

Embassy of India

Thimphu

Press Release : Education Flagship Program

A modern education system based on reason, values and scientific temper is key to a nation's development process. The Royal Kasha on Education Reforms highlights the need for a radical rethink of Bhutan's education system to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. It underlines the need to transform curriculum, infrastructure, classroom spaces, and examination structures. In the pursuit of a quality and modern education for all, Government of India is honoured to support the **Education Flagship Program** of the Royal Government. This program aims to digitalise schools across all Dzongkhags of Bhutan and enhance the digital competencies of both teachers and students.

For the 12th Five Year Plan of Bhutan, India has committed a Project Tied Assistance (PTA) of Nu./Rs. 28000 million for implementing development projects. **Out of this assistance, an amount of Nu./Rs. 600 million has been earmarked for the Education Flagship Program. During the third Bhutan - India Development Cooperation Virtual Talks in June 2021, it has been proposed to increase the allocation of Education Flagship Program to Nu./Rs. 900 million.**

Under the Flagship Program, the Information Communications Technology (ICT) curriculum for grade 4 to 10 is being reviewed and revised. The new curriculum will incorporate the additional component of coding for young learners to acquaint them with ICT at a young age. The existing ICT curriculum will also be adapted to visually impaired learners. The flagship will also build capacities of teachers across Bhutan in imparting ICT skills and teaching coding to students.

A key aspect of the Education Flagship is the development of digital infrastructure development of schools across Bhutan. Through this program, supply of Desktop Computers, Laptops, Tablets, Projection Devices is being done to various schools. The program will also provide internet connectivity and local area network connectivity to these schools.

Bhutan - India cooperation in the domain of education is spread over various projects. Under the 12th Five Year Plan, merit based **Undergraduate Scholarships** are being

provided to 375 students to pursue undergraduate studies in India. Under India's Project Tied Assistance (PTA) scheme, a project for the **Professional Development of Teachers** is being implemented across all 20 *Dzongkhags*. Further, a PTA project called **Existing Central Schools** is being implemented to create centres of excellence in 58 schools spread across Bhutan. To provide benefits of modern education to children in remote and inaccessible areas, children of nomadic communities and migrant populations as well as children with learning disabilities, a program to establish **20 Boarding Primary Schools** is being implemented by various *Dzongkhags* with India's support.

To complement Bhutan's efforts at digital transformation and e-learning, Government of India has implemented the **E-Library Project in Bhutan**. The project includes the development of an e - library portal, establishment of a data centre in Thimphu Tech Park, creation and management of e- content and creation of e - libraries in 49 schools and 12 colleges in each district of Bhutan. Additionally, a peering arrangement called **NKN-DrukREN** between India's National Knowledge Network (NKN) and Bhutan's Druk Research and Education network (DRUKREN) has created a free information highway between universities, research institutions, libraries, health-care and agricultural institutions of the two countries, benefitting 28 DrukREN members and more than 6000 users.

Government of India is honoured to be a part of Bhutan's pursuit of modernising education to the benefit of its citizens, in line with the vision of His Majesty the King of Bhutan as enunciated in the Royal Kasha on Education Reforms. As digital increasingly becomes the new normal, India stands ready to extend its support to help Bhutan achieve its full potential through digital inclusion and connectivity.

11 August 2021