

Challenges and Instruments for Admission into the Tertiary Education System in Bhutan

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Received: 8 November 2023

Accepted: 14 February 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17102/bjrd.rub.13.1.05>

Abstract

Bhutan's Tertiary Education system has grown significantly in a short period. Despite unprecedented growth and development, tertiary education in Bhutan continues to face challenges such as an inefficient transition from secondary to Tertiary Education due to a lack of multi-career pathways to absorb the growing population of high school graduates, quality of education and alignment of student knowledge, skills, and competencies with the world of work, and access to Tertiary Education through multiple admission processes. This study presents comprehensive reviews on the subject matter including the best practices of the Tertiary Education system in the Netherlands and Singapore.

Keywords: *Alignment, Admission processes, Inefficient transition, Multi-career, Tertiary Education*

State of Tertiary Education in Bhutan

In Bhutan, secular Tertiary Education is still in its infancy. Indeed, it was not until 1983 that Sherubtse College began offering the country's first Bachelor of Arts degree programmes. It did so under the auspices of Delhi University in India, which developed the curriculum, evaluated students' examinations, and even awarded their own Bachelor's degrees rather than those from Sherubtse College. Many of the college's faculty members were also recruited from India. Bhutan's National Institute of Education established the first Bachelor of Education program in 1983 (Schofield, 2016).

Bhutan has three types of Higher Education institutions including universities, colleges, and specialized institutes, all of which seek to attain Tertiary Education goals

(Tertiary Education Policy, 2010). These Bhutanese Tertiary Education institutions provide a diverse range of academic programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, including but not limited to humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, commerce, and professional education. Among these are courses in conventional academic topics, employment-oriented specialty areas, and cross-cutting abilities such as the use of information technology. Graduates from such well-designed academic programs are expected to have desired personal attributes, a well-balanced worldview, high levels of analytical and creative abilities, and a varied range of skills.

In Bhutan, there are now two universities that act as the umbrella body for Higher Education in the Bhutanese educational system. A royal edict founded the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) in 2003, with nine affiliated colleges. RUB has eleven constituent and two associated colleges that provide a wide range of academic degrees in areas like language and culture, natural resources and sustainable development, business studies, science and technology, engineering, computer technology, and the arts and humanities. The Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan (KGUMSB) was founded in 2015 to meet the country's growing need for medical personnel. With the establishment of KGUMSB, the erstwhile Royal Institute of Health Sciences and National Institute of Traditional Medicine, which were the constituent colleges of RUB, were delinked and became the faculty of this new Higher Education in Bhutan. Three private institutions, namely, Arura Academy of Health Sciences, Royal Thimphu College, and Apollo Bhutan Institute of Nursing, also offer nursing study programs affiliated with KGUMSB. Two other Higher Education institutions, the Royal Institute of Management established in 1986, and Jigme Singye Wangchuck School of Law established in 2015, also offer Higher Education study programs related to human resource capacity development, public policy and administration, and legal studies.

As indicated in the Ministry of Education (MoE) report of 2019, the enrolment of students in Tertiary Education within the country has increased from 5,051 in 2009 to 12,689 in 2019. There were just 1,775 female and 3,926 male students enrolled in colleges and institutes in 2009, while in 2019 there were 6,156 (48.5%) female and 6,533 (51.5%) male students enrolled in 19 Tertiary institutes in the country (Gyeltshen and Dorji, 2020).

Within a decade, access to university education has improved dramatically. There is no discrimination based on the social, ethnic, or linguistic minority in Bhutan because education is free even at the Tertiary level for about 70% of students enrolled in colleges for undergraduate degrees. No one has a reservation for a scholarship

or admittance. Everyone is welcome to apply, and admission is solely based on academic merit. However, 30% of undergraduate students are self-funding based on the admission policy of RUB. The MoE was ultimately in charge of university education in Bhutan, overseen by a Tertiary Education Board and a Bhutan Accreditation Council, and whose decisions were carried out through the Ministry's Department of Adult and Higher Education. However, the RUB is now classified as an autonomous institution and has considerable independence in staffing, as well as in planning and decision-making about how to allocate the budget it receives from the government. The constituent colleges generally offer diploma (two-year) programmes and Bachelor's degrees (typically three years for a BA, or four years for an honours degree or a degree in education or engineering). Some colleges have begun implementing Master's programmes in selected areas.

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan specifies that the state should provide education to improve and expand the population's knowledge, values, and abilities to fully develop the human personality. It also requires that all children of school age receive free education up to the tenth grade, that technical and professional education be made widely available, as well as that Higher Education is made equally accessible to all based on academic merit (Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008). Bhutan's guiding development philosophy is Gross National Happiness (GNH), and one of GNH's four pillars, Sustainable and Equitable Socio-Economic Development, plays a critical role in contributing to people's happiness and well-being. Tertiary Education plays a critical role in this development context, and the population of people aspiring for Tertiary Education is increasing rapidly. Within fewer than four decades, the Tertiary Education system in Bhutan has expanded from a few institutes in 1983 to 19 Tertiary institutes with over 12,000 students in 2019 (MoE, 2019). At the national level, the Royal Government of Bhutan has prioritized enhancing access to Tertiary Education, however, the youth unemployment rate is estimated at 20.9% as per the 2021 labour force survey of Bhutan and it has resulted in a huge number of frustrated unemployed graduates as getting a job is difficult in the competitive and small labour market.

Furthermore, given the country's present rate of development, a dynamic workforce rich in knowledge and ability is required. As a result, the Tertiary Education system is being challenged to respond in a way that supports a knowledge-based economy by creating an enabling environment that facilitates the generation of new knowledge and competencies. Understanding the situation of Tertiary Education is critical given the important role it plays in determining new directions for a country's total human resource development.

Tertiary Education in Bhutan aspires to be a nationally rooted and globally competitive system that aims to develop productive, socially responsible, culturally grounded, ecologically sensitive, and spiritually aware citizens equipped to lead Bhutan into a knowledge-based society that values lifelong learning, according to the draft National Education Policy of Bhutan 2018. Tertiary Education is critical in developing the Kingdom of Bhutan's future leadership and meeting its professional needs in the near and long term.

Problem Statement

Bhutan's Tertiary Education system has made remarkable strides in a relatively short time. Having started on a tiny scale about 35 years ago, it now serves over 10,000 students with programmes in a wide range of fields (Schofield, 2016). The reason most frequently given for pursuing Higher Education by students in RUB colleges is to improve their job opportunities (Hernadi et al., 2013). However, there is widespread dissatisfaction with the degree to which college graduates are prepared to function effectively in the workforce (Mindful Education Consultants & Royal Education Council, 2009; Dorji, 2014). Some of these concerns revolve around a shortage of individuals trained in technical fields, and policy documents have stressed the importance of aligning the college programmes offered with the specific needs of the economy (MoE, 2010). However, many complaints focus on issues such as the level of graduates' analytical and communication skills and the attitudes of entry-level employees (Gross National Happiness Commission, 2013).

RUB handles admissions to its constituent colleges centrally. Its policy is to admit all students to its Tertiary Education programmes that have a reasonable expectation of completing their programme of study successfully, subject to the proviso the University has the necessary resources to support the number of students in the programme. (RUB, 2015a, p. C1.1)

Admission to the RUB undergraduate programmes is based on students' performance in subjects relevant to the programme for which they are applying on a national examination given to Class XII graduates. So, students' choice between programmes emphasizing business, science, or the arts when they enter Class XI strongly impacts the college programmes for which they are eligible. The number of students admitted is limited by available funds since over 75% of the students receive full scholarships (Schofield, 2016).

On the other hand, some scholarships cater to students of disadvantaged family backgrounds with certain defined eligibility criteria (Bhutan Council for School

Examinations and Assessment marks) to give them an opportunity to significantly enhance their employment prospects and life outcomes. These include the Himalayan Higher Education Fund Scholarship in collaboration with RTC, the Trongsa Poenlop scholarship, and the like. Despite initiating special scholarships for disadvantaged students, the recipient of the scholarship is probably going to be the one with higher BHSEC marks. Since we have limited pathways to transition from Secondary to Tertiary Education, the question is “Where will the academically weak students go?”

Since the beginning, the RUB has carried out admissions to the Colleges of the University and admission to each of the programmes based on merit ranking of BHSEC examination mark and as per the ability rating in the admission criteria. It is now perceived that the ability rating which is based on the performance of the BHSEC examination has failed to recognize students’ abilities and competencies for pursuing some Tertiary Education programmes which ultimately fails a smooth transition from school to university education.

There is no comprehensive examination of the country’s unemployment situation. However, it is thought that there is a mismatch between skills and jobs in the market, resulting in significant unemployment (Kuensel, 2017). This is said to be owing to a mismatch between the country’s Higher Education and the employment that is accessible on the market. The education provided does not appear to be fully preparing students for the workforce. The knowledge and skills learned are often not practical in the real world, which has resulted in a high unemployment rate in the kingdom and is one of the main worries for the government and His Majesty the King.

The Royal Government of Bhutan has traditionally placed a high focus on education, but it has also been a sector where citizens’ worries about a perceived loss in educational quality have garnered more scrutiny and debate in the last decade or so. The quality and standards of university graduates have been extensively criticized in recent years, and as a result, Higher Education quality has become a national priority. Apart from records of students’ achievement in year-end examinational and the latest Programme for International Student Assessment test provided to students in Bhutan, there is no factual data to show that the quality of Higher Education, and education in general, has dropped (Gyeltshen and Dorji, 2020). Students are currently encountering challenges because of the narrow career path for transitioning from Secondary to Tertiary Education. Because the current scenario is that admission to Tertiary Education is limited to academic institutions, our system has been restricted to placing a greater emphasis on academic merits.

Objectives

To explore challenges and instruments in admission into the Tertiary Education System in Bhutan

Research Methodology

Secondary/Desk-based research

Information was gathered from a wide range of literature on similar topics that were published in journals, newspapers, and on the Internet. Some of the concepts were referenced and used in publications and papers available on reputable websites such as ResearchGate, Google Scholar, and Kuensel.

Data analysis Methods

The researcher examined Bhutan's current Tertiary Education status including the admission procedure and challenges we face in our current practices, before gathering information from a range of sources to analyse and explore the approaches that may be adopted in our system.

Literature Review

We live in a world where the great majority of employment growth will be in sectors where Tertiary Education produces skills, knowledge, and capacities. This demands universal, affordable but effective Tertiary Education access. It also implies that students must be able to mix and match a variety of chances to develop the correct combination of skills, talents, and information to advance their careers.

Educational Access as an Instrument of Fair Societies

Following World War II, there was a paradigm change that was marked by the movement toward more widespread access to education and the growing idea of advocating for equal access for all social groups. Today, it is widely acknowledged that "any society committed to promoting equity must ensure that their education system, including their Tertiary Education sector, is accessible to students from the broadest spectrum of underrepresented and traditionally excluded groups" because degrees have numerous public and private benefits (Salmi & Bassett, 2012).

Access to Higher Education was initially organized based on academic merit—Secondary degrees were the primary criterion for admission—and was later supplemented by a greater diversity of admission processes that took into account a

broader range of academic criteria as well as some social characteristics of students (Goastellec, 2008). Moreover, the number of students enrolled in Higher Education globally surpassed 200 million in 2014, more than doubling since the year 2000 (UNESCO, 2016). However, the percentage of people in a given age group who attend higher education varies significantly between countries and continents (Africa having the lowest access rates), as do the characteristics of the student body. Although the degree of the gap varies by nation, men and women still differ. In Sweden and Norway, for example, regulations have been passed to give men more access to fields in which they are currently underrepresented such as Sweden and Norway (Santiago, et al, 2008).

However, in most countries, family wealth—which, together with gender, is undoubtedly the most well-studied factor—has a significant impact on the likelihood of HE enrolment. This influence is measured by a variety of factors, including income, occupation, and parental education level. Disparities in enrolment rates related to other socioeconomic categories are also noteworthy; this special issue highlights the disparities observed between South African ethnic groupings. Afrikaners and coloured people have less than a third of the chance of participating in HE as Whites or Indians (CHE, 2013). According to Eyal Bar-Haim and Carmel Blank, Arab students in Israel are underrepresented compared to Jewish pupils (2019).

Equity in access is becoming the norm at the turn of the twenty-first century, with a focus on a student body that reflects society's population composition. For example, the United Nations' fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) and target 4.3 states that "by 2030, countries should provide equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational, and HE, including university" (Goastellec, 2008).

Who is expected and who gets access to Tertiary Education?

Valavanidis (2022) draws attention to the World Bank's (WB) projections on the massification of higher education as a helpful worldwide indicator for achieving goals related to financial prosperity and development. Around 220 million students worldwide were enrolled in Tertiary Education in 2017, according to the World Bank. This is the outcome of the sharp rise in the number of young people worldwide in many developing nations. It is often acknowledged that higher education gives young people better economic chances. According to a different WB report from 2017, students in developing nations who complete their Tertiary Education will earn more than twice as much as a student with just a high school diploma over a lifetime. However, according

to Mohamedbhai (2014) massification in tertiary education, while addressing issues of equity in access, has not necessarily led to equity in success for enrolled students. Similarly, Dias (2015) discusses that massification is an undeniable phenomenon in the higher education arena. However, there have been questions raised regarding the extent to which a mass system equates to an effective democratization of achievement as well as access.

Therefore, admissions procedures play a crucial role in organizing access and selecting students for higher education. As discussed by Mergner et al., (2019), the inclusion criterion differs according to the HEI. Moreover, O'Sullivan et al. (2019) address how different student profiles are drawn to admissions processes that are aimed at diversifying the student body based on how they are set up and, to some extent, who is in control of admission within a particular institutional culture. It's interesting to note that England and Ireland have different admissions policies as well as different personnel in charge of choosing applicants who would benefit from wider admittance: While students in England had to "opt-in" to be included inside the parameters of a HEI, HEIs in Ireland operate under a national framework.

It is demonstrated by Bar-Haim and Blank (2019) that those who gain from second-chance admissions are not the ones who are initially intended beneficiaries. In a quantitative analysis of modern Israel, they discovered that the majority of people are interested in mainstream access and that students from the dominant socioeconomic group—Israelis—benefit more from second chances than do students from Arab backgrounds, resulting in a rise in inequality. Alas (2016) findings supported this viewpoint, showing that the two groups were competitive in terms of undergraduate academic success and proving the value of second-chance admission in helping students who received subpar A-level grades to become more self-assured in their academic abilities. The study's authors provide suggestions in the end for tertiary institutions on how to improve lifelong learning initiatives by using a variety of entrance points.

Implications for the transition from secondary to tertiary education

The transition from secondary to tertiary education is a complex and challenging process, particularly in the field of mathematics (Martino & Gregorio, 2019). The difficulties associated with this transition can have significant individual, social, and economic implications (Evans, 1999). Van Dyck and Van Asselt (1996) as cited by Huisman & Boezerooy (2000) summarised the problems regarding the physical transition from Secondary to Higher Education in the last twenty-five years as follows:

deficient selection in Secondary Education, a lack of study and general skills, a lack of study and professional orientation, and shortcomings in Higher Education. It's worth noting that Secondary school was faulted in particular for inefficient transitions to Higher Education, resulting in high dropout rates and lengthy graduation periods.

Alternative pathways for entry into Tertiary Education

Dutch's Tertiary Educational System

Higher vocational education institutions offer theoretical and practical training for careers that require or benefit from a higher vocational certification, according to EuroEducation Net (1995–2022). Graduates work in a variety of disciplines, including medium and high-level positions in commerce and industry, social services, health care, and government. It is the right of students enrolled in vocational programs to receive guidance. It is the responsibility of the institution's management to give the monitoring of students from ethnic minorities extra consideration. The ECHO (Expertise Centre for Ethnic Minorities in Higher Education) supports Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in their efforts to provide guidance and assistance to this group of students to increase the number of ethnic minority students and graduates in Higher Education while also lowering the dropout rate.

University education strives to deepen understanding of phenomena investigated in diverse disciplines and develop new knowledge by focusing on instruction in academic fields, the autonomous pursuit of scholarship, and the application of scholarly information in the context of a vocation. Universities and higher vocational institutes use centralized admissions processes. In addition, there is a weighted lottery (known as "numerus fixus") for spaces in courses with quotas, which is followed by institutional selection. Students who are interested may apply to the CBAP, or Central Applications and Placement Office. There are no enrollment restrictions, therefore students can enroll in any topic at any university (EuroEducation Net, 1995–2022).

The following is the method for obtaining a seat in a university or HBO institution:

- Prospective students who receive an average grade of 8 or better on their high school diploma are immediately accepted into the programme of their choice.
- Those who are not eligible for direct admission are placed in a weighted draw. The greater a prospective student's average school-leaving examination mark, the more likely they are to be admitted via the lottery. A maximum of three drawings are allowed for applicants.

- Decentralized selection: educational institutions may grant spots on their own. They are free to use their selection criteria as long as they are not tied to school-leaving test results. Decentralized selection is an option, and if institutions choose not to use it, the draw system automatically applies instead. The number of times a candidate can apply through the decentralized method is up to the particular educational institution.

Moreover, there is a Special Entrance Exam for applicants who are past the age of 18 or do not have the appropriate school-leaving credentials, and these may apply to the Open University, which has no official admission criteria. Alternatively, students may be accepted to Higher Education by taking a specific entrance examination ('colloquium doctum') that assesses their knowledge at the proper level. Only individuals aged 21 and over are eligible to take this admission exam.

Singapore's Tertiary Educational System

In Singapore, depending on the interests and academic performance of the students, they may proceed to pre-university education where they study in a two-year junior college or three-year centralized institute course and sit for the General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE 'A-Level) examination. Other post-secondary pathways include being enrolled in a vocational institution such as a polytechnic or the Institute of Technical Education (ITE), or specialized arts institutions, and students can choose the courses that match their strengths and interests. There are also specialized schools focusing on nurturing students talented in sports, the arts, science, and mathematics. An accent is placed on the holistic development of the students, rather than a fixation on academic performance under an efficiency-driven education (NCEE,2021). Secondary students are given more choices to decide on their subject combination in schools, and could even study new subjects such as Economics, Computer Studies, and Drama. The post-secondary curriculum is also revised to develop thinking skills and nurture the spirit and values required for Singaporeans to thrive in a more globalized, innovation-driven future (Ministry of Education of Singapore, 2005). The goal is to provide a broad-based education where students are exposed to and able to excel in different disciplines and ways of learning.

Results and Discussions

The theory of underlying higher education's massification was that disparities would decrease as more students gained access to it. Indeed, expanded inclusion comes with increased massification: the more people who enroll in Higher Education,

the more degrees and members of the academic profession there will be. When a huge number of individuals have HE degrees, not having one can be a significant disadvantage in the job market. Bhutan's access to university education has improved substantially in the last decade, thanks to a variety of factors that have contributed to a rise in demand for Tertiary Education. Rising earnings and wealth have made some form of postsecondary education both an expectation and a perceived need for an increasing number of individuals. In Bhutan, there is no discrimination based on socioeconomic, ethnic, or linguistic minorities, and no one is denied a scholarship or admission. Admission is completely based on academic achievement, and anybody is allowed to apply. Bhutan has always placed a premium on BHSEC marks, with students with higher BHSEC marks being chosen for any type of scholarship.

Since equity in access has become the norm at the turn of the twenty-first century, an increase in the number of students pursuing Tertiary Education in Bhutan has been noticed in recent years. As a United Nations member country, achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) has always been a priority, and SDG 4 and its target 4.3 states that "by 2030, countries should provide equal access for all women and men to affordable and high-quality technical, vocational, and Higher Education, including university.

Subsequently, the RUB has been in charge of admissions to the University's Colleges, with entrance to each of the programmes based on the merit ranking of BHSEC examination marks and the ability rating in the admission requirements. The primary focus of class XII students has previously been on memorizing to achieve good grades. Expanded access comes with increasing massification: the more individuals who enroll in Higher Education, the more degrees and members of the academic profession there will be, and the bigger the number of disgruntled and unemployed graduates will be in a small but competitive labour market.

Massification is often associated with continuing inequities within the Higher Education sector, preserving the historical advantages of a fortunate few, and eventually failing to recognize students' abilities and competencies for pursuing Tertiary Education programs. Admission refers to the processes that enable or refuse students access based on a range of criteria (social, economic, intellectual) and procedures (prior degrees, examinations, assessments, capacity to testify one's social standing, and, more broadly, one's social traits). However, admission in

Bhutan, whether through scholarships for students from low-income families with specific eligibility criteria (BHSEC marks) or through mainstream government scholarships, has always placed a premium on BHSEC marks, with students with higher BHSEC marks being chosen for any type of scholarship.

Not only do England and Ireland have different admissions systems, but they also have different organizations in charge of identifying pupils who might benefit from broader admittance: Students in England must “opt-in” to be regarded inside an HEI’s frame, although HEIs in Ireland function under a national framework. Furthermore, the diversion mechanism seen in HE systems is also present in the admissions process, such as second-chance admissions, which is similar to the degree for Continuing Education (CE) programme offered by Royal Thimphu College and Norbuling Rigter College in Bhutan. However, unlike the Bhutanese government scholarship for second-chance admission, the expenses should be borne by the concerned individuals.

In the Dutch education system, students may be accepted to Higher Education after completing a special entrance exam that assesses their knowledge at the appropriate educational level. This approach might also be adopted for use in the Bhutanese system. Moreover, there is a Special entry test that allows interested persons who do not have the required school-leaving credentials to apply to the Open University, which has no official admission prerequisites. Students may be accepted to Higher Education after completing a special entrance exam that assesses their knowledge at the right level, which might also be used in the Bhutanese system. Despite the rising costs of Higher Education, as well as challenges associated with increasing diversity within the student population, the concept of open admission (given certain requisite qualifications) has rarely been challenged.

In Bhutan, students’ strengths and interests are not being fully captured due to limited routes in the existing Tertiary Education system. In Singapore, students can enroll in a vocational institution such as a polytechnic or the Institute of Technical Education (ITE), or specialized arts institutes, and pick courses that match their abilities and interests. There are other schools dedicated to supporting pupils who excel in sports, the arts, science, and mathematics. The Bhutanese educational system lacks a smooth transition from Secondary to Higher Education with multi-career options to pick from that match their interests and skills and due to limited career pathways, most of the students opt to study abroad if they can. As a result, governments should foster the creation of a wide range of flexible alternatives with defined expectations, results, and connections. Students must be able to locate courses that are appropriate for their abilities, interests, and requirements. Increased

flexibility must be combined with adequate information, guidance, and organized programs to guarantee that learning occurs.

Conclusion and recommendations

Bhutan's tertiary education system has grown significantly in a short period. It now has two universities that provide undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in subjects like language and culture, natural resources and sustainable development, business studies, science and technology, engineering, computer technology, and arts and humanities.

Despite unprecedented growth and development, Tertiary Education in Bhutan continues to face challenges such as an inefficient transition from Secondary to Tertiary Education due to a lack of multi-career pathways to absorb the growing population of high school graduates, quality of education and alignment of student knowledge, skills, and competencies with the world of work, and access to tertiary education through multiple admission processes. The ability to join post-secondary or university school is tightly tied to previous qualifications since all subsequent transitions are dependent on the original course chosen in Secondary Education.

Overall, the findings show that educational access, as an instrument of fair societies, has resulted in greater opportunities to give everyone an equal chance; however, academic merit, as the only instrument for admission to Tertiary institutions, has resulted in the massification of unemployed graduates in Bhutan. Furthermore, both pre-and post-secondary education system constraints result in widespread dissatisfaction with what college graduates know, as well as what they want to accomplish and execute in the workplace. As a result, the Tertiary Education glass in Bhutan is either half-full or half-empty, depending on one's perspective. However, it has undeniably been filling up, and this trend is expected to continue.

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from this study, the following recommendations are made:

Entrance examination

Admittance to the university education system in Bhutan is fully based on academic qualities of BHSEC scores, including non-mainstream scholarships, the number of students enrolled in Tertiary Education has increased. The current system has a flaw in that it is unclear how the BHSEC scores relate to undergraduate

programme chosen by the student. It may be more effective if the authority is decentralized to institutions to grant admission to applicants (eligibility criteria set by the university) by introducing an entrance examination, such as at the Jigme Singye Wangchuk School of Law because the concerned institutions are better informed about the competencies they expect from high school graduates. Institutions can also use admissions methods like a special entrance test or a weighted lottery with a quota system, similar to the Dutch approach.

Second chance admission

Tertiary institutions should use multiple entrance points to facilitate lifelong learning efforts. In Bhutan, second-chance admission is available in the form of Continuing Education (CE) in undergraduate programs, where the candidates are responsible for their fees. To encourage those who are financially disadvantaged, institutions should implement a robust second chance admission process in which there is a scholarship for CE, both preservice and in-service using open admission, in which there are no official admission criteria and the sole purpose is to assess applicant knowledge at the appropriate level.

Multi-pathway for career development

The Bhutanese educational system is limited to academic institutions, and the selection method for Higher Education scholarships is limited to BHSEC academic marks. As a result, a proportion of disgruntled graduates believe their skills and abilities are underutilized. Many students do not appear to be receiving an education that will prepare them for the workforce. The information and skills acquired are not generally applicable in the real-world setting, resulting in a high unemployment rate. Furthermore, due to an inadequate transition from school to post-secondary education, mismatches of skills and jobs are common in the civil service. This calls for the creation of many more professional paths for pupils, such as vocational, arts, music, and other options where students are given a variety of options from which to choose based on their interests and skills.

Limitations of the study

When analysing the conclusions of the article, there are certain constraints to consider;

- The findings are solely applicable to undergraduate programs, omitting postgraduate, master's, and PhD programs.

- Because the study only looked at the Dutch and Singaporean Tertiary Education systems, the analysis of paths to Tertiary Education was limited.

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