At first, when I started my research in the latest trend in library & information science like automation, networking, digital library or quality management, etc. But my guide Prof. Dr. Narendra Lahkar, asked me that, “As you are working in Bhutan, why don’t you do a project something relevant to Bhutan?” This question made me to realize my responsibility as the chief librarian of Sherbutse College, to initiate a good public library system in Bhutan. This social responsibility is concretized by the sentiments expressed by some students of Sherbutse College that they can not go for reading as they don’t have the library facilities. In Bhutan there are only two libraries, one is public library and the other one is National Library and Archives of Bhutan which are located in Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan. Reading in libraries and purchasing books are very difficult things in Bhutan, as it is very difficult to travel to Thimphu. Only school and college students can use the libraries of their respective institutions. If they finish their education, they too will be pushed off in the “bookless desert”.

This sad situation makes me to decide my research title namely “Public Library System in Bhutan”. When I consulted with the librarians of Thimphu, they appreciated my ideas and promised full cooperation in this regard. With this idea I approached again Prof Dr. Narendra Lahkar, he happily approved this project. This is how the project was born.

Public libraries are to meet the informational needs of all; to facilitate lifelong learning, to support educational, civic and cultural activities of individuals, groups and organizations. Without libraries, it is not possible to think research and development activities. Public libraries are the treasure houses of knowledge, culture and civilization. No one can neglect the services of the public library. Even layman will benefit from the public library services. It is a people’s university.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown (UK), on the launch of the National Year of Reading, 8 January 2008: "Reading is a ladder out of poverty. It is probably one of the best anti-poverty, anti-deprivation, anti-crime, anti-vandalism policies you can think of.” Literacy recognized as a right. The rationale for recognizing literacy as a right is the set of benefits it confers on individuals, families, communities and nations. These benefits of
literacy are classified as human, political, cultural, social and economic. Indeed, it is widely considered that, in modern societies, 'literacy skills are fundamental to informed decision-making, personal empowerment, active and passive participation in local and global social community'. Many research findings say that the public libraries in developing countries help to eradicate illiteracy of their countries. Samuel Johnson quotes that "no place affords a more striking conviction of the vanity of human hopes than a public library". It is indispensable part of human life.

This project "Public Library System in Bhutan: a systematic approach for future developments" tells about the significance of public libraries, systematic planning of public libraries. It gives some essential factors about Bhutan like political system, population, economy, languages, education and literacy. The study also covers the status and services of libraries and other mass media of Bhutan. The survey part of the study tells the awareness of libraries among Bhutanese, their habits and interests to go to the public libraries. The main objective of the study is to reach the information service to all the nook and corner of the country at free of cost.

This project will be useful for all the aspirants of libraries, students and scholars of library science, librarians and the government officials those who have interest to develop libraries for the society. Indeed, my plan is to submit the recommendations of this project to the Royal Government of Bhutan. Once if the RGB takes the recommendations in their hand, it will be a real success of this project. I hope this will provide "oasis" for those who are all suffering in the bookless desert.