

# Integration of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) into Bhutan's Curriculum: In-Depth Analysis, Alignment and Enrichment of GNH as a Framework.

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## ABSTRACT

This research attempts to highlight the necessity of integrating Global Citizenship Education (GCED) into Bhutan's educational curriculum aligning it with the fundamental principles of Gross National Happiness (GNH). It acknowledges the pivotal role of nurturing a global citizenship mindset among Bhutanese students, enabling them to comprehend global challenges, appreciate cultural diversity, and cultivate a profound sense of responsibility towards sustainable development. By establishing a robust connection between GCED and GNH, identifying implementation obstacles, and providing actionable policy recommendations, this research seeks to align and enrich GNH with the requisite knowledge, skills, and values of GCED to actively engage in global problem-solving while preserving Bhutan's distinct cultural and societal values.

The study employs a qualitative research approach due to its descriptive nature and the need to explore complex social issues. The methods used include a critical literature review, which helps in understanding relevant theories and issues surrounding Global Citizenship Education (GCED) integration. Unstructured and semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather participant insights, with responses analyzed thematically. This approach aligns with Creswell's argument that qualitative methods are useful for discovering unknown variables and understanding "why" and "how" research objectives. The study draws conclusions through inductive reasoning, highlighting the significance of current debates and challenges.

**Key words:** Global Citizenship Education (GCED), Gross National Happiness (GNH) Curriculum Integration, Sustainable Development, Educational Alignment, Nurturing Mindset

## INTRODUCTION

Bhutan, celebrated for its development philosophy of Gross National Happiness, which prioritizes holistic well-being, presents an ideal backdrop for exploring the amalgamation of GCED into the national curriculum. This research project meticulously conducted an exhaustive literature review and education policy analysis, recognizes and intricately aligns GNH principles with GCED concepts. Through consultative dialogues with educators, policy planners, and curriculum authorities, the project endeavors to seek support for the integration of GCED within the overarching framework of GNH. The culmination of this research investigation will be the production of a comprehensive report encapsulating critical findings, insightful recommendations for incorporation of GCED into GNH curriculum of Bhutan. By aligning GCED with GNH, Bhutanese students are poised to develop a more expansive worldview, nurturing empathy and fostering a profound sense of global responsibility.

## BACKGROUND

This study on the need for the Integration of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) into Bhutan's Curriculum: In-Depth Analysis, Alignment and Enrichment of GNH as a Framework aims to find the link between GNH and GCED. In recent years, there has been a global shift towards integrating GCED into national education systems as a means to prepare students to be active and responsible global citizens with Bhutan no exception. Despite Bhutan National Commission for UNESCO, MoESD and APCEIU to promote GCED through capacity building workshops, seminars and conferences, the integration of GCED into the national curriculum

has not been fully realized. Thus, this study seeks to understand the necessities for integrating Global Citizenship Education (GCED) into curriculum by considering how can GCED enriches Bhutan's distinctive development ideology of Gross National Happiness (GNH) as much as how can GCED enrich the school curriculum further in line with GNH by exploring the alignment and synergies between the principles of GNH and GCED.

### **A Brief Background on Bhutanese Education System**

Bhutan, often referred to as the "Land of the Thunder Dragon," occupies a unique position in the world, primarily due to its development philosophy centered around Gross National Happiness rather than Gross Domestic Product. In 2008, Bhutan transitioned to a Constitutional Democratic Monarchy, marking a significant shift towards democracy, initiated by the fourth king, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, despite the initial reluctance of the populace. Bhutan, with its 38,384 square kilometers and a population of just under 0.8 million, the concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH) has emerged as a foundational development philosophy in Bhutan, envisioned by its fourth king. GNH seeks to align the nation's developmental trajectory with the well-being of its people across multiple dimensions, including cultural, institutional, environmental, societal, and psychological aspects.

### **Historical Transition from Monastic to Western Education**

Maxwell (2008) noted that secular education based on Western models commenced in Bhutan in the 1960s. This shift coincided strategically with the launch of the country's first five-year economic development plan, which relied on foreign aid. Before this transition, education in Bhutan was primarily monastic, with a strong influence from the Buddhist clergy system. The scenario, however, changed in the 1960s when Bhutan's Third King, Jigme Dorji Wangchuk, decided to come out of its centuries-old self-imposed isolation. Buddhism is the state religion and 70 percent of the population are Buddhist. The people of Bhutan are mainly Mongoloid or Indo-Mongoloid with an influx of Nepali people, the Lhotshampas, who settled in the foothills during the 20th Century.

### **Educational Landscape Transformation:**

The Education Planning Division (2022) highlighted that the historical dominance of monastic education until the 1950s, with monasteries being the primary source of formal literacy development. Notable Bhutanese scholars even traveled to Tibet for Buddhist scripture studies. The subsequent transformation, emphasizing the shift to a three-tiered education system comprising general education, monastic education, and non-formal education especially since the inception of the first Five Year Plan in 1961.

### **Current Education Landscape**

The Education Planning Division (2022) provided insights into the present-day education system in Bhutan, with general education emerging as the largest and most recognized formal structure. This section can be expanded to discuss the goals and objectives of the formal education system and its role in addressing the nation's basic educational needs. Education (2023) web sourced to present current statistics on Bhutan's education system, including the number of schools, students, and teachers. This data helps in portraying the scale and reach of the education system as of 2022.

In the present day, Bhutan's education system comprises three main forms: general education, monastic education, and non-formal education. General education has become the largest and most recognized formal educational structure in the country. Over the years, the formal education system has experienced significant growth, especially since the inception of the first Five Year Plan (FYP) in 1961. The expansion of the education system aimed to address basic educational needs and develop the human resources necessary for the socioeconomic development of the nation. Education (2023) web maintained by Ministry of Education and Skills Development, as of 2022 Bhutan has 598 schools with 162420 students and 10546 teachers.

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## Educating for Gross National Happiness

Ura (2009) articulated the vision when he proposed incorporating Gross National Happiness Values Education into the school curriculum. His proposal suggested that instilling GNH values within educational settings could be effectively achieved by integrating value-based lessons into the school system. This proposition laid the foundation for the need to infuse education with the principles of GNH and emphasized that education should extend beyond academic excellence to instill values that promote well-being, responsibility, and compassion. Thinley (2010) expanded on this vision, emphasizing that bringing GNH into the curriculum is not about adding a new subject but enriching all learning experiences. It is about providing a heartfelt and genuine context, purpose, and meaning to education.

Powdyel (2010) furthermore, argued there is an emphasis on drawing out the core principle, primary purpose, and the essence of the role in education for Gross National Happiness (GNH). In January 2009, the government recognized the top priority of integrating GNH fully into the educational system. With the professional support of international experts and financial support from UNICEF, workshops on Educating for Gross National Happiness (EGNH) were organized for all the District Education Officers (DEO) and principals.

According to sources MoE (2010, 2011, 2013) & Thinley (2016) claimed that the initiative aimed to incorporate GNH values through five pathways: meditation, integrating GNH values into the curriculum, holistic student assessment, creating a more comprehensive learning environment, and promoting media literacy and critical thinking. Education (2013) wrote that Educating for GNH primarily involves educating students on five core themes: honesty, compassion, respect, responsibility, and courage. These themes emphasize the development of values and ethics that are integral to GNH.

Thinley (2018) noted the practice of educating for GNH in Bhutan is on the decline. There is a lack of professional support services and dwindling enthusiasm from parents and stakeholders. Sonam (2014) emphasized, the need for clear curriculum development and realistic goals is evident. Zangmo (2014) further noted that the teaching with the GNH infused pedagogy is not a panacea, but it does have some basic solutions to the societal problems that are consuming our communities and our lives.

Tshomo (2016) claimed the approaches of the EGNH initiative are more focused on teachers, teaching and pedagogy but “it appears that there is little focus on how EGNH framework promotes the conditions” as cited in (Kaka, 2022). Sherub et al. (2016) The motivation level of educators for EGNH is gradually declining. It is found that teachers have low self-efficacy for infusion of GNH values and principles in their lessons. School leaders and teachers still experience difficulties in translating policy directives and profound intentions into actions. Curriculum was not designed with the focus on GNH values. The initial phase of excitement and impact of training, as anticipated by seems to have faded away. Lack of preparation to teach Educating for GNH is compounded by: teachers’ requirements to cover vast syllabi; irrelevant topics; some obsolete aspects of the curriculum; teacher’s extreme workload; and, the large number of students in the classes.

According to Cheung & Wong (2012; Nolder (1990) Sherab & Dorji (2013) Other factors that negatively affect educational reform include high levels of conflicting attitude and teachers’ initial anxiety, tension, and skepticism; low levels of resources, teacher confidence, competence, and effective training; severe time constraints, infrequent reinforcement, unsupportive leadership, and low attitude. Bingimlas (2009) Cho & Nadow (2004) heavy teachers’ workload as cited in (Yangdon, 2019)

### Problem Statement

GCED as an educational paradigm, it offers a robust foundation for learners to educate and reeducate in the face of evolving global educational practices. Despite having sufficient evidence indicating the need to spell out the key components of GCED, Bhutan’s curricula lack more comprehensive policy guidelines on imparting core components of GCED within the purview of GNH. In the absence of such overarching guidelines, GCED has not been able to permeate into whole of current education approach. Some of the notable issues emerge in

the form of lack of awareness among education stakeholders, receptive pedagogy, and financial resources. This has resulted in negligent integration of GCED into teaching learning curricula. Consequently, it is worthwhile to assess the contextual issues surrounding it and underscore its significance and contemporary relevance.

### **Objectives:**

- To establish a clear connection between Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Gross National Happiness (GNH) by examining existing policies, guidelines and reports.
- To highlight the need for integrating GCED into educational curriculum.
- To ascertain challenges faced by educational stakeholders in integrating GCED into curriculum.

## **METHODOLOGY**

To answer the primary research objectives, qualitative research approach is employed in the study. This is due to the descriptive nature of the study. Using critical literature review and portion of unstructured and semi-structured interview questions, the study tries to problematize a driving research question of why there is unsuccessful integration of GCED into Bhutan's education curriculum? Creswall argued that qualitative approach is used in problem where you do not know variables and need to discover. In similar line, De Vaus qualitative approach is used to provide rich information on social issues in wider context. A qualitative approach is concerned with quality that cannot be graphed. It is non-numeric, descriptive and investigates "why" and "how" research objectives (Cited by Rajasekar et al.,2013).

Shah et al (2018) By using critical literature review, researchers can develop an in-depth understanding of pertinent theories, findings, methodology, concepts, interpretation and analysis pertaining to issues (It provides current context for the study by referring to contemporary debates, issues, and questions in the field. In addition, it suggests supporting evidence for the practical issues which the research is trying to address, thereby underlining its significance. Thus, a critical literature review allows researchers to draw conclusions based on inductive reasoning. A critical literature review allows researchers to problematize the research area and form research questions. Likewise, researchers can develop an understanding of the issue in relation to theories, findings, methodology, concepts, interpretation, and analysis (shah, Ahmed, & Khan, 2018). Ridley (2012) argues that a literature review provides a current context for the study by referring to contemporary debates, issues, and questions in the field. Furthermore, it suggests supporting evidence for the practical issues which the research is trying to address, thereby underlining its significance. Thus, a critical literature review allows researchers to draw conclusions based on inductive reasoning.

The research also employed a combination of unstructured and semi-structured interviews or consultations with research participants to gather insights into the challenges faced in integrating Global Citizenship Education (GCED) into educational curriculum. The collected responses were subjected to thematic analysis, revealing recurring themes that shed light on the existing issues.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Definitions of GNH and GCED**

(Education, 2011) Gross National Happiness is the development philosophy; Gross National Happiness is the vision for the government and Gross National Happiness one of the provisions of the constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

(Royal Government of Bhutan, 2023) The state shall strive to promote those conditions that will enable the pursuit of Gross National Happiness.

(Powdyel, 2014) The conventional, linear, uni-dimensional measure of progress otherwise called Gross Domestic Product, is too limited and reductionist, as it leaves out other significant, non-economic factors, Gross National Happiness is therefore, a more holistic, integrated and balanced to development.

(Fishman, 2010) Gross National Happiness (GNH) to describe the alternative approach to development.

(Sherub, 2015) defines Gross National Happiness as the development philosophy of Bhutan that has been rigorously promoted as a middle path to modernization and preservation of unique culture and tradition.

(UNESCO, 2013) The definition of citizenship itself is contested:

- i. Some have called global citizenship ‘citizenship beyond borders’, or ‘citizenship beyond the nation-state’.
- ii. Others have noted that ‘cosmopolitanism,’ as a term, may be broader and more inclusive than global citizenship; or still others opt for ‘planetary citizenship’, focusing on the global community’s responsibility to preserve the planet Earth. (UNESCO, The ABCs of Global Citizenship Education, 2016) defines
- iii. GCED as a sense of belonging to the global community and a common sense of humanity, with its presumed members experiencing solidarity and collective identity among themselves and collective responsibility at the global level.
- iv. Global citizenship can be seen as an ethos or a metaphor rather than a formal membership. Being a framework for collective action, global citizenship can, and is expected to, generate actions and engagement among, and for, its members through civic actions to promote a better world and future.
- v. (APCEIU, 2018) Global Citizenship Education (GCED) stands as a transformative initiative with the profound aim of preparing individuals to "Learn to Live Together." It goes beyond national borders, fostering a sense of belonging to a global community and promoting solidarity and collective responsibility on a planetary scale.
- vi. Oxfam sees the Global Citizen as someone who:

- Is aware of the wider world and has a sense of their own role as a world citizen;
- Respects and values diversity;
- Is willing to act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place;
- Takes responsibility for their actions.

### **Key components of GCED/Domains of GCED**

According to the Bhutan National Commission for UNESCO (2019), Global Citizenship Education (GCED) is conceptualized based on three interconnected domains of learning, encompassing cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral traits.

These domains are rooted in the Buddhist precepts of human action, namely *Thoey*, *Sam*, and *Gom*, which epitomize the ideals of piety, compassion, and respect for all life forms in the universe. In essence, the cognitive domain (*Thoey*) focuses on acquiring knowledge and thinking skills essential for understanding global complexities, fostering critical thinking, and analyzing issues at local, national, and global levels. The socio-emotional domain (*Sam*) centers on values, attitudes, and social skills that facilitate learners' holistic development, encouraging a sense of belonging to a common humanity based on shared values and responsibilities grounded in human rights. Furthermore, the behavioral domain (*Gom*) emphasizes conduct, performance, and practical engagement, urging learners to act effectively and responsibly at various levels for the promotion of a more peaceful and sustainable world. This involves cultivating motivation and willingness to take necessary actions in alignment with the principles of GCED (Bhutan National Commission for UNESCO, 2019).

### **The GCED Competencies and GNH Domains**

UNESCO (2017) outlines a set of competencies integral to Global Citizenship Education (GCED) which include:

- i. **Empathy:** Exhibit care and empathy for others and the environment with respect for diversity. Demonstrates capacity to understand the behavior of others, to experience others feelings, and to express that understanding to them.
- ii. **Critical thinking/problem solving:** Able to analyse situations, diagnose problems, identify the key issues, establish and evaluate alternative courses of action and produce a logical, practical and acceptable solution.
- iii. **Ability to communicate and collaborate with others:** Demonstrate the ability to share information in an effective and collaborative manner.
- iv. **Conflict resolution:** Exhibit ability to resolve conflict using appropriate strategies and effective communication.
- v. **Sense and security of identity:** Has knowledge and skills to encompass a responsible identity and possess appropriate skills to respect diversity.
- vi. **Shared universal values (human rights, peace, justice, etc.):** Has knowledge of universal values, upholds, emphasises and respects universal values.
- vii. **Respect for diversity/intercultural understanding:** Respect for diversity to forge peace and harmony in the community, and for one's internal peace and happiness; The understanding of difference and multiple identities, such as culture, language, religion, gender and common humanity develops skills for living in harmony in an increasingly diverse world.
- viii. **Recognition of global issues:** Demonstrate the ability to understand and function in an increasingly multicultural, international, yet interconnected environment. Develop an understanding of global governance structures, rights and responsibilities, global issues and connections between global, national and local systems and processes.
- ix. **Creativity and Innovation:** Identifies issues and takes a proactive approach to dealing with them. Formulates distinctive strategies emphasising high levels of creative thinking through recognition and development of new ideas and market opportunities. Demonstrates innovation and is able to understand, link and analyze information to understand issues, identify options and support sound decision-making.

### GCED Integration into Curriculum: A Necessary Context

APCEIU (2018) posited that Global Citizenship Education seeks to empower learners to actively engage on both local and global fronts, addressing and resolving pressing global challenges. It is instrumental in nurturing proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable world.

Moon (2015) highlighted that the GCED plays a pivotal role in bridging the gap between local and global issues, employing transformative pedagogies to make students realize the interconnectedness between the two realms. Nyerere (1967) further claimed that GCED emphasized the importance of instilling a sense of commitment to the entire community and values that align with collective well-being. Law (2004) further argued that the interconnected challenges faced on a global scale necessitate a different approach to education, one that unites the world toward a common goal for humanity: a sustainable and happier planet.

GEFI, (nd) Education is positioned as a powerful tool not only for entering the job market but also for shaping a sustainable future and a better world. The Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) recognizes education's transformative potential in creating just, peaceful, tolerant, and inclusive societies. APCEIU (2018) this multifaceted approach encompasses both cognitive and non-cognitive dimensions, emphasizing the importance of content and values in education

Toh et al. (2017) noted that the global landscape has undergone profound transformations over the past two centuries, driven by economic, technological, environmental, social, and political changes. Amidst remarkable progress, the world faces challenges ranging from armed conflicts within nations to various forms of violence and a decline in mental well-being. Pacho (2020) further articulated that the concept of global citizenship education (GCE) has gained prominence in an increasingly globalized world with impacts felt across social, cultural, economic, political, environmental, and technological dimensions, globalization necessitates an educational approach that empowers learners to become engaged global citizens, capable of recognizing the interconnectedness of the world and addressing global challenges.

APCEIU (2018) claimed that Educational thinkers and practitioners advocate for transformative education that emphasizes global perspectives, extending the notion of citizenship beyond the nation state. Lim (2021) argued that GCED goes beyond traditional academic knowledge; it encompasses values, attitudes, and skills essential for individuals to become responsible and well-rounded global citizens. Toh et al. (2017) also emphasized that in our progressively globalized world, the concept of citizenship grounded solely in national identity and expectations proves inadequate. The authors argue that nations are integral components of a 'global village,' interconnected by intricate relationships spanning all aspects of life. Furthermore, they highlight the contemporary era as witnessing the largest scale of population movement in history, driven by factors such as migration, conflict, education, economic and cultural exchange, tourism, resulting in individuals often possessing multiple citizenship identities.

APCEIU (2020) highlighted that the case study in Japan showed that various pedagogical approaches, including participatory learning, were employed to help students understand the relevance of global issues to their lives. Additionally, the school engaged city officials for feedback on students' GCED action plans for city development. The Republic of Korea school took a leadership role in supporting teachers in learning and implementing GCED at all levels, including curricular subjects and co-curricular activities. In Vietnam, the school integrated GCED by equipping students with 21st-century skills through activities like the 'LiFE' program, aiming to foster responsible and competent global citizens.

Toh et al. (2017) underscore the absence of a universally accepted definition or standardized principles for Global Citizenship Education (GCED). In the 'soft' paradigm, interdependence among nations and peoples is characterized by notions of fair trade, equitable resource sharing, and foreign aid to facilitate global South countries in catching up with the global North. Conversely, the 'critical' paradigm critiques this view, emphasizing the role of economic, political, social, and cultural power, structural violence, and resultant dependency and inequalities.

### **Relevance of GCED: Bhutan as a Part of Global Community**

UNESCO (2016) claimed that the relevance of GCED to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is highlighted in SDG Target 4.7, which calls on all learners to acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and the appreciation of cultural diversity and of cultures contribution to sustainable development by 2030 in which Bhutan is one of the signatories.

As a member of the United Nations and an integral part of the global community, Bhutan cannot avoid the impact of worldwide issues and challenges that jeopardize the shared future of humanity. Jamtsho (2015) reported that 33.37% of the reported cases of mental health issues, who sought medical intervention, were aged between 10 and 24. Of these 49.59% were aged 10 to 19 years old, while 50.41% were between 20 to 24 years old. They also reported that 70.5% of the registered mental health issues among youth were due to multiple drug use. (cited in UNESCO, 2019).

Lhadon (2013) highlighted a concerning 9.4% Annual Suicide Growth Rate in Bhutan, emphasizing the urgent need to prepare the youth to navigate the wired and digital landscape responsibly. Katel, (2023) further supplemented that the statistics reveal a significant rise in suicide cases in recent years. In 2022 alone, there were 112 recorded suicides, marking the highest rate to date. Among the victims, 3 were below 12 years of age, 12 were aged 13-19, and 56 were between 20-39 years old.

Ura, Pema, & Phuntsho, (2023) mentioned that Bhutan warmer by 1.02°C in the last 27 years, with a yearly rise by 0.0378°C. Editorial, (2023) articulated that one of the primary reasons for the increase in waste generation in the country is the rise in population and economic development. With the increased economic growth, people have become more consumer-oriented, leading to an increase in plastic packaging, non-biodegradable products, and electronic gadgets.

Ura, (2023) highlighted that from Paro Airport alone, 16,973 migrated in 2022. This number is equivalent to the population size of Bumthang district. Freeman and Jackson, (2012) report that Bhutan is witnessing a 6.7% annual growth in its urban population, attributed to contemporary globalization trends. This substantial population increase has led to significant challenges in addressing issues such as parking facilities, telecommunication services, water supply, drainage, solid waste disposal, and housing facilities. CBS and GNH (2015) also suggested that Bhutanese society is increasingly growing apart; the percentage of people who trusts their neighbors declined almost by one-half in the last five years.

Sherub et al. (2016) expressed concerns that the current approach of implementing the EGNH initiative through the transmission of GNH values alone is inadequate to ensure the success of GNH in Bhutan's education system. Additional factors negatively affecting educational reform include high levels of conflicting attitudes, teacher anxiety, tension, and skepticism.

Reporter (2022) reported that a total of 79 new HIV cases were detected in 2022 in the country, of which 40 HIV cases were diagnosed from January to June, and 39 cases from July to December 2022. This is one of the highest annual total cases detected up until now, as compared to the past the average detection was 55 cases annually. Cheung & Wong (2012), Nolder (1990) Sherab & Dorji (2013) noted that there are also issues such as low levels of resources and training, severe time constraints, and unsupportive leadership (Cited in Yangdon, 2019).

Portal (2023) mentioned Bhutan, renowned for its commitment to Gross National Happiness (GNH), is undergoing significant transformations in the face of globalization and technological advancements. The 21st century has witnessed unprecedented advancements in the field of technology, health and education, mass communication, and political participation among others. The world has become increasingly inter-connected as indicates the surge in digital adoption, with a high internet penetration rate of 85.6%, underscores the growing demand for online access, social media engagement, and the essential role of mobile devices in communication.

### **Relevance of GCED: A Policy Standpoint**

The Bhutan Education Blueprint 2014-2024 (2014) recognizes that education is evolving beyond mere academic achievement, focusing on fostering citizenship grounded in values like honesty, compassion, respect, responsibility, and courage – values. It also emphasizes instilling a sense of pride in students for their Bhutanese identity, irrespective of their socio-economic status, geographical location, linguistic differences, or religious affiliations. This patriotic sentiment is fostered through promoting values such as inclusiveness, tolerance, acceptance, and respect for diversity. With a profound awareness and comprehension, students not only view themselves as Bhutanese citizens but also recognize their role as global citizens, understanding that the principles of Gross National Happiness (GNH) extend beyond the borders of Bhutan (p. 67).

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan (2005) reinforces the importance of education directed towards the full development of the human personality which aligns with the goals of GCED. Royal Education Council (2012) The role of education is also to equip the young generation with the proper knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that are necessary to prepare and implement new ways of achieving the goals of GNH, in the context of the dynamics of local, national and global realities and developments.

Ministry of Education (2014) The education aspires to make the learners conscious of the interdependent nature of self and others, culturally aware, tolerant of others cultures and respectful of diversity, students are ready to take on the role of a global citizen. Besides anchoring the country's unique development aspirations underpinned by the philosophy of Gross National Happiness promulgated by the country's fourth king His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuk, the Bhutanese education system should have the imagination, dynamism and resilience to respond intelligently to the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century.

The Royal Decree (2020) emphasizes the need to harness available technologies, incorporate global best practices, and design a teaching and learning environment tailored to specific requirements. Hayward, Pannozzo, and Colman (2012) in the current era of intense globalization pressures on developing nations,



Bhutan finds itself at a crucial juncture in its history. The choices made today are poised to shape the country's future for generations to come.

Upon reviewing the aforementioned principles, policies, and plans, it becomes evident that the concept of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) aligns closely with the components outlined in the Ministry of Education's goals and policies. The synergies between these elements suggest a harmonious integration of global citizenship principles into the broader educational framework laid out by the ministry.

**Relevance of GCED: Curriculum Perspective**

Glover, et al. (2023) The researchers found a wide array of examples of how GCED learning is implemented in the curricula of the schools, demonstrating the benefits of a mainstreamed approach to GCED learning. Mainstreaming Global Citizenship Education is vital if students are to possess the abilities, skills, and knowledge needed to tackle sustainability and moral issues of the future. UNESCO (2019) illustrated that the subject matter mapping for key stage 1-3 (Classes PP-VIII) on GCED core competencies points out that the total of 791 topics out of 949 topics from 8 subjects could be very well integrated with GCED. However, 158 topics altogether may be difficult to teach through GCED lens. It is found out that eight different subjects have sufficient topics that can be aligned with GCED concepts. On the other hand, curriculum developers tend to agree that certain topics (158) from eight different subjects cannot be aligned with GCED concept. These differences indicate two important aspects; first, they lack the pedagogical skills to address the GCED competencies for students, and secondly, teachers with field experiences and curriculum developers differs in the way they treat the subject topics.

UNESCO (2019) indicated from 15 teachers from pilot schools for the Preparing Teachers for GCED project met with the Core Team of the project to get familiarized on GCED concepts and principles, share good practices of GCED and carry out Curriculum Mapping from Key Stages 1-3 on GCED domains and competencies. Descriptive results indicated that teachers' post-test means were higher than the pre-test means. Results indicated that the post-test means for all the statements were statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$  indicating that teachers' knowledge and attitudes towards GCED competencies became more favorable as a result of the training exercise and the curriculum mapping. Teachers' acceptance and readiness to integrate GCED into curriculum across three key stages is evident. In total, 193 participants returned the completed survey, the students' data suggests that within the cognitive domain, GCED competencies have been incorporated during the teaching and learning process. However, data suggests that there are more rooms for incorporation. Wangchuk, et al. (2019) Showed the number of topics taught in each subject currently in three key stages as contested in the table below:

Table 1.0 Curricula contents across three key stages

		Class PP	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V	Class VI	Class VII	Class VIII	Tot
Sub	Maths	10	10	10	10	18	18	19	20	22	137
	Science	0	0	0	0	54	59	60	39	37	249
	Dzo	6	4	4	4	5	5	6	6	6	46
	English	3	3	3	3	6	6	6	6	6	42
	S/studies	0	0	0	0	24	14	18	0	0	56
	History	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	14	26
	Values & Citizenship	10	10	13	13	19	19	18	17	18	137
	Geo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	107	149	256
Total	29	27	30	30	126	121	127	207	252	949	

APCEIU (2020) mentioned that in an Indian educational institution, the curriculum incorporated components of both Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), emphasizing concerns related to the environment and societal issues. This serves as a noteworthy illustration of instructing students about challenges pertaining to both People and Planet. Similarly, at Ageo Higashi Junior High School in Japan, GCED learning is integrated into the school's Integrated Studies program. This curriculum is tailored to align with students' interests, covering topics ranging from local issues like town and school planning to global-scale matters such as the environment, global conflicts, refugees, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### **Significance of GCED Integration: Alignment and Enrichment of GNH curriculum as a Framework**

According to APCEIU (2018) education, in addressing the intricate challenges of the contemporary world, extends beyond the conventional focus on literacy and numeracy. The imperative to instill respect for life and human dignity arises amid escalating injustices towards oneself, others, and the environment. It also underscores the importance of an education system that upholds universal values and celebrates diversity, acknowledging the coexistence of people with diverse worldviews. APCEIU highlights the importance of engaging with new knowledge frontiers, noting the constant emergence of technological breakthroughs and the active role of young people as knowledge bearers. The following significance underscore the relevancy of GCED to education system of Bhutan:

### **Realizing the Vision of Enriching GNH through GCED**

The alignment of GCED with GNH principles presents a compelling opportunity to enrich Bhutan's educational system. By infusing GNH values into education and addressing the challenges through GCED, Bhutan can further its unique vision of holistic well-being, sustainable values, and happiness for its citizens. Moreover, this endeavor has the potential to serve as a model that extends beyond Bhutan's borders, fostering global citizenship for the well-being of all. UNESCO, (2019) ascertains that the GCED concepts and strategies re-enforce deeper understanding of GNH and offer relevant context to deliberate the concept and practices of spiritual, social and cultural values of GNH through the nine competencies of GCED. These nine competencies complement and supplement with the nine domains of GNH.

### **Infusing GNH Values Through GCED**

UNESCO (2019) mentioned that the sense of interconnectedness and interdependency is founded on the principle of universality fundamental to humanist, humanitarian, and human rights perspectives. These qualities grounded on Bhutanese ethos of **Tha Dhamtsi Lay Judrey**, has served our society through generations. The integration of GCED allows for the infusion of GNH values within Bhutan's educational curriculum. By incorporating GCED principles, Bhutan can extend its focus on values like happiness, compassion, respect, and cultural preservation to a global context. Students can gain a deeper understanding of their roles as global citizens, emphasizing responsibility and ethical decision-making, values core to both GNH and GCED.

### **A Comprehensive Educational Approach and Life-Long Learning.**

GCED promotes a comprehensive approach to education that encompasses global themes such as human rights, environmental sustainability, and social justice. UNESCO (2019) argued that the formation of citizenship and the pride to belong to a community and nation are instrumental towards strengthening the nation cohesion and prosperity. UNESCO (2014) claimed that GCED applies a multifaceted approach, employing concepts, methodologies and theories already implemented in different fields of subjects. UNESCO & APCEIU (2018) Global Citizenship Education is an educational approach that nurtures respect and solidarity in learners in order to build a sense of belonging to common humanity and help them become responsible and active global citizens in building inclusive and peaceful societies. GCED, combined with Education for Sustainable Development converge in Target 4.7 on sustainable development Goal 4 on education of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This aligns seamlessly with GNH's multi-dimensional domains, extending the scope of education beyond academic excellence to personal well-being, cultural

preservation, and environmental stewardship. GCED offers a systematic framework for achieving the holistic well-being envisioned by GNH.

### **Partnerships and Pluralistic Endeavor**

UNESCO (2015) Global Citizenship refers to a sense of belonging to a broader community and common humanity. UNESCO (2014) aspired that Global Citizenship Education inspires action, partnership, dialogue and cooperation through formal and non-formal education. The challenges of dwindling enthusiasm and limited parental and stakeholder engagement can be addressed through the global perspective of GCED. By highlighting the interconnectedness of global issues and local well-being, GCED can engage parents and stakeholders more effectively. It fosters an appreciation for the relevance of GNH values in a global context, encouraging active participation and support from all stakeholders.

### **A Vision Beyond Borders**

UNESCO (2014) appealed that Citizenship beyond borders or citizenship beyond nation state. Ultimately, the integration of GCED into the Bhutanese education system not only enriches GNH but also presents an opportunity for Bhutan to become a beacon of global citizenship. It signifies Bhutan's commitment to fostering values and well-being for its citizens and extends the vision of GNH beyond its borders, emphasizing the importance of holistic well-being, environmental sustainability, and global interconnectedness for the well-being of all humanity.

### **GCED: a Transformative Pedagogy for Learning**

Majesty (2020) highlighted it is now time to give renewed life to these efforts by reorienting our school structures for the need and challenges of a different social context. We must revisit our curriculum, pedagogy, learning process, and assessments to either transform or rewrite them in view of the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century. Otherwise, continued focus on textbooks and content without integrating technology and social learning risks perpetuating passive modes of learning. UNESCO (2016) emphasized the cognitive facet of global citizenship education can be effectively tackled through traditional classroom learning and the analysis of various information sources. However, to address the socio-emotional and behavioral dimensions, a holistic pedagogical approach is essential. Although a distinct training program may not be necessary, GCED demands a transformative pedagogy. This approach encourages learners to critically analyze real-life issues and devise innovative solutions, prompting a reevaluation of assumptions, worldviews, and power dynamics.

### **Global Citizenship Education and the Sustainable Development Goals**

UNESCO (2016) SDG on Education Target 4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development. Education for sustainable development could also serve as a useful entry point to issues related to lifestyles, global citizenship, human rights and culture's contribution to sustainable development.

## **DISCUSSIONS AND FINDING**

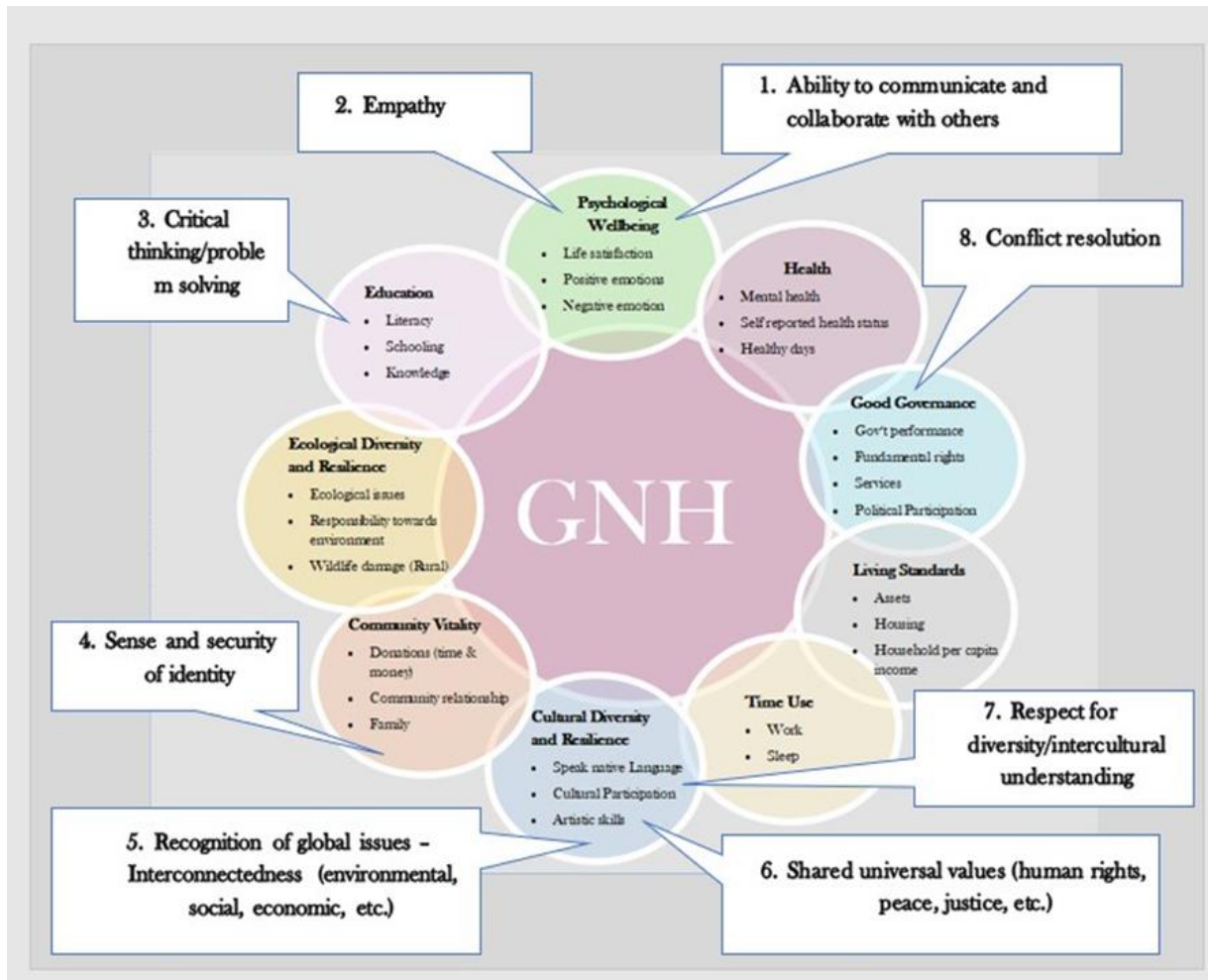
### **Connection between Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Gross National Happiness (GNH)**

Firstly, the socio-emotional domain of GCED, focusing on values, attitudes, and social skills, aligns with GNH values reflecting compassion, respect, and responsibility. Socio-Emotional domain as explained by APCEIU (2018) to recognize and appreciate different and multiple identities, e.g., culture, language, religion, gender, and our common humanity; develop skills for living in an increasingly diverse world. Develop attitudes of care and empathy for others and the environment; respect for diversity; develop values of fairness and social justice

and skills to critically analyze inequalities based on gender, socio-economic status, culture, religion, age, and other issues. The integration of values from both GCED and GNH into educational practices will enhance the combined impact on the holistic development of learners.

The competencies outlined by UNESCO for GCED, such as empathy, critical thinking, and respect for diversity, resonate with the themes of honesty, compassion, respect, responsibility, and courage emphasized in Educating for Gross National Happiness (EGNH) in Bhutan. A comparative analysis of the competencies in GCED and GNH identified bear tremendous possibility to generate synergy and has the potential to be mutual supplementary for deepening GCED and GNH values.

The comparative analysis on competencies of GCED and GNH Domains are as summarized in figure 1.2:



The vision of GNH in education goes beyond academic achievement. The fundamental understanding of GNH comes from Buddhist perspective of education and learning. The concept of GNH is from Buddhism which recognizes striking delicate balance between spirituality and economic prosperity. Therefore, to talk about goal of education in GNH, it is paramount to discuss the goal of education in Buddhism first. Buddhist view of education is endless pursuit of life-long learning. It calls for awakening of oneself through examining one's nature of mind. It is fascinating to note that the prominent themes in Buddhism actually correlates with the modern paradigm GCED alike. Buddhist themes such as compassion, kindness, tolerance, and the doctrine of cause and effects accept the entire human society as a single unit. On counterpart, GCED resonates the goal of empowering learners for a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable world. Based on this, both the goal of educating is intended to activate the learners' potentials of the existence.

### The Need for Integrating GCED into Educational Curriculum

GCED in Bhutan is rooted in the Buddhist precepts of *Thoe*y, *Sam*, and *Gom*, emphasizing cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioral. Integrating GCED aligns with Bhutan's cultural and ethical foundations, ensuring

that educational practices echo with the nation's core values, fostering a sense of identity and shared humanity. GCED emphasizes holistic development by focusing not only on cognitive aspects but also on values, attitudes, and social skills. This integration is crucial for nurturing well-rounded individuals aligned with the values promoted by GNH.

According to the research conducted UNESCO (2019), the mapping of GCED core competencies for Key Stages 1-3 (Classes PP-VIII) revealed that 791 out of 949 topics across eight subjects could be effectively integrated with GCED. However, there are 158 topics that pose challenges for alignment with the GCED lens. The study identified that subjects encompass a range of topics aligning well with GCED concepts, 15 teachers from pilot schools engaged with the Core Team to familiarize themselves with GCED concepts, share best practices, and conduct Curriculum Mapping across Key Stages 1-3. Post-test means surpassed pre-test means. The data highlighted teachers' acceptance and readiness to integrate GCED across key stages.

### **Challenges face by educational stakeholders in integrating GCED into curriculum**

A significant finding highlighted the inadequacy of pedagogical skills among teachers in addressing GCED competencies. The identified pedagogical skills gap, suggesting a need for professional development initiatives to enhance teachers' capacity to effectively integrate GCED into their teaching methods. One prominent challenge identified in the literature is the impact of teachers' workloads on the teaching-learning process. The study revealed that syllabus structures, influenced by institutional mandates and performance management systems, often result in teachers prioritizing exam-focused instruction over the broader goals of GCED. This shift in focus limits the transformative potential of education, leading to a narrower emphasis on achieving high exam scores.

The research also highlighted the constraint imposed by the prevailing system, guided by predefined syllabi and stringent timelines that hinders the integration of flexible teaching approaches. The study suggests that successful integration requires a departure from traditional teaching methods, allowing for more flexible hours and the incorporation of extra-curricular activities to impart teamwork, skills, and values. Importantly, the findings underscore the need for a comprehensive support system to facilitate the transition towards a more flexible and inclusive education model. The lack of professional support services emerges as a significant barrier to educators striving to align their teaching practices with the broader goals of GCED and GNH.

In addition to the challenges associated with pedagogical skills and curriculum development, the research also delved into the role of school leadership and the challenges posed by conflicting attitudes among educators. The study uncovered that effective school leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the educational environment conducive to the implementation of GCED competencies. However, it was observed that high levels of conflicting attitudes among school leaders themselves could hinder the cohesive adoption of these competencies.

The conflicting attitudes were found to manifest in differing opinions among school leaders regarding the priority and importance assigned to GCED within the broader curriculum. This disparity in perspectives adds an additional layer of complexity to the implementation process. Furthermore, the research brought to light the initial anxiety, tension, and skepticism among teachers when faced with the prospect of incorporating GCED into their teaching practices. This apprehension often stems from the unfamiliarity of the pedagogical approaches associated with GCED and the perceived challenges of adapting to a more flexible teaching model.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Political Commitment/Leadership for Support:** To address the challenges related to conflicting attitudes among school leaders, there is a critical need for a strong political commitment to support the integration of Global Citizenship Education (GCED). This commitment should be translated into clear policies and directives that emphasize the importance of GCED within the national education framework. Government authorities should work collaboratively with educational leaders to develop a unified vision for the role of GCED in fostering global citizenship. Training programs for policymakers and administrators can enhance their understanding of GCED's significance, encouraging consistent and informed support for its implementation.

**Capacity Building Workshops:** Given the identified gaps in pedagogical skills and the initial anxiety among teachers, comprehensive capacity-building workshops are essential. These workshops should be designed to equip educators with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively integrate GCED competencies into their teaching practices. Collaborative efforts between educational institutions, government bodies, and non-governmental organizations can facilitate the organization of these workshops. Tailored programs should address the specific needs of teachers, focusing on innovative teaching methods, cross-cultural communication, and the development of materials aligned with GCED principles. Continuous professional development opportunities can further support teachers in adapting to more flexible and inclusive instructional approaches.

**Pedagogical Awareness:** To enhance pedagogical awareness among administrators, education officials and educators, a systematic approach is required. Initiatives should include the development and dissemination of resource materials that highlight the pedagogical strategies suitable for GCED. Educational institutions, in collaboration with curriculum developers, can create guidelines and toolkits that provide practical insights into incorporating GCED competencies. To bolster awareness and understanding of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) among educators, administrators, and other stakeholders, leveraging online courses and materials hosted by APCEIU the accessibility of the GCED Online Campus, emphasizing the wealth of resources, including online courses, multimedia materials, and research documents. Encourage educators to explore the platform to deepen their understanding of GCED principles, pedagogies, and best practices.

**Collaboration and Stakeholders' Engagement:** Collaboration and engagement with stakeholders are pivotal for the successful integration of GCED. Establishing platforms for regular communication and collaboration between teachers, school leaders, policymakers, and community representatives can facilitate a holistic approach. Working groups and committees can be formed to encourage ongoing dialogue, ensuring that the perspectives of all stakeholders are considered in the planning and implementation of GCED initiatives. Moreover, involving parents in the educational process through awareness programs and collaborative activities fosters a sense of shared responsibility. This inclusive approach helps build a strong foundation for the sustainable integration of GCED into the education system, aligning the efforts of all stakeholders towards a common goal of nurturing globally competent citizens.

**Concept Mapping Between Current Curriculum and GCED Themes:** It is imperative to conduct comprehensive concept mapping. This process involves a meticulous examination and alignment of current curriculum contents with the key themes and principles of GCED. This mapping should be undertaken collaboratively by curriculum developers, educators, and subject matter experts. Initiate a systematic review of the current curriculum, identifying areas where GCED themes can be naturally integrated. This involves breaking down the existing syllabus into specific learning objectives and cross-referencing them with the core concepts of GCED. Ensure that the mapping process is not only content-driven but also considers the development of skills, attitudes, and values associated with global citizenship.

## Future Research

The study was conducted based on secondary data from policies, reports and guidelines. Future research could be of useful undertaking investigations basing on primary data. And also the scope of study is narrow as I couldn't gather wider perspectives. Research in future could consolidate wider array of schools and participants.

## CONCLUSION

The research delves into the interconnection between Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Gross National Happiness (GNH) within the framework of Bhutan's educational system. It highlights the harmonization of values, competencies, and objectives between GCED and GNH, particularly emphasizing their potential for mutual enhancement. The socio-emotional dimension of GCED, centered on values, attitudes, and social skills, aligns seamlessly with the GNH principles of compassion, respect, and responsibility.

Despite these positive connections, the research identifies challenges impeding the integration of GCED into Bhutan's educational curriculum. Notable challenges include a deficiency in pedagogical skills among teachers, conflicting attitudes among school leaders, and the restrictive influence of inflexible syllabus structures on the teaching-learning process. The study proposes recommendations to address these challenges, emphasizing the critical need for political commitment and leadership support, capacity-building workshops for teachers, heightened pedagogical awareness, collaborative efforts with stakeholders, and a comprehensive concept mapping between the existing curriculum and GCED themes.

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