

Solution Exchange – Bhutan Consolidated Reply



Query: Generating a Rural Development Policy for Bhutan – Advice; Experiences

Compiled by [Mamta Katwal](#), Resource Person

Issue Date: 27 April 2010

From [Samdrup Rigyal](#), College of Natural Resources, Lobesa, Wangdue
Posted 7 April 2010

Today, Bhutan's poverty rate is 23.2%, with forty-nine out of fifty of these poverty stricken persons living in rural areas (Poverty Analysis Report 2007 (PAR)) indicating poverty is largely a rural phenomenon in Bhutan.

The main challenges faced by the poor living in the *Dzongkhags* are small land holdings, ill health and low education levels, reliance on subsistence agriculture, food insecurity, scattered settlements, lack of communication facilities, labor shortages and vulnerability to natural disasters and wild animals.

These challenges are resulting in an increasing trend of rural-urban migration. Almost 47% of respondents in 2005 Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) survey reported that rural-urban migration has created acute farm labor shortage. Consequently, land is left fallow, decreasing the agricultural growth and ultimately slowing down development activities in rural areas.

Research indicates that migration would continue even if expected wage levels in urban and rural sectors were equal due to the difference in the accessibility to goods and services (Pham, 2001).

In the light of this state of affairs, we would like to review the outcome of the 18th annual *Dzongdags'* Conference held in March 2010. The Kuensel reported a clear message that came out of the conference - the exigency to generate a rural development policy for Bhutan. (To read the articles, click here: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14907> and <http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14908>)

Thus, acting as a representative of the academia working toward Rural Development Services, the following questions on developing a rural development policy in Bhutan are raised for your suggestions and feedback. Please share best practices and experiences to the questions below:

- What areas do you think the rural development policy needs to encompass?
- Do you think this new policy could be applied as a blanket recommendation for all *Dzongkhags* to underscore the strengths and weaknesses of each *Dzongkhag* and why?
- Which arm of the government do you think is best suited to steer the process once the policy is in place? And given that agency's current form, what level of decentralization and autonomy would be needed?

Finally, please share any experiences you have had or know of developing policies to promote rural development.

Your responses and feedback will facilitate greater exchange of learning to develop appropriate strategies while developing a rural development policy.

Responses were received, with thanks, from

1. [Phub Dorji](#), College of Natural Resources, Lobesa, Wangdue
2. [Purna Bahadur Chhetri](#), Institute of Silviculture, Universität für Bodenkultur, Austria ([Response 1](#); [Response 2](#))
3. [Lekey Wangdi](#), Dzongkhag Administration, Haa
4. [Chime Paden Wangdi](#), Tarayana Foundation, Thimphu
5. [Phuntsho Wangyel](#), Gross National Happiness Commission, Thimphu
6. [Daniel Buckles](#), Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada
7. [Saamdu Chetri](#), Prime Minister's Office, Thimphu
8. [Srijana Rana](#), Partnerships Bureau/Private Sector Division Unit, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New York, USA
9. [Henrik Fredborg Larsen](#), Decentralization and Local Governance, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Centre, Bangkok, Thailand
10. [Bob Reno](#), Rural Education and Development (READ), Bangkok, Thailand
11. [Chencho Gyalmo Dorjee](#), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Capital Development Fund, Thimphu
12. [Tshering C. Dorji](#), University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, Bangkok, Thailand*

* *Offline Contribution*

Further contributions are welcome!

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[Comparative Experiences](#)
[Related Resources](#)
[Responses in Full](#)

Summary of Responses

In response for a request for inputs on the drafting of a rural development policy, members felt such a policy is long overdue for Bhutan. They urged drawing up an overarching rural development policy that would cater to the needs of rural communities and result in equitable and sustainable development, and would supersede the different and overlapping sectoral policies. Discussants recommended creating a policy that would:

- Synthesize the interconnections between poverty and rural development
- Go beyond the current unilateral sectoral approach to have a coordinated and integrated approach that synchronizes policies of different ministries and sectors
- Uphold the concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH) and take into account the social, cultural, political and environmental aspects of development efforts
- Accommodate probable and changing rural development issues
- Identify the major stakeholders involved in taking rural development forward

Discussing how to create this type of rural development policy, members emphasized the importance of having a holistic approach to the policy and the need to strengthen local governments through capacity

development. Bearing in mind that many sectoral policies overlap, duplicate each other, and/or contradict each other, respondents suggested a coordinated and an amalgamated approach to addressing rural development. They also stressed the government cannot link a rural development to only one sector's success, as the needs of rural communities range from needing access to healthcare, education, income generation opportunities, food, shelter, opportunities for higher education, employment and livelihood.

Additionally, the policy needs to be in tune with the country's long-term development objectives and allow for flexible implementation at the community level. This is essential, since community level needs vary from community to community. Thus, members suggested that the new policy **cannot be applied as a blanket recommendation** for all dzongkhags and dungkhags to follow, the policy must reflect the unique needs of each area. For example, in Europe the [European Union's rural development policy](#), has overarching objectives, but each state must design its own development programme to meet its country's needs.

One suggestion for how to create a targeted and need-specific policy was to classify rural communities as "less favored", "rural" or as "semi-urban" depending on the level of availability and accessibility of services and infrastructure, agricultural conditions and socio-economic structures that can or cannot be harnessed to carry out development in the community. This would enable the prioritization of development needs, establishment of attainable, time-bound policy objectives and allocation of the necessary resources to communities. Another suggestion was to talk to community members to learn what their needs are and to understand what level of engagement or intervention would not collide with their expectations and cultural or social preferences.

Members also recommended selecting different service delivery strategies for different categories of goods and services which take into consideration what works well in one situation, may not always work in another setting. On this note, they recommended [building capacity](#) of the stakeholders involved and the community to deal with ground realities and to accomplish development objectives.

Additionally, respondents advised the policy depict [positive interactions](#) between towns and villages, to show how they can deliver meaningful, reciprocated and cost accounted services to each other. This would likely encourage a collaborative flow of services, resources, managerial power and mutual respect between villages and towns and vice versa. This would also potentially serve as a way of managing the growing issue of rural-urban migration.

Discussing what **areas the policy should cover**, members recommended:

- Moving from production-based to a more market-based approach in agriculture, like the trainees at the [Rural Development Training Centre](#) are learning
- Changing input-subsidy to market subsidy in agriculture
- Increasing farmers' cooperatives as well involving civil society organizations
- Improving accessibility to social services such as health, education, nutrition, vocational training and rural infrastructure (i.e. roads, electricity, telecommunications and technology transfers and dissemination of knowledge and information), similar to the [United States'](#) approach to rural policy

They also advised expanding rural outreach of financial and public institutions and improving farmer's and other entrepreneurs' access to microfinance.

A rural development policy needs to have a clearly defined, vision, mission and objectives. This, respondents felt would serve as a guideline and way forward for the local governments entrusted with rural development. To do this, the capacity of local governments needs strengthening members noted, specifically:

- Developing the skills of local elected representatives and allocating the human resources necessary to coordinate and carry out development activities
- Increasing the autonomy and decision-making capacity of the local governments

- Establishing well defined linkages between central and local government, including clear rules and legislations for different tiers of government
- Employing a dynamic and innovative approach to planning and a proper and steadfast approach to implementation, which ensures monitoring and evaluation at the dzongkhag level

Responding to the question about having **a single agency steer rural development**, members referenced to the [Constitution of Bhutan](#) and the [Local Government Act 2009](#) as legislations promoting decentralization and local governance. They opined that given the fact that there is a [Local Development Division](#) within the GNH Commission and a [Department of Local Governance](#) within the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs (MOHCA), these agencies should be well equipped to take rural development forward. Members also felt rural people must take greater ownership and is equally important in assuring success and sustainability of development initiatives.

Overall, members stressed that a rural development policy for Bhutan should evolve from and by the people of Bhutan, and encompass the development philosophy of Gross National Happiness. They concluded by noting that a rural development strategy that works in another country may not necessarily be the best option for Bhutan.

Comparative Experiences

Bhutan

Rural Development Training Centre (RDTC) Provides Training in Agriculture and Rural Development, Zhemgang (from [Purna Bahadur Chhetri](#), *Institute of Silviculture, Universität für Bodenkultur, Austria*)

In 2008, the RDTC was opened in Zhemgang, the poorest district to enhance agriculture production and rural development in the country. The RDTC started with 26 trainees, who learned how to cultivate vegetables and rear livestock. They were trained in agriculture skills and farm and group management, the centre also conducted youth agriculture awareness seminars. Over the past two years, the center has been able to provide training to 200 farmers in the Zhemgang area. Read [more](#)

From [Samdrup Chetri](#), *Prime Minister's Office, Thimphu*

United States of America

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development (RD) Policy Delivers a Range of Services

In 1972, the USDA developed a RD policy intended to improve the quality of life of rural Americans. Rural programs are delivered through utility, housing, business and community development programs catering to basic service needs, developing job opportunities and promoting community development. After nearly 40 years, the RD programs have created or preserved more than 150,000 rural jobs, helped more than 40,000 rural people buy homes, and help 450,000 low-income rural people access housing. Read [more](#)

Europe

European Commission's (EU) Rural Development Policy 2007-2013 focuses on improving the Quality of Life in Rural Communities

The EU has an active rural development policy. Their current policy focuses on enhancing the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector, improving the countryside, and improving the quality of life and diversification of rural economy. Each EU member state lays out a specific rural development programme for its citizens, and fund it. Since its adopting, it has enabled the promotion of modernization and innovation in agriculture and the wider rural economy. Read [more](#)

Related Resources

Recommended Documentation

From [Samdrup Rigyal](#), *College of Natural Resources, Lobesa, Wangdue*

Call for a Rural Development Policy

Article; Kuensel Corporation; 15 March 2010

Available at: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14907>

Reports on the need for a rural development policy in Bhutan as articulated by the Dzongdas during the 18th Annual Dzongda's Conference

Wanted: A Cohesive Rural Policy

Editorial; Kuensel Corporation; 16 March 2010

Available at: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=14908>

An article stressing the need for a rural development policy in Bhutan that goes beyond promoting agriculture and preserving Bhutanese culture

Poverty Analysis Report (PAR-2007)

Report; National Statistics Bureau, Royal Government of Bhutan; Thimphu; 2001

Available at: http://www.undp.org.bt/assets/files/publication/PAR_2007.pdf (PDF, Size: 485 KB)

Presents an up-to-date appraisal of poverty patterns in Bhutan, termed largely as a rural phenomenon and stresses the need for a rural development policy

From [Purna Bahadur Chhetri](#), *Institute of Silviculture, Universität für Bodenkultur, Austria*

Rural Development Training Center Opened in Zhemgang

Note; Ministry of Agriculture, Royal Government of Bhutan; Thimphu; 9 May 2008

Available at: http://www.moa.gov.bt/moa/news/news_detail.php?id=465

Backgrounder on creating a rural development-training centre in Zhemgang intended to promote agriculture and rural development

Prioritizing Food Production, the RDTC Way

Article; by Tashi Dema; Kuensel Corporation; 12 May 2008

Available at: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=10375>

Describes how the Rural Development Training Center is catering to training needs of farmers within and outside Zhemgang, and contributing to the development of rural communities

The Economic Policy of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2010 (from [Samdrup Chettri](#), *Prime Minister's Office, Thimphu*)

Document; Royal Government of Bhutan; Thimphu; 2010

Available at: <http://www.mti.gov.bt/Tender/edp-2010.pdf> (PDF, size: 260 KB)

Policy includes several rural development initiatives to diversify livelihood opportunities for rural communities through tourism, development of agriculture, cooperatives and entrepreneurships

From [Chencho Gyalmo Dorjee](#), *UNDP/UNCDF, Thimphu*

Tenth Five-Year Plan (2008-2013)

Document; Gross National Happiness Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan; Thimphu; 2009

Available at:

http://www.gnhc.gov.bt/10th%20plan/High%20resoln/TenthPlan_Vol1_Web_HighQuality.pdf (PDF, Size; 5.03 MB)

Overall strategy for poverty reduction, promoting economic opportunities & boosting critical sectors such as agriculture & rural industry, key for the poor & encourage rural development

Local Government Act 2009

Act; Royal Government of Bhutan; Thimphu; 2009

Available at: <http://www.nab.gov.bt/downloadsact/Dzo74.pdf> (PDF, Size: 7.78 MB)

States that the promotion of holistic and integrated area-based development planning is one of the powers and functions of local government bodies

The Constitution of Bhutan

Constitution; Royal Government of Bhutan; Thimphu; 2008

Available at: <http://www.nab.gov.bt/downloadsact/Eng66.pdf> (PDF, Size: 2.23 MB)

Delegates power and authority to local elects, defines objectives of the local governments and draws the relation between local and central government indicating the level of local autonomy

Resource Allocation Formula (RAF)

Document; Gross National Happiness Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan; Thimphu; September 2009

Available at: http://www.gnhc.gov.bt/resurce_allocation.asp

Explains local governments are entitled to adequate financial resources from the Government for development activities, factoring in the community's population, geographical size & poverty level

Assignment of Functional and Financial Responsibilities to Local Governments

Document; Gross National Happiness Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan; Thimphu 2007

Available at: http://www.gnhc.gov.bt/Assignment_of%20Responsibilities_to_LGs-GNHC_Website.pdf (PDF, Size: 205 KB)

Assigns financial and functional responsibilities to local governments in areas of administrative, infrastructure and capacity and human resource development for result-based planning approach

Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) of Bhutan (from [Srijana Rana](#), PB/PSD Unit, UNDP, New York)

Study; Ministry of Agriculture and World Food Programme Bhutan; Thimphu; 2005

Available at: <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/vam/wfp077524.pdf> (PDF, Size: 415 KB)

Prioritizes dzongkhags which have low agricultural potential or food insecurity for rural development and poverty eradication policies and initiatives

Capacity Development-Practice Note (from [Henrik Fredborg Larsen](#), Decentralization and Local Governance, UNDP, Bangkok, Thailand)

Document; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); October 2008

Available at: http://www.undp.org/capacity/our_approach.shtml (PDF, Size: 674 KB)

Explains how capacity assessment helps to identify what kind of areas need addressing and how to achieve the desired priorities and policies to implement an effective rural development policy

From [Samdrup Chettri](#), Prime Minister's Office, Thimphu

The Rural Development Policy-Facing the Challenges

Brochure; European Commission; 2008

Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/cyprus2008/brochure_en.pdf (PDF, Size: 1,078 KB)

Explains how the EU's rural policy framework for 2007-2013 operates and will be implemented. The RD policy takes on a flexible, strategic, thematic and integrated approach

Rural Development (RD) Policy 2007-2013

Policy; Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission

Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/index_en.htm

Explains the need, the structure and the approach of the European Union's 2007-2013 rural development policy, along with the rules and strategic guidelines governing this policy

Recommended Organizations and Programmes

From [Srijana Rana](#), PB/PSD Unit, UNDP, New York, USA

Agriculture Marketing and Enterprise Promotion Project (AMEPP), Ministry of Agriculture, Trashigang

Programme Facilitation Office, Khangma, Trashigang; Tel: +975-4-535112/524/131/113/378; Fax: +975-4-535115; <http://www.pfo-amepp.gov.bt/main/index.php>

Designed to bring balanced socio-economic development through five poverty alleviate and development interventions in the poorest six eastern dzongkhags in Bhutan

World Food Programme (WFP), Thimphu

P.B. 162; UN House, Samten Lam, Thimphu; Tel: +975-2-322424; Fax: +975-2-323988; <http://www.wfp.org/countries/bhutan>

Focuses on improving rural food insecurity, access to education, health and agriculture, recommended for its [Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping \(VAM\)](#) experiences

The Sustainable Land Management Project (SLMP) by World Bank, Thimphu

P.B. 907, National Soil Service Center, Ministry of Agriculture, Royal Government of Bhutan, Semtokha, Thimphu; Tel: +975-2-351037; Fax: +975-2-51038; <http://www.moa.gov.bt/nssc/projects/slmp.php>; nssc@druknet.bt

<http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=64283627&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P087039>

Project to strengthen institutional and community capacity for anticipating and managing land degradation, the project is working on the emerging issues of land degradation in Bhutan

Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Thimphu

P.B. 147, Doebum Lam, Thimphu; Tel: +975-2-322742/324254; Fax: +975-2-323936; <http://www.bcci.org.bt/>

Non-profit private sector organization for the business community, recommended for the role it could in rural development efforts by offering business opportunities for the rural poor

Bhutan Development Finance Corporation Limited, Thimphu

P.B. 256, Thimphu; Tel: +975-2-323425; Fax: +975-2-323428; <http://www.bdfcl.com.bt/?q=node>

Financial institution involved in providing microfinance services to alleviate poverty, recommended for its efforts to generate rural development in Bhutan

From [Chencho Gyalmo Dorjee](#), UNDP/UNCDF, Thimphu

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), Thimphu

UN House, Samten Lam, P.O. Box 162, Thimphu; Tel: +975-2-322424; Fax: +975-2-322657; <http://www.undp.org.bt/about.htm>

Supports the Local Governance Support Programme (LGSP) directed toward improving local level infrastructure and services for sustainable rural development

Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC), Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu

Tel no: +975-2-325192; Fax: +975-2-326779; <http://www.gnhc.gov.bt>

Central government body for coordinating and spearheading policy formulation, incorporates the Local Development Division (LDD), the implementing agency for local development initiatives

Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs (MOHCA), Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu

P.B 133, Trashichodzong, Thimphu; Tel: +975-2-322301; Fax: +975-2-322214;

<http://www.mohca.gov.bt/>

Supports local governments to provide efficient and effective service delivery through the Department of Local Governance (DLG) programme

Helvetas/Swiss Agency for Development Corporation (SDC), Thimphu (from [Purna Bahadur Chhetri](#), Institute of Silviculture, Universität für Bodenkultur, Austria)

P.O Box 157, Thimphu; Tel: +975-2-322870/323209/327103; Fax: +975-2-323210; helvetas@druknet.bt,

<http://www.helvetas.org.bt>; <http://www.helvetas.org.bt/Projects.htm>

Working to reduce poverty and socio-economic disparities through two programmes, the Rural Development Initiatives (RDI) and Rural Development Governance

Tarayana Foundation-Bhutan, Thimphu (from [Chime Paden Wangdi](#))

P.O Box 2003, Thimphu; Tel: +975-2-329333; Fax: 975-2-331-433; tarayana@tarayanafoundation.org;

<http://www.tarayanafoundation.org/>

Non-profit organization working toward the enhancement of lives of people in rural communities through small and targeted interventions

Rural Education and Development (READ) Bhutan, Thimphu (from [Bob Reno](#))

Royal Education Council Project Office Building; P.B. 226; Thimphu; Tel/Fax: +975-2-337415;

<http://www.readglobal.org/ourapproach>

Works closely with rural communities to fund and build READ centers catering to rural needs and promote rural development

Social Analysis Systems, Canada (from [Daniel Buckles](#), Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada)

<http://www.sas2.net/>; Contact Daniel Buckles and Jacques Chevalier sas2international@sas2.net

Provides tools & strategies for community-based research, project planning & evaluation & public engagement, for bridging gaps between urban & rural areas and to develop policies for each

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Rural Development (RD), United States of America (from [Samdrup Chetri](#), Prime Minister's Office, Thimphu)

USDA Rural Development, Room 205-W, Mail Stop 0107, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20250-0107; Tel: (202) 720-4581; Fax: (202) 720-2080; <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/>

Committed to rural development in the United States of America through different programs and activities which can be used as an example in developing a RD policy for Bhutan

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Centre in Bangkok, Thailand (from [Henrik Fredborg Larsen](#))

P.B. 618; United Nations Service Building; 3rd Floor, Rajdamnern Nok Ave; Tel: + 66-2-288-2129; Fax: +66-2-288-3020; regionalcentrebangkok@undp.org;

<http://regionalcentrebangkok.undp.or.th/practices/governance/decentralization/DecentralizedServiceDelivery.html>

Recommended for producing various publications highlighting practices from different countries used to strengthen local development policies through appropriate sectoral decentralization

Recommended Tools and Technologies

'SAS2 1.0: Causal Dynamics,' in Social Analysis Systems2 1.0 (from [Daniel Buckles](#), Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada)
Technique; Owned by Social Analysis Systems, Ottawa, Canada
Available at: http://www.sas2.net/documents/tools/techniques/causal_dynamics.pdf (PDF, Size: 298 KB)
Contact Daniel Buckles or Jacques Chevalier; sas2international@sas2.net.

Designed to help to assess the causes of a key problem and the way that each cause interacts with other causes, in this case to draw up positive interactions between villages and town

Related Consolidated Replies

Innovation on Subsidies to Farmers, from Tshewang T., Department of Livestock, Ministry of Agriculture, Sarpang (Advice; Experiences). Solution Exchange Bhutan. Issued 23 November 2009
Available at: <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.bt/cr/cr-se-bhutan-05031002.pdf> (PDF, Size: 176 KB)
Offers advice and experiences on subsidies to encourage farmers to progress into growth-oriented ventures

Creating Business Opportunities for the Poor, from Pema Chuki Wangdi, Poverty Unit, UNDP, Thimphu (Advice, Examples). Solution Exchange Bhutan. Issued 16 September 2009
Available at: <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.bt/cr/cr-se-bhutan-31070901.pdf> (PDF, Size: 148 KB)
Provides ideas and examples for creation of business opportunities that include the poor in an effort to reduce poverty

Methods of Integrating Planning, Implementation and Monitoring at the Gewog and Dzongkhag Level, from Sonam Tshoki, Dzongkhag Administration, Thimphu (Advice; Experiences). Solution Exchange Bhutan. Issued 22 October 2008
Available at: <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.bt/cr/cr-se-bhutan-22070801.pdf> (PDF, size: 154 KB)
Highlights issues related to limited capacity & resources at dzongkhag & geog levels to implement & monitor programmes, & explores lack of coordination among implementing agencies

Issues of Rural-Urban Migration, from Elizabeth Allison, Ministry of Works and Human Settlement, Thimphu. (Experiences). Solution Exchange Bhutan. Issued 8 April 2008
Available at: <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.bt/cr/cr-se-bhutan-08040801.pdf> (PDF, Size: 101 KB)
Explores some of the challenges faced by rural-urban migrants, especially for the mostly young male and female migrants

Responses in Full

[Phub Dorji](#), College of Natural Resources, Lobesa, Wangdue

First of all, I would like to congratulate Samdrup for highlighting a pertinent issue for deliberation in this forum. The initiative is much appreciated.

The absence or rather the need to develop a rural development (RD) policy and strategy is increasingly felt. We have always equated rural development with Agricultural development or presumed agriculture development to be the same as rural development. This presumption is not wholly wrong as agricultural development has been the main engine and basis for rural development.

While there was no RD policy per se, the essence of it was embedded or implicit in the sectoral policies and strategies, particularly of the agriculture, health and education sectors. Only now, we realize that poverty and rural development are multidimensional and need to be tackled in a holistic and interdisciplinary manner. A RD Policy and strategy paper is essential to map out the prospective, vibrant and sustainable rural landscape and to address the crosscutting RD issues.

Such a policy must:

- Justify RD in the long term in the face of increasing urbanization
- Envision the prospective rural landscape
- Formulate strategies to address the issues pertaining to RD
- Rationalize the creation of an agency for RD and its relation with other players in RD

Purna Bahadur Chhetri, Institute of Silviculture, Universität für Bodenkultur, Austria
(response 1)

I would like to support the fact that a Rural Development Policy is overdue and most of the issues highlighted in the query are perennial in nature. These issues have been there, will be there unless some policies are put in place, and implemented. Implementation should be consistent to square such complex problems.

The problem is correlated with livelihood, income, opportunities etc. Now the question is how to tackle this (these) issue(s)? Indeed a sound rural policy may bring positive effect. Nevertheless, we need to invest on rural enterprises and agriculture. In fact, investment in agriculture remains very poor. I hope with the creation of Marketing and Cooperatives Department, activities related to reduction of poverty will enhance, but still we need very clear guidelines and policies. And also the series of changes that are happening with land act may proper new development towards reducing poverty.

Hope to hear from other SE members on this issue of generating a rural development policy.

Lekey Wangdi, Dzongkhag Administration, Haa

I would like to share few of my thoughts here. Firstly, I would like to share few issues pertaining to current Local Government.

- Unilateral approach by different Sectors without clear common vision and objectives. Besides, no clear strategies are being developed by any of the local government
- Lack of clear policies governing local government
- Lack of capacity of the Local elected functionaries
- Very limited research work and paper on the functioning system of the local government and lack of timely feedback
- Conventional way of preparing Plans by the Local government and duplication of Plans and Programmes
- Lack of implementation capacity
- Not very clear linkages with the central government
- Lack of resources

So, considering the above critical issues faced by the local government, the need of Rural Economy Development has been a long overdue. Following are few of my recommendations and suggestions:

- The development of clear Vision, Mission, objectives and strategies of the local government and synchronize the sectoral policies with common goals of the local government.
- The capacity development of local elected functionaries is very important. Institutes and programmes need to be initiated to create a room for capacity development of the local functionaries.

- The need to create a research division and develop the capacity of local government to come up with timely intervention
- Shift focus from Conventional Approach of planning into more dynamic and innovative planning.
- The capacity development programme for the local government officials needs to be reviewed and more strategic approach has to develop by organization responsible for Local Government.
- More autonomy and decentralization is needed at the local government in terms of Human Resource Development.
- Develop clear bylaws, Rules and Regulations in line with different Acts governing the Local Government.
- Clear linkages need to be developed between different bodies at the central government and local government.
- One premium organization/body will have to be established which would be fully responsible for the governance of Local Government.
- The production based approach of the Ministry of Agriculture & Forest needs to be changed into Marketing based approach.
- The input based subsidy needs to be changed into marketing based subsidy.
- The cooperatives based society needs to be encouraged and civil societies need to be involved in local government.

Following are few steps & action taken by Government, which could help developing the Rural Economy Development Policy:

- Passing of Local Government Act
- Development of Strategic Planning Framework which focuses on development of Vision and strategies for Local Government by GNHC and Royal Institute of Management
- Development of Local Development Planning Manual
- Integrated Capacity Building Programme
- Shifting the approach of Ministry of Agriculture

Chime Paden Wangdi, Tarayana Foundation, Thimphu

Having a policy alone may not be sufficient in generating the momentum needed for rural development to take off. However, that is a step in the right direction. There are conflicting indications from many quarters regarding the direction of rural development as it stands now.

As articulated by [Purna Bahadur](#) and [Phub Dorji](#), Rural Development cannot be pegged to just development in any one sector currently working in the rural pockets. By that token, it cannot be pegged to any one sector's success. It is more than the sum of the successes of sectoral approach. Well-coordinated and dovetailed approach is needed when we think about implementing developmental initiatives in the rural communities. For the rural households, the need for access is equally important as it is for food and shelter, as is the need for health care and education and so on.

However, when we offer them a menu of developmental initiatives to choose from, commonly known as the cafeteria approach, and if we give them true selecting powers, they generally go for the option that would bring about the most synergy, one that could be termed "strategic" for other developments to occur as a spin off.

With slightly more than seven years experience of engaging directly with the rural communities, we have noticed that the communities know more than we give them credit for. What they need is facilitation, someone who can help inform the community about the various services available through programmes and Governmental initiatives. Very often, this information is not available to those at the grassroots resulting in the rural communities not being able to take advantage of the opportunities thus presented.

Yes, Rural Development is complex and should be thought about in a holistic manner rather than the usual linear thought processes. In order for development to take off at the grassroots, community mobilizations and engagement at that level over a prolonged period of time is necessary to really take the community through the various phases involved. This also means listening to what they have to say, really listening and learning from their experiences and wisdom, in helping them select the pace of development as well as the level of engagement that they would be happy with.

As a development worker, often times, we are in a hurry to get started without tabling all the cards on the table, this approach then comes back to haunt during implementation. There are also several socio-cultural nuances to be noted that may be specific to each community. These cannot be ignored as the success or failure of the intervention may depend on these very seemingly small things.

In many countries there are specific Ministries charged with the responsibility of Rural Development. They carry out the functions of local community capacity building to infrastructure development to job creation and so on for those in rural areas. This way the budget allocated for rural development is funneled through one point and can be directed to the most strategic interventions. In our case, we are a small nation and this may not be the answer, however, we could learn from such set ups to see how these function.

We know that Poverty Alleviation is the main focus of the 10th FYP, and Samdrup pointed out that the Government hopes to reduce poverty from 23.2% to 15% by the end of the plan period. We have a small population base and it may be easier to talk about in terms of absolute numbers rather than percent points.

There is both political will and donor commitments in ensuring that we move quickly towards meeting the MDGs as well as the SDGs (SAARC Development Goals). In this way, the roles and responsibilities of different agencies are specialized to improve efficiencies providing an opportunity to really bringing about significant improvement in the lives of those currently living below the poverty line.

Lastly, the momentum created for rural development need to be felt at the grassroots. There has to be a positive energy cruising through our villages that fuels their capacity to be part of the solution. Greater ownership for their own development will come only when true empowerment occurs. A Rural Development Policy with common vision, mission, and objectives may provide the framework for development, but the rural communities will have to be entrusted with the contents specification. All other interventions and support from various fronts including from the local, central government should be demand driven, with the community members in the driving seat.

Phuntsho Wangyel, Gross National Happiness Commission, Thimphu

I have been going through all your views with much interest on the rural development policy. It is indeed a very complex issue as many of you have pointed out. Personally, I have been trying to figure out if there is a need for such a policy.

The policy should be need based, and we have to make a convincing argument in favor of such a policy if we do decide to have one. Once we complete this task, then we can move on to developing a framework for the policy before fleshing out the details. Your views or opinions would be much appreciated.

Daniel, Buckles, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada

Thank you for launching this discussion of a rural development policy for Bhutan. While I have little knowledge of the details of rural life in Bhutan today, I would like to share one suggestion regarding the challenge, in response to [Mr. Rigyal's](#) question:

What areas do you think the rural development policy needs to encompass? My response to this question is based on 25 years of work on rural development from Bangladesh and India to Mexico, Honduras and Northern Canada, while at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) based in Mexico.

In short, a rural development policy must focus not on villages and rural areas per se but rather on the **relationship** between village and town.

The question is: how can villages serve towns, and towns serve villages? And do so in ways that create internal synergies, mutual benefit, and fair terms of exchange, sustainability and national happiness? On the one hand, development opportunities are there for villages to serve towns (as suppliers of clean water, food, fuel, building materials, etc., all exchanged on terms that reflect full cost accounting and principles of fairness). On the other hand, development opportunities are there for towns to serve villages (as suppliers of appropriate technology, including technical innovations, organizational capabilities and social innovations that enhance the productivity and sustainability of rural resources and environments).

I list these particular opportunities only as surface ideas, to illustrate the point that a rural development policy that looks at villages in isolation, or only at village-products as sources of foreign exchange in a global economy, will miss what I believe is the only realistic and meaningful focus of attention: the creation of **positive interactions** first and foremost between the two geographies (village and town) and the related sectors of the national economy (agriculture, forestry, water management, services, knowledge generation, appropriate manufacturing, etc.).

The input-output model developed in economics by Wassily Leontief and others is one way for policy makers to examine and plan ways to create these positive interactions. My colleagues and I have developed a participatory tool for doing the same thing while involving stakeholders directly in the analysis. It is called Causal Dynamics, available on our website at www.sas2.net.

As an aside, I would add that the rural-urban migration referred to by [Mr. Rigyal](#) and the [Dzongdags' Conference](#) cannot be stopped but it can be managed if the relationship between village and town is based on not only mutual respect but also real, two-way flows of people, resources, decision-making power, cultural exchange, etc.

I hope these comments are helpful. I can elaborate further if there is interest.

[Purna Bahadur Chhetri](#), Institute of Silviculture, Universität für Bodenkultur, Austria

(response 2)

It is very nice that the discussion on rural policy is elevating from strength to strength. Mr. Daniel Buckles' comments highlight the necessity of defining rural and urban within the Bhutanese context in order to develop an effective policy.

Our aim should be to alleviate rural dependency, which will be a forerunner to alleviating poverty. It will be important to look at the landscape and socio-economic activities in terms of their relationships. The rural policy should not be a stand-alone program. Infrastructure building, economics, cultural, livelihood, ecotourism etc. should combine together to generate a rural development policy for Bhutan.

The Ministry of Agriculture with the assistance from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation started a rural development institution known as the Rural Development Training Centre in 2008. The centre provides knowledge and skills on agriculture and rural development.

Saamdu Chetri, Prime Minister's Office, Thimphu

Being a country with altitude ranging from about 150 to over 7,500 meters above sea level, Bhutan has a very diverse climatic zones and conditions. I am not sure if all the sectoral policies, which seem to contradicting each other according to the debates I hear, will be capitalizing on the potentials so provided by a diversity of geographical settings and the climate. Knowing that USA developed a rural policy in 1972 and many developed countries in Europe and otherwise are beginning to develop rural development policy under different names, I think we are just in time to do so.

Political will is strong to help our rural lives attractive, more rewarding and meaningful to belong to and also crave to return to. What do we need to look for in rural policy is what does rural mean in our context- Rural will not remain rural forever, so classifications of rural, semi-urban and urban may be very necessary to provide different resources and inputs. We should not forget that Economic Development Policy (EDP) would have included many development issues for the rural settings but it may not enough.

I personally think there must be elements to be included in a rural policy such as:

- Gross National Happiness (GNH) (applying by doing)
- Rural Governance (collaboration between sectors and trans-boundary, who will apply, decentralization, focus on sectors or places etc.)
- Ecology and Forest (leverage local resources - how and who should it belong to? mines, minerals, non-forest wood products, adapting to climate changes, disposal management, etc.)
- Rural Economy (it must be aligned with EDP, poverty settings, different programmes of agricultural and non-agricultural nature - one area may need a different approach than others - cooperatives, tax systems, enterprises, innovation - one product one gewog? - employment, gender, etc.),
- Rural Services (assets both natural and man-made such as infrastructure, services such as health, education, eco-tourism, telecommunication, water and sanitation, lighting every home, electricity, etc.), I have used so many et cetera because what I have written is only some ideas and it is by far not exhaustive.

I personally believe that the rural development policy is very important for us - rather than separate sectoral policies. We are a small country and relatively a very small population - such a policy will only help to strengthen our democracy and the belief in it.

Srijana Rana, Partnerships Bureau/Private Sector Division Unit, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New York

I would like to congratulate all the Dzongkhag representatives and leaders for proactively voicing the need for the development of a rural development policy for Bhutan. I developed a keen interest in this subject while working for the Agriculture Marketing and Enterprise Promotion Project (AMEPP) in Trashigang, Khangma in 2006 through 2009.

Bhutan's unique development agenda: Gross National Happiness and the geopolitical landscape:

Although conventional wisdom often forces rural development programs to focus on high potential areas in order to achieve rapid and visible impact, the wide heterogeneity in agro ecological and socio economic conditions in rural areas, including diverse production systems and livelihood strategies, requires that rural development programs expand their focus.

Therefore, while discussing rural development in countries such as Bhutan, development policies should not only be viewed in terms of income poverty but also in terms of their social, political and environment aspects. For example, in Bhutan, maintaining and respecting rural people's ethnic and cultural identities, as well as preservation and conservation of Bhutan's fragile environmental landscape and rich natural resources, are critical issues that must be taken into consideration while developing an effective rural development policy.

In this context, adoption of a one-size-fits-all strategy borrowed from another country is not the best solution for Bhutan. Bhutan could build on the best practice example of the Gross National Happiness (GNH) concept and aspirations. The most effective rural development policies and strategies for Bhutan will be homegrown -- driven by the Bhutanese people and the think tanks of Bhutan. Of course, the Bhutanese people will be encouraged to seek guidance and consultations from a wide range of scholars and experts.

Key challenges, issues and lessons learned:

Some of the challenges that I faced while formulating a strategy for the Eastern Dzongkhags were the following:

Debates around the definition of "Rural Bhutan"

Reaching an agreement on the term, "rural Bhutan" was difficult. For example, some of the debates revolved around whether the indicators for "rural" should be based solely on population density, availability and access to public services, or whether other agro-ecological and socio economic conditions should be considered. Agreeing on a common definition is an unresolved and ongoing debate in Bhutan.

Classification of the Dzongkhags as Less Favored or Rural:

Another critical step is the adoption of a two-pronged approach to rural development rather than embracing a blanket approach. It is important to distinguish between the Less Favored Dzongkhags (LFD) and the rural dzongkhags in Bhutan. The Less Favored Dzongkhags are the Dzongkhags that are not only neglected in terms of development but also by nature.

Some of the useful criteria to consider when classifying the Dzongkhags as LFD or rural could be the following:

Criteria for classifying and selecting Less Favored Dzongkhags in Bhutan

- Dzongkhags that are food insecure or have low agricultural potential due to limited or uncertain rainfall, poor soils, steep slopes or other biophysical constraints (Ref: World Food Programme's vulnerability maps).
- Dzongkhags that constantly suffer from water stress, soil erosion and soil compaction problems (Ref: various Renewable Natural Resources Council publications).
- Dzongkhags that have critical watersheds and that fall into biodiversity hotspots (Ref: various World Bank project documents, reports, e.g., Sustainable Land Management Project (SLMP)).
- Dzongkhags dependent on migratory livestock keeping and over grazing problems (Ref: various documents and reports, including Ministry of Livestock and specific Dzongkhag livestock reports).

Criteria for classifying and selecting Rural Dzongkhags in Bhutan

- Dzongkhag that have higher agriculture potential than the LFD but that potential is presently underexploited due to limited access to infrastructure and markets (e.g., Trashigang, Samdrup Jongkhar dzongkhag).
- Dzongkhags that have land but face huge land fragmentation issues and limited access to inputs (e.g., dzongkhags in the southern belt of Bhutan).

The classification is not only helpful in providing focus and devising targeted support but is also a good tool for improving development result orientation. The exercise contributes to setting achievable, time-bound goals and is helpful in allocating necessary human and financial resources.

Rural development strategies that are beginning to show some positive signs:

From a marketing and agro ecological perspective, some strategies are beginning to show positive signs of progress. However, for progress to continue, strong impetus from government is needed, along with a supportive and enabling policy environment, additional financial support and government subsidies.

These strategies are as follows:

- Development of public/private partnership models for post harvest and value addition, such as development of Market Information Systems, grades and standards for products and enhanced sustainable international/regional value chain integration and development strategies.
- Improving access to input provision and micro credit for both farm and non-farm activities
- Improving land that has become fallow due to migration and an aging population
- Development and full exploitation of abundant water resources and waterways, including natural springs, rivers and river lets
- Development of rural infrastructure, such as road building
- Capacity building education and training for sustainable technology transfers, knowledge and information dissemination and storage and watershed management programs
- Development of farmers' and business-representative organizations and civil society organizations such as NGOs
- Capacity building of public institutions with rural outreach and presence (e.g., Dzongkhags, Regional Agriculture Marketing, Food Corporation of Bhutan, Bhutan Development Finance and Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industries)

Rural development is complex and touches upon many crosscutting issues:

As the complexity of the above policies and strategies demonstrate, rural development is a multifaceted issue that cuts across many sectors.

A good rural development strategy is holistic and encompasses all the pertinent issues and sectors, including the following:

- Agriculture, livestock and forestry (progress, development issues, challenges and way forward)
- Manufacturing and food processing (status and potential)
- Rural non-farm enterprises (status and potential)
- Activities meant to improve access to productive assets (e.g., land, labor, water, finance and capital) and their cost
- Promotion of inclusive markets and development principles
- Dzongkhag and Geog level development interventions, leadership, institutional and organizational development, progress and way forward.
- Access to, control of and affordability of social services (e.g., health care, education, nutrition and vocation training)
- Natural resource management of water, soil, air, plants, and wildlife (status and emerging issues including biodiversity conservation and climate change)
- Quality and sustainability of environmental services
- Protection of biodiversity, critical habitats and watersheds
- Rural infrastructure (e.g., roads, waterways, cable cars, telecommunications, dams, retention walls, sanitation systems, and electrification) development, access, affordability and potential for the development of inclusive business models
- Improving access to land markets, financial markets, water and irrigation systems through the adoption of inclusive market strategies and business models
- Sustainable forest management, resource mapping, access and control by the communities, indigenous people and the socially excluded
- Improving the agriculture trade and the regional integration and development of potential pro poor sectors and subsectors etc.

Critical elements in the development and implementation of a successful rural development policy:

Addressing the above issues and localizing them to match the context of Bhutan may produce a good rural development policy paper but its implementation and impact on rural poverty will depend upon Bhutan's ability to maintain and manage broad macro-economic policies and a supportive institutional infrastructure.

Some of the broad issues of concern for the successful development and implementation of a rural development policy would be the following:

- Maintaining macro-economic stability
- Development of neutral sector policies in terms of incentives (e.g., effective and efficient investment on the modernization of basic public services)
- Development of rural factor markets and infrastructure
- Defining the scope of state intervention in rural areas
- Promotion of good governance and institutional capacity, clear strategies and orientation towards building local strategic alliances and public/private partnerships to enable greater local accountability and efficiency in the design and delivery of decentralized services
- Promotion and sustainable use of natural resources
- Integration of rural economies into national, regional and world economies
- Enhancement of rural competitiveness
- Modernization and strengthening of state and civil society, including farmer cooperatives and private sector platforms (e.g., Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (BCCI))
- Government creation of appropriate laws and regulations, provision of public goods, seed capital and financial guarantees.

Moving forward:

Development of a rural policy for Bhutan requires long-term commitment, vision, coordination and strong leadership. This should be facilitated in a multi stakeholder environment through exploration of various approaches and options. Ultimately, the outcome should be clearly linked with and build on Bhutan's ongoing development goals, agendas and challenges.

Henrik Fredborg Larsen, Decentralization and Local Governance, UNDP, Regional Centre, Bangkok, Thailand

The three very relevant issues for discussion, which this query raises, point at the need for Bhutan's system of local governance and decentralization policy to be reflected in a rural development strategy.

One way of doing so would be to identify which packages of goods and services to communities forming part of the strategy will be:

- delivered by sector ministries and other central government agencies through their local offices (i.e. through 'deconcentration');
- delivered by the elected local governments at Dzongkhag and Geog level (i.e. through 'devolution'); and
- Might be agreed delivered directly to communities by various programmes.

For further information on these types of strategies, see e.g. the policy note on Capacities for Local Development (UNDP 2008-www.undp.org/capacity). While a bit dated and more focused on routes by-passing government, the background document for the 2004 World Bank conference on Local Development might also be useful in identifying the three-prong approaches (see <http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/136160/tslg/conference/description.html>). The 2008 World Bank evaluation on decentralization provides a more recent perspective.

Opening the box responding to your second issue and recognizing that most goods and services forming part of a rural development strategy are delivered with responsibilities at different tiers of government, it could thus be reviewed what discretion the dzongkhag offices would have for decision-making reflecting the local context and what roles and powers the Dzongkhag and Geog local governments have been assigned with national policy and laws (including e.g. the main local government legislation).

For examples of analytical work to strengthen local development policies in other countries along those lines, see e.g.

<http://regionalcentrebangkok.undp.or.th/practices/governance/decentralization/DecentralizedServiceDelivery.html>).

I hope this is helpful as a starting point - I would be happy to be in touch and discuss further as you move ahead.

Bob Reno, Rural Education and Development (READ), Bangkok, Thailand

A rural development policy in Bhutan needs to address a number of familiar aspects of life in rural areas: job shortages, lack of sufficient health care, use of natural resources, farmland usage, activities for youth, etc. The policy should also take into account urban consumption, its impact on rural areas and the need for managed growth in the towns and cities. The state can address these issues most effectively by listening to the residents of the places that are being affected. The focus of my work, and that of READ Bhutan, is at the community level. That seems a good place to start when discussing a rural development policy.

We have learned through many years of work in Nepal and India that the best way to help a community develop is by working with the people on the most important issues as determined by them. A top down approach will not work. The rural development policy can have many components that cover, and reflect the long terms needs, of the country, yet it must also be flexible enough to allow local communities a say in how the components will be implemented in their respective communities.

For example, general policy stipulations, like the determination to keep 60% of the land of Bhutan forested, should also include provisions at the local level so that a village can continue to use the forest in an environmentally sustainable way to create income, and food, for the community. Monitoring and evaluation by a coordinating body at the Dzongkhag level can make sure that the policy is being adhered to, and that the expected results are being produced.

Chencho Gyalmo Dorjee, United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Capital Development Fund, Thimphu

It has been interesting to follow the discussions put forward. I appreciate the individual thinking behind each contributor on so diverse an issue that sometimes we tend to consider should be quite simple and straightforward.

Through my involvement as a development partner (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)) supporting the Local Governance Support Programme (LGSP) to the government, I am aware the issue is multifaceted and under the 10th FYP development plans every attempt is being made to address poverty alleviation and its target to reach 15% by 2013.

What areas do you think the rural development policy needs to encompass?

Rather than reiterate the thought do we need a policy or not I would like to share that to address development programmes in all the 20 districts the government has initiated a formula based resource allocation for capital expenditure, which includes 70% for resident population; 25% for poverty and 5% geographical area/size of the gewog and dzongkhag. (See link <http://www.gnhc.gov.bt/>). Whether this is, the most effective method for development is a question for discussion but based on experiences and lessons learned to promote decentralization and local governance the formula has proved effective in the region to address poverty alleviation based on certain basic criteria to ensure no one is left behind.

Do you think this new policy could be applied as a blanket recommendation for all Dzongkhags to underscore the strengths and weaknesses of each *Dzongkhag* and why?

The challenge under the LGSP which is the first joint (development partners) sector support to local governance has been diversity (small as Bhutan is in size to the rest of other countries in the region) in terms of physical, financial, social, natural and human capitals of the 20 districts. What Lingshi dungkhag needs for development is not the same as Lhamoizingkha dungkhag in whichever context one considers development.

Lessons learned have shown that blanket programmes do not work at the practical implementation level so the Local Development Division (LDD), within the GNHC and Department of Local Governance (DLG), Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs (MOHCA) officials from the government have several initiatives to address issues mentioned like the capacity development strategy, strategic planning, coordination, training etc to identify and provide the skills and knowledge to improve delivery of public services, public expenditure management, planning and prioritization etc.

Which arm of the government do you think is best suited to steer the process once the policy is in place? And given that agency's current form, what level of decentralization and autonomy would be needed?

We have the Constitution and the Local Government Act 2009 that enable decentralization and local governance as legislations that recognize and commit to local governments. The current coordination between the LDD and the DLG to support local governments has provided the government much learning from the existing set up on the strengths and weaknesses and the way forward.

Personally, my belief is communities must be the leaders to development/change as it has been proved time and again that sustainability is guaranteed when grass root ownership is felt and expressed. We need to listen to communities, enable and empower them with regard to capacity and their own development.

Tshering C. Dorji, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, Bangkok, Thailand*

It is interesting to note the recommendations on rural development policy. I personally feel that connecting every village with a motor able road would be the first step in answering all these problems. For example, few years ago, my village didn't have road. They built the road sometimes in 2007.

Once the road reached the village, everything started to change. The business people came from as far as Thimphu selling clothes and other things. The shopkeepers and local business people came looking for vegetables and dairy products. People were able to sell their products and buy the things they needed with the money they earned.

Once the road arrived, I have seen many noticeable changes happening in quick succession. Maybe, we should focus on road at the moment and later, when it is achieved, the focus should shift to business enhancement by encouraging people to share resources and start cooperative business. Lack of roads restricts the mobility of people and all other things including business and livelihood suffer.

So, I believe that road is one single most important target that the Government should concentrate on.

** Offline Contribution*

Many thanks to all who contributed to this query!

If you have further information to share on this topic, please send it to Solution Exchange Bhutan at se-bhutan@solutionexchange-un.net.bt with the subject heading "Re: Query: Generating a Rural Development Policy for Bhutan-Advice; Experiences. Additional Reply."

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