

Interventions for Substance Abuse by the Central Monastic Body (*Gzhung Gra Tshang*) in Bhutan

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Abstract

The increasing number of Bhutanese youth engaging in drugs has become a national concern. In 2017, The Bhutan Narcotics Control Authority has reported that the use of cannabis was highest among the high school students with 24 percent followed by pharmaceuticals opioids. Realizing the need to protect the future leaders of the nation from drugs and alcohol, the *Gzhung Gra Tshang* proposed an intervention. The *Gzhung Gra Tshang* has been actively engaged in controlling addiction from a Buddhist perspective since 2003. However, it is unclear about the type of interventions that are currently practiced. Therefore, this qualitative study was carried out to understand the intervention approaches practiced by the *Gzhung Gra Tshang*. *Chos Bshad Las Rim* was one of the interventions conducted by *Gzhung Gra Tshang*. The participants comprised of seven program implementers and seven students who had attended the *Chos Bshad Las Rim* in their respective schools in Bhutan. The study identified *Chos Bshad Las Rim* as an effective intervention to substance abuse by Buddhist monasteries in Bhutan. The other key findings reveal that teaching Cause and Effect (Karma), meditation, and engaging youth in monasteries have a significant effect in bringing attitudinal changes in them.

Key words: *Gzhung Gra Tshang, Chos Bshad Las Rim, Addiction, Cause and Effect, Meditation*

Introduction

In order to tackle addiction from a Buddhist perspective, His Holiness the 70th Je Khenpo Trulku Ngawang Jigme Choedrak, instructed the Central Monastic Body (*Gzhung Gra Tshang*) in 2003 to develop and implement Dharma teaching in all schools across Bhutan. Accordingly, the Ministry of Education, the Royal University of Bhutan and the *Gzhung Gra Tshang* came together and launched the Choeshed programme (*Chos Bshad Las Rim*) or the Dharma discourse in all the middle and higher secondary schools and the two Colleges of Education in 2003.

The programme was initially introduced with the aim to prepare youth with values and principles, positive hopes and aspirations that will build compassionate, tolerant and a caring society, and drive Bhutan to be one of the most secure, prosperous and happy nations in the world (Ngedup, 2006, p.1). Similarly, in 2010 to further strengthen and establish a strong working

committee to facilitate the *Chos Bshad Las Rim*, the representatives from the *Gzhung Gra Tshang*, the Royal University of Bhutan and the Ministry of Education formed an association led by a joint committee called *Samjor Leckchoed Tshogpa* under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Ashi Sonam Dechan Wangchuck. The former Letshog Lopen travelled across the country to deliver the *Chos Bshad Las Rim* and in 2013 he wrote the book *Nazhoen Samjor Lekchey* (Positive Intent Action for Youth), based on his experience of teaching *Chos Bshad Las Rim* across the country, which became the required text for teaching *Chos Bshad Las Rim* in schools (Rinchen, 2014). Currently, the *Lam Netens* (district Abbots) in the twenty districts across Bhutan conduct the *Chos Bshad Las Rim* in the schools twice a year. Recently, the *Gzhung Gra Tshang* has appointed a *Khenpo* (Master in Buddhist studies) in various districts to conduct *Chos Bshad Las Rim* at least twice a year.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand the Buddhist approach to drug addiction prevention carried out by the Buddhist monasteries in Bhutan.

Literature Review

From the Western perspective, addiction is seen as a chronic relapsing brain disease, whereas Buddhism does not consider the root cause of problems to be an external agent of this life, but rather an internal agent developed over many lifetimes - the habitual tendencies of our own mind (Tsering, 2006). Buddha recognised that all cravings arise from addiction or intoxication of the mind and he declared addiction as the repetitive cravings as a root cause of suffering. Similarly, Satel and Lilienfeld (2014) report, "addiction is in the minds of addicts that contains the stories of how addiction happens, why people continue to use drugs, and if they decide to stop, how they manage to do so" (p.24).

According to Taylor (2010), medication helps to rebalance the body of an addict but if the mind is still dissatisfied, then the addict is likely to head straight back to addiction (p.9). Similarly, in the Buddhist cosmology, addiction is described as hungry ghost, "a state of intense and unsatisfied cravings" (Groves, 2014, p.987). Hungry ghosts are creatures with large empty bellies with small scrawny neck and tiny little mouth, so they never get enough to fill the empty bellies (Maté, 2010).

In the Bhutanese context, addiction is seen through the lens of religion and spirituality and is recognised as the root cause of misdeeds. His Majesty the Great Fourth King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck has repeatedly reminded the stakeholders to remind youth regarding the fundamental values that the mind is capable of cultivating. These includes taking care of one's

mind (*semdagzinthabin*), making one's mind strong founded on what is true and right as opposed to being feeble (*semdringdi zoni*); and making the mind useful (*semgochoepzoni*). These values will help the youth to understand that their actions should not cause harm to others, which includes the nature as a whole, but rather benefit them, and hence these, bring greater peace, harmony and happiness among others and themselves (as cited in Thinley, 2016, p.31).

In recent times, the Chokyi Gyatsho Institute in Dewathang, Samdrup Jongkhar in eastern Bhutan has started offering mindfulness camps for Bhutanese educators, youths, social workers, counselors, and others. Buddhist monks lead such programmes, unlike the other institutions (Gyeltshen, 2018). Within the Buddhist tradition, mindfulness practice as described by Dzongtsar Khyentse Rinpoche helps a person to understand the fact that the essence of human development begins with looking into the inner quality and state of one's own mind (as cited in Gyeltshen, 2018, p.2). Studies have demonstrated that mindfulness-based approaches have been applied to a number of psychological problems including stress reduction, substance use, addiction, relapse prevention, behavioral changes, psychological disorders, grieving and mental health issues (Bowen et al., 2009; de Dios et al., 2012; Sharma, Sharma, & Marimuthu, 2016).

Buddhist Approaches to Addiction

According to McWilliams (2014), the Buddhist approach helps to address mental well-being, recognise the changing nature of phenomena experience and separate disruptive thought and emotions, as it arises moment to moment and that does not require adherence to any religious elements. Prominent religious figures from the *Gzhung Gra Tshang* conduct *Chos Bshad Las Rim* (dharma talk) programme through mass sermons and religious talks to the common people through television and radio services (Royal Government of Bhutan, 2015). The *Chos Bshad Las Rim* programme covers dharma talks on the preciousness of human existence, the law of cause and effect, and highlights the negative karma that could accumulate from alcohol and drug. These information are disseminated to the general public, schools and institutions to discourage consumption of alcohol, drug use and also help youth change their perspective towards life (Thinley, 2012).

According to Groves (2014), Thamkrabok monastery in Thailand uses an approach to treating addiction which typically includes the use of medicinal plants during the detoxification phase and often induces extensive vomiting. The healing process also employs various procedures for internal and external purification (e.g., purging). This treatment includes rhythmic repetitive readings, cleansing baths, and massages; and the use of group ritual providing a support system for developing a positive identity and coping skills (p.342). It also includes practices such as making the addicts take a vow, meditation sessions, dharma talks and daily

chanting (p.989). Similarly, Narong Chaiyatha, a Buddhist monk at the Mongkol temple in Thailand, claims that practicing mindfulness or meditation and applying morality (shila), concentration (Samadhi), and wisdom (Panna) are the only Buddhist approaches to treatment of addiction (as cited in Sayadaw, 1994, p.196).

Buddhist monasteries in Bhutan do not run rehabilitation or treatment centers. However, prominent religious figures from the *Gzhung Gra Tshang* conduct *Chos Bshad Las Rim* (dharma talk). The *Chos Bshad Las Rim* for the youth emphasises on the five faults of indulging in drugs: i) obstruction of studies which focuses on the importance of education and living a meaningful life, and recognises the negative impacts of drugs; ii) disregard for others and being useless even if one is learned: understanding the negative impact of indulging in drugs and possessing a negative mind can lead to become unworthy of one's own learning; iii) cause of unhappiness for parents and teachers: drugs can destroy their relationship with parents and teacher and their own life; iv) wastage of wealth and resources: use of drugs and alcohol can lead to loss of resources, may experience rejection of loved ones and also give rise to problems such as imprisonment; and v) cause of conflict and impediments to prosperity: drugs can lead to family conflicts, gang fights which destroys oneself and others (Rinchen, 2014, pp.185 – 188).

Besides, *Chos Bshad Las Rim* also talks on the truth of Cause and Affect (Karma). The programme teaches how cause and effect arises and everything that exists is a result of various conditions and causes. In the Buddhist tradition, karma refers to action driven by intention (cetanā), which leads to future consequences. For example, good intentions make good actions whereas bad intentions make bad actions (Cozort, 2016). The addict is responsible for creating the cause of their experiences like suffering and destructive actions (Chödrön, 2017).

Buddhist monks in Bhutan are regarded as spiritual teachers in the society (Marma, 2017). Therefore, it is common amongst individuals with addiction problems visiting monasteries to seek psychological support and to get back serenity in their life. Some individuals who are dependent on drugs prefer to take refuge, by taking a vow in front of a wrathful local deity. The Buddhist monks help the individual by performing some sacred ceremonies and providing instructions about the sacredness of the vow and the consequences of breaking the vow.

In addition, people prefer to seek a shaman to conduct rituals to cure diseases related to addiction and relapse. Rituals and astrology are seen as a dominant factor for continuing positive emotional well-being of the Bhutanese people (Calabrese & Dorji, 2013). Previous studies indicate that youth who are more involved in religious ceremony and activities are less likely to be involved in abusing drugs than those who do not participate (Adamczyk & Palmer, 2008). Attending religious ceremonies and activities provide emotional support, which often acts as a

protective influence for youth to keep away from abusing drugs (Knight et al., 2007). In addition, family religiosity with strong religious beliefs may inculcate anti-drug attitude in children, which could influence youth to stay away from peers using marijuana.

In Bhutan, most of the traditional healing practices are based on rituals and spiritual beliefs, which are deeply guided by Buddhism. The National Institute of Traditional Medicines (NITM), recently renamed Faculty of Traditional Medicine (FTM) under the Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan (KGUMSB), has been providing some indigenous medicine to treat drug addiction. Historically, Bhutan is also known as the *Menjong Gyalkhab*, which means the land of medicinal plants for centuries (Rinchen, 2014). The physicians who practice traditional medicine at FTM under KGUMSB prescribe *Wangpo Kuensel* as a substitution to cure addiction. *Wangpo kuensel* (clearing all the sense faculties) is a researched and registered medicine since 1967. This medicine is made from herbal plants and used for clearing the five senses. This medicine is also prescribed for the treatment of Yam Yathra (sinusitis).

Research Question

1. What are some of the approaches adopted by the Central Monastic Body (*Gzhung Gra Tshang*) to tackle drug use and addiction among the youth of Bhutan?
2. How effective is the Chos Bshad Las Rim provided by the *Gzhung Gra Tshang* in curbing drug use?

Research Approach

The researcher sought to investigate the model and approaches that are adopted by *Gzhung Gra Tshang* to treat drug abuse and addiction. Data were gathered through a qualitative investigation of 14 participants. The participants included in the study consisted of two groups: the first groups were Buddhist monks (programme implementers) [PI] from the *Gzhung Gra Tshang*, who have been teaching *Chos Bshad Las Rim* (dharma course) in schools in Bhutan. The second group consisted of participants (CI) who were substance abusers and have attended the *Chos Bshad Las Rim* programme in their respective schools in Bhutan.

Semi structured interview guides were used to elicit information based on the research questions. The interview was conducted in Dzongkha for the Buddhist monks and English and Dzongkha for the students, depending on their preference. Each interview lasted between 25 – 30 minutes.

Ethical Consideration and Institutional Approval

Approval for the clients in the schools was sought and obtained from the school counselors and concerned clients. Approval for the Buddhist monks was sought from the individual participants. The researcher followed the research ethical guidelines for approval from the office of the Vice chancellor, Royal University of Bhutan (RUB).

Data Analysis

The data from the interview were analysed systematically following a series of steps as suggested by research perspectives from Braun and Clark (2006). The first stage began with transcribing the recorded interviews into readable text, followed by close and repeated reading of the transcripts, which enabled the researcher, to generate thematic codes followed by development of thematic categories.

Findings and Discussion

Major theme

An iterative process of creating the categories and codes for each theme resulted in the formation of two themes namely model and approaches. Under the theme model, *Chos Bshad Las Rim* was discussed as the model adopted by the *Gzhung Gra Tshang*. The theme approaches were discussed under three sub themes; a) cause and effect (karma), b) Meditation, and c) youth engagement in the monastery.

To avoid misinterpretations, syntactical errors conveying the participant's quotes from the interview have not been corrected; therefore, the participant's quotes are written verbatim.

Model: Choeshed Layrim (*Chos Bshad Las Rim*)

Chos Bshad Las Rim in this study refers to the model adopted by the Buddhist monasteries to tackle drug addiction among the youth of Bhutan. According to programme implementers *Chos Bshad Las Rim* means religious discourse where students are taught and informed about the essence of life and help them develop positive thinking in order to cultivate good values and attitude. Majority of programme implementers are of the view that today's youth do not understand the Buddhist value education, and the best way is to teach these values is through *Chos Bshad Las Rim*. Conducting *Chos Bshad Las Rim* can help youth to understand the three elements. For example, Programme Implementers (PI6) expressed:

Three main elements for learning, first youth should be aware of what is learning or knowledge is: second, they should be aware of the purpose of learning; and third, be aware of the various obstacles to learning. If youth are aware of these three points, they

will not indulge in abusing drugs. And understanding the three main purpose of learning is equivalent to *dham phe choe* or dharma teaching.

Similarly, P11 mentioned, teaching conduct (*choelam*), meditation and etiquette (*bjawa and choepa*) as one of the best interventions to drug use and addiction. Similar studies by Rowan et al., (2014) on cultural intervention to treat addiction in indigenous populations found out that various indigenous cultural interventions treatment programme can be a standalone intervention to treat addiction, as this intervention addresses the wellbeing: spirit, physical, mind, social and emotional (p.23). Similar practices were also found in a study by Sanesathid et al., (2018), where Buddhist monks in Laos, were found conducting dharma teaching on moral (*sin-tham*) and meditation to the student, and in the rehabilitation centers.

The participants (students), who attended the *Chos Bshad Las Rim* felt that they could not connect themselves with traditional monastic teaching, which are directly translated from the religious scriptures, and also the teaching is mostly in form of lecture. However, when taught with visual presentation, they are able to connect and understand the content taught. For instance, participant C112 said, “the picture of hell realm caught my attention, and it reminded me of my action towards my parents and my addiction.” Similarly, some of the participants said that it is easier and relatable when *Chos Bshad Las Rim* is taught through stories and relevant examples. While others said *Chos Bshad Las Rim* is boring and lengthy but if shortened ... it would be more exciting”.

The conduct of *Chos Bshad Las Rim* has shown significant impact on the attitude of youth towards drugs. Some of the programme implementers said that youth who attended *Chos Bshad Las Rim* are less likely to involve in drug use, than those who have not attended. For example, C111 said, “After attending *Chos Bshad Las Rim*, it empowered me to fight drug addiction.” Several studies have identified religiosity as a protective factor against drug use and addiction (Adamezky & Palmer, 2008; Knight, et al., 2007). Similar findings were also reflected in Nuken (2011), which reports that youth, who are exposed to religiosity, has significant impact on the attitude towards substance use.

When asked about the effectiveness of the programme, the participants said that *Chos Bshad Las Rim* was a timely intervention. For example, participant C112 said, “It is an opportunity to train our mind, and I learnt about ethics and eight-fold path. Similarly, C19 said, “I learnt the importance of life, value of helping people in need, and “it empowers us to fight our depression not by drugs” (C111). On the contrary, one participant said “To be honest, it is difficult to

understand the meaning" (CI14). These could be attributed to the fact that most of the teachings are directly from the Buddhist text. For example, one of the programme implementer stated that:

There are many Buddhist approaches to treat addiction. However, it is not easy to apply these real situations because most of the Buddhist terms are in *Chokyed* (religious language), and difficult to translate precisely in Dzongkha (National language) and make them understand (PI2).

In addition, some programme implementers said, students have little exposure to Buddhist studies in the school. This limited exposure to Buddhist studies deprive youth from understanding the sacred values and principles of Buddhist teaching (PI4 &PI5). Similar finding was also reflected in Rinchen (2014), which reported that the current mode of education system in Bhutan, does not focus more on time-tested vehicle of profound wisdom to help youth develop positive mind. Besides that, the mode of instruction to Buddhist values and ethics in schools is through one single Dzongkha language class which deprives youth from understanding the sacred values and principles of Buddhist teaching.

Approaches to impart *Chos Bshad Las Rim*

Buddhism does not stop at explaining human suffering but also provides a path to alleviate this suffering and realise the ultimate truth which gives rise to inner happiness and peace. The programme implementers from the Buddhist monasteries view Buddhism as a religion and associate its approaches with elements of beliefs and local practices, often leading to treat Buddha as deity, who can heal all sufferings.

The key findings that emerged from the data were discussed under three themes: (a) cause and effect (Karma); (b) meditation; and (c) youth engagement in the monastery.

Cause and effect (Karma)

Choeshed programme emphasises on cause and effect or Karma, which is considered to be the foundation of all Buddhist study and practice. In the Buddhist tradition, karma refers to the action driven by intention (*cetana*), which leads to future consequences. This concept has been related to drug addiction (which causes harm for self and other sentient beings) as an act, which gathers a lot of negative karma. In other words, an addict is the cause of his/her own suffering but also suffering of others around him or her (Chodron, 2009).

A majority of the programme implementers highlighted cause and effect as one of the effective approaches to deal with drug addiction. According to them, Karma means essentially

the moral causality that good actions bring good results, and bad actions bring bad results. This could be attributed to the strong influence of Buddhist worldview of accumulating good deeds in this birth that leads to rebirth in the higher realm. In the Bhutanese society where buddhist principles and beliefs have a strong influence in people's daily lives, the concept of karma is often associated with the traditional way of explaining illness, misfortune and unsuccessful life. The misfortune a person experiences is often attributed to the law of karma. For example, the common term (*Tsho ma saap*), which means one has not accumulated good merit in the previous birth, is often heard, to describe the unequal suffering of human beings in the world. And most often, the term (*Tsho ma saap*) is also thrown at youth who are addicted to drugs, as they are found engaging in destructive behavior and not valuing the preciousness of human life (Calabrese & Dorji, 2013).

Some of the programme implementers said linking karmic actions with the six realms was found to be effective in making youth realise the consequences of taking drugs. For example, PI6 said, "visually showing them the hell realm was effective in explaining about the consequences of drug use and addiction". The programme implementers also strongly felt that youth should be made aware of the ten virtuous deeds: three sins of the body, three sins of speech, and four sins of mind. Teaching youth to refrain from destructive behaviors caused by lack of self-discipline, discipline of mind, body and speech and how these sins can be avoided by understanding the concepts of cause and effect (karma). Studies have explained that good or bad karma can be modified by the conditions under which present actions are performed. For example, when someone indulges in drugs, the effect or the side effect is evident within a short period of time such as loss of health, loss of jobs and family (Santina, 1984).

Some of the participants with problem of substance abuse and addiction articulated the benefit of attending sessions on cause and effect. These benefits include understanding of the preciousness of life and value of right living, right understanding and right communication (CI10, CI14). According to Venerable Sayadaw (1994), the law of karma is not rigid but allows for modification. For example, Buddha has said, "Everyone has a certain amount of free will to mould one's life or modify one's action". Even the most vicious person can become virtuous if he wants to bring change in his life and make the effort accordingly. However, everything in this world, including man himself is subject to conditions and without the necessary conditions, nothing can arise (as cited in Sayadaw, 1994, p.84).

The findings too showed that teaching the concept of Karma has shown a positive impact in bringing change in the youth's attitudinal behavior. However, the findings also revealed that

there is lack of learning materials in print as most of the *Chos Bshad Las Rim* is carried out through oral transmission.

Meditation

The programme implementers from the Buddhist monasteries reported meditation as one of the effective tools to train the mind of youth with addiction. According to them, meditation is considered as a personal religious practice to train one's mind for better mental ability, and to attain nirvana. Meditation was seen as one of the effective tools to train the mind and bring a sense of purpose in life for those youth with addiction. For example, one of the programme implementers expressed that, "If someone is sick due to illness then the patient has to be treated with medicine, but for addiction issues, training of the mind is required to treat addicted youth" (P12).

These findings are supported by numerous literature. For example, the Dalai Lama (2005) emphasises that meditation helps to become aware and see things as they are. Similarly, Kyabgon (2013) reports that through the practice of meditation, we are able to differentiate the good thoughts from bad thoughts.

The participants who attended the *Chos Bshad Las Rim* expressed different understanding of meditation through their own experiences. For some, it was a practice to control their mind and eradicate their negative thoughts, while for others it was showing direction to righteous living and conduct. Some of the participants also mentioned that attending *Chos Bshad Las Rim* was like social gathering where they get to meet their friends.

Some of the programme implementers questioned the validity of the current practice of meditation introduced in schools. One of the programme implementers argued that meditation practice with no proper guidance, is a kind of punishment for youth and instructing them to stay silent for a while and "remaining silent is not a real meditation in Buddhism" (P15). In Buddhism, it is important to train the mind to be in better control of itself, meditate for a long duration and subdue one's mind from the five poisons (*dug lnga*), the five negative emotions, which are bewilderment (*gti mug*), attachment (*dod chags*), aversion (*zhe sdang dvesa*), jealousy (*phra dog, irsya*), and pride (*nga rgyal*) (P16). These could be attributed to the fact that most of the meditation practice taught under the green school project were teachers, who may have undergone a week training and lack experiential experience. In addition, meditation session is carried out as a part of school culture, where the students are asked to stand still for few minutes during the morning assembly. These findings are significant and may have implication on the Ministry of Education (MoE).

On the contrary, the *Gzhung Gra Tshang* has introduced meditation in schools and colleges. Although, the importance of meditation along with the religious discourse are highlighted, there is no follow up on the programme taught by the *Gzhung Gra Tshang* in schools. These findings are significant and have implications for the *Gzhung Gra Tshang* and the Ministry of Education.

Currently, *Chos Bshad Las Rim* is conducted only once a year and most often not scheduled in the annual calendar. Therefore, most of the students find it difficult to practice meditation on their own. These findings have implications for the Ministry of Education (MoE) as *Chos Bshad Las Rim* is offered in the educational settings. MoE could collaborate with *Gzhung Gra Tshang* and train teachers in meditation so that they can continue the practice of meditation effectively and efficiently.

Youth engagement in the monastery

One of the key findings that emerged from the interview was youth engagement in the monasteries. Youth engagement in this study refers to engaging youth in programme such as “*lekshey lamten*” and “*namshey gomdrel*” for higher secondary to primary schools in the monastery during their summer and winter break. Majority of the programme implementers said such engagements provide an opportunity for youth to enroll in the monastery for ten days to recite prayers, attend and experience the life of a monk which helped them to discipline their mind and habits.

The programme implementers believed that engaging youth in the monasteries helped them to reflect on their addictive behavior and following a disciplined life helped the youth in controlling their mind. For example, P16 said, “visiting religious sites, chanting prayers, and following a disciplined life helped youth in controlling their mind”. Such engagement has brought significant change in the behavior of students with addiction issues. A majority of the programme implementers feel that the inability to be in control of one’s mind is the cause of drug addiction. Therefore, it is important to isolate them from the present environment (P17). Majority of the programme implementers reported positively on the youth engagement programme. For example, C19 said, “This programme helped me to understand suffering and cause and effect of taking drugs”. Likewise, Participant C113 said “circumambulating chorten, chanting mantra and visiting religious sites helped me to overcome my problems. These findings were supported by Groves and Farmer (1994), which highlight that engaging in dharma provides confidence for an addicted person to believe that they can be happy without indulging in addictive behavior. Studies on similar practices emphasise the importance of Buddha dharma teaching in shaping youth and engaging

in ethical behavior in terms of speech, bodily action and livelihood (Borchert, 2008; Groves & Farmer, 1994).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The current study provides an insight into the Buddhist approaches taken by the *Gzhung Gra Tshang* to tackle drug addiction among youths. This study identified *Chos Bshad Las Rim* as the model adopted by the *Gzhung Gra Tshang*. This study also identified approaches such as teaching cause and effect (Karma), meditation and engaging youth in the monasteries as effective methods for bringing about attitudinal change in their behavior. It is also evident that Buddhist intervention to drug addiction was context based and has shown significant impact in bringing positive change in the mind of the youth. Hence, the practice of teaching *Chos Bshad Las Rim* could be continued and strengthened.

The participants also identified meditation as one of the tools for mind training, although there is no follow up after the delivery of the *Chos Bshad Las Rim*. Therefore, it is imperative for the *Gzhung Gra Tshang* to collaborate with Ministry of Education to bring a systematic way to incorporate *Chos Bshad Las Rim* across the schools in Bhutan. Similarly, they can also collaborate with the Ministry of Education in developing reading materials and meditation programmes for the teachers so that they can train the students to continue and follow the meditation practice in a systematic way.

The study also showed that engaging youth in programme such as *lekshey lamten* and *namshey gomdrel* were found to be effective in a way of engaging youth with spiritual and cultural values, hereby cultivating positive attitude towards life. The *Gzhung Gra Tshang* could continue and strengthen to reach out across all schools in Bhutan. This study recommends the Ministry of Education to consider taking *Chos Bshad Las Rim* as part of the value education programme delivered in schools. MoE could also collaborate with *Gzhung Gra Tshang* on strategizing uniform delivery of the *Chos Bshad Las Rim* programme across all schools in Bhutan. Further for effective learning, MoE could collaborate with *Gzhung Gra Tshang* in developing materials on *Chos Bshad Las Rim*. A programme on mindfulness training could be imparted for the educators, which will bring in efficiency in the delivery the programme to the students.

Furthermore, the researcher recommends to *Gzhung Gra Tshang* to offer youth engagement programme across all schools in Bhutan.

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