity card or moving with expired identity cards. The other fellow citizens were provided all the social benefits. The Lhotshampa communities inside Bhutan were considered as second class citizens (Acharya, 2000).

Over 20,000 landless northern Bhutanese are now resettled in the land which once belonged to refugees. The officials acknowledge that government was giving away only those lands in southern Bhutan which belong to people who left Bhutan 'voluntarily.' In Bhutan, there is a great number of stateless populations formed by the strict citizenship law. Unofficial says about 24,000 Lhotshampa and 10,000 individuals from other ethnic groups are stateless and their applications for citizenship are waiting for the Royal Prerogatives. Monarch has the power to provide citizenship in his exercise of royal prerogatives. Most of these stateless people are the result of the discriminatory citizenship law. The offspring born to the Bhutanese women who have married to the foreigner husband don't get Bhutanese citizenship. They are provided special residence permit. Mothers of the children born out of wedlock have to disclose the identity of father along with his citizenship details to the officials for the citizenship of children. The fatherless children are considered under the stateless category. Since 2005, the Government of Bhutan provides the biometric Citizenship card to its inhabitants with the validity of five years. The citizenship card requires being renewed every five years (Dhungana, 2010).

The UNHCR and diverse partners that organized the "Core Group on Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal" declared in 2007 to shift the majority of the 108,000 registered Bhutanese refugees. The U.S. initiated to take 60,000 and began admitting them in 2008. Canada, Norway, Australia, Denmark, and Netherlands, offered to resettle 10,000 each, and New Zealand offered to resettle 600 refugees over a span of five years beginning in 2008. By January 2009, more than 8,000 and by November 2010, more than 40,000 Bhutanese refugees were resettled in different countries. Canada offered to admit additional 6,500 Bhutanese refugees by the end of 2014. Norway has already resettled 200 Bhutanese refugees, and Canada has admitted accepting up to 5000 through to 2012. In November 2015 it was declared that 100,000 refugees have been resettled in foreign countries USA 85 percent and in February 2017 the number increased to a total of 108,513.

Refugee's resettlement has given the opportunity of introducing a new life. But the problems that they are going through in the labour market are a large hurdle in settling themselves in the new countries that are very different from their own (Koirala, 2017).

The predicament of Lhotshampa community has improved post-2008 when the nation welcomed the 'planned democracy.' Two Lhotshampa ministers became the Cabinet Minister in 2008-2013. 11 Lhotshampas members were elected to its first ever parliament. In General election of 2013, 10 Lhotshampa members were elected to Parliament. Currently, there are two cabinet ministers belonging to Lhotshampa ethnic community. In democracy period, the votes of Lhotshampa community have become the major vote bank to the political parties for the formation of the government. They determine the fate of 13 members out of 47 National Assembly seats. Lhotshampa community is slowly moving forward in economic prosperity by the remission payment from the relatives resettled in America and forthcoming of political parties eagerness to resolve their genuine complaints. Nowadays, political parties of all hues insisted on the resolution of citizenship matter of Lhotshampa community in their manifesto (Rizal, 2015).

4.11 Impacts on Bhutan and Nepal Relations

In 1983, Bhutan and Nepal established the diplomatic relations. However, the major problem in the bilateral relationship between Bhutan and Nepal was instability in Nepal. On the other side, the continual changes in Nepal's government system made it difficult for Bhutan to negotiate. As a result, Bhutan's government expelled numerous of ethnic Nepalese people by enforcement of new citizenship laws in 1988. In response to this, ethnic Nepalese started a protest, sometimes violently. In the reaction of this, Bhutan's government launched a crackdown against Nepalese ethnic community, such as schools, clinics, and development programs were destroyed by the government. Subsequently, ethnic Nepalese people began to leave southern areas of the country in large numbers to take shelter in Nepal in 1991 (Baral, 1993).

Bhutan-Nepal relations are inevitably tied to the issue of unresolved refugee crises. As two regimes in the Himalayas, Bhutan and Nepal have many similarities, one of which was to be a neutral zone between India and China following the Chinese takeover of Tibet. Although non-resident connections between the two

nations were established in 1983, it has been the problem of the people in the refugee camps in Nepal that has overridden bilateral connections since the 1990s (The background to this problem is provided in the annexes). Nonetheless, there is scope to develop and enlarge cooperation in many fields of common interests. Up until now, some fields of cooperation between the two nations include trade and services, sports, technical and cultural cooperation, and others things (Ghosh, 2016).

On 7th August 1990, Bhutan and Nepal allied on an Air Services Agreement, and Druk Air currently operates two flights a week to Kathmandu. Over the years, Bhutanese nationals have the beneficiaries of fellowships provided by Nepal in the area of animal husbandry, as well as various training and workshops under UN, SAARC and other local and international organizations. In sports, various exchanges and interactions have taken place and recognizing that Nepal is more advanced than Bhutan in many sports, the latter recognizes the worth of receiving technical support in this field. Major sports of interest include football, table tennis, rifle shooting, and Taekwondo. As of date trade and economic connections between the two have not been particularly substantive although advancements continue to be taken since Bhutan made some initiatives to build up trade connections with Nepal, following the establishment of SAARC. Bhutan's significant exports to Nepal were coal and gypsum until 1997 when these were replaced by inexpensive Indian products. The steady growth in imports from Nepal contains consumer goods like instant noodles, soaps, beer, camping equipment, footwear, and clothing. There is no authorial framework within which Bhutan and Nepal arrange trade procedures, and these are currently regulated by the Trade and Transit Agreements that each one has signed with India (Kumar, 1993).

On 14th March 2003, the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) and the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI)⁵⁷ agreed on a Memorandum of Understanding directed toward increasing mutually beneficial trade and economic cooperation. 14 Similarly, the Construction Association of Bhutan (CAB) is in the process of signing an MOU with the Federation

⁵⁷ Economic and Political Relations between Bhutan and Neighboring Countries. (March, 2004). http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-Heidelberg.de/303/1/mono_Ecnmc_Pol_Rel_Bt_Nghbrng.pdf. (Accessed on 18 March, 2017).

of Contractors Association of Nepal (FCAN) to advance cooperation and understanding between the private sectors of the two nations. To enhance tourism in the two nations, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed on May 3rd, 2003 between the Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators (ABTO) and the Nepal Association of Travel Agents (NATA). Apart from others things, the MOU is directed at establishing sound understanding and professionalism, integrated development of tourism in the Himalayan areas, tightening tourism alliance, forming exchange programs and establishing Kathmandu and Paro as (sister destinations). Nepal continues to be a significant destination for many Bhutanese pilgrimages as it has many religious Buddhist sites such as the birthplace of Lord Buddha in Lumbini.⁵⁸ The two nations possess great scope in strengthening bilateral relations through cultural cooperation, considering that Buddhism continues to advance in Nepal and permeates all features of life in Bhutan.

4.12 Benevolent Affection of the World Refugee Crisis

Refugee issue became the front page news only when Europe faced the refugee crisis of her own. In 2015 the picture of a drowned Syrian refugee child on the shores of Europe moved the hearts of many global leaders who displayed their compassion and Europe and Canada particularly have welcomed Syrian refugees with open arm. The terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015 and Brussels in 2016, however, reversed most of the generosity generated in the early part of 2015.⁵⁹ Now, the EU has struck deals with Turkey to stop the refugees from entering Europe. The refugees are human beings and deserved the 'human rights.' The world must address the fundamental reasons for the refugee crisis in first place. The protracted Bhutanese refugee issues had been being neglected without sympathy and attention until 2007.

Figure 4. 1- Syrian refugee child (2015)

⁵⁸ Economic and Political Relations between Bhutan and the Neighboring Countries. (March, 2004). http://www.ide.go.jp/library/English/Publish/Download/Jrp/pdf/132_3.pdf. (Accessed on 15 March, 2017).

⁵⁹ Canada says it never denied a refugee application for Alan Kurdi and his family. (2015). Available At: <http://nationalpost.com/news/politics/chris-alexander-suspends-campaign-after-news-that-canada-rejected-drowned-boys-refugee-application/wcm/136bdafc-a67d-47e0-8fdf-f051bf158a00>. (Accessed on 21 March, 2017).



Source: National Post (September 3, 2015)

The UNHCR along with eight core countries (US, England, Denmark, Canada, Norway, New Zealand, Netherland and Australia) initiated the Third Country Resettlement and started to take refugees from Nepal. As a result, over a hundred thousand Bhutanese refugees have resettled in eight countries so far. As of now, approximately 15,000 Bhutanese refugees are housed in eastern Nepal. However, UNHCR states some 8,000 refugees are likely to remain in camps as they are either not willing to resettle in a third country or are ineligible for the program. Thus an unanswered question lingers on the fate of remaining refugees. More importantly, it asks, who will deliver justice to those families who were uprooted from their ancient homes (Koirala, 2017).

5. Conclusions

The study has basically analyzed ethnicity, society, and culture of Bhutan and examined the various dimensions of the relationship between the ethnic minority groups and the state of Bhutan. Bhutan, as a buffer state between India and China, has a strategic status in an area which has faced decades of often ethnically-based troubles. Moreover, the inclusion of Sikkim in India in 1975 and the agitation in Nepali-dominated north-east India were seen as developments that endangered the protection of the regime. The ethnic dreads of the *Ngalung* establishment drove them to policies which initially tried cultural assimilation, then racial prejudices and expulsion policies, which have finally turned in the formation of a culturally divided Bhutanese society.

The broad overview on the development of the Bhutanese political structure under the reign of the Wangchuk monarchy has also been analyzed. Its uniqueness is not only of cultural nature but also derives from the connections between tradition and politics. Under the guidance of its Kings, the country goes through significant developments in a period of 100 years, for which European democracies took several centuries. In spite of the rapid pace of reforms and modernization, however, the idea of Gross National Happiness allowed for transformation in continuity, and it has found its way into the new Bhutanese politics. The direction and intent of the transformation and its implementation is clearly a novelty in the study of 'system change.'

The different phases of the *Lhotsampa's* experiences in an exile from, Bhutan since the late 1980s present almost a paradigmatic model which generally explains the pattern of ethnic tension. Ethnic diversity within a country leads to conflict for fair representation and resources as some ethnic groups had been excluded structurally from the opportunity for full participation in the political, economic and socio-cultural system of the country. Conflicts cultivated particularly through the dreaded ethnic diversity which deepened the cleavages within the society along ethnic borders. With intensifying ethnic tension, one group used whatever resources and power of the state and implemented the policies, resulting in the ethnic repression, discrimination and systematic human rights violations upon their perceived rivals, to

bolster the group's own hold on control of power. This process has been undergone in Bhutan especially from the late 1980s.

The Drukpa elite got its access to power over the country and has since carried out strategic human-rights violations. Self-serving, ethnosectarian Drukpa upper class had tried to deracinate the *Lhotsampa* and restrict this group as a peripheral community in spite of the *Lhotsampa's* considerable participation of the national population now considerably less inside Bhutan as a consequence of these deracination attempts. Ethnic tension has deepened in Bhutan.

National Assembly arguments since 1990 have brought the matter of race to the forefront in various policy talks. The argument over a pseudo-constitution is flavoured greatly with racial meanings. Deep and active bias against the *Lhotsampa* has served to empower ethnic identification among the people of *Lhotsampa* origin. Bhutan has moved in 2008 towards a protective ethnoreligious, even racial, the concept of the state. The new Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan and the nation's legislation unambiguously serve to emphasize what in many respects can be understood a rejection of minorities and differences and enshrine measures that continue the strategic violation of many of the basic human rights of the country's minorities particularly the *Lhotshampas*. The concern in keeping the political ascendance of the Drukpa at all costs and of safeguarding Bhutan as a Buddhist enclave in the Himalayas has unfortunately resulted into this small kingdom's having in place some of the most racially discriminatory laws and practices in the modern world.

An ever deeper ethnic conflict is now pitting the major ethnic groups, especially around the *Ngalung*, against the *Lhotsampa* and *Sharchop*. Bhutan has seen in the rise and consolidation of an ethnocracy which controls the institutions of government, economy, and society and starts ethnic conflicts by promoting its own ethnic communities at the expense of others. The Drukpa is a majority in Bhutan with a minority complex and a short political outlook. The short-term profits that the Drukpa elite's ethnically divisive policies may get for some cannot compensate for the long-term social, economic and political costs for the country at large. These are not just the costs of biases and denial of opportunity for the *Lhotsampa* and others, who could have given much to the country. It is also the immeasurable cost that

comes from a community now driven along ethnic and other lines by the dread, infidelity, resentment, frustration, and anger that the government has deliberately fuelled. The ethnic dread of the *Ngalung* establishment drove them to policies which at first tried cultural assimilation, then racial prejudices and expulsion policies, which have at last resulted in the formation of a culturally divided Bhutanese society. The Government's strategies may have proved temporarily successful, but they can also ultimately ruin the unity of the nation. There is now the serious possibility that smouldering grievances on the part of those who are repressed and expelled may be pushed into militancy in a desperate effort by some to get a just and equitable solution, to what now seems an intractable issue.

The study also finds that in Bhutan, the growth and consolidation of an ethnocracy control the institutions of the state, economy, and society and fuels ethnic conflict by promoting its own ethnic group at the expense of others. The majority Drukpa with a minority complex and a short political outlook Bhutan ruined the unity of the state. The short-term profits that the Drukpa elite's ethnically divisive policies may achieve for them that cannot compensate for the long-term social, economic and political costs for the country at large. These are not just the costs of prejudices and non-availability of opportunity for the *Lhotsampa* and others, who could have contributed much to the development of the country. It is also the immeasurable cost that comes from a society now driven along ethnic and other lines by the dread, mistrust, resentment, frustration, and anger that the government has deliberately fuelled.

There are other ways to have a just and equitable solution that has to be analyzed first. Pragmatism informed by broad-minded recognition of national and regional history states that Bhutan cannot be a homogenous state, despite government efforts to make it so through the 'One Nation, One People' ethos. Bhutan has always been multi-ethnic; what is today the country of Bhutan is a construct several centuries ago of diverse ethnic communities with a rich diversity of racial, religious, cultural and linguistic differences. The only workable solution for Bhutan is that of a pluralistic society that welcomes its diversity as a source of opportunity, richness, and strength. This prefigures a country that achieves unity in diversity rather than, as at present, being divided by those who seek to use the potential virtue of this diversity to serve their own narrow interests.

The sectarian nature of the governing elite must also be understood. Religion and state have a long history of complexities in Bhutan. The marriage to Bhutan's sovereign monarch, of members of a family supposedly supreme in theocratic, pre-monarchy days before 1907, greased the wheels for religious influence to return to the state institutions, encouraging the ethno-sectarian nationalism that is the flagship of the current Drukpa government. Because of this diversity, Bhutan should be a secular state, where religion has nothing to do with the policies of state and is, instead, the personal belief of a person. The secular state of Bhutan needs to be ruled by a broadly based democratic political government which is fairly representative of the Bhutanese people. This, of course, needs relocating sovereignty from the King to all the population of Bhutan, once they have been fairly resettled after their years of exile outside Bhutan.

Late in the 1980s, the ethnic conflict between the *Drukpas* and the *Lhotsampas* reached a striking point when the former declared that due to illegal immigration from India and Nepal the population of the *Lhotsampas* had grown disproportionately to their natural growth which endangered the demographic equilibrium of the kingdom. There was indeed some truth in Bhutanese government's argument. In the mid-1980s Nepalis were exiled out of Manipur, Meghalaya, and Nagaland to which New Delhi had not raised any concern. Many of these Nepalis settled in southern Bhutan. Considering their nationalism in ethnic terms the regime insisted the cultural nationalism of the *Drukpas*. Not only were the citizenship laws strictly imposed causing the exile of thousands of *Lhotsampas*, the government also emphasized upon all nationals to agree to the national code of conduct the *Driglam Namzha* forcing them all to accept a uniform dress and other codes while visiting the *Dzongs*, monasteries, government offices, and official functions. Dzongkha was announced as the official language, and the use of Nepali in schools even in the *Lhotsampa*-majority regions was restricted. All subjects were made to pledge loyalty to the Monarch and the Drukpa political order. These policies were in opposition to the earlier ones that encouraged *Drukpa-Lhotsampa* cultural integration. The sectarian approach to nation building led to strategic *Lhotsampa* protest, which in due course resulted in militancy. State oppression followed. The end product was a large-scale exile of *Lhotsampa* refugees to Nepal and India.

The study has analyzed the criticism of Bhutan by Nepalese. Many even oppose Jigme Singye Wangchuck as a bodhisattva Monarch, who is born to lead the nation through the troubles of our time. Nepalese writers, by contrast, generally depict him as a narcissistic dictator whom his public fear and who executes his adversaries ruthlessly. Both Bhutanese opposition and Nepalese demonisation take the view of the Kingship to harmful extremes. The reality and a useful understanding lie somewhere in between the both. Emperor Jigme is definitely the most powerful personality in Bhutan, but he lives a simple life and remains in close contact with his public. He is a kind of the Kings, tested by the difficulties of our age, including western cultural invasion, the southern Bhutanese immigration and refugee problem, and the Indian rebels.

Nepalese writers often think that Bhutan's royalty line belongs to the "ruling" *Ngalong* group that is counterposed to the *Sharcho*. The Wangchuck dynasty is basically of stock from the central districts of Kurtoe and *Bumthang*, which traditionally fall under the region of eastern Bhutan. Power has been accumulated in the hands of the central Bhutanese ever since the great-great-grandfather of the present Monarch. Power was never solely in *Ngalong* hands. Similarly, the leading *Drukpa* opposition, Rongthong Kuenley Dorji, is often identified as a *Sharcho*, in order to fuel the fictional *Ngalong-Sharcho* tension. Rongthong Kuenley is not a *Sharcho* or a native Tsanglha speaker. He belongs to Kheng, a cultural and linguistic group different from both *Ngalong* and *Sharcho*.

The nation of Bhutan is no Shangri-La or happy nation in the world even though Bhutan was ranked the calmest among eight South Asian countries and 13th among 163 countries on the Global Peace Index (GPI) 2016. Bhutanese go through similar socio-economic problems like any others south Asian countries albeit with a bit of success due to less population. Bhutan dealings of refugees by apartheid law against the *Lhotshampa* community in the name of danger to national security and cultural identity of Bhutan should never be ignored. Twenty-six years is a long time in a man's short life. Bhutanese refugee deserved respectful closure. After the end of TCR programme, the residual refugee people in the camps are hoping for a return to Bhutan. In addition, there are unregistered Bhutanese refugees in India who are managing out there living in Sikkim, North Bengal, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. In addition, the resettled Bhutanese who now comprised one of the largest forced

diasporas are organizing themselves as 'Non-Resident Bhutanese.' Bhutan must accept genuine resettled Bhutanese as non-resident Bhutanese (NRB). The International community must insist Bhutan resolve the issues of refugees for long-term political stability in Bhutan and South Asia as a region. Bhutan should also solve the pending citizenship cases of over 34,000 residents.

There is movement going on in Europe that the previous Monarch Jigme Singye Wangchuk deserved the Nobel Peace Prize for presenting Gross National Happiness 'unique vision of human development'. The regime of Bhutan has engaged several prominent international scholars and academics including former Nobel laureates in its campaign. The prominent Buddhist religious personalities are also consulted. The world should never forget the exile of 100,000 Bhutanese people from their home by former Monarch of Bhutan inflicting all kinds of human rights violations.

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