CHAPTER 3

**EDUCATION**

The comprehensive modern education system in Bhutan was introduced with the initiation of economic development plans in 1961. The monastic form of education however existed and continues even today. There are now extensive network of schools and other educational institutions spread throughout the country.

The school-based education structure in Bhutan comprises of 11 years of free basic education from classes PP to X, divided into 7 years of primary education (PP-VI), which starts at the age of 6, and 4 years of secondary education (VII-X). Beyond the 10th standard students either continue their general education in classes XI and XII in higher secondary schools or join the vocational training institutes or enter the labour market. After completing class XII, graduates either continue their studies at the tertiary level under one of the institutes under the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) for diploma or bachelor’s degree, or enter the job market. Some also go abroad for further studies.

The medium of instructions in the schools are Dzongkha (national language) and English. School curricula also include training in traditional arts, crafts, and agriculture. Besides the modern education system, there are large numbers of traditional institutions offering education to children in Monasteries, Drupdras and Shedras (The Ministry of Education has only recently started collecting information for the Shedras. Collection of information on private Monasteries and Drupdras has not yet been undertaken).

Non-Formal Education (NFE), which is meant for those individuals who are unable to avail the facilities of the formal education, was first established formally in 1992. Basic literacy skills, reading, writing and numeric skills are likewise strengthened through this system. The Ministry of Education maintains an extensive range of statistics on students, schools and teaching personnel.

Many schools provide boarding facilities for students living in areas far from the school with meals provided through the support of World Food Programme (WFP). The WFP also supports mid-day meals for day scholars who come from distant communities.