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GUPS' Handbook



Department of Local Governance
Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs
Royal Government of Bhutan

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Gups' Handbook



Department of Local Governance
Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs
Royal Government of Bhutan



SCHOOL
GROUP ARIKHA TASHI
BHUTAN



Background

An effective implementation of decentralised functions by Gups determine the good practice of local governance and an effective public service delivery at the local level. This is to say that the success of the country's decentralised governance system and practices depends largely on the ability of the Gups to implement their roles and responsibilities effectively.

Continuous reforms initiated to deepen the decentralisation and democratic governance system at the local level increase the challenges for a Gup to embrace the increasing responsibilities. Moreover, differences in context of various Gewogs, education of Gups, level of exposures and experiences demand that Gups, especially the newly elected, are properly oriented on effective management of decentralised functions.

In this respect, the primary purpose of the Gups' Handbook is to help the Gups carry out the decentralised functions effectively, within the national legislative and policy framework. The specific objectives of this Handbook are to:

1. Familiarise the Gups on decentralisation concept and implementation processes, so that they are well versed in theory as well as practical methods of implementation.
2. Orient and familiarise Gups, especially the newly elected and those who are new to the system, on various strategies of local governance and management of local development affairs.
3. Serve as an overall reference and learning tool for the capacity-building of Gups on the decentralisation framework, processes of implementation and roles of Local Governments (LGs) in the achievement of national development goals.

Although, Gups are the key stakeholders of this Handbook, it shall also be useful for other relevant LG functionaries that share the mandate of local economic development and management. They include the Mangmis, Tshogpas, Gewog Administrative Officers (GAOs), Geydrungs and other sector heads based in the Gewogs who liaise with Gups and the Gewog Administration on the implementation of their respective sectoral activities.

The Handbook has been developed with close reference to all relevant policies, Acts, Rules and Regulations, strategies and frameworks that are associated to Gups' functions. However, the Handbook may not contain everything that is required of Gups to be able to understand and manage local affairs. As such, this Handbook is not binding and does not supersede other policies, guidelines and legislative instruments of local governance.

The Handbook is a living document and open to periodic revision, depending on change in the central Government policies, rules and practice of decentralised governance. In this regard, the users may provide their feedback any time verbally or in writing to the Department of Local Governance (DLG) at dlg@mohca.gov.bt so that the Handbook may be refined and improved to maintain its relevance in the changing times.



His Majesty personally conferred the Kabney to Gups to highlight the important role of the locally elected leaders in strengthening democracy and furthering development at the grassroots level.

*Source: Bhutan Broadcasting Service, story on 14 October 2016
<http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=62801> (retrieved dated 4 March 2021)*




**His Majesty the King's Address to the
Gups who were elected in
the first historic local government
elections of 27 June 2011**

I say, with happiness and great satisfaction, that in the few years since 2008, we have conducted the general elections, adopted the Constitution, and formed the houses of Parliament, constitutional bodies, and the Supreme Court. And today we have accomplished yet another milestone, in establishing the first local governments under democracy. We have, therefore, laid all the founding pillars of democracy in Bhutan so early in my reign, as I fulfil the vision of my father, His Majesty the fourth Druk Gyalpo, of a vibrant democracy.

Today on this most auspicious occasion, let me take this opportunity to share some of my thoughts with you.

It gives me immense pleasure to congratulate the representatives of the gewogs of the 20 dzongkhags and to thank them for having come forward to serve their communities. I am also grateful to the Election Commission of Bhutan, civil servants, armed forces and volunteers. With your hard work and the prayers of the Dratshang, we have conducted the historic first local government elections under democracy. I appreciate the efforts made by many people to travel and vote in their constituencies, in the spirit of democratic participation.

As a symbol of the independence and importance of local government, I am awarding your kabneys from the Throne.



However, as you carry out your duties, remember you are not there to seek status, wealth or fame. Your primary goal is to serve the people without prejudice and bias and to always hold the interest of the nation above all. As citizens of a spiritual nation, be compassionate and fulfil the aspirations of the people with the highest standards of integrity.

We – elected officials, the Government and the King – are all here to serve our nation and people.

I must remind you that in democracy there are no winners and losers. Those who are capable and desirous of serving their country and people should come forward and stand for elections. Those, whom the people choose, must then serve without fear or favour. If we can do this, then democracy succeeds and the nation wins.

Democracy did not come to us overnight. It was a carefully planned process full of hard work and sacrifice, led by His Majesty the fourth Druk Gyalpo. Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogdus were established as far back as 1980 and Gewog Yargay Tshogchungs in 1990. Decentralisation and empowerment of the grassroots has been a constant process, culminating in the transfer of powers from the Throne to the people under democracy. In the exercise of these powers, local governments are invaluable to the people.

That is why, first of all, I want to dispel a false perception. Local government is NOT the lowest level of government; it is the nearest and closest level of government for our people. For rural Bhutanese, local governments are indispensable avenues for participation in democracy and development. In the long run, the success of democracy in Bhutan will be determined by the success of local governments.

We are a small landlocked country, and our highest goals are the peace, prosperity, security and sovereignty of our nation. It is an important responsibility of Gups to ensure a harmonious and united society. In standing for elections, you sought the votes of the majority. In carrying out your duties you must gain the trust and faith of all the people. You must have intimate knowledge of the daily lives of the people in your constituencies; work in constant and close interaction with them and nurture cooperation, consensus and close-knit communities. In a largely rural country, you are important not just in carrying out vital duties towards achieving development objectives of the people, but also in bringing about a harmonious and united society.

You might think that I have detailed your duties and responsibilities and the importance of local government, but have said few words of felicitation and praise for your success in the elections. Your work is yet to begin, and praise will not solve any of the problems facing our people. If, after five years, I find that you have served your constituencies well, that you have worked hard and without prejudice, and that above all, you have not hurt the sentiments of my people, I will be the first to commend and praise your achievements.



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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS




CEP	: Community Engagement Platform
CG	: Central Government
DLG	: Department of Local Governance
DT	: Dzongkhag Tshogdu
DYT	: Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogdu
EU	: European Union
FYP	: Five-Year Plan
GAO	: Gewog Administrative Officer
GNH	: Gross National Happiness
GNHC	: Gross National Happiness Commission
GT	: Gewog Tshogde
GYT	: Gewog Yargay Tshogchung
ICT	: Information and Communication Technology
LDPM	: Local Development Planning Manual
LG	: Local Government
MoF	: Ministry of Finance
MoHCA	: Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs
MSME	: Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
POP	: Parliament of Bhutan
RGOB	: Royal Government of Bhutan
TT	: Thromde Tshogde

GLOSSARY

Chairperson	: Chairperson of DT, GT and TT
Chiwog	: Lowest territorial constituency consisting of a group of villages, for the election of Tshogpa to the Gewog Tshogde
Constitution	: Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan
Druk Gyalpo	: His Majesty the King of Bhutan
Dungpa	: Appointed Administrative Head of Sub-District
Dzongdag	: Appointed Head/Chief Executive Officer of District
Dzongrab	: Appointed Dy. Head of District
Dzongkhag	: District
Dzongkhag Yargay	: District Development Council in the pre-democracy governance system in Bhutan
Tshogdu	: Local Government Council at the district level/District Assembly
Dzongkhag Tshogdu	: Local Government Council at the district level/District Assembly
Gewog	: Block or local constituency for the election of Gup and Mangmi to the Gewog Tshogde
Gewog Administrative Officer	: Head of Gewog Administration Office, and Secretary to Gewog Tshogde
Gewog Yargay	: Gewog or Block Development Council in the

Tshogchung	: pre-democracy governance system
Gewog Tshogde	: Local Government Council at the Gewog level/Gewog Assembly
Geydrung	: Gewog clerk
Gup	: Elected Head of the Gewog and Chairperson of Gewog Tshogde
Gyaljong Tshogdu Handbook	: National Assembly : Gups' Handbook
Kabney	: Scarf indicating different positions/rank
Lhengye Zhungtshog	: Council of Ministers or Cabinet
Lodroe Tshogde	: Royal Advisory Council
Mangmi	: Elected representative of Gewog who serves as the Dy. Chairperson of Gewog Tshogde
Members	: GT members (who are the Mangmi, and the Tshogpas of respective Chiwogs) and DT members (Gups and Mangmis of respective Gewogs of a Dzongkhag)
National dress	: Gho for men and Kira for women
Parliament	: National Assembly or Parliament of Bhutan
Session	: DT or GT session, as the case may be
Thromde	: Municipality/Town
Thrompon	: Elected Head of Thromde and Chairperson of Thromde Tshongde
Thromde Tshogde	: Municipal Council
Tshogpa	: Elected representative of a Chiwog and member to Gewog Tshogde
Zakar	: Auspicious/Good day
Zomdu	: Village/Community meeting

ILLUSTRATIVE TOOLS

	<p>Tips Clues for further exploration and thoughts</p>
	<p>Keys Hint or pointer on the concept, subject matter or elaboration</p>
	<p>Reminder Recapitulation on past activity, current practice or framework</p>



Local Government is an institution of decentralised governance functions. The success of the country's decentralised governance system and practices (in Bhutan) depends largely on the ability of the Gups to implement their roles and responsibilities effectively.

Chapter 1

What Does Decentralised Local Governance Mean and How is it Implemented in Bhutan

- **Meaning of Decentralisation and Characteristics of Decentralised Governance**

Meaning of Decentralisation

Decentralisation is defined as a state governance reform enacting the transfer of responsibilities, resources and authority from the Central Government (CG) to the lower level of Governments or Local Governments (LG). Such reform is implemented through a set of public policy and legislative instruments that empowers LGs to implement such reforms¹.

The volume of responsibilities, resources and authority transferred are determined by the country's level of development, availability of resources and/or the implementation capacity of the LG functionaries. The degree of decentralisation is then determined by the extent to which responsibilities, resources and authority are transferred.

¹ Falletti, T.G. (2005) 'A Sequential Theory of Decentralisation: Latin American Cases in Comparative Perspective', *American Political Science Review* 99 (3).

Tips



- ↳ **Responsibilities** refer to the administrative role of LGs to plan and implement development activities.
- ↳ **Resources** refer to the revenue and expenditure assignments devolved to LGs.
- ↳ **Authority** refers to the role of LGs to make independent decision concerning the choice and prioritization of development needs.

Democratic decentralisation² is enabled by a set of constitutional provisions enshrining electoral reforms and political authority to LGs³. Democratic decentralisation involves relinquishment of authority for planning, decision-making and management of resources including revenue generation authority to LGs⁴. The LG representatives are elected from the local electoral constituency among the people themselves, on the assumption that people would be able to understand their political representatives better who in turn would be better informed about the preferences of local citizens and exhibit greater responses to people's needs⁵.

Decentralised local governance can be understood as the governance system that supports LGs to apply good governance and implement public functions pertaining to a local territorial area that are decentralised and devolved to a statutory local authority. In turn, good governance is one that ensures a broad consensus of political, social and economic priorities of society in which voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources⁶.

Tips



- ↳ **Efficiency** refers to managing resources and implementing development activities in the most economical way (using fewer resources to do the same thing or doing more things with the same resources)
- ↳ **Effectiveness** refers to making use of the processes and systems that best meet the needs of the people with the use of resources available, as per the prescribed rules and regulations.
- ↳ **Transparency** refers to acting or conducting local management affairs in an open manner and sharing information of local affairs with free information access to all stakeholders, especially those who are affected by the decisions taken and enforcement made.
- ↳ **Accountability** is the obligation of the service providers to take the responsibility and at the same time be liable to answer for the actions taken. To account and being answerable means to inform about actions and justify them and suffer sanctions/punishment in case of misconduct.

² Manor, J. (2002) "The Political Economy of Democratic Decentralisation", Washington, DC: The World Bank.

³ Bardhan, P. & D. Mookherjee (2006) "The Rise of Local Governments: An Overview", in Bardhan, P. & D. Mookherjee (eds) *Decentralisation and Local Governance in Developing Countries: A Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, A MIT Press, London, England.

⁴ Brillantes A. B. and Cuachon N.G (eds.), (2002) 'Decentralisation: An Overview' in *Decentralisation & Power Shift: An imperative for Good Governance*. Sourcebook on Decentralisation in Asia, CLRG Working Papers Series 2002/02.

⁵ Bardhan, P. & D. Mookherjee (2006) *Ibid*

⁶ Brillantes A. B. and Cuachon N.G (eds.), (2002) *Ibid*

Principles and Characteristics of Decentralised Governance

The main premise and rationale of decentralisation is to bring the Government or public administration closer to the people, and institutionalise good governance in LGs for delivering services to the people⁷. Good governance refers to the responsible management of public affairs and resources with **efficiency, effectiveness, transparency** and **accountability** within the rule of law.

The following are the key objectives or characteristics of decentralised governance:

(a) People-centred development approach:

People's welfare and wellbeing are key motive of the country's social and economic development. Decentralisation ensures safeguarding people as stakeholders of development activities instead of merely being recipients and beneficiaries of CG. Decentralised governance enables development activities to be focused on the specific interests and needs of people as people themselves are involved in designing the activities to address their own needs.

Tips



Problems associated with centralised governance are:

- ↳ Poor service delivery (e.g. corruption, mismanagement, marginalization)
- ↳ Lack of transparency (e.g. not know what is happening to community fund)
- ↳ Lack of accountability (e.g. not knowing who is accountable for mismanaged resources and a poor delivery of public service)
- ↳ Lack of participation (e.g. people are not involved in decision making on issues that will affect their wellbeing). People's needs are decided independently by a few central authorities without understanding the real felt needs on the ground.

(b) Bottom-up approach of development planning and decision-making:

In a decentralised governance, the process of planning and decision-making for local development activities

Tips

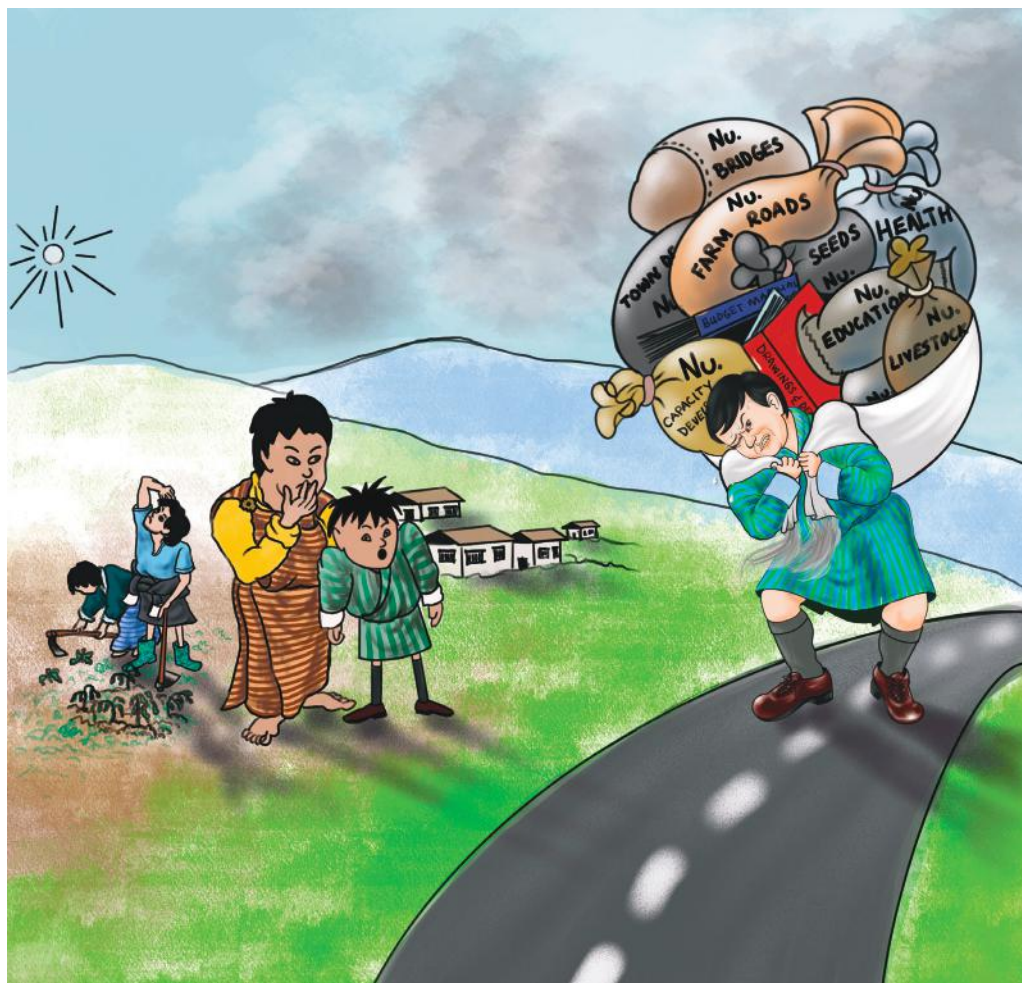


Advantages of decentralised governance:

- ↳ Improved efficiency of resources.
- ↳ Fosters accountability.
- ↳ Increases participation and decision-making.
- ↳ Increases mobilization of local resources.

⁷ Rondinelli, D.A. and S.G. Cheema, (1983), Implementing Decentralisation Policies: An Introduction In: Rondinelli D.A. & S.G. Cheema (eds) *Decentralisation and Development: Policy Implementation in Developing Countries*, Sage Publications.

originate from people themselves. As such, it guarantees that the social and economic needs of the people are incorporated in the national development plans and framework. The bottom-up approach of planning and decision-making for local development activities ensures a minimal intervention from other external agencies and CG authorities to impose development ideas that are different from the interests and needs of people.

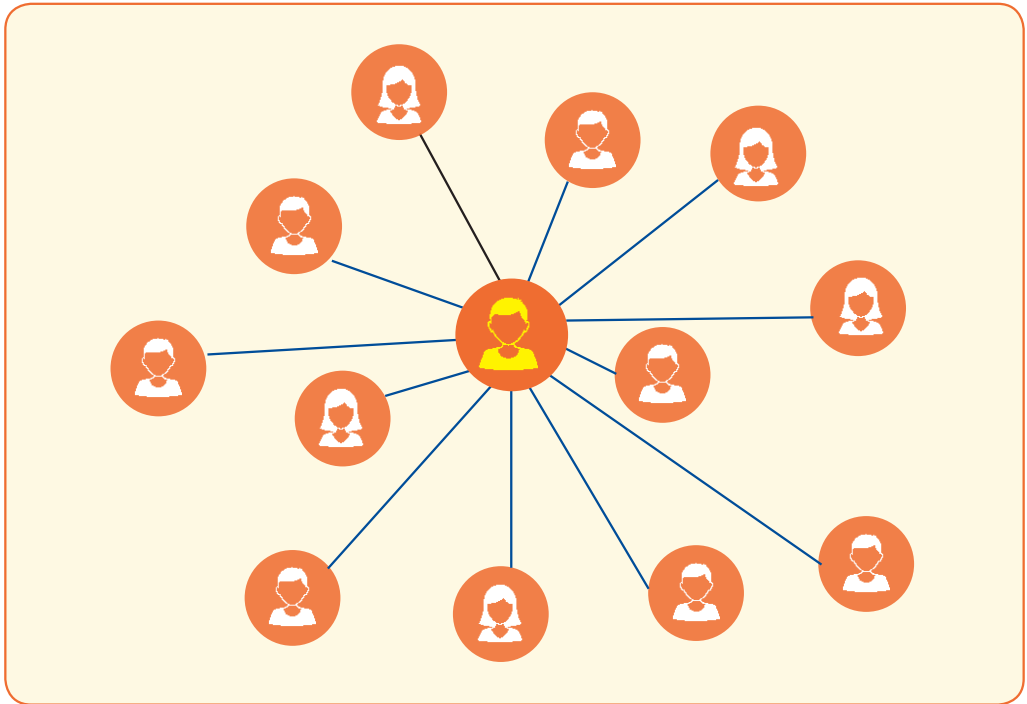


Centralisation

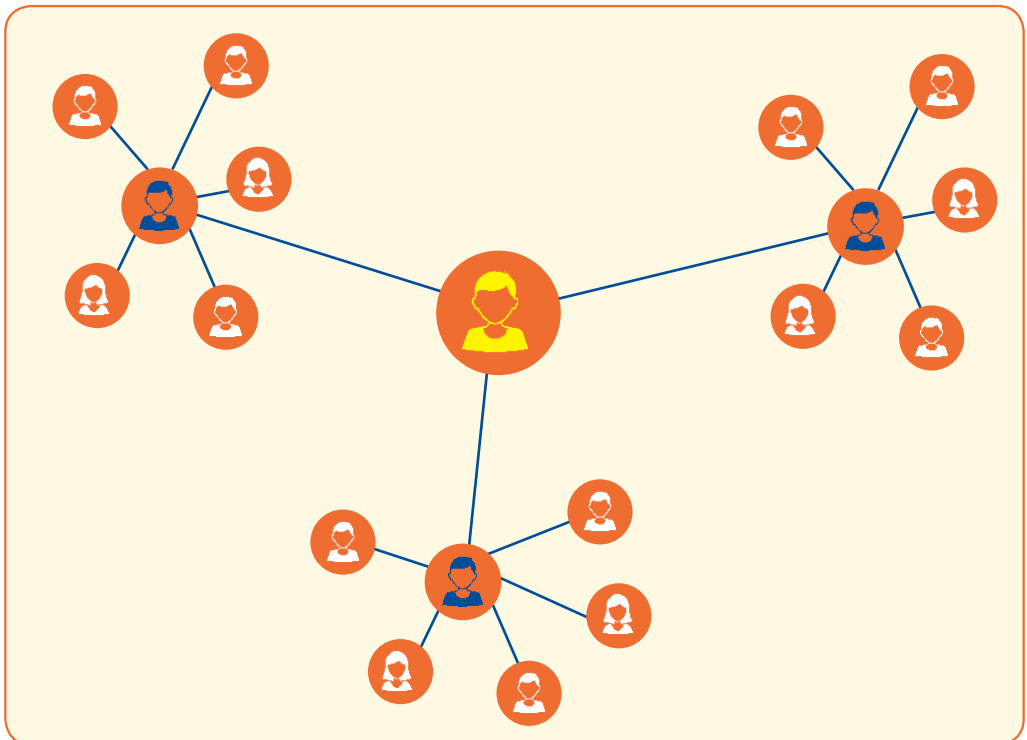
- One central agency or official struggling with the burden of delivering many public services, all of which, however, may not be what people need.
- Mismatch of what the central agency considers important for local needs, and what is exactly required by the people at the local level.
- Development activities can take place without the adequate participation and consultation of people, which can result in wrong investments.



Centralised Governance



Decentralised Governance





EQUALITY

- Sameness – Giving everyone the same thing.
- It works only if everyone starts from the same place.



EQUITY

- Fairness – Access to the same opportunities.
- We must first ensure equity before we can enjoy equality.

(c) **People's participation and engagement:**

Decentralised governance enables a direct involvement of people in matters concerning their own livelihoods, and allows them to make decisions that are aimed at bringing about a better change in themselves. People's participation and engagement empower them, especially those who are challenged the most by development affairs, to plan and execute their own development priorities, as well as monitoring the progress with a greater sense of ownership.

(d) **Promoting inclusiveness, equality and equity:**

In decentralised governance, people's participation and engagement ensure inclusiveness and promotion of equality and equity in the distribution of resources and benefits of the development in the communities.

(e) **Social Accountability**

Decentralised governance provides a platform for the people to hold the LG functionaries or the elected representatives accountable to the people for any actions they have taken on behalf of the people.

It involves citizens/communities working together, to ensure that the Government and service providers are managing public funds effectively and transparently. People use their rights to demand their elected representatives or service providers to provide explanations of the allocation and distribution of local resources, decisions-made for local needs, and results of the implementation of decisions.

Tips



- ↳ **Inclusiveness:** refers to mainstreaming everyone's needs or providing everyone with equal access to opportunities and resources. They include those who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised, such as people having physical or mental disabilities or belonging to other minority groups such as women and children, elderly, etc. who are affected the most by the challenges of development and, thus, need to be given more attention during the planning and decision-making process.
- ↳ **Equality:** Refers to giving equal treatment and equal rights to everyone.
- ↳ **Equity:** Refers to giving justice and fairness by taking into account the differences and characteristics that exist between individuals. It is about the recognition of diversity and removing barriers so that people can effectively access equal opportunities and enjoy services provided.

Local Governments as Institutions for Implementing Decentralised Governance

LG refers to a specific territorial area constituting a sub-division of a major political unit of a nation, whereby the executive powers are exercised by locally elected representatives⁸. It could be created by the national Constitution, ordinary legislation of a higher level of central government, or simply by an Executive Order⁹. LG has a clear and legally recognised geographical demarcation within which the authority to implement a range of significant local services is exercised with statutory independence, with little or no direct control of CG¹⁰.

However, LG is not totally independent from CG in the sense that it operates within the legal framework issued by CG, which also monitors its operations constantly and intervenes when called for. Moreover, LGs often represent CG and the functions are carried out either jointly with or on behalf of the CG. Furthermore, a considerable part of local expenditure is transferred from CG and, therefore, it is essentially a part of the national government system. Nonetheless, LGs are different from CG's local field administrations that exist alongside the local authorities¹¹.

Autonomy is an important aspect of LG functioning and decentralised governance. The autonomy of LG is defined as the capacity of LG to make binding decisions with the administrative, fiscal and political powers that it has or should have to perform the prescribed local functions. Local autonomy is characterised in three ways: freedom from direct central interference; freedom to effect particular outcomes; and, reflection of local identity. The degree of local autonomy depends on the extent of the existence of characteristics of LG described above¹².

▪ Implementation of Decentralised Governance in Bhutan

Objectives of Decentralisation in Bhutan

Decentralised governance in Bhutan is based on the country's guiding development philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH). According to this development concept, the capacity and the space for individuals to make choices through institutions and procedures that they collectively made and to pursue development at a pace they want are the preconditions of human happiness. As decentralisation takes decision-making processes closer to individuals, GNH gets more operational¹³.

⁸ Helmsing, A.H.J. (1991) 'Introduction' In, Helmsing, A.H.J et al *Limits to Decentralisation in Zimbabwe: Essays on Decentralisation of Government and Planning in the 1980s*.

⁹ Shah, A. (2006) 'A Comparative Institutional Framework for Responsive, Responsible and Accountable Local Governance'

¹⁰ Turner, M. & M. Hulme (1997) "Decentralisation within State: Good Theory but Poor Practice", in Turner, M. & M. Hulme's *Governance. Administration and Development*, London, McMillan

¹¹ Helmsing, A.H.J. (1991) *Ibid*

¹² Mequanent, G., & D.R.F Taylor (2001) 'Decentralisation and Local Autonomy: Regional Planning in Ethiopia' In, Walter B. Storch et al (Edts) *New Regional Development Paradigms*, Vol. 3, USA, Green Wood Press.

¹³ Ura, K. (2004b) 'Deities, Archers and Planners In The Era of Decentralisation' Thimphu; Bhutan

The impetus and call for decentralisation in Bhutan is generated from within, without domestic or external political compulsion or pressure for reforms. The impetus for decentralisation was the personal initiative of the King, founded on his enlightened notion that it is perilous for the security and welfare of a small nation to depend on one individual. It was the King's noble intention to design development programmes alongside the popular desires, by involving people in sharing development responsibilities and implementing them for their own economic self-reliance¹⁴.

The objectives of decentralisation in Bhutan are:

- To make LGs play a central role as the localised units of planning and, function as a platform for people's participation in the formulation of national development plans and priorities consistent with popular desires, so that development takes place in tune with the felt needs and aspirations of the people¹⁵.
- To engage people themselves in implementing the planned programmes, and detach them from dependence from the Government by deconstructing the notion of the Government being solely responsible for their livelihoods and their expectations being translated into making demands from the Government¹⁶.
- To instil greater political consciousness and decision-making skills among the people to regenerate the sense of control, ownership and responsibility for the maintenance of collective local resources¹⁷.
- To restrain CG sectors from standardising and normalising development plans that are not within the interests of the decentralised executing agencies. The Government would only give the overall direction, and necessary resources or technical inputs that are beyond the capacity of the people¹⁸.



“As far as you, my people, are concerned, you should not adopt the attitude that whatever is required to be done for your welfare will be done entirely by the government. On the contrary, a little effort on your part will be much more effective than a great deal of efforts on the part of the government”.

Source:

*His Majesty the King
Jigme Singye Wa ngchuck,
Coronation Speech, 1974*

¹⁴ Ura, K. (2004b) Ibid.

¹⁵ Ura, K. (2004c) 'The First Universal Suffrage Election at County (Gewog) Level in Bhutan'. Discussion Paper No. 4, Institute of Developing Economies, JETRO, Japan

¹⁶ RGoB (1999) "Bhutan 2020: Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness", Planning Commission, Keen Publishing (Thailand) Co., Ltd

¹⁷ RGoB (1999) Ibid

¹⁸ Ura, K. (2004a) 'Peasantry and Bureaucracy in Decentralisation in Bhutan', Discussion paper No. 17, Institute Of Developing Economies (Ide), Jetro, Japan.



Policy and Legal Framework of Decentralised Governance in Bhutan

Decentralised governance in Bhutan has reference to the following policy and legislative basis:

i. Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan¹⁹

Article 22 of the Constitution of Bhutan enshrines that power and authority shall be decentralised and devolved to LGs to facilitate the direct participation of the people in the development and management of their own social, economic and environmental well-being. It accentuates the need to take into account local interests in the national sphere of governance by providing a forum for public consideration on issues affecting the local territory.

ii. LG Act²⁰

The LG Act provides for decentralisation of functions, powers and services and is securing a direct participation of the people in the development and management of their social, economic and environmental wellbeing, whereby there is:

- A democratic and accountable government for local communities;
- Participation of communities and community organizations in matters of local governance.

iii. Bhutan 2020: Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness²¹

This overarching policy document seeks to enhance decentralisation and democratic systems to pursue a “people-centred sustainable development”, for safeguarding the interests of the local communities, including “vulnerable and disadvantaged groups”. The Vision document in particular espouses a decentralised governance system through the following strategies:

- Progressive share and transfer of responsibilities, resources and authorities for the development planning and implementation to Dzongkhags and Gewogs to enable people to assume greater responsibility for the development of their communities, to participate in the decisions that have a direct bearing on their lives and livelihoods and the future of their families and communities, and to express and share their hopes and aspirations.

¹⁹ RGOB (2008) ‘Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan’, ISBN: 99936-754-0-7

²⁰ Parliament of Bhutan (2010) ‘The LG Act of Bhutan 2009 (Amended in 2014) and The LG Bill of Bhutan 2020 (draft 14)

²¹ RGoB (1999) Ibid

- Enlarge and strengthen the autonomy of Dzongkhags and Gewogs by the transfer of financial responsibilities in the form of block grants with the authority to spend.
- Give powers to LGs to mobilize their own revenue and make expenditure.

iv. **Enhancing Good Governance: Promoting Efficiency, Transparency and Accountability for GNH (GG99)**²²

This report reinforces decentralisation to strengthen people’s active participation in the process of decision-making through:

- Transfer of skilled human resources, devolution and delegation of financial and administrative powers to LGs, and a greater inter-sectoral coordination to fulfil the country’s governance vision of people-centred development, based on a “bottom-up approach.
- Provide LGs the authority to make decisions on the local development plans and programmes, while the central government should continue to manage personnel matters within the delegated powers.

v. **Decentralisation Policy of Bhutan 2020 (draft)**²³

The (draft) decentralisation policy of Bhutan 2020 envisions a well devolved and conducive decentralised system of governance in pursuit of a vibrant democracy and Gross National Happiness. The policy sets the objective of the decentralisation in Bhutan to create LGs that are responsive, well-managed and serving the people with transparency, accountability, efficiency, effectiveness and inclusivity.

Governance Practice and Sequential Trajectory of Decentralisation in Bhutan

Decentralisation was practised as part of Bhutan’s governance system right from the beginning of the country as a nation-state. The Gewogs have always existed as administrative organisation and principal political entities at the lowest level, wherein the Gup was the principal coordinator. The members of a Gewog had certain rights and obligations defined within the context of a Gewog in cultural and economic spheres²⁴.

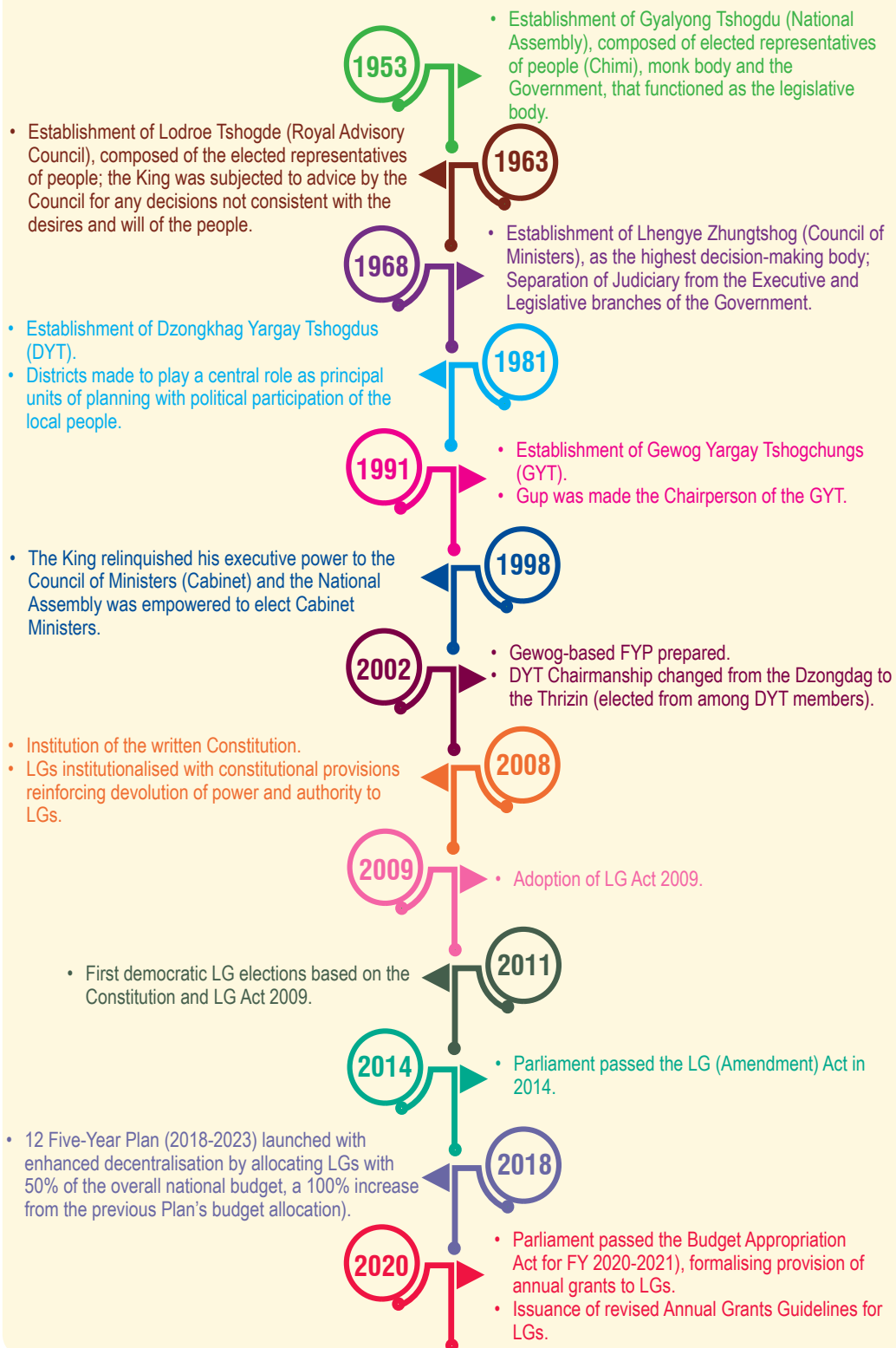
The modern system of decentralisation was formally established with the institution of the National Assembly (Gyalong Tshogdu) in 1953. The following figure shows the sequential trajectory of decentralisation process in the country:

²² RGoB (1999) ‘Enhancing Good Governance: Promoting Efficiency, Transparency and Accountability for GNH’, Planning Commission, Thimphu.

²³ MOHCA (2020) ‘Decentralisation Policy of Bhutan 2020’, RGoB, Thimphu (September 2020, draft 14).

²⁴ Ura, K. (2004a) *Ibid*

Trajectory of Decentralised (Local) Governance in Bhutan



Local Government Structure and their Functions within the current Decentralised Governance System in Bhutan

The sub-national governments in terms of a spatial, geographical or territorial basis consist of Dzongkhags and Gewogs. Both Dzongkhag and Gewog are specific local areas constituting a sub-division of the nation. They are created by the national constitution with a clear and legally recognised geographical demarcation within which the decentralised functions are exercised.

Within the territories of Dzongkhag and Gewog, the Dzongkhag Tshogdu (DT), Thromde Tshogde (TT) and Gewog Tshogde (GT) are established as the functional bodies that deliver decentralised public functions within the respective territories of the Dzongkhag, Thromde and Gewog.

The DT, TT and GT are the autonomous local bodies that are constitutionally independent with little or no direct control of CG. Their members (Gups, Thrompons, Mangmis, Chiwog Tshogpas and Thromde Tshogpas) are elected among the people by the people from within the given local territorial jurisdictions. They function with a corporate status with their own budget and accounts along with substantial authority to raise their own revenue and make expenditure within the framework of laws put in place by CG. They are empowered to take independent decisions on behalf of the people of their constituencies.

The Dzongkhag, Thromde and Gewog administrative offices are staffed by civil servants who support DT, TT and GT to execute the decentralised functions. They are the local administrative units or field offices of the CG agencies that implement the deconcentrated or delegated functions of the respective CG authorities. At the same time, these CG field or branch offices also function as the administrative machinery of LGs and provide technical support in implementing the devolved service delivery functions of LGs.

In this respect, the local administration offices maintain vertical reporting and accountability with CG agencies in implementing the respective sectoral local functions. At the same time, they maintain a horizontal reporting and accountability functional relationship with LGs for the local functions devolved to LGs. The vertical and horizontal

Reminder

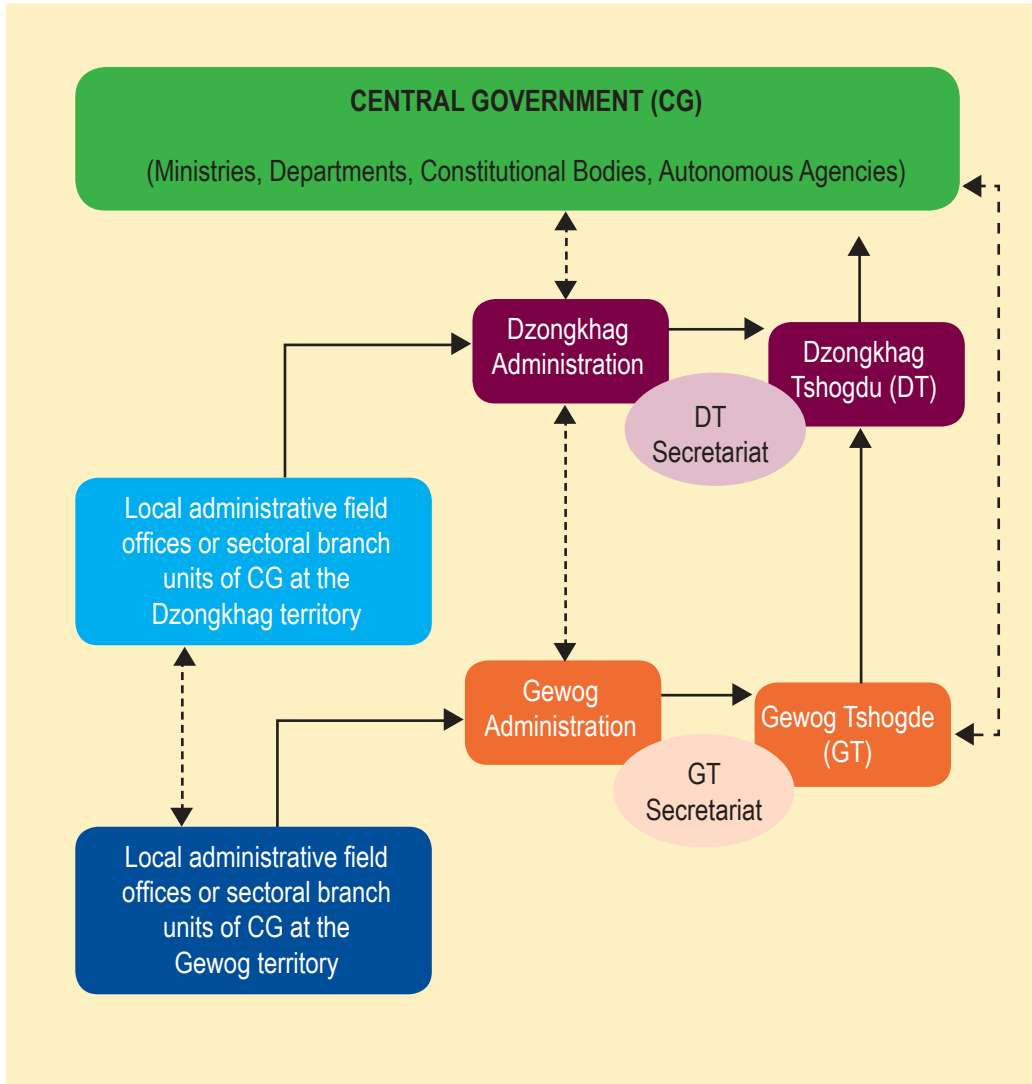


“Local Government is not the lowest level of Government; it is the nearest and closest level of government for our people. For rural Bhutanese, local governments are indispensable avenues for participation in democracy and development. In the long run, the success of democracy in Bhutan will be determined by the success of local governments.”

Source: His Majesty the King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck (July 2011, Ceremony for awarding Dhar to Gups)

functional mandate of the local administration offices are based on the Division of Responsibilities Framework (DoFR) between central Government agencies and Local Governments²⁵.

Graphical Representation of Local Governments and Decentralised Governance Structure in Bhutan



²⁵ GNHC (2017) 'Twelfth Five Year Plan Guideline 2018-2023' RGOB, Thimphu.



In terms of the local-central relationship, although LGs are politically devolved institutions at the Dzongkhag and Gewog levels, they are not totally independent from CG as they largely operate within the legal framework issued by CG, whose role also lies in monitoring its operations. CG maintains the exclusive power and authority over governance and management of public goods and services that are of strategic national importance and priority. In this respect, CG oversees the implementation of national functions at the level of LGs.



Continuous reforms initiated to deepen decentralisation and democratic governance system at the local level increase the challenges for a Gup to embrace the increasing responsibilities



Chapter 2

Positioning the Gup and Implementing the Roles and Responsibilities Within the Decentralised Local Governance System

- **Implementing the Functions and Roles as an Elected Representative of the People**

As an elected representative of the people, a Gup must ensure an effective service delivery for the people. S/he must look after the welfare of the people who not only voted for him or her, but of all the people within the political jurisdiction of a Gewog. S/he is an agent of change that brings an inclusive sustainable social and economic development in the community for the people's welfare with efficiency, transparency and accountability.

The following are some of the strategies:

- (a) **Lead but not decide for people.** A good representative of people is one who gives people the space and opportunity to express and seek to make decisions. That is to say that all decisions made by a Gup for the people should be based on a bottom-up approach. If a Gup makes independent decisions based on his/her personal opinion, perception and interest, it is against the decentralisation and decentralised governance practice.
- (b) **Give more attention and focus to the people in the community who are challenged the most by development affairs.** It is not the wealthy or most capable people of the Gewog that portrays the health of the community. It is the poor and minority sections of the community that show how developed or not a Gewog is. They include women and children, elderly members of the community, and other disadvantaged and vulnerable sections of the community such as people on low-incomes, and the people who are physically and mentally challenged and who are susceptible to being left out of the development process.

- (c) **Be law abiding and comply with rules of law.** A Gup shall not act and make decisions that are not within the national laws and rules of law. While people have the power to make decisions, a Gup should make sure that all decisions made by them or others are within the permissible provisions of the laws in place. Doing things in line with the laws also means that a Gup upholds equality as well as equity based on fairness and justice in his/her conduct.
- (d) **Promote collaboration and cooperation among people for community unity.** A Gup should always strive to promote collaboration and cooperation among the people of the Gewog, so that communities make collective efforts to fulfil their needs within their own capacity and resources available. A community that functions as a team with utmost collaboration, cooperation and partnership can be easily represented as one people of one Gewog. This in turn can enhance the decision-making ability of the people and the management of people's needs should be easier.
- (e) **Act as bridge and agent of local-central Government relationship:** The Gup is a critical link between the CG agencies, Dzongkhag and the Gewog. In that respect, a Gup must act and function to maintain vertical as well as horizontal relationship with the Dzongkhag and Gewog administration offices. S/he acts upon the directives of CG to implement public functions devolved to the Gewog, as well as represent people of the Gewog to raise people's voices in the national forums.





▪ **Implementing the Functions and Roles as the Head of Gewog**

As the Head of a Gewog, a Gup is also the Head of the Local Government. In his/her capacity as the Gewog Head, s/he has the responsibility and authority to act and make decisions for the implementation of the functions of LG on behalf of the people of the Gewog.

The following are the functions of a Gewog as LG and how a Gup can implement them:

(a) Promote area-based development planning:

It means that the development activities for a Gewog should be based on the issues and needs of the specific Gewog concerned, rather than a particular sector or target group. To formulate an area-based development plans, a Gup should:

- (i) Identify the specific needs of a local area (not based on general problems faced everywhere) depending on a particular context;
- (ii) Build the plans and programmes on existing community strength, including the existing capacity, resources, governance structures, markets and service delivery mechanisms;
- (iii) Ensure that the needs identified are integrated (multi-sectoral);
- (iv) Make the proposed development interventions inclusive (aimed at benefiting the whole community and not just a particular groups or individuals);
- (v) Formulate the plans and programmes in a bottom-up and participatory approach with the flexibility of response to changes.

(b) Be the custodian of community resources (land, water, lakes, springs, streams, rivers, forests, minerals, etc.)

The wealth of a Gewog is largely dependent on the availability of local resources such as land, water sources, lakes, springs, streams, rivers and many others. These locally available resources are the strength of a Gewog as they are the important sources of livelihood of the people of the Gewog. In that respect, it is the responsibility of the Gup to ensure that they are preserved, protected and used judiciously, by avoiding or minimizing plans, projects and activities that will generate negative impacts in the natural environment and other local resources.



It does not matter how much resources you have. If you cannot use them properly, they are all in vain.

(c) Protect and preserve local identity and customary cultural practices

Preservation and promotion of Bhutan's rich identity and culture have been the basis of the country's survival as a nation state in the past, while it will continue to be so in the future. Therefore, a Gup should protect, preserve and promote:

- (i) Bhutanese architecture and historical artefacts within the broad framework of national codes.
- (ii) Rich folklore, myths, legends, customs, crafts, rituals, symbols, traditional sports, astrology, poetry, drama, songs and dances.

(d) Promote community participation in maintenance and upkeep of community facilities:

As people's participation is critical in decentralised governance, a Gup should steer the community's participation by:

- (i) Strengthening community participation and engagement mechanisms such as:
 - Water user groups
 - Farm road maintenance groups
 - Community Forestry Management groups
 - Other community support system and self-help groups
- (ii) Encouraging people to participate in community contract works as per the community contracting protocol²⁶ in place.

²⁶ DLG (2011), Community Contracting Protocol, RGoB



Sustainable management of limited resources is an important aspect of decentralised governance


(e) Promote innovation and creativity for economic enterprises

In order to strengthen rural livelihood security and community self-reliance, a Gup should promote self-employment in entrepreneurship and business opportunities, especially for youths. Such entrepreneurship opportunities include:

- (i) Organic farming.
- (ii) Commercial farming of non-wood forestry products.
- (iii) Post-harvest agro-products processing.
- (iv) Biotechnology and value-additions.
- (v) Forest-based products.
- (vi) Poultry, dairy, fisheries, floriculture, health food, animal feed, apiculture and horticulture.
- (vii) Community-based eco-tourisms in the protected and recreational areas.
- (viii) Development of local tradition-based products such as crafts and cottage industry.

(f) Oversee the affairs of a Gewog including the enforcement and implementation of the resolutions of the GT

As the Head of a Gewog, a Gup is responsible to ensure that the Gewog administration functions smoothly, by interacting closely with the relevant staff of the Gewog Administration, and supervise their works, while, at the same time, seeking support on implementing the functions effectively. Some of the oversight functions of a Gup are:

- 
- i) Maintain office decorum and professional work environment.
 - ii) Review and approve Gewog annual plan and budget in line with the resolution of GT and the Government rules in place, and accord financial sanctions for planned activities within the budget limit.
 - iii) Accord approval for official travels and leave of absence from duty for Gewog administrative staff, ensuring that the travels are justified within the prescribed rules in place.
 - iv) Accord approval for hiring and mobilization of labour for the upkeep of community facilities in accordance with the rules made by the Government.
 - v) Recover damages on works or property owned, constructed, acquired, or used by a Local Government as per the rules in place.
 - vi) Monitor illegal constructions and all other types of encroachment in community land and enforce the rules and regulations in place pertaining to such matter.
 - vii) Review and ratify accounts of all expenditures of Gewog on a regular basis within the resolutions of GT and in line with the appropriate rules in place.

▪ **Implementing the Functions and Roles as the GT Chairperson**

The functions and roles of the Gup as the GT Chairperson include:

(a) Effective chairing and moderation of GT sessions

- i) Move and steer the discussion of agenda items proposed for discussion during the specific GT session, ensuring that the topics are strictly based on the agenda approved.
- ii) Make decisions based on general consensus and avoid making independent decisions based on personal opinion, interests or personal benefits out of the decision.
- iii) Provide equal opportunity for all members to raise their views and seek to deliberate on the matter of discussion, by adopting appropriate mechanisms that will enable everyone to get an opportunity to raise views. However, it does not mean that every view submitted by the members needs to be adopted for decisions.



- iv) Ensure that all GT decisions are in line with the relevant Government policies, Acts and rules. If the members make decisions that are not consistent with the rules in place, the members should be informed appropriately, and steer towards appropriate decisions.
- v) Record the decisions in the form of resolutions, duly endorsed by the members with their signatures. Such records should also clearly specify the actions to be taken as per the decision, how they shall be implemented, and who shall have responsibility for implementing them.

(b) Enforcing the decisions of the GT sessions

The GT Chairperson should ensure that the GT sessions are implemented, as follows:

- i) In coordination with the Gewog Administration Office staff concerned, prepare a list of agencies, sectors and individuals that need to be given a copy of the minutes or resolutions. Such list should be based on the need to take certain actions as per the resolutions or for information-sharing.

- ii) Ensure that the GT resolutions are shared and distributed with all the agencies and individuals concerned on time, following the protocol and rules in place. Such recipients could be the sectoral staff, field administrative office of delegated CG agencies, or the staff within the Gewog Administration, including both appointed and elected functionaries.
- iii) Coordinate with the staff concerned to follow up and ensure that the letters of distribution of GT resolutions are dispatched within the prescribed time schedule, follow up on the receipt by the recipients and check that the recipients acknowledge the receipts.
- iv) Ensure that the staff concerned explain to the agencies or individuals concerned the contents of the letter and specific GT decisions requiring actions, by clearly stating the nature of actions required, and the deadline of the actions.

Tips

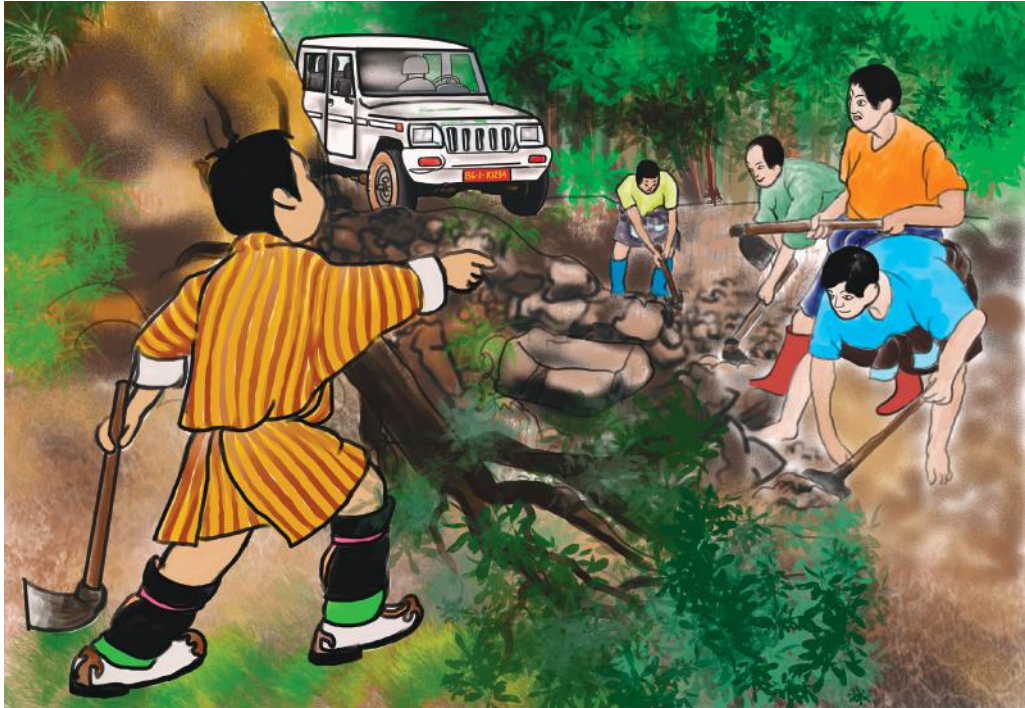


The distribution of the GT resolutions should be:

- ✦ Accompanied by a cover letter with name, designation and address of the recipient.
- ✦ The cover letter should identify the specific GT resolution and the reason for giving the copy of the GT resolutions pertaining to that particular resolution.
- ✦ The cover letter should clearly state the actions required to be taken by the recipient as reflected in the GT resolution, with deadline and address of submission.
- ✦ If the number of resolutions and actions required from an agency or individual concerned is long, they should be enclosed as an attachment.
- ✦ Such letter accompanying the GT resolutions shared or distributed should be properly signed by the Gup or his/her authorized representative if he/she is out of station or not able to sign at the time when the GT resolutions are distributed.
- ✦ Such a letter should be copied to all relevant agencies or individuals within the Dzongkhag or Gewog, for their kind information and support as may be deemed necessary for the recipient to take appropriate actions and respond to the GT decisions.

(c) Supervision and monitoring of the implementation of works

Apart from the GT decisions, which are implemented by the CG sectoral or administrative staff, a Gup should ensure that those activities to be implemented by the staff under a Gewog administration are appropriately entrusted to the staff concerned with a clear strategy of implementation, resource allocation and methods.



(d) Reporting the status of works

The reporting functions of a Gup include:

- i) Receiving periodic reports of the progress of the works from the Gewog staff who are implementing the works. The purpose of this reporting is to make sure that the works are implemented as planned, and any challenges reported on time and solutions discussed.
- ii) Reporting the progress of the Gewog works to the Dzongkhag focal person concerned for the same purpose as above.
- iii) Submit and present the reports to the GT session or DT session.
- iv) Report to the public, through Zomdus and other appropriate platforms.



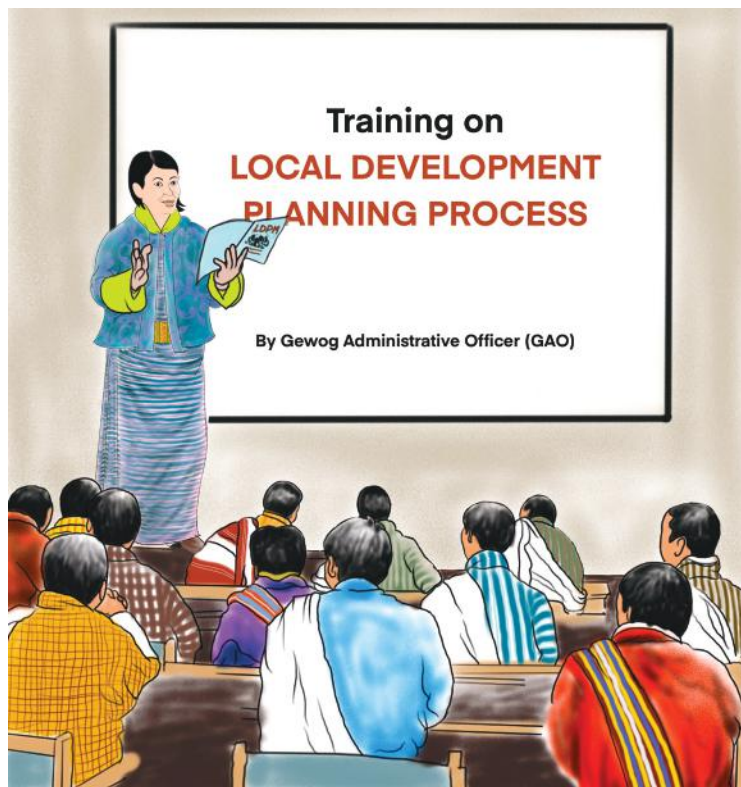
Chapter 3

Implementing the Planning and Financial Management Functions

■ Planning Functions

As per the LG Act 2009²⁷, the LGs are empowered to:

- a. Formulate Five-Year and Annual Plans of the Gewogs and Dzongkhags.
- b. Monitor, evaluate and ensure the implementation of the planned activities.



²⁷ Also the LG Bill 2020



The general conditions of the planning functions are:

- i The plans and programmes need to be within the overall Five-Year Plan goals and objectives set by the Government.
- ii The focus of the plans and programmes need to be aligned to the national key result areas and sectoral key result areas.
- iii The plans and programmes should be based on the planning and financial management functions specified by the Division of Responsibilities Framework²⁸ issued by the Government.
- iv All plans and programmes must be based on the principle of holistic and integrated area-based development planning, ensuring an equitable development across the jurisdiction of the Gewog.
- v The plans and programmes must be within the budget-ceiling allocated by the Government in line with the inter-governmental fiscal transfer of budget specified by the annual grant guidelines²⁹.
- vi The formulation of plans and budgets should be in line with the planning and budgeting notification issued by the relevant CG agencies, including the compliance with the planning and budgeting phase.
- vii The formulation of plans and programmes must be carried out in close consultation with the people of the respective local jurisdictions, ensuring an active participation and engagement of people in the decision-making of the plans and programmes.

The local economic development plans and programmes should be based on the vision and missions of the Gewog or Dzongkhag within the overall national development goals set within the Five-Year Plan or other policy guidelines. To do so, if necessary, LGs can use external assistance and expertise by engaging consultancy support.

²⁸ GNHC (2018), Guideline for preparation 12th Five -Year Plan 2018-2023, RGoB

²⁹ MoF (2019) 'Guidelines for Gewog Annual Grants', RGoB, Thimphu.



The plan formulation and budgeting process-steps:

The plan formulation and budgeting process takes place in six key steps³⁰ as follows:

	Activity	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
1	Assessment and Identification												
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Situation analysis of the Gewog, including the challenges faced and the strategies required to resolve the issues 												
2	Prioritization of development activities												
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify activities assessed in terms of importance to fit within the budget allocated 												
3	Differentiation between Dzongkhag and Gewog plans												
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse which prioritised activities are to be delivered under the Gewog (and leave out those to be implemented under Dzongkhag and CG programme) 												
4	Activity Planning												
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss implementation methods, including place and time of implementation, sub activities, and responsibility of different stakeholders with budget allocation. 												
5	Implementation (after receipt of first annual grant)												
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation with beneficiaries, coordination with CG agencies, procurement, negotiation and conflict management 												
6	Monitoring and Evaluation												
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission of quarterly progress reports 												
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid-term Review 												
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Review 												

³⁰ RGOB, (2018) 'Local Development Planning Manual (LDPM)', GNHC, Thimphu.

▪ Financial Management Functions


Effective financial management determines the extent of the efficiency and effectiveness of local service delivery and allocation of limited resources. Financial management tools include: cash-flow management, procurement management, asset management, and budgeting. Financial management is undertaken based on a sound accounting system characterised by the accuracy of transactions' information, completeness and true representation of transactions, an effective control system against fraud and corruption, and relevance of financial information³¹.

Reporting is an important aspect of financial management, and the Gup should report to the GT and DT on financial performance as well as the status of the planned activities of the Gewog. The information on financial status and their utilisation are used for public information, as well as a basis for CG agencies concerned (MoF) and GNHC for the allocation and monitoring of resources.



³¹ POP, (2012) 'Public Finance Act (Amendment) of Bhutan', RGOB.

■ Gup's Financial Management Roles and Responsibilities


	
<p>The financial management system of Bhutan is implemented within the provisions of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Finance Act of Bhutan • Financial Rules and Regulations of Bhutan, 2007 (Amended 2012) consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financial Management Manual ▪ Finance and Accounting Manual (FAM) ▪ Budget Manual (BM) ▪ Property Management Manual (PMM) • Procurement Rules and Regulations (PRR) and the Procurement Manual • Revenue Manual (RM) 	<p>The financial management functions include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mobilisation and judicious application of resources; b. Proper custody, use and maintenance of Government properties; and c. Clear and transparent accounting of all public receipts and expenditures and reporting on them.

As the Head of the Gewog and Chairperson of the GT, the Gup is entrusted with the responsibility of oversight and monitoring the management of financial resources within the jurisdiction of the LG.

(i) General Functions

The general functions and responsibilities of a LG are:

- Management, custody and administration of funds and properties in accordance with the prescribed rules and regulations, with maximum economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the best interests of the Government;
- Installation and implementation of an adequate system of internal control within the LG, to prevent misuse, misappropriation and wastage of Government funds and properties;
- Introduction of accountability at every level;
- Introduction of subsidiary rules, orders and practices for the harmonious and efficient administration of the activities and achievement of the purposes, in line with the rules in place;
- Formulation of Master plan, 5-year plan, rolling and annual budget proposals;

- 
- Proper execution of functions in accordance with the approved budget allocations and the prescribed rules and regulations; and
 - Administration of taxes.

(ii) Revenue Assignment

The concept of revenue assignment is based on the premise that LGs use revenue generated from the local taxes to finance services provided to local communities. Such revenue sources include service charges; user taxes; and general taxes. Article 22, Section 18 of the Constitution empowers LGs to levy, collect, and appropriate taxes, duties, tolls, and fees in accordance with procedures and limitations set by the Parliament.

Currently, the GT is empowered to mobilise, spend and invest money for the support of its functions. A GT, at such rates approved by Parliament, can levy and appropriate the following taxes:

- (a) Land tax;
- (b) House tax;
- (c) Cattle tax;
- (d) Grazing tax;
- (e) Advertisement tax other than advertisement in newspapers, print, radio and internet; and

A GT is also empowered to levy and vary rates of fees and charges on utilities in accordance with the existing laws. However, a GT shall ensure that the fees and charges are:

- (a) Not excessive, oppressive, or confiscatory;
- (b) Not contrary to laws and national policies; and
- (c) Set at a level no higher than the cost of the most efficient method of providing the service.

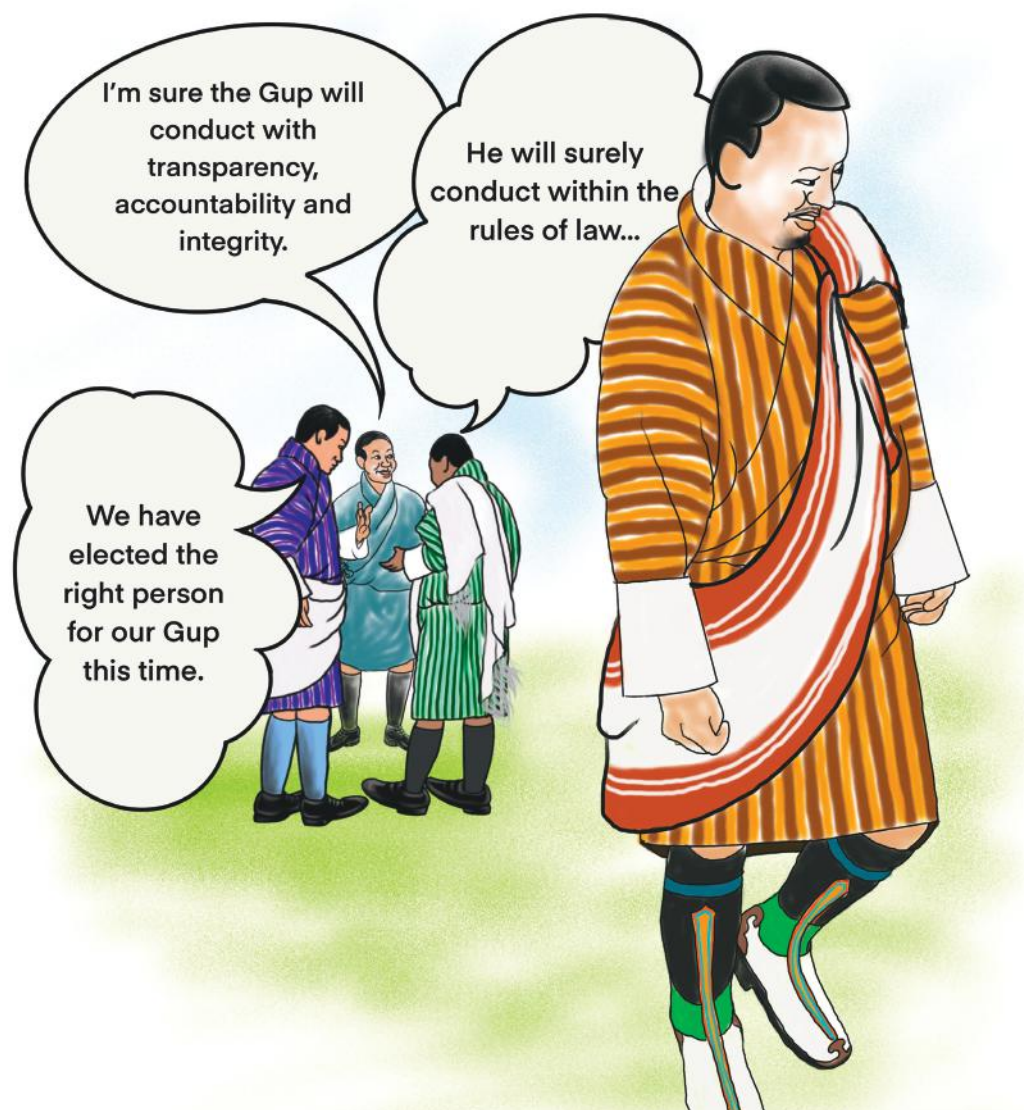
(iii) Expenditure Assignment

This pertains to the responsibility and power of LGs to use the budget allocated from the Government (annual grants and inter-governmental fiscal transfer) to make expenditure for public functions that are devolved to them. Article 22, section 18 of the Constitution enshrines provision of LGs with adequate financial resources from the Government in the form of annual grants. The Constitution (same article) also guarantees LGs to be allocated a portion of national revenue to ensure self-reliant and self-sustaining units of local self-government. The current


inter-governmental fiscal transfer is made as prescribed by the annual grant guidelines³² for Local Governments issued by the Ministry of Finance (MoF).

The financial management functions for expenditure assignment of LGs include:

- (a) Reviewing and approve Gewogs' annual budget based on ceilings;
- (b) Carrying out re-appropriations of Gewogs' budget;
- (c) Reviewing and ratifying accounts of all expenditures of Gewogs';
- (d) Approving the maintenance of development infrastructures, the expenses for which are met from the retained local taxes and other funds; and
- (e) Approve procurement in accordance with financial rules and regulations.



³² MoF (2019) 'Guidelines for Gewog Annual Grants', RGoB, Thimphu.

A woman with short black hair, wearing an orange jacket with a white and red striped sash, stands at a red podium with yellow decorative patterns. She is speaking into a microphone. In front of her, an audience of men is seated in rows of wooden benches, viewed from behind. A large white speech bubble with a black outline is positioned above the woman, containing the text: "I THANK YOU FOR YOUR TRUST AND FAITH IN ME TO HAVE ME AS YOUR GUP. I WOULD REPRESENT ALL OF YOU, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHO VOTED FOR ME." The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR TRUST AND
FAITH IN ME TO HAVE ME AS YOUR
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FOR ME.



Chapter 4

Effective Organisation and Conduct of GT or DT Sessions

Effective conduct of GT sessions determine the effectiveness of LG, which in turn depends on the ability of the Gup and the DT Chairperson to conduct the session smoothly. The process steps of conducting GT sessions and roles of the Gup as the Chairperson are discussed as follows³³:

Tips



Apart from the respective provisions stipulated in the LG Act and Regulations, the **PROTOCOL FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROCEEDINGS** describes the process of conducting the GT/DT sessions.

▪ Process leading to GT/DT Sessions

The following are the pre-session activities the Gup will have to ensure as the GT or DT Chairperson:

(a) Identifying a date of the GT or DT session:

The dates for GT and DT sessions are identified with the following steps:

- i. The Gup will verify a good *Zakar* and propose a date with the DT Chairperson.

³³ Apart from the provisions of LG Act and Regulations, the **PROTOCOL FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROCEEDINGS** describes the process of conducting the GT sessions.

- ii. The Gup concerned and the DT Chairperson will ensure that such a date does not coincide with other major planned activities of the Dzongkhag or Gewog.
- iii. In identifying such a date, the Gup concerned and the DT Chairperson will ensure that there is an adequate duration for the issue of notification and submission of the agenda from the members, before the date identified.
- iv. The DT Chairperson will discuss with Gups and identify the date for DT session, which should be 15 days after the conclusion of GT sessions.
- v. However, the respective DT or GT Chairpersons may identify a date for the special DT or GT sessions based on the urgency of the matters to be discussed, without considering the minimum duration requirement.

Reminder



- As per the LG Act 2009, the regular DT sessions are held at least two times a year, preferably once in six months. The regular GT sessions are held at least three times a year.
- The first session of both DT and GT is held not later than 30 days from the date of the declaration of election results. The first GT session is held not later than 15 working days after his/her administration of oath. First DT session is held not later than 10 working days after the first GT session.
- The dates of the DT/GT sessions are identified by the respective Chairpersons (except for the first DT session, which is called by the Dzongdag).

(b) Notification for the date of GT or DT session and submission of agenda

After identifying the date for GT or DT sessions, the next step is to issue a notification for GT and DT sessions as follows:

- i. The GT or DT Chairperson, as the case maybe, shall, after the confirmation of the date for the GT or DT session, issue a notification in the media with date and venue of the GT or DT session.
- ii. The Chairperson shall issue a written a notification, at least 15 working days prior to the date of the session, to all the members calling for the session. Such notification should clearly mention:

- Date of the GT session;
 - Venue of the GT session;
 - Directive to conduct Zomdu for the collection of proposals for agenda in case of a GT session; and
 - The deadline of the submission of agenda proposals.
- iii. Such a notification issued to the members should be displayed on the notice-board of the Gewog or Dzongkhag Administration Office.
- iv. Such a notification may also be publicized through other forums such as Dzongkhag or Gewog websites, if available, and social media pages of the respective Dzongkhag and Gewogs.
- v. Follow up with members and seek the confirmation of the receipt of such notification with the acknowledgment of their understanding of the notification.

Reminder



Special DT or GT sessions are conducted:

- On receipt of a written request made by not less than three-fourths of the total number of members of the Local Government concerned, duly signed by the members;
- Whenever the Chairperson considers a matter to be of urgent nature; or
- If a written request is made by the Dzongdag.
- If the Dzongkhag Tshogdu by a resolution so directs to conduct a special session.

Reminder



While issuing the notification, the Gup must ensure that GT members get 15 days to conduct Zomdu and submit the agenda proposals by the deadline.

Sometimes, although the notification is sent from the Gewog office before 15 working days of the GT session date, by the time such notification reaches the members, the GT members may have a very limited number of days to conduct Zomdu and consult with the people. Sometimes, such notifications reach the members after the deadline is passed. Such situations result in having a few proposals or no proposals from people, and later the GT members may be blamed for not incorporating the concerns of people for discussion in the GT session.

(c) **Compilation, verification and finalization of the agenda proposals**

The compilation and verification of the agenda proposals will take place as follows:

- The GT and DT Secretary, as the case may be, will receive and compile the agenda proposals received for the GT and DT sessions respectively.
- Agenda Finalization Committee will review and finalize the proposals received for inclusion in the GT or DT session agenda after verifying that:
 - The proposals may be matters of follow-up actions of the past GT or DT sessions, which need to be reported to the current respective sessions. These matters include reports of LG committees, LG administration and annual report of a Gewog of the Dzongkhag.
 - The proposals submitted by the GT members are received in writing duly signed by the GT members as a resolution of the Zomdu conducted in the respective Chiwogs for the purpose of the submission of the proposals for inclusion in the GT sessions.
 - The proposals submitted by GT for inclusion in the DT agenda are endorsed and duly signed by the GT chairperson concerned.
 - All proposals originating from the GT members, GT, Member of the Parliament (MP) or the respective Chairpersons as the case may be, are not under sub-judice in the court or legal proceedings that are active.

Reminder



The Agenda Finalisation Committee of DT session comprises of:

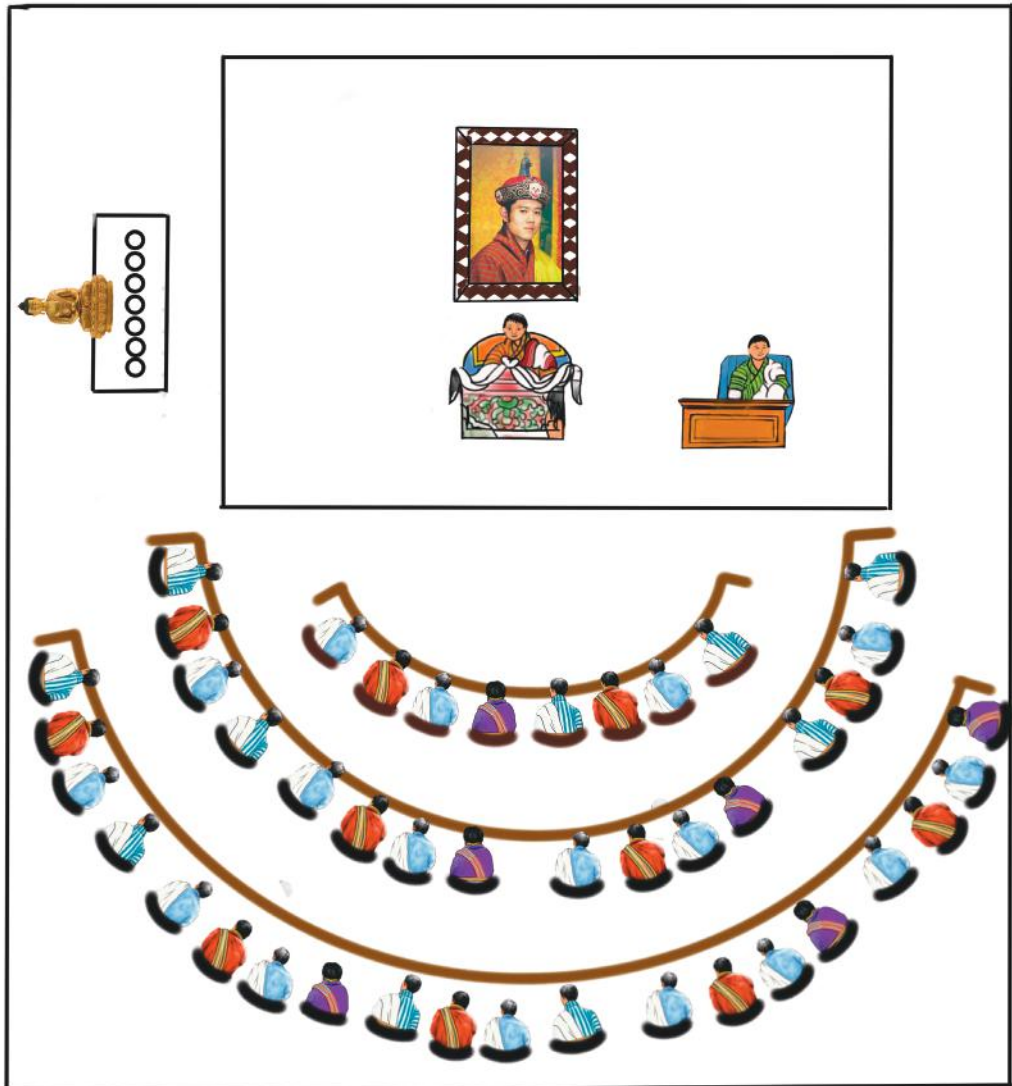
1. Chairperson
2. Dy. Chairperson
3. Dzongdag
4. Dzongrab
5. Dzongkhag Planning Officer
6. DT Secretary (Member Secretary)

The Agenda Finalisation Committee of GT session comprises of:

1. Chairperson
2. Mangmi
3. One Tshogpa (nominated by the Chairperson)
4. GT Secretary (Gewog Administrative Officer, as the Member Secretary)

The roles, functions and guidelines of the Agenda Finalisation Committee is stipulated in the Protocol for Local Government Proceedings.

- All proposals originating from the GT members, GT, MP or the respective Chairpersons as the case may be, are not in contrary to the provisions of the Constitution.
- The proposals received are beyond the scope and capacity of the proponents to be resolved through bilateral meetings and a discussion with the parties concerned without having to discuss in the GT or DT.



(d) Sharing of finalised agenda and invitation

After the agenda is finalised by the Agenda Finalisation Committee, the GT or DT Chairperson, as the case may be, will share the finalised agenda to the GT or DT members and other participants, and invite them for the GT or DT sessions on the date and venue as follows:

- The GT or DT Chairperson, as the case may be, will share the finalised GT or DT agenda in writing, accompanied by the cover letter stating the purpose, to the GT or DT members at least five-days prior to the date of the GT or DT session.
- The cover letter accompanying the agenda shared to the members should clearly mention the reasons for excluding from the GT or DT agenda, if a proposal submitted has been excluded from the finalised agenda.
- Apart from the GT or DT members, the invitation to attend the GT or DT sessions, as the case may be, should be extended to a Government agency or official concerned for the purpose of addressing or submitting any information or explanation on matters pertaining to the agency as reflected in the agenda.
- The GT or DT Secretary, as the case may be, should follow-up and confirm the receipt of such invitations to the sector agencies and that they acknowledge the receipt of the invitation and participation as required.
- The invitation to attend the GT or DT sessions, as the case may be, should also be extended to relevant Government officials as observers. A member of the Parliament, as may be desired, could attend the session as an observer, with due information and approval of the Chairperson.

Reminder



The LG Act empowers GT or DT to require an official under Dzongkhag and Gewog Administration to address or submit any information or explanation either orally or in writing, whenever a related matter is under discussion.

Tips



Observers of DT or GT sessions may include:


1. Dzongdag
2. Dzongrab
3. Dungpa (where applicable)
4. Relevant sector heads of the Dzongkhag/Gewog Administration
5. Heads of Regional and Corporate offices
6. Members of Parliament
7. Media personnel
8. Public

It is not necessary for the Chairperson to invite all officials in the list above as observers. The Chairperson can choose to extend invitation to the few or all officials depending on the relevance of the agenda items. However, any officials from any Government agency or sectors that are not invited can attend, if they wish, with the due permission of the Chairperson.

▪ **Conduct of GT/DT Sessions**

The Chairperson shall ensure that:

- (a) All members and observers come in national dress, and other appropriate formal dress for non-Bhutanese observers.
- (b) All members and observers register themselves with their names and signature in the given registration form.
- (c) All members are seated in the designated seat of the venue of DT or GT session before the start of the business.
- (d) All the non-member officials or observers have valid identity cards.
- (e) The members as well as the observers are seated in the designated seats allocated prior to the time set for start of the business.
- (f) Observers follow their code of conduct and refrain from making any comments or judgements, unless called by the Chairperson to do so on certain agenda items requiring specific non-member to speak.

- 
- (g) The quorum of the meeting is met, and due procedure is observed if the quorum is not met.
 - (h) The session will commence and be conducted strictly as per the agenda tabled.
 - (i) The session will be an open session, unless it is a closed session.
 - (j) Only a designated member shall make statements in the media on the discussions held in the session.

▪ **Chairing and Moderating GT/DT Sessions**

The Chairperson shall chair and moderate the session as follows:

- (a) Prior to the start of discussion of the agenda, the Chairperson shall call for adoption of the agenda and make additions or deletions as proposed by the members. However, addition of the following matters should be refrained:
 - Matters that require consultation of the public but have not been done through a Zomdu.
 - Any subjects not in line with the provisions of the Constitution and other laws.
 - Any subjects under the court.
 - Any matters that were excluded by the Agenda Finalisation Committee.

Similarly, any deletion of agenda items shall be made with consensus of the proponent of the agenda item.

- (b) During the adoption of agenda, the Chairperson shall move a motion for inclusion in the agenda (not submitted by members) that s/he rules as an urgent business, if any.
- (c) The Chairperson shall introduce the agenda item at the start of the specific agenda discussion and call upon the proponent to move the motion, if a particular agenda item is submitted by a specific member.
- (d) The Chairperson shall ensure that sufficient debate takes place to discuss each agenda item, and allow members to ask questions that fulfil the admissibility conditions on the matter of the discussion. The Chairperson should, if necessary, allow the member who moves the motion to respond to the observations made by other members.

Tips



Admissible questions	Non-admissible questions
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Relating to plans and policies of Dzongkhag or a Gewog concerned;2. Matters relating to implementation of the planned programmes and activities of a Gewog or Dzongkhag;3. Questions not containing ironical expressions or defamatory statements;4. Questions not directed to question the character or conduct of any person other than the person's official functions and roles.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A question, the answer to which cannot be made in public for general interest.

- (e) If necessary, the Chairperson may invite an observer to respond to questions or explain the subject matter in order to facilitate the members to make appropriate decisions on the subject matter being discussed.
- (f) The Chairperson shall rule out any motion or debate on a subject moved by a member if s/he deems it unlawful or that the implementation of activities arising out of such a matter would be unlawful.
- (g) However, the Chairperson shall allow debates only to the extent that the discussions justify fruitful decision-making on the subject matter and that further debates are permitted within the time allocated for the agenda item.
- (h) The Chairperson shall uphold and maintain transparency and accountability throughout the moderation of the session, including upholding of equality and equity with justice.
- (i) The Chairperson shall ensure the provision of equal duration to all members to speak on a subject matter. If needed, the Chairperson can intervene to stop a member from speaking based on his or her view that a particular member has been heard enough to understand the matter being discussed, and that s/he is depriving other members of their space and opportunity to speak on the subject matter.

- (j) The Chairperson shall ensure that the members uphold the prescribed code of conduct, and behave in a courteous and respectful manners, while refraining from using profane, offensive, vulgar and derogatory expressions including the use of physical force that is likely to disrupt and disturb the effective discussion.
- (k) The Chairperson shall stop a member and/or remove from the GT or DT session if he/she is deemed to have violated the prescribed protocols or code of conduct as stipulated in the LG Act and Rules and Regulations.
- (l) Even in an open session, the Chairperson can use his/her discretion to exclude the press and any of the other observers, from all or part of a proceeding of discussing an agenda or part of an agenda, in the event of a compelling necessity where publicity would seriously jeopardize the public interest. However, such a decision should be made with a consensus of the members in attendance.





- **Decision-making and Recording of DT/GT Resolutions**

- (a) **Decision-making on the discussion of an agenda item:**

The Chairperson will determine a decision on an agenda item based on the key conclusions out of the discussion. The Chairperson shall then float the decision and propose it for adoption, which should be made as follows:


- i. Show of hands**

- The Chairperson shall call for the show of hands for a decision proposed.
- The Chairperson shall note down the number of hands, and the majority show of hands should be taken as the consensus for adoption of the decision proposed.
- The Chairperson shall specify as and when the call for a show of hands is for 'Yes' or 'No'. Accordingly, when the number in a show of hands is in the majority, it will determine whether the members accepts or rejects a proposed decision. For example, for a 'yes' or 'no' question, the Chairperson should first ask the members to show their hands for 'yes', followed by a show of hands for 'no'. The Chairperson shall make a decision based on the majority of the show of hands.

- ii. Voting**

When a consensus is not reached for a decision by a show of hands, the Chairperson shall propose the adoption of a decision by voting. The decision to be taking by voting can also take place when a member who moves a motion for discussion on a particular agenda proposes to vote. The decision to be taken by voting shall take place as follows:

- The Chairperson shall call the members to cast their vote for a decision on a particular proposal. Each member, including the Chairperson, is entitled to only one vote per proposal. However, the Chairperson should not cast his vote in the first instance.
- Only member of the GT or DT are entitled to cast a vote.
- Members are not allowed to exercise the right to vote by proxy.

- 
- The invitation to cast the vote shall be by a roll call or in any other manner the Chairperson may decide to be appropriate for the purpose.
 - The Chairperson will cast his or her vote, when:
 - The votes cast by the members are tied, and need a deciding vote;
 - A matter is to be decided by at least two-thirds of the total number of members of the DT or GT.

(b) Recording the decisions and compiling the GT or DT resolutions

i. Recording of decisions

The record of decisions shall be made as follows:

- No further debate is allowed on an agenda item on which a decision has been made by consensus through a show of hands or by voting.
- The Chairperson shall ensure that the GT or DT Secretary, as the case may be, maintain the record of votes cast by the members for the decision of each agenda item with the details of the names of members who voted for the motion as well as those who voted against the motion. However, these details will not be recorded in the case of votes cast by secret ballot.
- The Chairperson shall announce the outcome of the voting and adopt the decision for discussion on the specific agenda item.

ii. Compiling the GT or DT resolutions

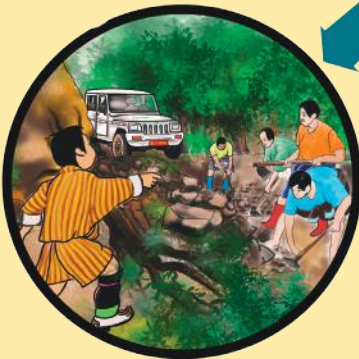
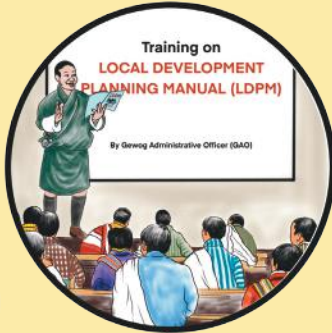
The compilation of the decisions and resolutions of GT or DT session are carried out as follows:

- The GT or DT Secretary, as the case may be, prepares detailed minutes of the session, including the following:
 - Date of session.
 - Venue of session.
 - Member participants who attended the session.
 - Other persons and observers who attended the session.
 - The details of the entire proceedings of the session by each agenda item, including the motion moved, discussion and the process of decision-making with the results of the decision-making process.



- Conclusion
- The Chairperson shall call upon the GT or DT Secretary, as the case may be, to read out the draft minutes and seek the confirmation and endorsement of the decisions.
- The Chairperson shall order for the incorporation of comments or feedback of the members on the minutes, provided that such comments and feedback were held during the discussion and only if they have been missing from the minutes.
- Following adoption of the minutes by all the members, the Chairperson shall sign in every page of the minutes in the presence of the members.
- The signed minutes shall then be considered as the resolution of the GT or DT session and distributed to all members, agencies and individuals concerned.

LG FUNCTIONS





Chapter 5

Effective Conduct of Zomdu for Community Participation and Engagement

▪ Purpose of Community Involvement and Engagement

People's participation and involvement in LG development planning, decision-making and implementation is an important aspect of decentralisation. Currently community participation and engagement is implemented mainly through Zomdus, which is a platform for:

- Discussing and soliciting people's views to submit proposals for the agenda of the GT, DT or Parliament session;
- Formulating, discussing and reviewing the five-year and annual plans, programmes and activities of the Gewog.
- Consultation on the formulation of national policies, laws and rules;
- Sharing the GT, DT or Parliament resolutions and, annual performance or progress reports;
- Discussing and consulting on the implementation of other sectoral project activities; and
- Discussing and consulting on any issues deemed important and required to do so by Gewog/Dzongkhag.



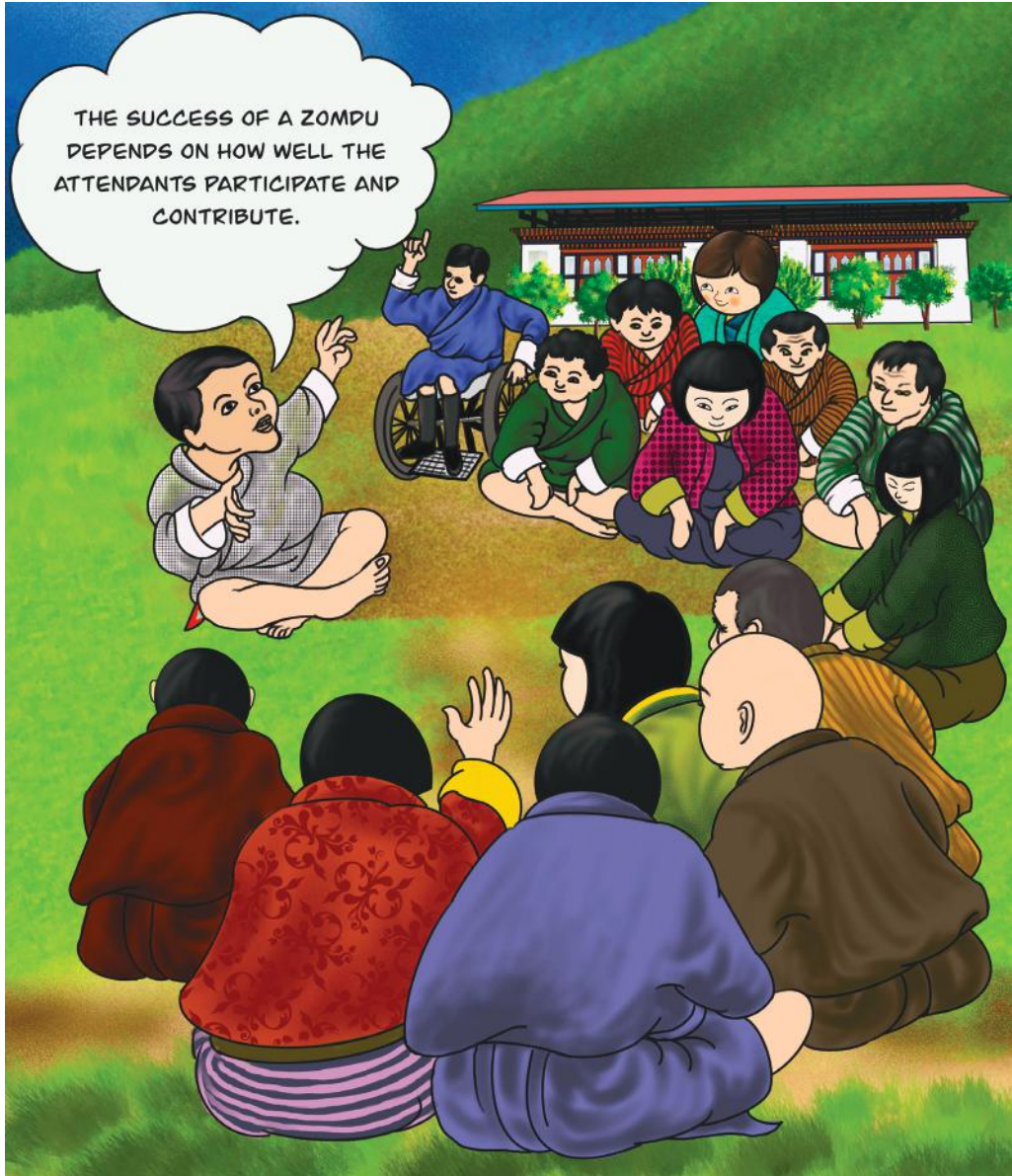
▪ **Pre requisites of Effective Zomdu**

Participation is not determined merely by a large number of attendees. A Zomdu may be more effective when the participants are involved and interact actively in discussion of the agenda items. Therefore, the Gup should ensure that the Gewog staff concerned who organise and preside over the Zomdus deploy appropriate community facilitation skills and strategies.

The following measures are recommended to enhance effectiveness of a Zomdu:

- (a) Avoid organisation of ad-hoc and irregular numbers of Zomdus to prevent people from suffering Zomdu fatigue. The Gewog should conduct Zomdus in an organised manner, with proper planning of the Zomdu calendar. Requiring people to come frequently and irregularly for Zomdus may disturb their routine activities, and result in not attending or proxy-attendance.
- (b) The Chiwog or Gewog concerned should share the Zomdu plan or calendar with all relevant agencies and sectors through appropriate medium, clearly mentioning the number of Zomdus to be held per year with dates, soliciting all concerned to plan their respective consultation with people to coincide with the Zomdu dates. For example, the common forum conducted during election are organised to facilitate all contestants to speak at one meeting, so that people are not required to attend several times.
- (c) Ensure that the notification for a Zomdu reaches the people concerned on time, while making sure that they understand the date, venue and agenda of the meeting.
- (d) When asked, explain clearly why a Zomdu is called, the agenda items, what is expected to come out of the meeting and how people may be impacted by the decisions. This will help people understand the importance of the meeting and make an effort to attend.
- (e) Conduct the meeting at a time convenient for people. If a meeting is conducted when people are busy in the fields or other village activities, they may not come. So do not conduct meetings in the peak farming season, on holy days or other traditional and customary events. Levying fines and penalizing them may not result in a productive and effective outcome.
- (f) Conduct the meeting in a public place that is comfortable and convenient for the people to attend, considering the conditions of the people expected to attend. If a Zomdu is held at a place far from most people's residence or that requires uphill climb, for example, elder people, women and other physically challenged people

may not be able to attend. Remember, consultation with communities has to ensure an inclusiveness to incorporate the interests of everyone, especially those who will be impacted the most by the decisions.



▪ **Prior Necessary Arrangement for Effective Zomdu**

- (a) Do not take anything for granted. At least one day before the Zomdu, the Tshogpa should ensure that all necessary arrangements are made and set.

Tips



- a. Make all necessary preparations of the meeting hall or place on the preceding day of the meeting.
- b. Design an engaging meeting programme, instead of a programme that requires continuous lecture and information-sharing by the Tshogpa or the facilitator. Design the meeting programme in such a manner that it will encourage participants to engage and speak out. This will be possible by including group works, presentations and other innovative methods. Ice-breakers are important and they make participants more comfortable and confident to participate.
- c. Organizing a visually impactful meetings with posters and pictorial presentation may be more likely to lead to an interactive and attentive discussion by the participants.
- d. Share the meeting programme with a few people and discuss it briefly to ensure that it is most suitable for the purpose and objectives of the meeting.
- e. Make a suitable sitting arrangement for the meeting. It is important to observe the national etiquette or the customary procedure and practice. However, the sitting arrangement must not create an intimidating environment, differentiating the official or social positions amongst the participants and between the organizing officials and participants. For a consultative meeting, a circular sitting arrangement is much better so that everyone can be seen and heard. If the number of attendees are too large for a circular sitting, at least do not make people sit in rows with some people behind others and far away from the speaker.

In order to enhance the effectiveness of discussions in a Zomdu, the Tshogpa should encourage prior community meetings through the use of community engagement platforms (CEPs). The prior discussions with community stakeholders in CEPs should enable community members to make effective decisions on the agenda items proposed for discussions in the Chiwog Zomdu and participate meaningfully in the Chiwog Zomdus. To that effect, for any matters that are going to be discussed in the GT or DT sessions, as far as possible, the Tshogpa should promote the practice of using CEPs as the origin of community's views and decisions.

- (b) On the meeting day, just prior to the beginning of the meeting, the Tshogpa should ensure that all the last-minute preparations are set to welcome participants.


Tips



- a. Make sure that the Tshogpa or Gewog Administrative Officer (GAO), as the case may be, arrive at the meeting venue at least half-an-hour earlier than the people.
- b. Ensure that all meeting materials are ready and equipment properly set. Make sure the equipment functions properly.
- c. Review the sitting arrangements, and make changes, if necessary, depending on the mental calculation of the size and nature of attendance. For example, do not put a too much of chairs to have them empty, or don't put too few for some people to feel embarrassed by not having a seat like their colleagues.
- d. As people arrive, greet them in a friendly gesture, and make an informal welcome as they approach. Make them feel comfortable and acknowledge their arrival. Talk or make remarks about ordinary community life and topics of usual talk in the community or village.
- e. Tell them to feel free and relax, and take seats (in the meeting hall) as they wish, until start of the meeting after everyone has arrived.

▪ Process of Effective Conduct of a Zomdu

- a. When the meeting starts, ensure that every one is comfortable and have their attention. Do not, by any means, make uncomfortable remarks or threatening actions. Even if some people are late and just joining, let them feel free to do so.
- b. Introduce the purpose and subject of the meeting. Present or read out the agenda of the meeting, and invite comments and feedback from the participants, if any.
- c. As additional proposals of agenda are being submitted, note them down. Prepare the final list of agenda items to be discussed, and adopt the meeting programme by reading out to the participants.
- d. Chair the meeting with fairness and transparency without discrimination on race, religion, social position and economic background, and without any cause for suspicion, doubt and fear. As far as possible, try and create an informal setting,



however, without allowing some participants to take advantage of the situation and behave abnormally to affect the essence of the meeting.

- e. Encourage everyone's engagement because it needs to be inclusive and participatory.
- f. Group work is an effective way of participation. Wherever necessary, break the participants into groups, and request them to present their findings.
- g. All decisions should seek the consensus of all participants. Findings of each group should not necessarily influence the decision of the particular point of discussion.
- h. As the meeting goes on, the Tshogpa shall keep a record of all decisions on each discussion point. At the end of the meeting, read out the decisions once again and confirm everyone's agreement.
- i. After the Zomdu, the Tshogpa shall prepare a proper minutes of the Zomdu, containing the following:
 - a. Day, date and venue of the Zomdu
 - b. Objective of the Zomdu
 - c. List of participants
 - d. Programme of the meeting with agenda items; and
 - e. Process of discussions and decisions made for each discussion point.
- j. The minutes of the Zomdu should be signed by the Tshogpa or the Gup.
- k. The Zomdu minutes should be submitted to the Gewog Administration clearly indicating the decisions taken for submission to GT session and other follow-up matters.

Tips



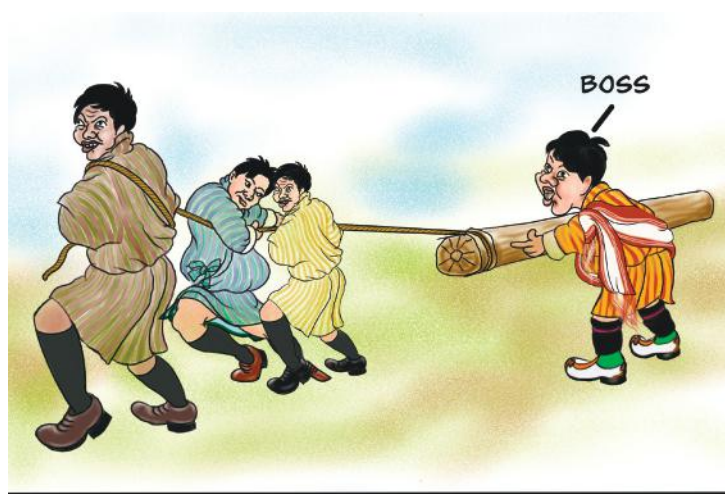
- a. Present yourself in a friendly way with due humility and submissiveness. (You are leading them, but they have made you lead). Maintain constant smiles and accommodating gestures.
- b. Maintain a bird's eye view of the gathering and see if anyone is not comfortable or appears not to be very confident because of sitting arrangement or any other reasons.
- c. If you want to, reshuffle the seats to mix people, especially men and women. The general tendency in any meeting is that people choose to sit together with friends or with a more familiar colleagues. The most common practice is that women and men sit in separate groups. Break such crowds by mixing them, so that the discussions are effective.
- d. To make the participants open up and feel free, ask the participants for an ice-breaker. Ice-breaker must be one that makes everyone, especially the shy and not confident, engage and open up.
- e. Welcome the participants for the meeting. Thank them for acknowledging the importance of the meeting and coming, as requested.
- f. Share their concerns and administrative burden caused by repeated meetings, but, convince them that any decision on community development depends on their inputs and advices. Make each of them feel important as if only their attendance can achieve the objectives of the meeting.



Chapter 6

Attributes of a Good Gup

As a leader, a Gup must possess and display leadership qualities. A leader is someone who not only leads people, but also someone who is driven by the right motivation and makes a positive impact on the people around them. A leader is someone who sees how things can be improved and who rallies people to move forward with a better vision for a change. A leader works towards making the community vision a reality by putting the people first. The following are a few examples of the attributes of a good Gup as a leader:





a. Relationship builder

A good leader is one that values relationships with staff, and with people. Disrespect, contempt, and personal attacks create unhealthy relationships that undermine sound governance. If one wishes another to fail, then everyone fails. Good relationships and sound policy will serve you and the community better.

b. A team player

A Gup is elected by the public as an individual, but to work with the people as a team. A Gup must work constructively with people without dominating the flow of information or ideas. The role of a Gup is to respect and support the decision of the majority, by setting aside personal interests and influences for the common good.

c. Self-awareness or self-leadership

Self-awareness and self-leadership is a paramount for leadership. The better you understand yourself, the more effective you can be. So, it is important for Gups to understand how other people view them, and they conduct themselves at work.

d. Approachable and willingness to listen

A good leader is expected to be accessible to the community through various platforms at all times, while listening carefully with a desire to understand concerns, ideas, and perspectives. Commitment to a clear, diverse, and regular communication with the community is key.

A Gup is a leader of people who must help LG succeed. So, listening to people, their interests and needs can be achieved when their views are heard and their voices reach to the authorities concerned.

e. Preparedness

As an elected representative of people, a Gup must be well versed about the situation of the local jurisdiction and the development needs of the locality. So, Gups must inform and prepare themselves in order to understand their community well to be able to represent the people well to achieve with good result.

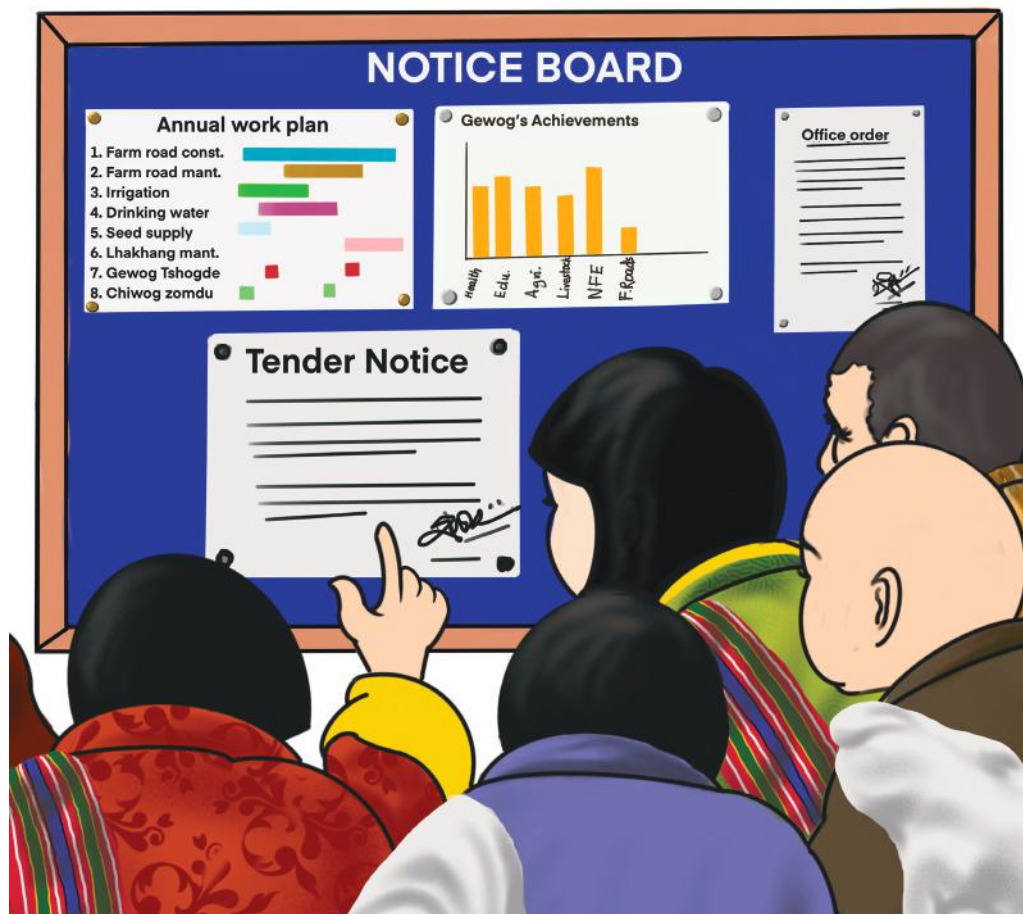
Preparation by a Gup is the key to success for the constituents and the citizens of the locality. Preparation includes reading the materials pertaining to LG affairs (such as Acts, Rules and Regulations, Guidelines and other relevant frameworks), consultation with people, making site visits and verifying the issues, and seeking advice from the professional staff and legal counsel.

f. **Emotionally mature**

A Gup needs to behave in line with his/her own emotional state and know how it affects himself or herself. A Gup is required to make decisions in the best interests of the people, so s/he must be able to withstand criticism. Being emotionally mature means staying engaged, welcoming dissent, and not over reacting to it, while accepting the differences of opinion. Differences help the community consider various views and debate various ideas. Diversity of opinion often helps to get to the best possible answer for the locality. After all, a Gup is not elected to make his/her own decisions.

g. **Transparency, Accountability and Integrity**

These are the very essence and an entire objective of a good governance that a good leader must promote and practice. As a responsible public figure at the community level, a Gup is followed by the people for her/his intelligent decision-making. So, transparency, accountability and integrity are critical for community trust and reputation.




h. Respect and gratitude

Treating people with respect on a daily basis is one of the most important things a leader can do. It will ease tensions and conflict, create trust, and improve effectiveness. Similarly, being thankful can make you a better leader. Gratitude can lead to higher self-esteem, reduced depression and anxiety, and even better sleep.





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7. Financial Manual 2016
8. Procurement Manual 2019
9. Community Contracting Protocol 2020
10. Protocol for LG Proceedings 2020

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