



Journal Homepage: -www.journalijar.com

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)

Article DOI:10.21474/IJAR01/12993
DOI URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/12993>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF UNEMPLOYED GRADUATES IN BHUTAN

Jigme Singye

A research Thesis Submitted In Partial Fulfillment Of The Requirements for the Master of International
Development.

Manuscript Info

Manuscript History

Received: 05 April 2021

Final Accepted: 09 May 2021

Published: June 2021

Key words:-

Graduate Unemployment, Bhutan,
Labour Market Paradox, Qualitative
Analysis

Abstract

Over the past few decades, Bhutan has made remarkable progress in socio-economic development, and the kingdom has been identified by the UN as one of the early achievers of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2018. Yet, Bhutan continues to confront a raft of development challenges. One of the most pressing challenges is in the area of youth unemployment, particularly among school and university leavers. Just as school participation has increased in recent years within the kingdom, so too has the number of unemployed graduates. Remarkably, the high levels of unemployed graduates exist alongside a large number of job openings, mostly in the fields of science and engineering, teaching, business administration and commercial management. These positions are usually filled instead by foreign, tertiary-educated workers. Thus, this research thesis intends to study this labour market paradox of graduate unemployment by mapping the lived experiences of unemployed graduates in Bhutan. It relies on primary data collected through a combination of unstructured face-to-face and semi-structured interviews with three unemployed graduates aged between 19-25 years old. The thesis poses two core research questions: firstly, to what degree is there a systemic skill mismatch and jobs, from the perspective of unemployed graduates, and secondly, what is the role of Bhutan Civil Service Examination (BCSE) in the job search strategy and labour market readiness of graduates. The results of the analysis are presented in a narrative form. The findings of this research study reveal that graduate unemployment issues in Bhutan are shaped by a range of issues including the role of the BCSE, a mismatch in wage expectations, the lack of entrenched labour market institutions, and the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of graduates.

Copy Right, IJAR, 2021,. All rights reserved.

Introduction:-

The Kingdom of Bhutan is a small landlocked country located in the Eastern Himalayas sandwiched between two of the world's most populous countries – China to the north and India to the south. Bhutan has an area of 38,394 km² (RGoB, 2012), and the most recent census recorded a total population of 727,145, of which 380,453 male and 346,692 are female (PHCB, 2017).

Corresponding Author:- Jigme Singye

Address:- A Research Thesis Submitted In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of
International Development.

Until 1960, Bhutan remained isolated, and the people lived in seclusion relied on agriculture and forestry for survival (Wangmo, 2012). Lessons learnt from the developed countries elsewhere shaped the Bhutanese development plans to proceed cautiously. Bob Frame (2005) stated that:

Bhutan has never been colonised. It entered the twentieth century without a complex of inferiority and subservience vis-à-vis foreigners. It has addressed its development challenges with careful consideration, building on the core Buddhist values of the Drukpa tradition, the official religion of Bhutan and a branch of Tantric Lamaism.

The first five-year plan (FYP 1960-1966) was introduced in 1960 by the third King of Bhutan, the late HRH Jigme Dorji Wangchuk, who focused on social and infrastructure development. By the end of 1966, observers noted many schools and hospitals had been constructed, and the King had established several new government departments such as the Department of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Forestry alongside further infrastructural developments such as roads and telecommunications (GNHC, 2017). Since then, with each FYP Bhutan has achieved steady socio-economic development that provides free education and health facilities to all citizens. In 1972, the 4th King of Bhutan, HRH Jigme Singye Wangchuk, articulated the iconic development philosophy popularly known as “Gross National Happiness (GNH)” (Ura, 2008). Alongside the GNH, the government has continued its focus on the growth and development of economy, with a new focus on hydro power and tourism.

By all indicators, Bhutan has achieved a dramatic increase in net economic growth. It has accomplished majority of the targets set under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through the comprehensive development agenda and trajectory – the iconic development philosophy of GNH which demands equity and equality in all spheres of socio-economic development. In 2017, the World Bank proclaimed Bhutan as one of the world’s fastest-growing economies, with an expected yearly average GDP growth in between 2017 and 2019 to be 11.1 percent (Jones, 2017). Furthermore, the Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS) revealed in September 2020 that Bhutan was recognized as an early achiever of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Voluntary Review submitted to the UN in 2018.

An overview of Bhutan’s Economic Performance

According to ADB (2008), the GDP growth in Bhutan was estimated to have almost doubled from 9 percent in 2003 to 17 per cent in 2007 soon after the commission of its major hydropower plant – the Tala hydropower plant in 2006. However, the Royal Monetary Authority (RMA) 2018 annual report observed drastic drop in economic growth in 2017 (8 percent in 2016 to 4.6 percent in 2017) (RMA, 2018). Further, the economic growth in Bhutan has slowed down to 3 percent in 2018 due to successive decline in hydro-electricity production and public investment (RMA, 2019).

Going by the sectoral contribution to the GDP growth in the country, according to RMA 2019 report, the service sector (tertiary) continues to dominate at 45.9 percent followed by industry sector (38.4 percent), and agriculture sector (15.7 percent). However, the targeted policy intervention undertaken in recent years, the agricultural sector rebounded contributing an average growth of 4.4 percent in 2018 as compared to 2.9 percent in 2017.



Figure 1:- Bhutan's GDP Growth Trend.
(Source: RMA Annual Report, 2019)

The government of Bhutan has made tremendous efforts in progressing from a traditional stage of economic development – one that has been rooted with limited production by single primary sector - to achieving the preconditions for an 'economic take-off' (Mitra & Yun Jeong, 2017). According to Izuchukwu (2011), the economic take-off stage is:

When the manufacturing industry assumes greater importance, although the number of industries remains small, for instance, the agriculture sector has potential to be the industrial and economic springboard from which a country's development can take off.

Further, Tenzin (2019) argues that Bhutan has made remarkable achievements in its recent economic expansion, which has led to immeasurable benefits through socio-economic development both in terms of infrastructure and livelihoods. In 2019, for an instance, around 93 percent of rural areas were connected with farm roads, 99.9 percent of households in the country were connected to the power grid, 5,545 villages connected with telecommunication network, 96 percent of population had access to free health facilities, almost 16,036 X grade students – who were not qualified for higher education – were sponsored by government to continue their higher studies with the aim to provide equitable access to quality education, multi-dimensional poverty rate has been reduced to 5.4 from 12.4, and gender disparities in education, health and labour – Bhutan's HDI increased to 0.617, an increase of 20.5 percent from 2015 – have been narrowed (Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2019).

However, Bhutan has been confronted with various development challenges such as narrow economic base, limited private sector growth, and underdeveloped credit markets. The high production costs, shortage of skilled labours, heavy dependence on trade and foreign aid, and the weak capital market – small amount of capital for businesses and government to be aware of current and future products and services in fixed income, presumably due to the heterogeneity of borrowers and the local nature of the information that lenders need – have influenced the economic inequality especially regarding the youth unemployment (Mitra & Yun Jeong, 2017).

The unemployment crisis among educated youths in Bhutan initially started in 1991 (see figure 2), although during the period, around 78 percent of male and 95 percent of female population were engaged in agriculture sector. The Statistical Yearbook 1991 recorded the initial reduction in number of employments in civil service (around 11,228 persons were employed in 1991 as compared to 13,182 persons in 1987). The change in the government HR policy acknowledging 'small, compact and efficient government' was found to have influenced the recruitments of employees in civil service in 1991 (NSB, 1991, p.29). Lee and Warner (2004) explained that when enterprise reforms focus on the performance-based hiring, firing and

compensation, those state-owned enterprises begin to use labour contracts, adopt wage reform, and decentralize labour management which does not provide protection to job seekers from the market forces. Studies have also revealed significant relationship between the government spending and the rise of unemployment. According to Mayer, Moyen and Stahler (2010) the aggregated unemployment is likely to increase when there is non-persistent government spending. For instance, in Morocco the unemployment figure among educated workers worsened as there was reduction (cuts in the public spending) in the public sector hiring due to the structural adjustment policies implementation in 1983 (Boudarbat, 2006).

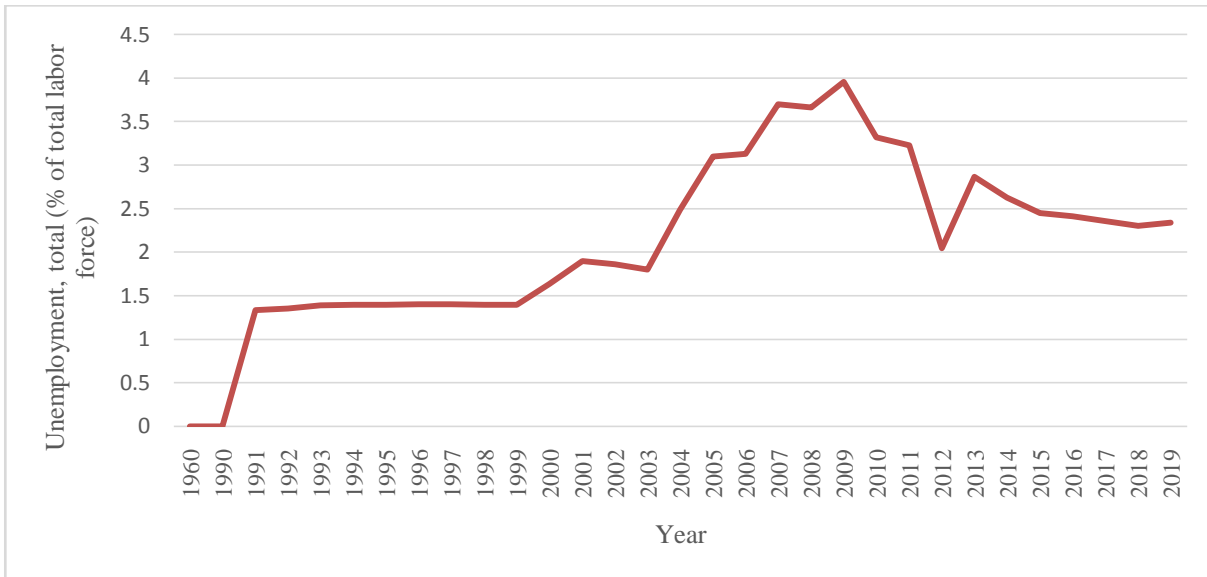


Figure 2:- Overall Unemployment rate in Bhutan 1960 to 2019. (Source: World Bank Open Data, 2019)

Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), Unemployment and Labour Market

The Population and Housing Census (PHCB) 2017 reported that of the total population above 15 years of working age group (537,728 persons), 63.3 percent (340,236 persons) were found economically active and are in labour force (NSB, 2017). According to the Labour Force Survey Report, Bhutan 2019, the LFPR in Bhutan accounted around 66.4 percent in 2019 (comparatively higher in rural with 68.5 percent than 62 percent in urban), while male LFPR in urban and rural (75.7 and 70 percent respectively) is higher than female counterpart (49.5 and 67 percent respectively) (NSB, 2019).

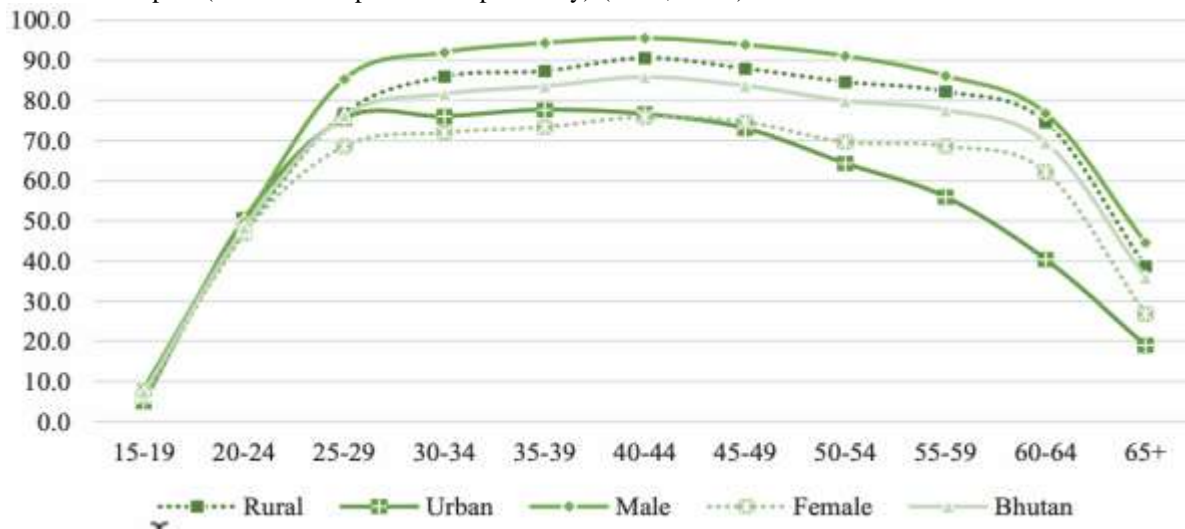


Figure 3:- LFPR by area and gender, 2018. (Source: LMIB 2019, MoLHR)

However, the RMA Annual Report 2019 stated that in 2018 a total of 185,694 potential workers remained out of work force, largely students (43 percent), attending family duties – housewives (28 percent) and old age (15 percent). The youth population constituted around 48 percent of total unemployment with compared to varying age groups in the country. Further, RMA claimed that reflecting on the available working-age group, statistically it represents, for every ten persons there are seven potential workers depicting higher level of economic support ratio.

School Enrolment, Labour Force and Youth Unemployment

Bhutan has observed increasing school enrolment due to the rapid socio-economic development specially in education system which mandates to provide qualified graduates for various government agencies and organization. Thus, the association between the increasing number of school enrolments and rising youth unemployment in the country is clearly depicted through the available statistics (see figure 4 and 5). Fakeeh (2009) discusses that the poor alignment of the education system and labour market situation loses control over the content of the curriculum and forward planning that doesn't equip graduates with hard and soft skills necessary to meet the economic demands.

In 1986, Bhutan had only 52,500 students enrolled in various level of educations, but in 2019, Bhutan had 251,709 students and trainees enrolled in different level of education such as ECCD centres, formal schooling (including primary, lower secondary, middle secondary, higher secondary, extended classroom, continuing education, central schools & special institutes and SEN schools), tertiary education (tertiary students within Bhutan and abroad, technical & vocational education and training, institute of ZorigChusum) and other forms of education (monastic education, non-formal education and Sanskrit Patshala) (NSB 1986; NSB 2019).

With the gradual increase in the number of student enrolment across different levels of education, the young, educated persons (graduates) in the country started experiencing unemployment consequences. The Labour Market Information Bulletin 2019 (MoLHR, 2019) noted that the trend of unemployed persons in Bhutan with higher education qualification is a rising phenomenon (28.5 percent with higher secondary education, 24 percent with middle secondary education and 26.1 percent with bachelor's degree education), and almost 52.6 percent of have been unemployed for more than two years.

National statistical reports have also reported that unemployment among population ages between 15 to 29 years constantly remained high with 13.7, 12.4, and 12.3 percent respectively (NSB, 2006, 2007 & 2008). Similarly, in 2018, the unemployment among population ages between 15 to 29 stood at 13.6 percent (NSB, 2019). Moreover, in 2019, the youth (15 to 24 years old as defined by NSB) unemployment rate stood at 15.7 percent (4,921 persons) with 49.7 percent male and 50.3 percent female youths (Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2019).

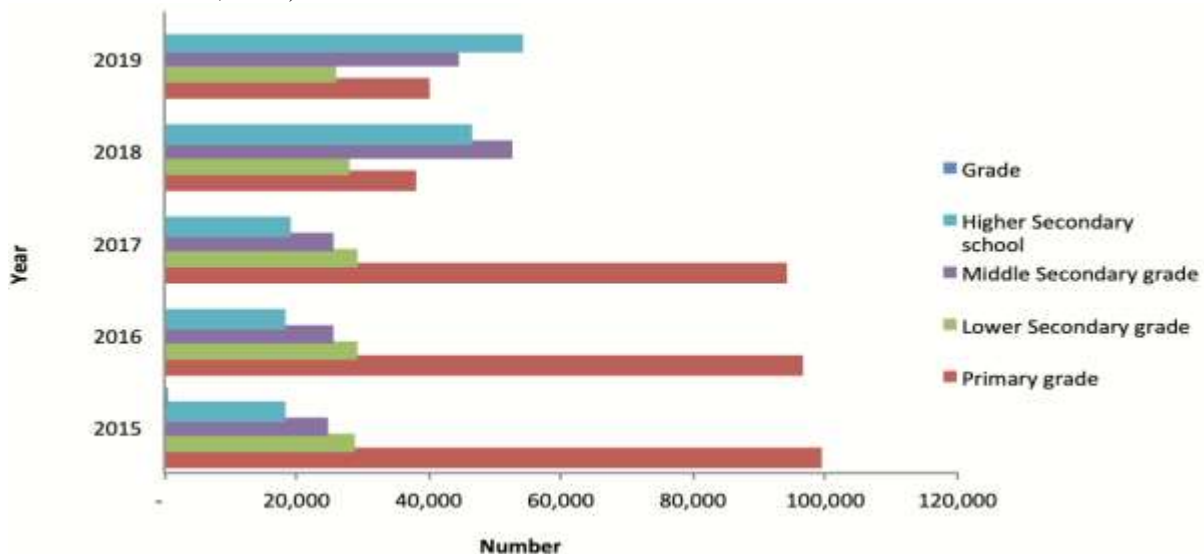


Figure 4:- Number of students by grade in Bhutan, 2015 to 2019.

(Source: Statistical Yearbook 2019, NSB, Bhutan).



Figure 5:- Youth unemployment rate by gender, 2013-2018.
(Source: LMIB 2019, MoLHR)

Graduate Unemployment and Job Availability in Bhutan

Remarkably, the prevalence of huge educated unemployed persons in Bhutan has occurred together with the existence of various job vacancies floated annually. The Employment Services Division (ESD) under Ministry of Labour and Human Resources has recorded around 5,201 jobs (32.5 percent in private sector, 27.8 percent in government & autonomous agencies, 20.7 percent in overseas and 18.2 percent in corporate and NGOs) during the fiscal year 2018-19 (MoLHR, 2019). Moreover, the report also presented huge foreign workers (50,057) in the country as of June 2019, employed in various occupation like managerial, technicians and associated professionals, craft, and related trade.

Despite the attempts of the Ministry of Labour to introduce many measures intended to counter youth unemployment, these unfilled job vacancies continue to occur in Bhutan. The Ministry of Labour and Human Resources (MoLHR) has been implementing several programs and trainings to consolidate youths' skills and work experience such as

1. The Guaranteed Employment Program which encompasses three sub-programs such as the Direct Employment Scheme, Employment Skills Scheme and Overseas Employment Scheme
2. Critical Skills Training, and
3. Entrepreneurship and Self-employment.

The government has further launched national events such as a graduate job fair, a global entrepreneur week, along with the prospective job search strategic framework.

Similarly, various policies and programs intervention were launched by Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) since 1973 – long before unemployment was an issue in Bhutan. For example, the establishment of the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) has been considered one of the major and successful government agencies in the country in promoting efficient human resource management and development system that is just, equitable and fair. However, the prevailing statistics on the rising graduate unemployment phenomenon suggests that these initiatives may not be as effective in managing youth unemployment as previously hoped.

RCSC and the HR Policies for Civil Service in Bhutan

Demmke and Moilanen (2010) stated that “civil service systems are a constituent part of our system of government” as it has democratic and ethical functions serving society and law in pursuant of sustainable civil services, it deals with the national civil services and employees influencing the quality of life. Thus, the study on the civil services reforms regarding the changes in the size, structure and overall organization of national civil services have gained significant attention (Dussauge Laguna, 2011). Moreover, Demmke and Moilanen (2010) while analysing the national civil service reforms (processes concerning civil servants' legal status, organisational changes, recruitment policies, remuneration, decentralisation of human resource

responsibilities, job security and ethnics) in 27 Member States of EU, questioned the outcomes of reform processes and future of the national civil service.

In Bhutan, the Department of Manpower under the Ministry of Development was established in 1973 which was later, in 1982 changed as the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC). Since then, RCSC has focused to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in the civil service maintaining uniformity of personnel actions throughout the country. The introduction of Cadre System in 1989, Bhutan Civil Service Rules and Regulations (BCSR) in 1990, 2002 and 2006, and replacement of Cadre System with Position Classification System (PCS) in 2005, have served to be an effective tool for strengthening civil service system ensuring high standard of morale and effective public service delivery. Much of its functions has been based on the theme 'Good Governance' which was published in 1999 that embraces four core values:

1. Expedite Job Classification System,
2. Reinforce Merit-based career progression,
3. Promote IT/ e-governance in HR management, and
4. Organize regular training for civil servants on leadership and management

Moreover, in 2007, human resource (HR) actions were decentralised where the recruitment in the operational position category was authorised to agencies. However, RCSC conducts Organizational Development (OD) exercise at national level to ensure and maintain the right size of civil service, organizational structure, staffing, strength and pattern, and the need for capacity building. Thus, Green (2005) stated that it is crucial to have the civil service management to be the integral component of decentralisation rather than a discrete and stand-alone operation, as it affects both the incentives of and the demands on the civil service. Further, Green emphasized that "a uniform system of job classification imposes rigidities on the small local civil services".

The Problem Statement of the Study

The rapid socio-economic development in Bhutan has led to the colossal transition in education system. According to Dorji (2005) since 1961, Bhutan went through a period of tremendous socio-economic change and modern education became crucial for developing human resources to implement new development activities. The headway of socio-economic development in the country demanded the transition of education system to modern and tertiary education level as many government agencies and private organizations required candidates (graduates) from universities (Hernadi, Rathore, Dorji&Dawala, 2012). Lately, Bhutan has achieved 44.7 percent gross enrolment ratio in the tertiary institutions (MoE, 2019). This has resulted in the high number of educated workforces. The high number of students qualifying for tertiary education (government scholarship) or pursuing higher education through self-funding in the hope for better jobs (position and salaries) and life has infixed soaring unemployment figures in Bhutan especially amongst the graduate youths (Pauw, 2008). Although the education system has improved in Bhutan both in terms of quality and quantity, it has failed to fulfil the needs of both students and employer (Department of Education, 2016).

The statistics indicates that graduate youth unemployment in Bhutan is increasing gradually. The MoLHR (2012) witnessed the highest youth unemployment rate in 2009 with 12.9 percent (10.7 percent male & 14.7 percent female). It was also observed that the total labour force in the country was expected to increase to 318,688 by 2015 which demanded an economy to increase its employment opportunities by 24 percent (GNH, 2010). In 2012, out of 3,500 (7.3 percent) unemployed youths, approximately 900 (8.6 percent) were graduates (LFS, 2012) and in 2013, there were 3,210 unemployed graduates amongst 9,916 unemployed individuals (LFS, 2013). The PHCB 2017 reported that the unemployment rate increases with the level of education. From the total economically active persons, 41.3 percent are with or above higher (certificate, diploma, bachelors, and masters) education. Moreover, LFSR 2017 also observed that 57.9 percent of youth with higher education and 28.4 percent with bachelor's degree were unemployed in Bhutan.

In contrast to a huge unemployed graduate prevailing in the country, in 2013 many foreign workers (2,123 foreign workers) with university degree were recruited mostly in the area of science and engineering, teaching, business administration and commercial manager along with huge foreign labour recruitments in the construction sectors (National HRD Advisory Series, 2014). It is also noted that during the fiscal year 2014-2015, 9174 (2.6 percent) unemployed individuals in 2014 was allied with many jobs availability in the country (43,200 domestic requirements across different sectors (LMIB, 2014). Further, the democratic government's initiative of sending

graduates abroad for oversea employment through Employment Skill and Direct Employment Schemes has not been able to tackle the graduate unemployment figures.

Several factors are likely to have deterred the existing paradoxical labour market in Bhutan. For example, lack of comprehensive human resource planning and structured program documentation specifically on the work experience programs in the country materializes to have significant correlation with the rising graduates unemployed (Esterhuizen, 2010; Mughal, 2011). The Labour Market Information Bulletin (LMIB) (2014) asserts the prevalence of structural unemployment (mismatch between job and skills acquired) while the Unemployment Youth Perception Survey 2014 found that almost 41 percent unemployed youth in 2014 was due to their preference for white-collar job over blue-collar job. However, students' perception on the rationale for their unemployment is entirely different. The 2014 National HRD Advisory Series observed nearly 73 percent of unemployed graduates responded to have chosen the degree programmes based on "higher employment prospects" of the courses provided in the colleges. Indeed, the policy formulation by apex labour recruitment body such as the RCSC also plays a vital role in determining the employability of the potential labour force in the country. According to the National HRD Advisory Series (2014), the RCSC policy on prioritizing the "skill enhancement of civil servants" which enacts to have "Small, Compact and Efficient civil service" has greatly affected the recruitment of graduates in the government agencies and other related bodies over the years.

Thus, the current employment market scenario and the unemployment trend especially the huge graduate unemployment in Bhutan delineates an existence of policy impediment. Most of the government stakeholders, private sectors and other corporate bodies allege of short-staffed and excuse themselves of not being able to undertake their mandates or fulfil their targets. While on the other hand, as more and more university and vocational graduates continue to pour in the labour market annually, the government and policy makers are concerned with the prevalence of paradoxical labour market in Bhutan (DoE, 2016).

The prevailing information and evidence of having labour shortages amidst plenty graduates in the labour market in Bhutan indicates a perplexity and doesn't satisfy the need as it is unable to reveal the nuanced issues that exist beneath the policy level that might be contributing to youth unemployment. Therefore, a qualitative analysis is needed. Thus, this thesis study tries to triangulate the existing dilemma to understand the missing link between unemployed graduates on one hand and the prevalence of job vacancies on the other through various questions, such as:

1. To what degree is there a systemic skill mismatch and jobs or unplanned human resource development, or a gross negligence or the lack of absorptive capacity of the organizations?
2. Is the rising graduate unemployment in Bhutan due to some policy hurdle?
3. To what extents Bhutan's rising youth unemployment issue is due to a lack of or poor coordination, understanding and linkage between different government organizations?

Therefore, in general, this thesis aims to study the paradoxical nature of labour market amidst huge unemployed graduates in Bhutan. Specifically, this research study intends to assess the individual graduates' lived experiences on the associated factors for the rising graduate unemployment in Bhutan.

Chapter 2

Literature Review:-

The challenges facing Bhutan around rising youth unemployment despite high levels of job vacancies are not unique to the kingdom, although there are significant differences across local contexts. This chapter will review the breadth of studies that are pertinent to these issues. Due to the lack of scholarship in Bhutan around this matter, it is useful to look further afield for comparable examples around graduate employment and labour oversupply.

The labour paradox according to Sarbaugh-Thompson et al. (1999) is defined as "the coexistence of high central city unemployment rates with unfilled jobs throughout the metropolitan area". They explain that such scenario occurs due to three dimensional factors such as skill mismatch, spatial mismatch, and social isolation. Further, research by the World Bank (2006) on the "Skill development in India: The vocational education and training system" suggested that the presence of high unemployed educated persons is the existence of skills mismatch in the job market. Chowdhury (2014) stated that the co-existence of skill unemployability and the skill shortages in the job market is a typical phenomenon of skill mismatch and can lead to long term unemployment in the country. He is adamant that such distortion in labour market is brought about by two factors; (a) when education system does not sync its skills

development programmes with what is demanded in the market, and (b) when job market does not incentivise required labours (such as wage, provision for professional training). As this thesis will demonstrate, these elements are all present in Bhutan.

Curriculum and The Labour Market

This section will demonstrate the association between curriculum and labour market in determining the graduate employability in Bhutan. Literatures have indicated that the structural unemployment pattern in a labour market is due to the irrelevant courses offered in universities, whilst universities on other hand allege labour market for not being able to create enough jobs for new graduates. The findings of this section will illustrate how this quandary prevails in an economy and what are some of the strategies and policies put forward by other developed and developing countries to address this pertinent paradox.

In 2003, despite China had around 9.6 million young graduates their multinational companies could absorb only few due to lack of necessary skills for service occupation (Farrell & Grant, 2005). Such conditions have propelled China's unemployment rate among graduates at 6 percent in 2003. Comparing the engineering education system in China, Germany, India, North America and other European countries, Farrell & Grant found that China had almost 33 percent (1.6 million) university students pursuing engineering which was 10 times more than other countries. Yet only 160,000 young engineers could fit for multinationals. This was attributed to the course delivery mode – Chinese education system was found bias toward theory while others had practical projects and teamwork experiences. Zhiuwen (2009) stated that Chinese business education has failed to deliver employability as it was exam-oriented, and teacher-centred learning, which has demanded reformation into an employability-directed education.

Similarly, according to Ajaegbu (2012), more than 37 percent of educated Nigerian youth were unemployed in 2011. Studies have argued that Nigerian curriculum is outdated providing limited required employability skills. It was also found that there was adoption of untimely economic policy measures. Ogege (2011) argues that corrupted system of governance and expansion of education system in Nigeria has contributed to the upsurge of unemployment amongst qualified young people. The study observes that more than 300 billion U.S dollars revenue from oil was lost to democratic dispensation in between 1999 and 2007. Corruption thus, distorted the allocation and management of resources. Moreover, the geometric growth of graduate unemployment was also attributed to the fast expansion of education system. The expansion of education with the sluggish economic growth has indicated the lack of structural and transformation capacity, which pinned down to the education curricula and the pedagogical obsolete.

Further, it is evident that the preceding growth in the manufacturing industries in India for the last few years has demanded large number of skilled technical graduates, but with the huge influx of technical graduates in the market has been a detrimental factor for rising unemployment in the country (Lin & Pleskovic, 2008). According to Recotillet (2007), the initial labour market conditions have severe consequences on the long-term outcomes. The cross-sectorial analysis has demonstrated that high number of existing technical graduates didn't possessed the skills (graduates either had poor quality or different skills) required. Perrone and Vickers (2003) stated that rapid development of mass higher education system makes the labour market less predictable and favourable. Their study on "Life after graduation as a very uncomfortable world: an Australian case study" found that many prospective employers had paradoxical expectations of graduates to have substantial work and management experiences.

Similarly, despite having 30, 30.5 and 22 percent unemployed graduates in Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria respectively in 2014 (Madoui, 2015), it was found that companies had a difficult time finding a suitable employee. On other hand, universities were alleging companies of not being specific in articulating the skills needed. Such blame-game situations between the education system and the labour market stakeholders have been found determining not just the graduate unemployment in Algeria but also it has led several other social (impacts individual behaviours) consequences. Valerievna (2012) said that the existing discrepancy between the education markets to labour market needs has been one of the major causes for graduate unemployment.

In Egypt, the high level of unemployed graduates is due to the quality of education (Galal, 2002). Pitan and Adedeji (2012) elucidated that since employers especially the private sector performs in a competitive market, they tend to assure negligible cost on-the-job training by focusing not just on what qualifications students have – the employers also take consideration of best attributes like good personal, social, analytical, communication, and technical managerial skills which are critically associated with the provision of quality education. In Nigeria, since graduates

lack training and are unproductive on the job, they are often viewed as ‘half-baked’ by the potential employers in the country.

According to Dhanani (2004), in Indonesia, the rising share of tertiary graduates in total unemployment (24 percent), despite considerable public and private investment in their human resources, has been under growing scrutiny which has led government to embarked on entrepreneurship training programmes to encourage students to pursue self-employment. However, it is evident that graduates turning towards self-employment is negligible in most of the countries. Kostoglou (2011) discusses the importance of bringing changes in the curricula and incorporating entrepreneurship. He argued that the promotion of entrepreneurship can fire up economic growth as well as fulfil the dire need for linking higher education and labour market. Zhiwen (2009) recommends for the need of flexible curriculum to continue updating the curriculum imperatively with the change in technologies. He added that vocational courses such as career management, entrepreneurship, self-management skills, team-work skills, interpersonal skills, group problem solving, communication management, global and international business must be designed and updated regularly.

Farrell and Grant (2005) argue that the education institutes along with government agencies need to reform the financial expenditure for tertiary education in China to raise the quality of graduates. They exemplify Microsoft to demonstrate the need for companies to invest more in training and developing the new talent they need. This is justifiable as there are emerging debates on the significant relevance and effectiveness of gaining work experiences while still in universities (Perrone & Vickers, 2003). However, Lin and Pleskovic (2008) states that increasing government funding for higher education enables the education sector to train enough graduates efficiently. They are on the agreement that understanding the sources of higher returns is crucial not just for predicting future trends but also for designing policies. For example, Australian University practices annual Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) along with the Graduate Careers Council of Australia (GCCA) monitors and evaluates students after college life processes (quantifying graduate profiling) regarding employment, salary, etc. (Perrone & Vickers, 2003). Moreover, Germany has focused providing quality vocational education and training (VET) through ‘Dual System’ and fully qualifying school-based system (Henseke, 2018).

Incentives, Wages and The Labour Market

There is substantial evidence stating that the existing wage premium (what employers offer) in the labour market and the minimum wage expectation by fresh graduates (high returns on education) has played a vital role in undermining the employment of graduates. According to Azam (2009) the relative supply and demand shifts in favour of workers with a tertiary education can determine the wage and incentives premium in the market, ultimately affecting the graduate employment. Moreover, Zeman, McMullen & De Broucker (2010) conceded that higher education level is the path higher wages, employment stability and social integration for the individual. Thus, the findings of this section will demonstrate that graduate employability is also influenced by the wage and incentives (return on education) and substantiate that the structural unemployment could also be due to over-educated.

The OECD nations face the same emergent labour paradox just as developing nations do. In most of the OECD countries during the period of 1991 and 2003, the unemployment rate amongst university graduates was found higher than those with non-tertiary education (Machin & McNally, 2007). They exhibited that graduate unemployment is due to being both ‘over-educated’ as well as ‘under-educated’ in OECD countries. Their varying methods of measuring these two conditions provided that these conditions may arise because of three circumstances – one, based on the ‘work-study experts’ (who determine the skill needs of an individual’s occupation); second, ‘surveys of jobholders’ (ascertains the qualification needed to do a job); and third, ‘calculation of average education levels’ (assesses the education level in an individual’s occupation). Based on these three conditions, Machin & McNally (2007) rebuffs the concept of mismatch of skills and available jobs. Further, Nunez and Livanos (2009) stated that the prospect of finding stable employment in European countries have become uncertain for graduates as huge number of graduates enters labour market annually, although students possess great skills and qualification. In Turkey, for instance, there was approximately 45 percent annual increase of graduates in 2007 and the total number of university graduates was almost 2.5 million in 2010 (Erdem&Tugcu, 2012).

Hartog (2002) supported that the economic conditions where there are recruitments for highly skilled people for the jobs designated for lower level of education or labour shortages amid plenty unemployed graduates, its interpreted as ‘under-utilisation of skills’ or ‘over-education’. A study on the “Graduate unemployment in the face of skills

shortages: A labour market paradox” clearly emphasized that “employment growth... should be seen in a more positive light than is generally the case” (Pauw et al., 2006). Further, in 2008, Greece had 29 percent of unemployed university graduates and was determined by the wage, stringency of employment protection legislation, links between education and labour market and the labour market policies (Karamessini, 2010). According to Yu (2013), graduates in South Africa were mostly unemployed due to lack of; (a) information on job market, (b) soft skills, and most importantly due to (c) unrealistic wage expectation.

According to Mavromaras, Sloane and Wei (2013), the skill mismatch would be possibly in the form of skills under-utilization deterred by scarring effects of low pay (wages). As noted by (Gray & Chapman, 1999), the premium wage at entry for college graduates is one of most salient and widely reported features of labour market since 1980s. In trying to understand the dimension of “overeducation: mismatching supply/demand”, Pauw, Osthuizen & Westhuizen (2006); Pauw (2008); and Hwang (2017) explains that university graduates expect higher valued jobs as compared to high school graduates, as a result remains unemployed. Hwang (2017) further stresses that overeducation is the major reason for graduate unemployment, and its smidgens on the job mobility and wage bargaining, which is succinctly represented as “Supply (wage, market condition) = Demand (wage, education, no. of graduates)”. It is observed that there is ‘persistent effects of initial labour market conditions on wages’ and is associated significantly with the rise in the youth unemployment rate at graduation (Andrews, et al., 2020). According to Shelkova (2009), the ‘structure of underlying markets’ as well as ‘relative to the competitive market wage’ have detrimental impact on the minimum wage (price floor), which affects the employment - its distortional and welfare.

It is also noticeable that policies that enhances drastic increase in the influx of graduates in labour market strengthen employers’ position in negotiating wages at entry (Gray & Chapman, 1999). Ziwei and Chunbing (2020) observed that the expansion of enrolment in China after 2000 has affected the return on education as labour market saw huge influx of graduates. In Nigeria graduates are unemployed due to economic recession, minimum wage rate, rural-urban migration, and government policy (Kgotlhane, Mudau, & Ncube, 2018). Agarwal (2011) observes that in India:

The country’s current low wages, growth rate, and size can create many jobs across the skills spectrum, but merely putting more people into universities and colleges can exacerbate the situation unless the demographic expansion is directed to meet the country’s skill needs in an integrated manner.

Further, along with the ‘cruel dilemma’ as explained by Phillips’s curve, many economists in 1950s and 60s argued that unemployment would be influenced due to cost-push forces related to market institutions and imperfections (Schwarzer, 2018). According to Livanos (2010), unemployed graduates in Greece are responsive to the prospective wage flexibility and the oversupply of graduates have forced them to take jobs in inappropriate fields. Moreover, a College Graduate Employment Survey conducted by Po (2011) found that reduction in graduate’s wage reservation by 1000 yuan can significantly increase the probability of finding job by 66 percent in China. He stated that market wages should be the reference points when adjusting income expectations. Patel and Bulsari (2015) found that in Taiwan, the increase gap of wage expectation and actual wages in market has caused increasing unemployment amongst educated people. The labour market segmentation has thus, impacted the labour mobility, employability, and wage differences across the specific classes within the work force (Ryu, 2018).

Implication of These Findings for Bhutan

Research studies have indicated that the increasing supply of graduates pose a question of how the labour market will absorb new university graduates. The transition of education system and soaring graduate unemployment rate has raised several questions. For example, has the increase in the supply of university graduates lowered the value of a degree? As Po (2011) discusses that despite various government policies designed for graduate employment in China, given the rigidity of labour market there is need for fundamental changes to labour market to provide alternative solutions to graduates in adjusting the job search strategies, for instance. He also observes that having more realistic wage expectations can lead to efficient and productive job search. Thus, the emerging scenario of rising graduate unemployment in other developed and developing countries illustrates various methods to understand and tackle this dilemma strategically.

It is evident that Bhutanese university graduates have faced increasing labour market competition since the expansion of tertiary education. The increasing trend of graduate unemployment rate in Bhutan is a pressing and long-term objective of national social and economic policy.

During Bhutan's 2018 National Assembly, unemployment was one of the key issues raised emphasising mismatch between supply and demand. Almost 67 percent of bachelor's degree holders in Bhutan were jobless in 2016 (Ernst & India, 2019). In 2017, the unemployment among educated youth (bachelor's degree and above) accounted to 15.5 percent (Whitecross, 2019). Further, the National Statistical Bureau (2018) recorded that unemployment rate is highest amongst persons with bachelor's degree (12.7 percent), followed by higher secondary (11.2 percent) and middle secondary (7.7 percent) education level in 2018. According to Gray and Chapman (1999), a steady increase in college-educated workers is one of the most salient and widely reported features of labour market.

The Labour Market Information Guide for Job Seekers (2018) has forecasted that the number of secondary and university graduates entering the labour market in the next five years will be about 12,000 to 13,000 (see table 1).

Table 1:- Job seeker forecast in the 12th FYP period.

Education	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Total
Class X	2,943	3024	3304	3051	2938	15260
Class XII	5642	5672	6409	6585	7196	31504
University Graduates	3712	3894	4034	3556	3761	18957
Other	848	911	921	1032	1035	4748
Total	13145	13502	14668	14224	14930	70469

(Source: MoLHR, 2018)

These findings are highly relevant to Bhutan as the increasing graduate unemployment in the country with accelerating economic growth has become major concern for government (MoE, 2010). Although the education system has improved in Bhutan both in terms of quality and quantity, it has failed to fulfill the needs of both students and employer (CIPE, 2007). The Labour Market Information Bulletin 2019 noted that 26.1 percent graduates with bachelor's degree have been unemployed for more than one year which indicated that graduate unemployment in the country is largely a long-term issue (MoLHR, 2019).

The causal factors for high graduate unemployment in Bhutan have remained critically a mayhem. For instance, The Labour Market Information Guide for University Graduates 2015 found that graduates aspire for desk jobs and prefer public sector which are mostly saturated (MoLHR, 2015). According to the MoLHR (2016), unemployed graduates do not take up private sector jobs and portentously prefer to work in the public sector. The report notes that such widespread queuing for public-sector jobs is a major reason for high rates of unemployment among young, well-educated, and well-off urban residents. Moreover, Ministry of Labour and Human Resources (MoLHR) and other government published reports like NSB have been claiming that there is an existence of structural unemployment in the country. As Mathou (2002) notes:

The mismatch between limited white-collar job opportunities, highly popular among graduates, and a growing but unsatisfied demand for blue-collar skilled work force, mainly in the private sector, came as the main challenge.

On other hand, as of January 2018, the 12th FYP HRD Masterplan for the Economic Sectors (2018-23) observed that about 50,000 foreign workers were employed in different sectors in the country – majority in Craft and Trade (82 percent) while 260 persons were in managerial, 1,200 persons in professional and 570 in technical & association professional positions (MoLHR, 2018).

There are, however, negligible research works conducted in Bhutan that seeks to understand the association between earning expectations and graduates' labour market attainment. Nor has there been any research that undertakes a qualitative approach to understand individual graduates' lived experiences. Therefore, this thesis tries to study the paradox of labour market in Bhutan through investigating the individual graduates' lived experiences. The analysis will address following four research questions:

1. How does the reservation wage influence a college graduate's probability of being employed upon graduation and within 6 months after graduation?

2. Does the gap between the reservation wage and the market wage affect an individual's job search outcome?
3. How does BCSE affect job search and preparation for labour market?
4. Why private sector jobs are overlooked?

Chapter 3

Methodology:-

To understand the paradoxical nature of prevailing labour market, several researchers have used quantitative research methods – some scholars have focused on the ‘classification of gradates jobs’, some on the ‘organisation of labour market’, while others opted to analyse on the ‘work task data and reports’ like Employment Surveys (Henseke, 2018). However, studies such as “Earnings expectation and graduate employment: Evidence from recent Chinese college graduates” (Po, 2011), “What is the cause of graduates’ unemployment? Focus on individual concerns and perspectives” (Hwang, 2017) and “An exploration of challenges faced by unemployed university graduate students: A case of a rural university in the Limpopo Province” (Kgotlhane, Mudau & Ncube, 2018) have employed a qualitative analysis. Their analysis draw importance on understanding the individual experiences through descriptive narration of respondents’ statements and discussing the theoretical framework to explain the empirical models of their findings. Similarly, Karamanis, Beneki and Ioakimidis (2018) used the datasets of Hellenic Statistical Authority and Ministry of Labour to study “Greek labour market: The evaluation of minimum wage and unemployment during the period 2000-2017”. They employed descriptive method to analyse two factors such as minimum wage and, employment and unemployment.

Thus, this research study is explorative and qualitative in nature, meaning it aims to map the lived experiences of unemployed graduates in Bhutan to evaluate and understand the phenomenological functions of graduates’ attributes in determining their unemployment status. Peroz&Rosca (2007) stated that, “Qualitative research provides a micro-level perspective, exploring the meaning that events and situations have for participants. It can be used to illustrate and explain in depth specific social phenomena”. Similarly, Kgotlhane, Mudau & Ncube (2018) found that qualitative analysis elicits participants’ accounts of meaning and experiences of respondents’ lives under real-world conditions.

Qualitative Study and Anthropologist Perspective of Interview

Johnson Bruke (2014) stated that the qualitative research method provides researchers an opportunity to understand how ‘one or two’ individuals experience a phenomenon, for instance, interview of 20 widows on their experiences of the death of their husband. The qualitative study accounts the “lived experience of the individuals” in a specific setting (Reeves, Albert, Kuper and Hodges, 2008). Similarly, Goddard & Melville (2004) acclaimed that qualitative research concerns with the phenomenon, for instance, investigating the reasons for human behaviour such as why people think or do certain things in certain ways using in-depth interviews which have word association tests, sentence completion tests, and story completion tests.

Brockington and Sullivan (2003) proclaimed that the information can be collected through participant observation, writing ethnography, semi-structured interviews, oral histories, and group discussions. This method of data gathering helps in describing the facts and associated ideas that cannot be drawn with the secured facts and focused data. For instance, qualitative analysis is useful in answering why do people use drugs, rather than portraying just the number of drug users. Riesman and Benney (1956) said that the first newspaper interview with foreigners and the political opponents conducted with the lists of prepared questions which were later published without any comments, demonstrated that people could possibly see the “deep-seated differences”.

In Lee’s (2008) study on “David Riesman and the sociology of interview” said that the method of interview date backs in 1947 when Riesman interviewed adolescents about their musical tastes to draw an aspect of Adorno’s work. Riesman however, failed to gather quality responses for his questions and similarly, Lee observed that Riesman and Glazer (Riesman’s apprentice) even failed to analyse the opinion polls to predict the result of the 1948 U.S. presidential election. These failures however, had lessons taught, as Riesman and Glazer described:

1. Technical issues (sample bias)
2. Understanding social and psychological context embedded within political opinion
3. Interview responses were also mediated social position. For instance, upper-class participants overestimated the social importance of their own opinions, middle-class seemed to have tendency to express their individuality through tastes, preferences, and consumer choice, while lower-class lacked a sense of potency in their own lives (they didn’t want to get tied up with public opinions)

4. The responses of middle-class respondents by large had stock of opinions but were tended to be driven by the polls and mass media influences.

For this, Riesman's writing on interview had two phases; (i) The Lonely Crowd and (ii) Faces in the Crowd. The first phase 'The Lonely Crowd' methodological intended to gather information on a general ground, for instance, relationship between character, politics, and society through a comic strip to illustrate themes. While the second phase 'Faces in the Crowd' presents readers a series of illustration for individuals but are often randomly selected and doesn't represent any specific population.

Respondents Sampling

A total of three unemployed graduates, one male and two females aged between 19-25 years old were employed in the analysis. The purposive random sampling method was used to select the research participants (RP). The purposive random sampling technique (often referred as judgment sampling) is a premeditated choice of respondents, who possess qualities of being a key informant – one or two persons who can willingly share the required information based on their knowledge and experience (Tongco, 2007). All the three respondents have completed their university degree from Sherubtse College under Royal University of Bhutan (RUB). They have been living in Thimphu – capital of Bhutan and are dependent on their parents for living. All of them do not have formal work experiences neither in qualified (desk jobs) nor in unqualified work (such as cleaning, delivery, etc.). The RPs have been unemployed for a period ranging from 120 days to 2 years which provides an appropriate sample representative for studying the short-term and long-term graduate unemployment in Bhutan.¹

Data Collection Method

To address the research questions, data were collected through unstructured or ethnographic –as defined by Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) – face-to-face and semi-structured interviews. The interview was conducted in two phases. The first phase of interview was conducted individually face-to-face that happened virtually through videoconferencing software (Zoom), and second phase of interview was conducted with the semi-structured questionnaire to supplement the discussion on the first phase interview. Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) stated that, unstructured interview is a technique “in which neither the question nor the answer categories are predetermined, instead they rely on social interaction between the researcher and the informant... or a way to understand the complex behavior of people without imposing any a prior categorization, which might limit the field of inquiry”. While, the semi-structure interviews, as stated by Longhurst (2003), “is a verbal interchange where one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information from another person by asking questions. Although the interviewer prepares a list of predetermined questions, semi-structured interviews unfold in a conversational manner offering participants the chance to explore issues they feel are important”.

In addition, documentary review (Peroz&Rosca, 2007) was employed to gather substantial data and materials for exploring a start point social – educated youth unemployment – phenomenon which was obligatory to familiarize with specific circumstances and characteristics. Scott (2014) stated that “official statistics on crime, income distribution, health and illness, censuses of population, newspaper reports, diaries, reference books, government publications, and similar sources are the basis of much social research ...” Thus, a series of published government and NGO national reports, newspapers and other literatures were reviewed for the qualitative analysis.

Language Transcription of Collected Primary Data (Interviews)

This study constitutes twelve questions for first individual round and eight questions for second round interviews, 35 minutes each for unstructured face-to-face video-taped information gathering with three participants, conducted in August 2020. The virtual face-to-face interview was conducted in both English and Dzongkha (national language of

¹*Limitation of respondents sampling:* The research study was conducted during the COVID 19 pandemic. As Bhutan was also hit hard by the corona virus – COVID19, she went into a 21-days nationwide lockdown on August 11, 2020. Since the respondents sampling and data collection for the research study was scheduled from 17 August to first week of September 2020, the nationwide lockdown in Bhutan affected the respondents sampling. Moreover, graduates were found engaged in the preparation for civil service examination, which graduates consider as one of the major turning points/events in their career path. Thus, a sample size of three unemployed graduates was confirmed after the thorough discussion and obtaining consensus from research supervisor.

Bhutan). At the same time, written responses in English were also collected. Similarly, for the semi structured interview – second round interview – data were collected in English. Thus, the results represented in this study are the direct extract of responses – language style – which respondents have corresponded during the interviews. Therefore, the presence of language errors – grammatical issues, etc. – are indicated with ‘sic’.

Data Analysis Method

As the qualitative research addresses the process-oriented questions (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007), a mixed mode of content-based analysis (thematic analysis) and interpretative analysis (discourse analysis) were adopted to analyze the collected data, as both methods have same stages of the data analyzing process (see figure 6). According to Sgier (2012), thematic analysis basically looks at what the data say and aims at identifying patterns within the data, while discourse analysis emphasizes more on ‘how they say’ than ‘what they say’ considering the language proposition – strategic site of power struggles – that offers constraint to our perceptions. In other word, the discourse analysis looks at how the language used has asserted a definitional dominance to enact a specific ideology. This study uses the conceptualized data analysis framework derived from Bengtsson (2016) study on “How to plan and perform a qualitative study using content analysis”, which indicates that the data analysis process for each stage must be conducted many times – frequently – to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the analysis.

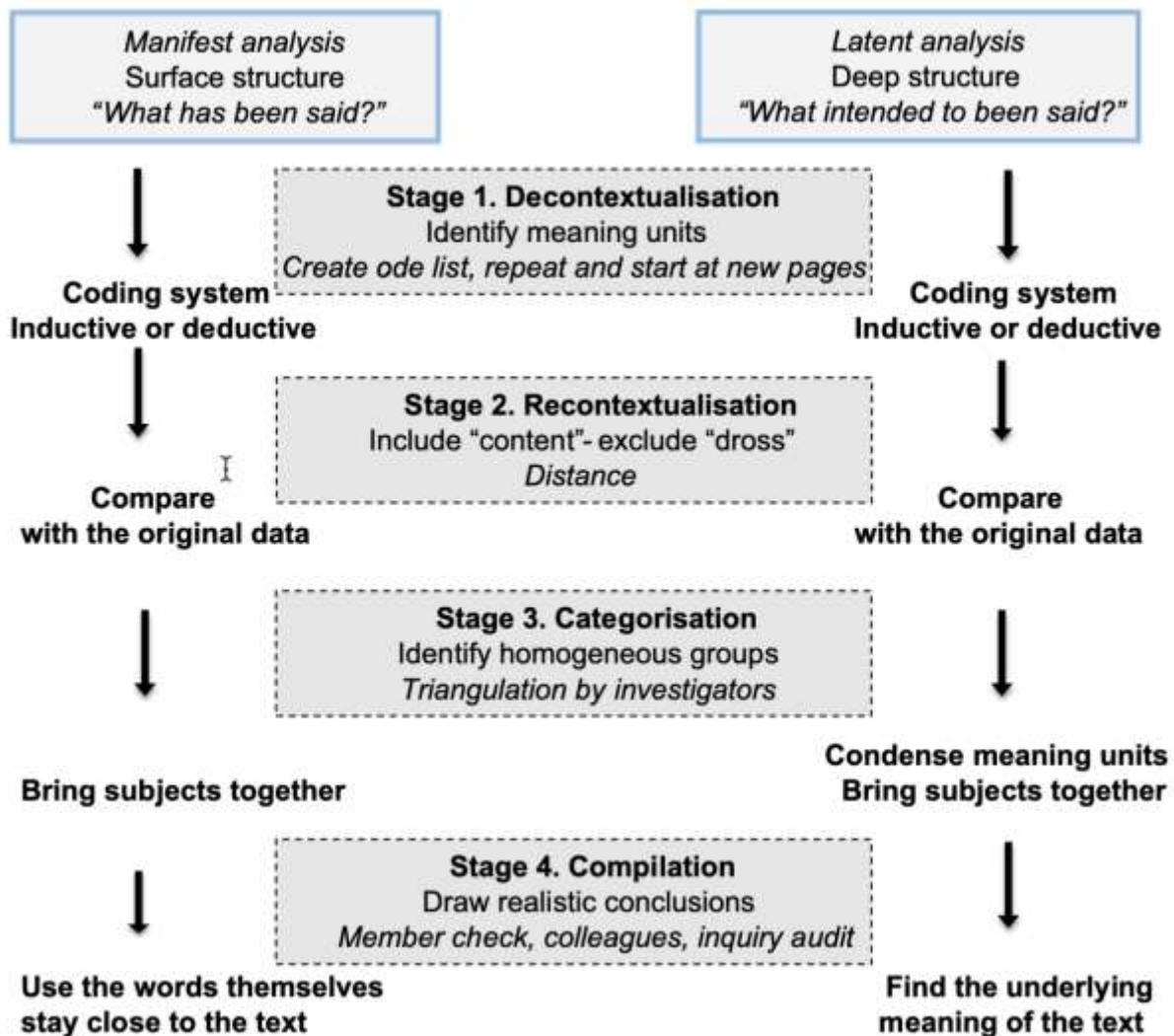


Figure 6:- Bengtsson's (2016) Qualitative Data Analysis Framework.

Thus, the collected data were compiled, disassembled, and reassembled for interpreting the result. The compiled data were read methodically, related clusters of meanings have been established – ‘Meaning Condensation’ and grouped together as themes – ‘Meaning Categorization’ to satisfy the research objective(s). Peroz&Rosca (2007) stated that meaning condensation helps researcher to facilitate the defining causes of youth unemployment and meaning categorization to make comparison between and within the interviewed groups ensuring to achieve research findings. The results of the analysis are presented in a narrative form.

Data Validity, Reliability, and Generalizability

For this study, the data validity (truth value) – trustworthiness of result of a phenomenon studied (Bengtsson, 2016), reliability (consistency) – the extent to which results can be replicated consistently using similar methodology (Golafshani, 2003), and generalizability (applicability) – the applicability of the results to other contexts, settings, or groups (Noble & Smith, 2015) have been tested constantly to ensure the data quality. To improve the validity and reliability of the acquired data, triangulation method was adopted. Brink (1993) stated that triangulation method is “the use of two or more data sources, methods, investigators, theoretical perspectives and approaches to analysis in the study of a single phenomenon and then validating the congruence among them”. The concept was further supplemented by Golafshani (2003) and Bengtsson (2016).

Thus, the data obtained from interviews and documentary reviews were separately analyzed, discussed, and obtained consensus by two investigators – student researcher, Mr. Jigme Singye and research supervisor, Dr. Ernest Koh. Moreover, the validity and reliability were also obtained through a series of follow up questions and clarifications (Golafshani, 2003; Peroz&Rosca, 2007) from the interviewees, after comparing and complementing the data obtained from; (a) the documentary review, and (b) first and second round of interviews with the RPs. This method is also called as the ‘test-retest method’ where the answered questionnaire items are retested for measuring the stability of individual’s scores at two different times (Golafshani, 2003).

However, generalizability of the results cannot be drawn to wider groups and circumstances or settings considering the nature of this qualitative study, although there are evidence indicating significant association between generalizability of data to the remarkably achieved validity and reliability. Golafshani (2003) stated that, “generalizability depends on the case selected and studied, ... and is very specific to the test to which it is applied”.

Research Ethics Consideration

Since the qualitative research study focuses on investigating, analyzing, and explaining individuals and their natural surroundings, there is a close interaction between the researchers and the participants (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2001). It is evident that qualitative research provides more freedom of action to the researchers, considerably its impact on the participants involved is also greater (Peroz&Rosca, 2007). Thus, research ethics consideration in qualitative analysis is needed to reduce the potential harm – physical, social, psychological, economical, and legal – to the research participants.

Robert (2015) argued that university researchers – students, faculties, and other academicians – should obtain ethical approval from an ethics review body. Therefore, for this research study, following research ethics consideration have been monitored.

1. Informed consent: The need for the ethical approval for this study from the university ethical review body was discussed with the examiner during the presentation of research proposal – research objective and expected results. Moreover, the research participants were also informed and briefed about the purpose of the research study, and the nature of participation – voluntary participation – assuring that they can withdraw from participating at any time of interview if they feel uncomfortable. A confirmation email was received from all the three participants accepting to participate in research study voluntarily. Before starting the interview, participants were even asked about the language preference (language they feel comfortable to communicate). The researcher also asked for the permission to video-tape the interview session as well, explaining the purpose of the recording.
2. Anonymity and confidentiality: Respondents were assured that the identity and other personal information will not be disclosed. Kgotlhane, Mudau, & Ncube (2018) stated that, “anonymity is secured when the subject’s identity cannot be linked with personal responses”. Thus, for this study codes such as RP1, RP2 and RP3 were used to represent respondents while facilitating analysis. Further, it was assured that collected data and findings will be purely used for this research study.

Chapter 4

Result And Discussion:-

There are several factors such as poor macroeconomic performance (Gorlich, Stepanok& Al-Hussami, 2013), high rate of population growth, massive rural-urban migration, inappropriate curricula and perception of policy makers and youth on employment (Agnes, 2010) amongst other have significantly determined the youth unemployment in most of countries globally (Jimeno& Rodriguez-Palenzuela, 2002). Similarly, research studies and government reports claimed that determinants like mismatch of skills and job availability, rural-urban migration, high youth demographic explosion and low preference for private jobs have influenced the youth unemployment in Bhutan (Wangmo, 2012; Yangchen, 2017). Nonetheless, the existing studies on youth unemployment does not consider the lived experiences of educated unemployed youths as they progress through the latter stages of the education system in Bhutan.

Thus, the findings of this study – the individual graduates’ experiences on the associated factors for the increasing graduate unemployment in Bhutan – are categorized into eight research themes. These themes have been developed from what the existing literature has identified as being the principal issues around youth unemployment, to map the graduates’ experiences to demonstrate their attitude towards the various opportunities.

1. Choice of degree, career plan and decisions: The choice of degree, career plan and taking appropriate decisions either through parents’ consultation or education career counsellors – guidance throughout the career development stages – are detrimental for graduates to achieve the positive outcomes which is either employment or further study rather than being unemployment. Moreover, coordinated job search strategies and participating in paid/unpaid internships during and after study are found critical to determine the graduate’s employability in Bhutan.
2. Relationship between BCSE and graduates’ career plans: Bhutan’s Civil Service Examination is conducted annually by RCSC, and more than 3,500 graduates vie for limited civil service positions. The structure of higher education system – in which colleges/teachers’ foreground/weights and values graduates who secure civil service jobs – and the HR policies for civil service regulated by RCSC encumbrances the graduates career plans.
3. Wage expectation and employment status of graduates: The wage expectation/wage reservation of graduates in Bhutan is one of the most debated factors while considering their unemployment status. This is because the graduates’ wage expectation come along with the employers’ skill and experience requirements. Thus, this theme determines the relationship between the wage expectation of graduates and their employment status.
4. Preference for public sector jobs: Like most developing economies, graduates in Bhutan opt for public sector jobs over private jobs due to the existence of sizeable reward differentials. Moreover, this also means most graduates tend to make decisions in a risk-averse fashion – they understandably apply for stable and well-paid public jobs. Thus, this gives rise to job queues and wait unemployment which influence the unemployment duration of graduates.
5. Graduates’ perception on current job market: This theme maps the graduates’ experiences on the absorptive capabilities of Bhutanese labour market. This discussion traverses the relationship between labour market supply and demand. For instance, the skills that graduates possess for labour market and the skills employers seek.
6. Work experience programs and graduate employment: Employers always look for the experienced graduates, although not thoroughly polished but at least those who could demonstrate basic understanding of certain technicalities for what they are applying. These attributes are developed during work experience programs. Studies have indicated that graduates who neglect their career planning processes experience the most difficult education to work transition. Thus, the shared graduates’ experiences about their participation in work experience programs like internship will be discussed.
7. Need for labor market institutions: The presence of labour market institutions such as labour policy council and minimum wage council determine the labour market behaviour, particularly graduates’ unemployment duration. However, literature revealed that the magnitude of impact of labour market institutions on graduate unemployment is uncertain.
8. Socio-economic and demographic characteristics of graduates: Socio-economic and demographic characteristics of graduates such as age, gender, location, and family social position can have a natural stratifying element in risking graduates of being unemployed. For instance, the lack of equal social distribution of economic opportunities could influence graduates from accessing enough amount of vital job search strategies.

Choice of Degree, Career Plan and Decisions

Freeman and Wise's (1982) study "The youth labour market problem: Its nature, causes, and consequences" have indicated that the degree of preparation for employment undertaken during schooling will shape the subsequent labour market experiences of youth; on a similar vein, Carnevale, Cheah, & Strohl (2013) have stated that "the risk of unemployment among recent college graduates depends on their major". Yet paradoxically the education psychologist and counselor Shannon Salter (2008) has stated that more often college students are not adequately prepared to make academic and career choices while entering the college. Thus, to determine the level of graduates' preparedness for the job market, questions on; (a) 'Degree course completed' was asked to assess their subject specialization, and (b) 'Reasoning on the choice of degree' was solicited to gauge their choice of interest, career planning and decisions. In response to these pertaining questions, the research participants (RP) stated that:

RP1:

"I completed B.A. in Population & Development Studies ... I chose to undertake this course because... the modules taught were interesting and multidisciplinary in nature. I always wanted to become an academician. My degree was part of my career development plan. ... it was entirely my choice and decision to take this course"

RP2:

"... I choose B.A. Population and Development Studies ... Before I made the decision, I did a research ... and found that the modules in Population and Development studies have interest me more I would like to apply for the post of research officer ... I made my career decisions based on the degree course. But if things do not go as planned, I do not mind becoming an entrepreneur"

RP3:

"I took B.A. Political Science and Sociology... After my graduation I will look for job, good enough to sustain myself. I would like to apply for corporate jobs and in private/NGO sectors as research analyst or any other jobs which ranks not bad. ... Or I will try to start entrepreneurial venture. Other plan can be like going overseas... I do consult with relatives, and I make sure I inform my parents about my plans. ... degree was part of my career plan"

According to the survey respondents, in Bhutan, graduates are conscious of what and how they are proceeding with the academic degree choices, career plans and decisions. This finding, however, stands in contrast to Salter's (2008) findings. On the other hand, it indicates that although graduates in Bhutan may have chosen the degree courses with greater interest aligning to their career plans, the choices and career decisions are made with the lack of proper information about the existing labour market conditions and structure. Bollman (2009) has demonstrated that lack of consistent and unreliable information can alter the personality traits, abilities, and preferred career alternatives. The argument on the choice of degree course and risk of being unemployed is clearly depicted in Carnevale, Cheah, & Strohl (2013) study on the relationship between majors, unemployment, and salaries. The authors found that graduate unemployment rates were higher among non-technical majors such as Arts (11.1 percent), Humanities and Liberal Arts (9.4 percent), Social Science (8.9 percent) and Law and Public Policy (8.1 percent), while unemployment among graduates with majors related to Computer and mathematics, Healthcare and Education, Business (Hospitality Management) and Engineering were comparatively low. Further, Kgotlhane, Mudau and Ncube (2018) proclaimed that the graduates of social science and applied humanities have the largest proportion of unemployment, led by graduates of industry or trade, whereas graduates with technical qualifications tend to have more favorable prospects for the job market than those with general qualifications. Similarly, in Bhutan according to Yonten (2019), as of August 7, 2019, around 683 vacancies were floated for civil service jobs amongst which 333 vacancies are for technical (Engineering) and medical (Clinical Nurse, Medicine, Surgery) services and 265 for general graduates (Teaching, Administration, Finance).

Moreover, it is found that parents of graduates always remain in support and are content with their children's career decisions and choices in Bhutan.

RP1:

"My parents do not advise me much. They leave up to me, as at the end I am the one to live with it – happy or unhappy."

RP2:

"My parents are happy with my decision, and they are with me in every decision I take"

RP3:

“I think my parents are happy and satisfied with my decision as they haven’t expressed any discontentment with my decisions and plans till now. And my parents want me to do a job where I earn decent and have societal respect”

The shared experiences of graduates indicate that their career development processes starting from the choice of degree courses has been left without proper guidance either from parents or from other professional career counsellors. The finding also propels its implications on the Bhutanese education system – has it considered directing its resources and policies towards career development of graduates under the provision of quality education. According to Olson (2014), graduates “navigate the unfamiliar – and often obscure – road to and through higher education somewhat alone”, while on other hand, “parents may be determined to see the student succeed, they often have either the knowledge or the experience to help the student adequately”. Thus, it is necessitated that the college students at the time of entering and during college must be helped by colleges, career counselors and career education to assist graduates in the selection, decision, application, and adaptation of a career/occupation as a matured professional (Williams, 2013; Park and Han, 2016). The career development courses provided either by respective colleges or career educationalist or parents can become a primary career intervention resolving various career decision-making difficulties (Bollman, 2009).

Furthermore, affiliating to their career plans, the RP were observed to have participated in various research activities and skills development programs during and after college. According to Suddeth (2015) having substantive research experience and other professional development activities are some of the critical attributes that employers seek. On other hand, it is worth noting that “not all college students participate in a diverse array of activities during their college and are unaware of their specific abilities, interests and values translate into viable career options” (Salter, 2008). Thus, Salter acknowledges the importance of having the career education as an integral and an interactive part of higher education to fulfill the needs of the changing economy, technological advances and curb the high youth unemployment.

Relationship between BCSE and Graduates’ Career Plans

The Royal Civil Service Commission remains the largest employer in Bhutan of fresh graduates (Wangmo, 2020). The question of ‘what factors make the civil service an attractive career option in Bhutan?’ remains around the sphere, and so it was not surprising that the career plans of the RP referenced the BCSE consistently.

To map the relationship BCSE and graduates career plans, respondents were asked ‘What are your plans after graduation?’, ‘Why is it crucial for you to appear BCSE than start looking for job?’, and ‘What is your parents and college’s stance about BCSE?’ RPs commented that:

RP1:

“I want to appear (sic) BCSE first and even wants (sic) to do Masters. BCSE is very crucial for those who wants secured government jobs”

RP2:

“... I want to appear BCSE and then prepare for IELTS to do master’s degree in foreign countries”

RP3:

“I don’t really think many people around me considers important to appear BCSE. But I do believe that BCSE is crucial examination in deciding our career path. However, there is enormous societal pressure to appear the exam”

The study responses of the participants indicated that appearing BCSE is their first and foremost career plan after graduation, although the perception on the importance of appearing the BCSE for framing professional career by graduates is not felt critical. Such situation may be determined by the way education system perform, the government HR policy for civil service, and other factors like societal pressure to appear BCSE once graduated and low job prospective in other sectors in job market. RP3 clearly stated that s/he doesn’t find BCSE as essential career ladder but often graduates are oscillated to appear BCSE due to societal pressure – a social stigma, while other two – RP1 and RP2 – had grounded their career plans in accordance with the BCSE. The social stigma consciousness of graduates is thus found influencing negatively on the job search strategies and behaviors of graduates during and after their college. Hence, the finding demonstrates that despite having various career plans, graduates are stranded

with the BCSE in Bhutan. This tosses us back to the first question ‘what factors make the BCSE – or the civil service – such an attractive career option in Bhutan?’

The entrance to civil service on merit-based (competitive exams), provision of protected arbitrary removal, and political neutrality for civil servants by an independent body has become one of the most recognized forms of career selection in developing countries (Shepherd, 2003). It is evident that in Bhutan, the BCSE carries out stringent and highly competitive procedures to select the best applicants through various criteria, such as formal academic achievements, technical competence, communication abilities in both English and Dzongkha (national language) and analytical skills. However, the World Bank Group and MoLHR (2016) recommended that Bhutan must reform the way BCSE functions and direct its greater emphasis on the private sector work experience (to be included as one of the main selection criteria), as it is observed that graduates appearing the BCSE the second round (after first unsuccessful attempt), RCSC continues to assess graduates based on the same criteria persistently ignoring the importance of gaining work experience.

These conditions have, however diverted graduates’ focus from getting prepared for and looking for jobs. Instead, they are stuck with the same old format of studying the relevant subjects and exploring previous years’ questions to fulfill the criteria. Purcell, Wilton, & Elias (2007) stated that:

An understanding of the career paths of graduates requires a classification of the kind of work that graduates do – a classification that reflects both the demand for their graduate skills and qualifications and the extent to which these are used within their jobs.

Moreover, the stringent selection processes for civil service jobs have led to the loss of prestige in other sector jobs, especially private jobs in Bhutan. In addition, the existing common perceptions on the civil servants among the citizen due to the bureaucracy (a formal, rule based-organization design that empowers individuals – status and power) has unquestionably made people to comprehend apathetically and unwillingly accept that civil service jobs are better than other sector jobs.

RP1:

“I want to start looking for private jobs, but the salary package is comparatively low and is not secure enough. Moreover, private sector rarely provides other benefits like provident fund, insurance, etc.”

RP2:

“... I feel applying for every opportunity for networking and experience is crucial. It is not important for me to appear for BCSE than looking for a job because after we appear for BCSE, we are purely judged on test scores and our previous job experiences and study area do not matter”

In the National Newsletter of Bhutan, Kuensel (2020) it was reported that not many look beyond government jobs, as they see those working in private sector as second-class employees or unsuccessful graduates – one that has not got through the civil service entry examinations. Wangmo (2020) has acknowledged that there are plenty of jobs, but Bhutanese have a stereotypical thinking that government jobs are the best and any other are just not good. RP1 stated that s/he didn’t start looking for jobs in private sector due to comparatively low salary package, insecure (job stability) and lack of other benefits such as provident fund, insurance, etc. In 2019, around 3,600 graduates were expected to vie for 683 slots in the civil service (Yonten, 2019) despite knowing that those who do not secure placement in government agencies will have to search for jobs in corporations and the private sector (Delma, 2016). Jahan (2006) stated that there is need for the change in society and individual’s attitude regarding civil service jobs, although it is a complex system. Besides, the change in the individuals’ attitude would only be transformed with the change in the private sector HR policies – more possibly better structured and systematic than public sector HR policies. For instance, the World Bank Group and MoLHR (2016) suggested that the overall compensation packages for private sector especially the private sector wages need to be established higher than the public sector wages.

Wage Expectation and Employment Status of Graduates

The classical economic theory stated that individuals will behave rationally considering the wage premium which indicates that individuals will always prefer higher wage over lower paid jobs (Van de Walle, Steijn&Jilke, 2015). According to Brunello, Lucifora and Winter-Ebmer (2004) the wage expectation by the graduates is the expected return to education attainment that determine students’ behavior in job search. Fundamentally, it is noticeable that

individuals would only accept jobs at a minimum set wage – the wage reservation –, however, when the vacancies are restricted with high competition, the job seekers overlook their wage reservation and take any job (Tangtipongkul&Wangmo, 2017). Meanwhile, Jerrim (2008) has suggested that wage expectation of graduates specifically tend to be determined by the acknowledgement of their own ability, labour market information and employment prospects.

To test the applicability of these concepts and theories within the Bhutanese context, questions such as: ‘What is your salary expectation (per month) from any job you wish to opt?’ and ‘Do you see possible association between wage expectation and graduate unemployment?’ were asked of the participants to assess the degree to which wage expectation of graduates in determining their employment status.

RP1 stated that:

‘I expect to be paid around Nu. 25,000 to 30,000 per month from any job I take. I assume that I will find a higher better job than high school graduates after completing college’.

RP2 commented that:

‘I expect Nu. 20,000 to 25,000 per month for any entry job. ...there is a positive relationship between wage and graduate unemployment. I don’t think graduates will work in jobs where they are paid less. I am sure they will work there for few months for experience. ...’.

RP3 argues that salary doesn’t matter for Bhutanese graduates unless they get desk jobs:

‘Initially I would expect Nu. 15,000 to 20,000 in a month. I don’t think wage expectation has anything to do with graduate unemployment. A graduate will take up an office desk jobs at wage of Nu. 13 to 15 thousand but they won’t take up a job as construction laborer for that amount’.

The survey respondents were observed to have varied but relatively high wage expectations based on different contexts. RP1 expects to get employed in better position with higher wage than other counterpart – high school graduates, while RP2 clarified that graduates would work in low paid jobs only work for few months to gain experience, whereas RP3 stated that graduates would be willing to work in any jobs unless it is a desk job – not something related to menial works such as construction, agriculture, etc. The finding presents a muddled position to interpret and evaluate the association between wage expectation and graduate’s employment status in Bhutan. This prerequisite may have influenced due to the lack of information from the demand side of labour market – employers outlook on the expected wage premium and recruitment of graduates. However, it is clearly indicated that graduates in Bhutan are constantly in search for highly paid-office jobs.

Urrutia (2016) proposes the importance of understanding the differences by the field of study (majors) in determining the wage distribution among graduates, for instance, annual average wage expectation for graduates holding engineering in America was found to be USD 95,714.98 whereas graduates in education field were expecting at least USD 54,996.93 – a difference of USD 40,718.05. Moreover, it is also evident that every university graduate doesn’t earn the average wage in accordance with their educational attainment. Zeman, McMullen, & De Broucker (2010) found that 25 percent of university graduates were earning more than high school graduates while 25 percent of other university graduates were earning less than high school graduates. The variability in wage expectation and actual earning of university graduates certainly implies the risk of being employed as anticipated. However, in China, the relationships between graduate unemployment and wage expectation are found negative (Cheng, 2010). The case is also found similar in Bahawalpur (Khan & Yousaf, 2013).

Thus, the study on the realistic nature of graduates’ expectations with respect to their employment prospects and future earnings would provide substantiating evidence for understanding the characteristics and structure of the labour market in Bhutan. Moreover, the evidence can provide basis for the informed planning and policy initiatives in higher education system in Bhutan.

Preference for Public Sector Jobs

According to Van de Walle, Steijn&Jilkem (2015), the choice to work in public and private sector is influenced both by individual preferences and structural labour market characteristics. They discussed the differences in the employment sector preferences in 26 countries through two aspects: (a) wage differences between public and private sector, and (b) economic conditions (job security for instance).

The information on the differentials in the graduates' preference for public and private sector jobs in Bhutan is gathered through a question, 'Do you intend to work for private firms? Why?' The study participants have indicated that both these aspects are applicable in Bhutan to understand graduates' perspectives on the employment sector preferences.

RP1 stated that:

"I don't intend or plan to work in private firms. It is my second option because there is understanding that private jobs are not secure. Salary is one of the biggest reasons for students not to dream about private jobs. Government sector jobs have better benefits. Increments for government jobs are standardized, whereas the private sector jobs are either depended on the profit or sometimes they don't have one".

It is found that RP1 is more inclined to public sector jobs. There is a general trend that indicate a clear preference for working in the civil service than in corporate/private sector due to significant pay differences (Delma, 2016). Likewise, Van de Walle, Steijn&Jilke (2015) found that the public sector does pay higher wages for their employees, and this has brought changes in the employment sector preferences, for instance, in Morocco university graduates prefers public over private employment. They further stated that individuals choose public sector during the economic crisis for job security however, during the economic boom, there are evidence of graduates switching their interest for private firms.

However, in Bhutanese economy, graduates opt for public sector due to their nature of being 'risk-averse' for stable and well-paid jobs. RP1 stated that s/he is not willing to join private sector jobs due to low pay and unstandardised benefits such as increments. In Bhutan, public sector employees are observed to have received all the eight distinct fringe benefits while private sector employees are found receiving either none of these benefits or if they do, they just got certain percentage of the benefits that too comes as an unstructured format (World Bank Group & MoLHR, 2016). The eight distinct fringe benefits include gratuity, provident fund payments, overtime payments, paid annual leave, paid sick leave, paid casual leave, paid maternity/paternity leave and compensation for work accidents or occupational diseases. Thus, in Bhutan, graduates tend to wait for the public sector jobs, rather than start applying for abundantly available private jobs. Hyder (2007) stated that amidst sizable private and other opportunities, if graduates still opt for public sector jobs and are unemployed, such condition would be interpreted as 'wait unemployment or queuing' as graduates may be using that period as an optimal job search strategy.

On the other hand, there has been evidences recently showing changes in the trend of graduates rushing for civil service jobs in Bhutan. Wangmo (2020) reported that graduates of various colleges in Bhutan have chosen to be either in corporate/private firm employee or entrepreneur and left the civil service jobs which is secured through BCSE as a subsequent option. Likewise, during the survey, RP2 and RP3 were found demonstrating their interest in private sector jobs.

RP2:

"... I don't mind working in private firms because private firms have better connection and networking opportunities than public. ... Although people say that private firms are not secure and competitive, employees are given opportunity to create and contribute innovative ideas. Thus, personal growth is a huge benefit of private firms. ..."

RP3:

"I prefer private firms over public sector. I think private sectors are more flexible, demanding, and constantly makes you work more, demanding skills upgradation as profit oriented and rewarding. Public sector is more of sluggish and its does not demand high performers".

They are of the view that public sector jobs are sluggish, whereas private sector jobs are competitive that demands highly qualified workers, provide various opportunities to upgrade qualification, and challenges employees with greater innovations and creativeness. These attributes of graduates in Bhutan indicates two major aspect of labour market; (a) the wage differential in private sector has started to normalise according to pay system, and (b) graduates have experienced longer duration of unemployment opting for public sector jobs.

Pfeifer (2011) proclaimed that initially the public-private sector wage differential was homogenously positive (civil servants had higher pay then those workers at lower tail of the wage distribution), but lately, the wage differential

has shifted to heterogeneity meaning, lower tail wage distribution workers earn higher than civil servants (upper tail of the wage distribution). Moreover, it is also noted in Pfeifer's study that private firms demand for highly qualified workers in large numbers, job positions have become stable with several professional development opportunities. Thus, an individual graduate preferring public sector jobs is expected to suffer longer duration of unemployment as compared to those preferring private jobs (Khan & Yousaf, 2013).

Graduates' perception of current job market

To determine the graduates' perception of the current labour market in Bhutan, graduates were asked, 'Have you started looking for job(s)? (If yes, share your experiences in that respect? If no, what have you heard from your peers?', 'How do you perceive current labour market (specifically regarding graduate unemployment)?' and 'What is your opinion for the prevalent skill mismatch between labour supply and demand in labour market?'

The perception of graduates on the current labour market in Bhutan has depicted a mixture of experiences. Graduates have stated that the labour market has become competitive with the rising educated work force annually in the country. All the three respondents – RP1, RP2 and RP3 – have stated that labour market in Bhutan is small and it's very difficult to get jobs as there are huge influx of graduates in the market.

RP1 stated that labour market has become very competitive:

"Very competitive, and small because of increasing number of graduates annually – not much of job opportunities for graduates in the country"

RP2 further added:

"... Each year with the increase in the number of graduates, there is a strong competition for the limited number of jobs"

RP3 stated that:

"... its challenging for general graduates to find job, which are in highest number and technical degree holders are more likely to get employed. Often those people who cannot make through RCSC have tough time finding job"

In addition, graduates expressed how the mismatch between skills and available jobs occurs in Bhutanese labour market.

RP1 stated that:

"Prevalent of skill mismatch in the country is because most workplaces have a hierarchy This condition affects the skills that the graduates possess – they are seen as (sic) skill mismatch".

RP2 added:

"... I have heard that there will be many job vacancies but none of the jobs related to our course. ... I think ... mismatch between the labour supply and demand in labour because many applicants do not have knowledge on the particular post or the organization education system produces graduates whose courses do not have demand in the labour market. For example, RCSC can be one platform where there is mismatch between jobs and course. After we appear for Royal Civil Service Examination, we are purely judged on test scores and their previous experience or study area do not matter".

RP3 claimed that:

"There is huge mismatch between job seekers and employers. Because ... jobless economic growth ... no real value production in economy... graduates attracted towards the romanticized dream of oversea money a failure of education system to adequately equip young graduates for the 21st century job market"

RP3 justifies the prevalence of mismatch between skills supply and demand with two reasons; (i) the inability of the education system to equip graduates with necessary skills needed for the market, and (ii) lack of graduates' enthusiasm for upgrading their skills to meet the demand – they heavily depend on the degree certificates for acquiring jobs. These findings critically align with what Okafor (2011) observed in his study on "Youth unemployment and implications for stability of democracy in Nigeria". He argued that in Nigeria, graduates were not employable as they didn't possess necessary skills needed by the employers due to the outdated school curricula.

However, the finding only reveals demand sided interpretation. It is evident that in Cai (2012) study on “Graduate employability: A conceptual framework for understanding employers’ perceptions”, the employability of graduates is always underpinned on how potential employers perceive about the graduates during the transition from education to work. In RP2 response it is clearly stated that none of the vacancies floated in Bhutan is relevant to the course (degree) he/she have undertaken. Moreover, RP1 stated that the labour market in Bhutan is deeply oriented towards a hierarchical formation – does not indicate to the strict structures of authority and discipline but refers to an age-old concern where fresh graduate employees are being side-lined from their own capabilities and responsibilities. Several studies have revealed that a top-down hierarchy can stifle the employee experience and leave workers with a lack of control, motivation, and desire to excel. This condition is found affecting the skills that the graduates possess which are often observed as a skill mismatch. Further, Tomlinson (2008) argued that the mismatch between skills and job availability would even exist if the university graduates took those jobs which are designated for non-graduates (high school) due to increasing supply of university graduates in the country.

Thus, this argument is critical in understanding the behavior of higher education system and labour market system in Bhutan. As most of the colleges under Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) functions as an autonomous body, colleges increasingly adopt a marketing orientation in the provision of educational services to maintain its sustenance. In another word, most of the colleges in Bhutan have introduced several degree courses which are irrelevant to the market needs, consequently producing high number of graduates with general qualifications. On other hand, the perceived differentials on the existence of skill mismatch associated with a college degree on the general ground must be remedied. Menon, Pashourtidou, Polycarpou, & Pashardes (2012) stated that, “despite the growing awareness of the importance of addressing students’ employability needs, the students’ transition from the university to the labour market has not been investigated on a systematic basis in many countries”. Therefore, Fakeeh (2009) claimed that any policies and programs should not target the symptom (unemployment), instead it must focus on the problem of employability.

Work Experience Programs and Graduate Employment

It is reported that the impact of institutional framework in particularly, the school-to-work transition (STWT) processes and their determinants have altered the graduate labour market performance (Demidova & Signorelli, 2012). Halfer and Graf (2006) acclaimed that work experience programs check the graduates’ reality shock – a transitional phase from educational to the service setting with various priorities and pressures. The graduates’ experiences on work experience program such as (un)paid internship and their employment were evaluated through question, ‘What were some of the trainings/preparations you undertook (during and after college) to get employed in your desired position (e.g., Office assistant)?’ This question ascertains not just the number of trainings availed by graduates during and after their college, but it also helps in determining the extent of work experience programs and its relevance to graduates career plans.

RP1 stated that:

“I did internship for 1 month at NSB... I learnt R software package for research and even attended workshops. Moreover, during my vacation I used to give tuition to my cousins”

RP2 reiterated that:

“... I have researched on ‘Migration and remittances in Bartsam’ and ‘Waste management practices among university students: A case study in Sherubtse College’. Moreover, I did internship in National Statistical Bureau, GoI PTA – project for HRD Master Plan for four months in interior designing and Loden Foundation for two months. ... I have even participated in workshops on statistical software such as SPSS, Spectrum, MORTPAK, and R”.

RP3 further added:

“I took courses on Statistical software like SPSS, and R studio. I worked for NGO such as Bhutan Toilet, and Bhutan Rainbow so that I can have recommendations for job”.

In Bhutan, graduates seem to have experienced one or more kind of work experiences in different areas of interest during and after college despite there is a lack of proper career centers for internships initiated by the individual colleges except for those technical colleges like engineering which also happens irregularly. It is also noteworthy that graduates have participated in work experience programs only for certain months ranging from one to four months on an average with each institution. For instance, RP1 was engaged with NSB for one month, while RP2

was with NSB for four months and Loden Foundation for two months. Whereas RP3 stated s/he participated in work experience program with Bhutan Toilet to obtain recommendation letter for applying other jobs. The varying duration of graduate's internship with individual institute, task assigned and the intended objective of graduates for participating in work experience program indicates that the work experience programs are unstructured in Bhutan. It also reveals that graduates have been involved in a unregularized work experience programs – graduates seem to have clutched any opportunities that was available.

As per EIU (2014), students do not learn much without structured work experience program even if high priorities are given to participate in every activity of the organization. For instance, in Australia Australian graduates had an inquisitive view on the usefulness of their University Careers Centres – most often graduates were even unaware of its services (McKeown & Lindorff, 2011). Similarly, Kgotlhane, Mudau and Ncube (2018) asserted that graduates do not learn to apply theoretical knowledge into practice until provided enough internship duration. For instance, the dual apprenticeship system in Austria, Switzerland and Germany has been found successful. According to Cahuc, Carcillo, Rinne and Zimmermann (2013) stated that besides standard curricula, the dual apprenticeship system provides graduates a combined work experiences, on-the-job training and classroom teaching which represents the main path of transition from school to work. Moreover, in U.S. business schools endorsed a field internship to enhance the graduates' practical experience and employment marketability. Gault, Leach, & Duey (2010) proclaimed that average performing interns were more likely to receive full-time job offers than non-interns, and high performing interns were even likely to receive higher starting salaries.

Need for The Labor Market Institutions

According to Gorlich, Stepanok and Al-Hussami (2013) the labour market institutions such as employment protection legislation (EPL) and minimum wages in European countries, do not play any significant role for the level of youth unemployment, as such institutions resulted in the temporary jobs creations which are shed away during the economic crisis or other unfavorable economic conditions. In their study, they clarified that the presence of EPL in Mediterranean countries in Europe specifically Spain had created several temporary jobs to curb the rising youth unemployment but during recessions, youths were found hit hard by the economic crisis.

However, according to the survey respondents, such legislation and labour unions should be implemented in Bhutan to avoid future uncertainty. In this view, graduates do not indicate the need for temporary jobs creation in the country as they base their justification with different context.

To determine the need for the labour market institutions in Bhutan, graduate respondents were asked, 'Do you think Bhutan needs employment protection legislation and other labour market institutions, such as one that regulates wages for example?'

RP1 felt the need for labour market institutions for combating prejudice in the recruitment processes:

"Bhutan especially needs employment protection legislation because of all the corruption and nepotism happening in the country. By complying with relevant legislation, both employers and their staff members can ensure that their hiring processes, dismissal processes, and their workplace, are fair for every individual and it also helps us combat discrimination, and effectively promote equality at work".

RP2 supported the need for labour market institutions considering the changing labour market annually:

"Yes, I think such institutions are required because the labor market is not the same anymore. What worked 10 years ago do not work now, more students are graduating, adding to the youth unemployment rate. Resorting to overseas for employment in the name for education may become more intense if the government do not show interest in this area. Brain drain may lead to many challenges in the coming time"

However, RP3 stated that the introduction of institutions such as labour unions are more important than introducing additional legislation in Bhutan:

"No, I don't think as it can lead more legislations, but a labor union and interest groups are necessary to protect the workers"

All the three respondents agreed that Bhutan need to have labour market institutions. For instance, RP1 and RP2 felt the need for such institutions to combat prejudice in recruitment processes and due to the changing labour market situations. The National Corruption Barometer Survey (NCBS) conducted by the Bhutan Transparency Initiative

(BTI) reported that favouritism and nepotism in recruitment, promotion and transfer are the most prevalent forms of corruption in the country (Zangmo, 2016). While RP3 supported that labour, union need to be established in Bhutan to ensure protection to worker in different job classification.

Moreover, it is critical to record that lately, Bhutan has started to resort to over-sea employment in Middle East countries (Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait), Japan, etc. to tackle rising educated youth unemployment in the country. RP2 stated that such strategies are becoming more vexatious relating its consequences such as brain drain. Further, it was reported that such initiatives have given rise to several informal –unregistered – overseas agents in the country. These agents conned thousands of educated youths who were stranded in differently cultured countries with increasing debts, increasing number of suicides, and later it was also found that many youths were human trafficked. On September 20, 2020, Kuensel reported that over 160 Bhutanese women were trafficked to Iraq by the colluding local and foreign agents, which are unauthorised and illegal in Bhutan. However, those women were evacuated from Iraq upon the command of His Majesty the King. Likewise, thousands of educated youths have now returned home and crippled the youth unemployment issues.

Therefore, the presence of (i) Government-Labour-Management Employment Council, (ii) Labour Policy Council and Minimum Wage Council, and (iii) Labour Relations Commission (Labour Union) in Japan has brought positive implications on several issues which are subjected through social dialogue, bringing changes in working hours, rising income, creation of jobs including for elders, women and even disabled, promoting secured job, and initiating reforms in unemployment insurance system (Sivananthiran& Ratnam, 2003). Moreover, the tripartite National Wages Council (NWC) in Singapore has not just brought changes in the wages but also restructured several policies including the educational system to meet the need for the high-tech export-oriented industries (EOI) strategies (Kuruville, 1996). According to Then (1999) NWC provides many features in Singaporean wage system that ensures workers to a continuous payroll even during the economic downturn and higher bonus payments during economy boom. Further, Chew & Chew (1999) stated that NWC while making its annual wage recommendations, it also helps in promoting stable industrial relation, restructure economy, achieve wage stability and maintain export competitiveness.

In Bhutan, the MoLHR is obliged to perform the functions of such vast institutions along with other ministerial operations. Thus, such market institutions, established separately from MoLHR are felt vital in the Bhutanese economy to restructure wage reform, labour market system and educational reform to meet the need of the rising educated young workforce.

Socio-economic and Demographic Characteristics of Graduates

To provide the differentials in the employment status and situations of graduates in Bhutan, questions pertaining to socio-economic and demographic variables were asked during the interview. The socio-economic characteristics such as place of residence, economic status of family, number of siblings, and demographic attributes like age and gender of the research participants (RP) were collected through respondent profiling.

All three RP – two females and one male respondents – are between age group of 19-25 years. They responded that although they are originally from different Dzongkhags (in national language for ‘districts’) such as Haa, Punakha and other, they have been living in Thimphu, capital of Bhutan (most urbanized district in the country with more than 138,736 people) where all ministries, other important agencies like NGOs, CSOs, Corporate, FDI companies, Private firms and graduates meet frequently. All the respondents are from ‘middle-class families’ with not more than two siblings. In this stratum, families have consumption pattern above subsistence levels, invests in productive activities, accumulates physical and human capital (Roman, 2020).

Kgotlhane, Mudau and Ncube (2018) stated that socio-economic and demographic factors such as age, location, sex, race, and affirmative action contributes to the graduates’ unemployment status. In their study, they found that probability of female graduates getting employed was higher than male graduates due to the affirmative action’s such as gender equality. Moreover, the place of resident also played essential role in graduates’ employability – higher the economic activities in a place of residency, higher the job opportunities. However, the massive mobility of graduates from rural to urban in search for job and better lives has also been influencing the graduates’ employment status (Agnes, 2010). According to Tangtipongkul and Wangmo (2017) the probability of being unemployed for graduates residing in urban increases by 6.5 percent than those residing in rural areas. They also argued that age as one of the prominent determinants of youth unemployment, for instance, in Vietnam and Kenya,

educated youths were found more likely to look for jobs than older cohorts. In addition, one of the respondents in Kgotlhane, Mudau and Ncube (2018) study stated that they are stereotypically overlooked for being young with high qualifications, and in some case, if someone (employer) working in the department only has Grade 12 qualification, the employer tends to become insecure about their jobs while employing young candidates.

Gorlich, Stepanok & Al-Hussami (2013) asserted that due to lack of experience, youth face higher barriers to entry into the labour market and have lower job protection. Furthermore, Freeman and Wise (1982) observed that “youths from poor families frequently tend to be employed less often than youngsters from wealthier families, ...” It is also substantiated by Tangtipongkul and Wangmo (2017) that graduates from “households with higher income had higher and more likely opportunities searching for a job than those individuals who came from poorer household” as the job search processes incurs cost. Substantially, the socio-economic differentials in family incomes are also found affecting the graduates labour market information and related wage expectations – higher the family income, higher the wage expected by graduates and vice versa (Jerrim, 2008).

Chapter 5

Conclusion:-

Whilst unemployment is considered by economists and politicians as a natural process of economic development, as a lived experience and in longitudinal terms it has greater implications on social and economic development, shapes political attitudes, and it impacts and younger members of the population disproportionately.

The phenomenon of a large, educated youth that remains unemployed growing in Bhutan annually, as thousands of fresh and enthusiastic graduates pour into the labour market only to be met with disappointment and despair. It is not as though that jobs do not exist: the rise in the number of young Bhutanese graduates has run parallel to the steady increase in the numerous availabilities of vacant and unfilled jobs in the kingdom's economy. It is also observed that several international workers with university degree specially from India are recruited in various position level such as teaching, engineering, management, etc. Moreover, the unfulfilled project mandates of various organizations (government agencies, cooperation, and private firms) have one reason to point at – the limited human resource. The university graduates on other hand take up the courses available or offered by the colleges in the country, receive short term training and participate in work experience programs to acquaint themselves with the demand. However, the demand side of the labour market always propagate that graduates lack required skills and are not competent enough to fit in the job offered. Thus, this thesis has explored the Bhutanese labour market paradox through investigating the lived experiences of unemployed graduates in Bhutan.

In relation to the choice of degree, career plan and decisions, the graduate respondents proclaimed that they have made a justified degree choice and proceeded with the career planning and decisions. However, this attribute of graduates infers that their degree choices, career planning and decisions have been contrived with the lack of proper information about the existing labour market conditions and structure. The shared experiences of graduates revealed that their career development processes starting from the choice of degree courses has been left without proper guidance either from parents or from other professional career counsellors. Thus, the claim of making right choices and career decisions of their own can be an unconscious tendency of graduates in Bhutan not to reason themselves as the problematic group for the rising graduate unemployment in the country. The finding propels its implications on the Bhutanese education system – has it considered directing its resources and policies towards career development of graduates under the provision of quality education?

The focus on the relationship between BCSE and graduates' career plan has propounded one prominent question - what factors make the civil service an attractive career option in Bhutan? It is evident that the stringent selection processes for civil service jobs have led to the loss of prestige in other sector jobs, especially private jobs in Bhutan. As series of graduates' career planning and decisions in Bhutan is more often associated with BCSE, it has become critical to evaluate the lived experiences of graduates to determine the underpinned factors. The finding reveals that many people see those working in private sector as second-class employees or unsuccessful graduates – one that has not got through the civil service entry examinations. The result suggests the need of structured and systematic private/corporate sector HR policies, preferably better than public sector in terms of wages for instance.

The finding reveals that Bhutanese graduates are constantly in search for highly paid desk jobs. Yet, graduates are also willing to take lower wage premium jobs unless it is a desk job. The analysis illustrated that wage expectation of graduates has implication on graduate unemployment in Bhutan. Moreover, the wage expectation evaluates the

extent of self-assessment on their own abilities, labour market information and employment prospects which is critical to understand the wage distribution differentials among graduates in relation to their major. This is because the variability in wage expectation and actual earning of university graduates certainly implies the risk of being employed as anticipated.

Further, in the Bhutanese economy, it is demonstrated that graduates opt for public sector due to their nature of being 'risk-averse' for stable and well-paid jobs. There is a lack of all eight distinct fringe benefits in private sector amidst sizable private and other opportunities. Thus, graduates tend to wait for the public sector jobs, rather than start applying for abundantly available private jobs. This condition is interpreted as 'wait unemployment or queuing' as graduates may be using that period as an optimal job search strategy. Thus, an individual graduate preferring public sector jobs is expected to suffer longer duration of unemployment as compared to those preferring private jobs. Nonetheless, there are evidences recently showing changes in the trend of graduates rushing for civil service jobs in Bhutan. These attributes of graduates in Bhutan indicates two major aspect of labour market; (a) the wage differential in private sector has started to normalise according to pay system, and (b) graduates have experienced longer duration of unemployment opting for public sector jobs.

The perception of graduates on the current labour market in Bhutan has depicted a mixture of experiences. Graduates have stated that the labour market has become competitive with the rising educated work force annually in the country. In addition, graduates expressed how the mismatch between skills and available jobs occurs in Bhutanese labour market. The employability of graduates is found underpinned on how potential employers perceive about the graduates during the transition from education to work. Graduates confirmed that none of the vacancies floated in Bhutan is relevant to the course (degree) he/she have undertaken. Moreover, the labour market in Bhutan is deeply oriented towards a hierarchical formation. Further, the mismatch between skills and job availability exists when university graduates take those jobs which are designated for non-graduates (high school) due to increasing supply of university graduates in the country. Thus, there is need for policies and programs to orient it importance not on the symptom (unemployment), instead it must focus on the problem of employability.

The Bhutanese graduates affiliating to their career plans were observed to have participated in various work experiences program in different areas of interest such as research activities and skills development programs during and after college. These work experiences however were only for short duration ranging from one to four months on an average. The varying duration of graduate's internship with individual institute, task assigned and the intended objective of graduates for participating in work experience program indicates that the work experience programs are unstructured in Bhutan. It also revealed that graduates have been involved in a unregularized work experience programs – graduates seem to have clutched any opportunities that was available. In addition, it is discovered that not all college students engage in a range of events during their college and are ignorant of their unique talents, desires, and beliefs, which translate into feasible job opportunities. Therefore, the need for the career education as an integral and an interactive part of higher education is felt critical.

In Bhutan, graduates have revealed that there is need for the labour market institutions like in Japan and Singapore. Currently, along with the ministerial operations, MoLHR is obliged to perform the functions and responsibilities of labour market institutions such as: (i) Government-Labour-Management Employment Council, (ii) Labour Policy Council and Minimum Wage Council, and (iii) Labour Relations Commission (Labour Union) and the (v) tripartite National Wages Council (NWC). The need for such institutions is felt critical due to the frequent featuring of favouritism and nepotism in recruitment, promotion, and transfer. Moreover, the recent human trafficking issues related to over-sea employment scheme has realized the importance of these institutions.

The socio-economic and demographic characteristics of graduates such as place of residence, economic status of family, number of siblings, age, and gender in relation to graduate unemployment. It is evident that socio-economic and demographic attributes are influencing the graduate unemployment in Bhutan. For instance, due to the higher economic activities and higher job opportunities along with the presence of all potential employers, Thimphu capital have observed massive mobility of graduates from rural to urban in search for job and better lives. Moreover, family social status differentials have substantially affected the wage expectation premium, and job search strategies of graduates.

Therefore, this research study provides impetus for policy makers and recommends further on the need of in-depth analysis of graduate unemployment and its related issues. The findings of this study are expected to produce following benefits.

1. The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights into various factors affecting the recruitment of graduate in Bhutan, thereby facilitating the leaders and policy makers to formulate an appropriate policy measure to enhance higher employability of young graduates.
2. This thesis study would also guide government and relevant stakeholders to develop standardized framework and assessment method to design and evaluate the development programs for growing graduate unemployment in the country.
3. The findings of this research will contribute to future academic researchers and the policy makers in Bhutan, which can be used as the future reference both by academic researchers as well as by the policy makers.

References:-

1. ADB. (2008). Asian development outlook. Manila: Asian Development Bank.
2. Ajaegbu, O. O. (2012). Rising youth unemployment and violent crime in Nigeria. *American Journal of Social Issues and Humanities*, 2 (5), 315-321
3. Agnes, I. A. I. (2010). Youth unemployment in Nigeria: Causes and related issues. *Canadian Social Science*, 6(4), 231-237.
4. Andrews, D., et al. (2020). The career effects of labour market conditions at entry. Treasury Working Paper 2020-01; The Treasury, Australian Government
5. Azam, M. (2009). Essays on the wage structure in India. The Graduate Faculty of Dedman College, Southern Methodist University. Retrieved from: <https://www.businessmanagementideas.com/essays/wages/wage-structure-of-workers-in-india-essay-industrial-management/12388>
6. BBS. (September 26, 2020). Lyonchen requests the UN to reset both SDGs format for a smooth transition from the LDC category. Retrieved from: www.bbs.bt
7. Bengtsson, M. (2016). How to plan and perform a qualitative study using content analysis. *NursingPlus Open*, 2, 8-14.
8. Bollman, L. M. (2009). An examination of the effect of a career exploration course on the career decision self-efficacy of traditional-age undecided college students (Doctoral dissertation, University of Toledo).
9. Boudarbat, B. (2006). Unemployment, status in employment and wages in Morocco. *Applied Econometrics and International Development*, 6(1).
10. Brunello, G., Lucifora, C., & Winter-Ebmer, R. (2004). The wage expectations of European business and economics students. *Journal of Human Resources*, 39(4), 1116-1142.
11. Brink, H. I. (1993). Validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Curationis*, 16(2), 35-38.
12. Brockington, D., & Sullivan, S. (2003). *Qualitative research*. Birkbeck, University of London
13. Cai, Y. (2013). Graduate employability: A conceptual framework for understanding employers' perceptions. *Higher Education*, 65(4), 457-469.
14. Carnevale, A. P., Cheah, B., & Strohl, J. (2013). Hard times: College majors, unemployment, and earnings: Not all college degrees are created equal. Retrieved from: <https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/handle/10822/559308>
15. Cahuc, P., Carcillo, S., Rinne, U., & Zimmermann, K. F. (2013). Youth unemployment in old Europe: the polar cases of France and Germany. *IZA Journal of European Labour Studies*, 2(1), 18.
16. Coetzee, M., & Esterhuizen, K. (2010). Psychological career resources and coping resources of the young unemployed African graduate: An exploratory study. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 36(1), 1-9.
17. Chew, S. B., & Chew, R. (1999). Tripartism in Singapore: The National Wages Council. In *Wages and Wages Policies: Tripartism in Singapore* (pp. 93-111).
18. Cheng, X. (2010). Does wage affect unemployment in urban areas in China? (Doctoral dissertation, Georgetown University).
19. Chowdhury, S. R. (2014). Skill mismatches in Indian labour market: Policy prioritises and challenges ahead. *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations*, 49 (3), 422-438
20. Dar, A. (2008). Skill development in India: The vocational education and training system (No. 42315, pp. 1-123). The World Bank.
21. Demidova, O., & Signorelli, M. (2012). Determinants of youth unemployment in Russian regions. *Post-Communist Economies*, 24(2), 191-217.
22. Demmke, C., & Moilanen, T. (2010). Civil services in the EU of 27: Reform outcomes and the future of the civil service. Peter Lang.

23. Delma, T. (2016). Where the RCSC selected graduates will go? TheBhutanese. Retrieved from: <https://thebhutanese.bt/where-the-rcsc-selected-graduates-will-go/>
24. Department of Education. (2016). Work experience program (WEP). NY: Human Resource Division. Retrieved from www.opportunityjobnetwork.com/delaware/work-experience-rev1.html
25. Dhanani, S. (2004). Unemployment and underemployment in Indonesia, 1976-2000: Paradoxes and issues. International Labour Office, Geneva
26. Dorji, L. (2005). Youth in Bhutan: Education, employment, development. Retrieved from: <http://crossasia-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/304/1/YouthBhutan.pdf>
27. Dussauge Laguna, M. I. (2011). Book review: Book reviews: Christoph Demmke and Timo Moilanen, Civil Services in the EU of 27: Reform Outcomes and the Future of the Civil Service. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 285 pp., ISBN: 978—3—631—60466—3. International Review of Administrative Sciences, 77(1), 212-214.
28. Ernst & India, Y. (2019). Developing skills in youth to succeed in the evolving South Asian economy: Bhutan country report. Summary Brief; South Asia Youth & Solutions Forum, UNICEF. Retrieved from: <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/4486/file/Bhutan%20CR.pdf>
29. Erdem, E., & Tugcu, C. T. (2012). Higher education and unemployment: A cointegration and causality analysis of the case of Turkey. European Journal of Education, 47(2), 299-309.
30. Farrell, D., & Grant, A. J. (2005). China's looming talent shortage. The McKinsey Quarterly, 4(56), 70-79.
31. Fakeeh, M. S. (2009). Saudization as a solution for unemployment: The case of Jeddah western region (Doctoral dissertation, University of Glasgow).
32. Freeman, R. B., & Wise, D. A. (1982). The youth labour market problem: Its nature causes and consequences. In The youth labour market problem: Its nature, causes, and consequences (pp. 1-16). University of Chicago Press.
33. Frame, B. (2005). Bhutan: a review of its approach to sustainable development. Development in Practice, 15(2), 216-221.
34. Gault, J., Leach, E., & Duey, M. (2010). Effects of business internships on job marketability: the employers' perspective. Education&Training. Retrieved from: https://digitalcommons.wcupa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=mark_facpub
35. GNHC. (2017). 1st Five Year Plan (1961-1966). Retrieved from: <https://www.gnhc.gov.bt/en/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/1stFYP.pdf>
36. Gray, J., & Chapman, R. (1999). Conflicting signals: The labour market for college-educated workers. Journal of Economic Issues, 33(3), 661-675.
37. Gray, J. & Chapman, R. (1999). Conflicting signals: The labour market for college-educated workers. Journal of Economic Issues, 33 (3), 661-675
38. Green, A. (2005). Managing human resources in a decentralized context. East Asia Decentralizes: Making Local Governments Work, 129-153.
39. Gorlich, D., Stepanok, I., & Al-Hussami, F. (2013). Youth unemployment in Europe and the world: Causes, consequences, and solutions (No. 59). Kiel Policy Brief.
40. Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. The Qualitative Report, 8(4), 597-607.
41. Goddard, W., & Melville, S. (2004). Research methodology: An introduction. Juta and Company Ltd.
42. Hartog, J. (2002). The overeducated worker? The economics of skill utilization: Borghans, L., and Grip, A. D. (Eds); Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, UK 2000. Economics of Education Review, 21(2), 192-194.
43. Halfer, D., & Graf, E. (2006). Graduate nurse perceptions of the work experience. Nursing Economics, 24(3), 150.
44. Hernadi, I., Rathore, A., Dorji, R., & Dawala. (2012). Higher education and employemnt: Challenges in Bhutan. Royal university of Bhutan, Thimphu
45. Henseke, G. (2019). Against the grain? Assessing graduate labour market trends in Germany through a task-based indicator of graduate jobs. Social Indicators Research, 141(2), 809-840.
46. Hwang, Y. (2017). What is the cause of graduates' unemployment? Focus on individual concerns and perspectives. Journal of Education Issues, 3 (2), pp. 1-10.
47. Hyder, A. (2007). Preference for public sector jobs and wait unemployment: A micro data analysis. Retrieved from: <https://dataspace.princeton.edu/bitstream/88435/dsp0105741t94v/1/2007-20PreferenceforPublicSectorJobsworkingpaper20.pdf>
48. International Labour Oragnization. (2014). Global employment trends: Risk of a jobless recovery? International Labour Office. Geneva: ILO.

49. Izuchukwu, O. O. (2011). Analysis of the contribution of agricultural sector on the Nigerian economic development. *World review of business research*, 1(1), 191-200.
50. Jahan, F. (2006). Public administration in Bangladesh. Retrieved from: <http://dspace.bracu.ac.bd/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10361/343/CGS%20working%20paper%201.pdf?sequence=1>
51. Jerrim, J. (2008). Wage expectations of UK students: How do they vary and are they realistic? Retrieved from: <https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/63558/1/63558-01.pdf>
52. Jimeno, J. F., & Rodriguez-Palenzuela, D. (2002): Youth unemployment in the OECD: Demographic shifts, labour market institutions, and macroeconomic shocks. ECB Working Paper, No. 155, European Central Bank (ECB), Frankfurt a. M.
53. Jones, A. (2017). Bhutan: The world's fastest-growing economy. *International Banker, Authoritative Analysis on International Banking*
54. Johnson Bruke, C. L. (2014). Chapter 2 quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research: This chapter is our introduction to the three research methodology paradigms. *A. Educational Research: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Approaches*, 1-10.
55. Karamanis, K., Ch, B., & Ioakimidis, M. (2018). Greek labour market: The evaluation of minimum wage and unemployment during the period 2000-2017. *Journal of International Studies*, 11(4).
56. Karamessini, M. (2010). Transition strategies and labour market integration of Greek university graduates. *Hellenic Observatory Papers on Greece and Southeast Europe*, No 32. The London School of Economics and Political Science
57. Khan, T., & Yousaf, F. (2013). Unemployment duration of first-time job seekers: A case study of Bahawalpur. *Asian Journal of Economic Modelling*, 1(1), 8-19.
58. Kgotlhane, B. E., Mudau, T. J., & Ncube, D. (2018). An exploration of challenges faced by unemployed university graduate students: a case of a rural university in the Limpopo Province. *Gender and Behaviour*, 16(2), 11465-11484.
59. Kuruvilla, S. (1996). Linkages between industrialization strategies and industrial relations/human resource policies: Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, and India. *ILR Review*, 49(4), 635-657.
60. Kuensel. (Oct. 9., 2020). Efficient and excellent over small and compact. Retrieved from: <https://kuenselonline.com/efficient-and-excellence-over-small-and-compact/>
61. Leech, N. L., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2007). An array of qualitative data analysis tools: A call for data analysis triangulation. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 22(4), 557.
62. Lee, G. O., & Warner, M. (2004). The management of human resources in Shanghai: A case study of policy responses to employment and unemployment in the People's Republic of China. *University of Cambridge, Judge Institute of Management Working Paper*, (04).
63. Lee, R. (2008). David Riesman and the Sociology of the Interview. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 49(2), 285-307.
64. Livanos, I. (2010). The relationship between higher education and labour market in Greece: the weakest link? *Higher Education*, 60(5), 473-489.
65. Longhurst, R. (2003). Semi-structured interviews and focus groups. *Key Methods in Geography*, 3(2), 143-156.
66. Mavromaras, K., Sloane, P., & Wei, Z. (2015). The scarring effects of unemployment, low pay and skills under-utilization in Australia compared. *Applied Economics*, 47(23), 2413-2429.
67. Madoui, M. (2015). Unemployment among young graduates in Algeria: A sociological reading. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 3, 35-44
68. Machin, S., & McNally, S. (2007). Tertiary education systems and labour markets. *Education and Training Policy Division, OECD*, 6.
69. Mayer, E., Moyon, S., & Stahler, N. (2010). Government expenditures and unemployment: A DSGE perspective. Retrieved from: <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/39789/1/634465538.pdf>
70. Malik M. A. (2004). Manpower overseas Pakistanis. *Country report for symposium on globalization and the future of youth in Asia*. 1(1): 66-77.
71. Mathou, T. (2002). Bhutan in 2001: At the crossroad. *Asian Survey*, 42(1), 192-197.
72. McKeown, T., & Lindorff, M. (2011). The graduate job search process—a lesson in persistence rather than good career management? *Education & Training*.
73. Mehta, P. M. (2012). *The Factors Driving Employee Salaries: Determining Their Weights Across Industries*. Doctoral dissertation, Stern School of Business, New York University.
74. Menon, M. E., Pashourtidou, N., Polycarpou, A., & Pashardes, P. (2012). Students' expectations about earnings and employment and the experience of recent university graduates: Evidence from Cyprus. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 32(6), 805-813.
75. Mitra, S., & Yun Jeong, H. (2017). *Bhutan: New Pathways to Growth*. Oxford University Press.

76. MoLHR. (2012). Labour force survey report. Employment Department. Thimphu: MoLHR.
77. MoLHR. (2013). Labour force survey report. Department of Employment. Thimphu: MoLHR.
78. MoLHR. (2014). Labour force survey report. Department of Employment. Thimphu: MoLHR.
79. MoLHR. (2014). Labour market information bulletin. Employment Department. Thimphu: MoLHR.
80. MoLHR. (2014). National HRD advisory series: A focus on graduates and labour market dynamics. Department of Human Resources. Thimphu: MoLHR.
81. MoLHR. (2014). Unemployed youth perception survey report. Department of Employment. Thimphu: UNDP.
82. MoLHR. (2015). Labour market information guide for university graduates. Retrieved from: <https://www.molhr.gov.bt/molhr/>
83. MoLHR, RGoB. (2016). Bhutan's labour market: Toward gainful quality employment for all. World Bank.
84. MoLHR. (2017). Labour force survey report. Labour Market Information and Research Division, Department of Employment and Human Resources, MoLHR
85. MoLHR. (2018). Labour market information guide for job seekers, 2018. Labour Market Information and Research Division, Department of Employment and Human Resources, MoLHR. Retrieved from: https://www.molhr.gov.bt/molhr/?page_id=348
86. MoLHR. (2018). 12th FYP HRD masterplan for the economic sectors (2018-23). Retrieved from: <https://www.molhr.gov.bt/molhr/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/12th-FYP-HRD-Masterplan-2018-23.pdf>
87. MoLHR. (2019). Labour market information bulletin. Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu
88. MoE. (2019). Annual education statistics. Policy and Planning Division, MoE, RGoB
89. Mughal, B. D. (2011). Education and employment in Sub-Saharan Africa: Some evidences from Senegal. *Theoretical and Applied Economics*, 18(5), 59-76.
90. Neely, C. J. (2010). Okun's Law: Output and unemployment. *Economic Synopses*, 4. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/46566153_Okun%27s_Law_Output_and_Unemployment
91. NSB. (1991). Statistical yearbook of Bhutan 1991. Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu
92. NSB. (2006). Statistical yearbook of Bhutan 2006. Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu
93. NSB. (2007). Statistical yearbook of Bhutan 2007. Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu
94. NSB. (2008). Statistical yearbook of Bhutan 2008. Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu
95. NSB. (2015). Statistical yearbook of Bhutan 2015. Thimphu: Kuensel Corporation Ltd.
96. NSB. (2017). Population and housing census 2017. National Statistical Bureau, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu
97. NSB. (2018). Labour force survey report, Bhutan. Retrieved from: <http://www.nsb.gov.bt/publication/files/pub3td3256de.pdf>
98. NSB. (2019). Statistical yearbook of Bhutan 2019. Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu
99. Noble, H., & Smith, J. (2015). Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Evidence-based Nursing*, 18(2), 34-35.
100. Nunez, I., & Livanos, I. (2010). Higher education and unemployment in Europe: An analysis of the academic subject and national effects. *Higher Education*, 59(4), 475-487.
101. Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. (2019). State of the nation. Second session, the third parliament of Bhutan, June 26, 2019. Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu
102. Ogege, S. O. (2011). Education and the paradox of graduate unemployment: The dilemma of development in Nigeria. *An International Multi-Disciplinary Journal*, Ethiopia, 5 (1), 253-265
103. Okafor, E. E. (2011). Youth unemployment and implications for stability of democracy in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 13(1), 358-373.
104. Olson, J. S. (2014). Opportunities, obstacles, and options: First-generation college graduates and social cognitive career theory. *Journal of Career Development*, 41(3), 199-217.
105. Orb, A., Eisenhauer, L., & Wynaden, D. (2001). Ethics in qualitative research. *Journal of nursing scholarship*, 33(1), 93-96.
106. Pauw, K., Oosthuizen, M., & Van Der Westhuizen, C. (2008). Graduate unemployment in the face of skills shortages: A labour market paradox. *South African journal of economics*, 76(1), 45-57.
107. Pauw, K. (2008). Graduate unemployment in the face of skills shortages: A labour market paradox. *South African Journal of Economics*, 76(1), 45-57.
108. Patel, D., & Bulsari, S. (2015). Education and unemployment: A study of India. *Global Journal of Research in Management*, 5(2), 19.
109. Park, M., & Han, S. (2016). A structural analysis on the decision-making level, career decision-making self-efficacy, career decision immersive, career preparation behaviour, and self-determination of college students

- who participated in the training courses from lifelong educators. International Information Institute (Tokyo). Information, 19(4), 1145-1162.
110. Perrone, L. & Vickers, M. H. (2003). Life after graduation as a "very uncomfortable world": An Australian case study. *The Emerald Research*, 45 (2), 69-78
111. Peroz, E., & Rosca, O. (2007). Youth unemployment in Gothenburg (Sweden) among native Swedes and immigrants: A qualitative study of labour market exclusion. Retrieved from: https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/2077/4691/1/Degree_report_2007_on_Youth_Unemployment_final.pdf
112. Pfeifer, C. (2011). Risk aversion and sorting into public sector employment. *German Economic Review*, 12(1), 85-99.
113. Pitan, O. S., & Adedeji, S. O. (2012). Skills mismatch among university graduates in Nigeria. *US-China Education Review*, 1, 90-98
114. Population and Housing Census of Bhutan. (2017). National report, National Statistical Bureau, RGoB
115. Po, Y. A. N. G. (2011). Earnings expectation and graduate employment: Evidence from recent Chinese college graduates. *Frontiers of Education in China*, 6(4), 549-570.
116. Purcell, K., Wilton, N., & Elias, P. (2007). Hard lessons for lifelong learners? Age and experience in the graduate labour market. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 61(1), 57-82.
117. Rad, S. T. (2011). Jordan's paradox of growth without employment: A microcosm of the Middle East? Centre for Development Policy and Research, 65.
118. Ramona, B., & Camelia, V.M. (2014). Improvement of youth insertion on the labour market through social programs developed by universities and the business environment. *Academica Brancusi, University of Targu Jiu* (5).
119. Reeves, S., Albert, M., Kuper, A., & Hodges, B. D. (2008). Why use theories in qualitative research? *Bmj*, 337.
120. Recotillet, I. (2007). PhD Graduates with post- doctoral qualification in the private sector: Does it pay off? *Labour*, 21(3), 473-502.
121. Riesman, D., & Benney, M. (1956). The sociology of the interview. *The Midwest Sociologist*, 18(1), 3-15.
122. RGoB. (2012). Bhutan: In pursuit of sustainable development. National Report for the United National Conference on Sustainable Development 2012. Retrieved from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/798bhutanreport.pdf>
123. RMA. (2018). Annual report 2018. Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu.
124. RMA. (2019). Annual report 2019. Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu
125. Roberts, L. D. (2015). Ethical issues in conducting qualitative research in online communities. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 12(3), 314-325.
126. Roman, O. Z., et al. (2020). An emerging but vulnerable middle class: A description of trends in Asia and the Pacific. *Asia-Pacific Sustainable Development Journal*, 27(1), 1-20.
127. Ryu, K. (2018). Labour market dualism and the wage penalty for temporary employment: Evidence on the interplay of employment protection legislation and labour market institutions from PIAAC data. *Development and Society*, 47 (4), pp. 535-561
128. Salter, S. (2008). Comparing outcomes of two instructional approaches to a career development course (Doctoral dissertation).
129. Scott, J. (2014). A matter of record: Documentary sources in social research. John Wiley & Sons.
130. Schwarzer, J. A. (2018). Cost-push and demand-pull inflation: Milton Friedman and the "Cruel Dilemma". *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 32 (1), 195-210
131. Sgier, L. (2012). Qualitative data analysis. *An Initiat. GebertRufStift*, 19, 19-21.
132. Shepherd, G. (2003, May). Civil Service reform in developing countries: Why is it going badly? In 11th International Anti-Corruption Conference (pp. 25-28).
133. Shelkova, N. Y. (2009). Minimum wage and low-wage labour market. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses; University of Connecticut.
134. Sivananthiran, A., & Ratnam, C. V. (Eds.). (2003). Best practices in social dialogue. International Labour Organisation (ILO).
135. Skinner, J. (Ed.). (2013). The interview: An ethnographic approach (Vol. 49). A&C Black.
136. Syed, A. A. S. G., et al. (2011). Impact of globalization on SMEs export business and economy of Pakistan by using CGE model. *Asian Social Science*, 7(9), 52.
137. Suddeth, T. M. (2015). An investigation of how career-related influences shape career-related decisions and behaviours of black male collegians (Doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University).
138. Tangtipongkul, K., & Wangmo, D. (2017). Determinants of unemployment: Characteristics and policy responses in Bhutan. *Southeast Asian Journal of Economics*, 5(2), 27-48.

139. Taghdisi-Rad, S. (2012). Macroeconomic policies and employment in Jordan: Tackling the paradox of job-poor growth (No. 994692453402676). International Labour Organization.
140. Tenzin, U. (2019). The Nexus Among Economic Growth, Inflation and Unemployment in Bhutan. *South Asia Economic Journal*, 20(1), 94-105.
141. Tomlinson, M. (2008). The degree is not enough: Students' perceptions of the role of higher education credentials for graduate work and employability. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 29(1), 49-61.
142. Tongco, M. D. C. (2007). Purposive sampling as a tool for informant selection. *Ethnobotany Research and applications*, 5, 147-158.
143. Ura, K. (2008). Gross national happiness as a larger context for healing and global change. Retrieved from: <https://www.oecd.org/site/progresskorea/44120751.pdf>
144. Urrutia, A. Q. (2016). The economics of higher education: Interactions between gender, college major decisions and the labour market (Doctoral dissertation, UC Riverside).
145. Valerievna, M. I. (2012). The problem of youth employment and unemployment in the context of the education market mismatch and labor market. Murom Institute of Vladimir State University
146. Van de Walle, S., Steijn, B., & Jilke, S. (2015). Extrinsic motivation, PSM and labour market characteristics: A multilevel model of public sector employment preference in 26 countries. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 81(4), 833-855.
147. Wangmo, K. (2020). A change in the trend of youths rushing for civil service jobs. *The Bhutanese*. Retrieved from: <https://thebhutanese.bt/a-change-in-the-trend-of-youths-rushing-for-civil-service-jobs/>
148. Wangmo, D. (2012). A Study on youth unemployment and its consequences in Bhutan (Doctoral dissertation, KDI School).
149. Ways to curb unemployment. (2018, Mar 15). *Early Times*. Retrieved from <https://ezproxy.canberra.edu.au/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.canberra.edu.au/docview/2014548165?accountid=28889>
150. Williams, K. (2013). Career decision-making difficulties among high school students: From the perception of career counsellors and high school principals (Doctoral dissertation, University of La Verne).
151. Whitecross, R. W. (2019). A change in government. *Asian Survey*, 60 (1), 204-206.
152. World Bank Group, & Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, R. G. O. B. (2016). *Bhutan's Labour Market: Toward Gainful Quality Employment for All*. World Bank.
153. Yangchen, T. (2017). Determinants of youth unemployment in Bhutan (doctoral dissertation, KDI school).
154. Yonten, K. (2019). 3,600 graduates to vie for 683 slots in the civil service. *Business Bhutan*. Retrieved from: <https://www.businessbhutan.bt/2019/08/07/3600-graduates-to-vie-for-683-slots-in-the-civil-service/>
155. Yu, D. (2013). Youth unemployment in South Africa since 2000 revisited. A working paper of the Department of Economics and The Bureau for Economic Research at the University of Stellenbosch, 4, 13.
156. Zangmo, T. (December 22, 2016). Favouritism, nepotism, most prevalent forms of corruption in Bhutan. In Kuensel, *The National News Letter*, Bhutan. Retrieved from: <https://kuenselonline.com/favouritism-nepotism-most-prevalent-forms-of-corruption-in-bhutan/>
157. Zeman, K., McMullen, K. E., & De Broucker, P. (2010). *The high education/low-income paradox: College and university graduates with low earnings*, Ontario, 2006. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
158. Zhiwen, G. (2009). Employability enhancement of business graduates in China: Reacting upon challenges of globalization. *Estudos do Trabalho*, 3 (4), 1-26
159. Zhang, Y., & Wildemuth, B. M. (2009). Unstructured interviews. *Applications of social research methods to questions in information and library science*, 222-231.
160. Ziwei, Y., & Chunbing, X. (2020). Education, employment, and human capital investment in China: Reality and expectation. *China Economist*, 15(2), 77-91.