Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study aims to examine the concept of Gross National Happiness (or GNH) against the backdrop of the minority situation in Bhutan. In one sense, the study is an attempt to test the happiness-oriented development paradigm of Bhutan. Bhutan measures prosperity on the basis of its citizens’ happiness levels and not the Gross Domestic Product (or GDP). Therefore, this study seeks to answer if this happiness-oriented approach of development is responsive to the needs of its citizens. Bhutan is a small Himalayan kingdom in South Asia whose history is more unique than its neighbouring counterparts. Nestled high in the Himalayas between India and China, it is one of the only two countries in the South Asian region that was not a British colony, the other being Nepal. In fact, the country emerged from its isolation only on 1959, shifting its development emphasis on economic sphere.

The history of Bhutan’s origin leads us back to the 17th century, when Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, a Buddhist military leader from Tibet, took over control of most of Bhutan and developed the country’s dual religious/secular system of government. Buddhism has long been a predominant element in Bhutan ever since its introduction in the eighth century by the Indian monk Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche in Bhutan). With the ascension of the Zhabdrung into power, Buddhist monks continued to hold theocratic authority over the new Bhutanese state. Since 1907, through the formalization of secular government, one Penlop (regional fief) was chosen to be king over the entire state. This

---

1 In Tibetan, Zhabdrung literally means ‘In front of the foot’, but often translated as ‘To whom one submits’.
2 Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal bifurcated the duties of the ruler by creating two separate offices – one to look after the spiritual and religious affairs to be known as Dharma Raja (Zhabdrung), and the other to be called Deb Raja (Desi) to look after the general administration of the State revenue and expenditure and dealing with foreign powers. The Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal himself became the Dharma Raja and was vested with superior powers which included matters of both foreign and domestic affairs of the State and each of these matters required his signature. In few decades after the establishment of these two institutions, Dharma Raja wielded extensive powers and became the symbol of law and justice, while Deb Raja had then the functions of a mere Regent.
3 Padmasambhava was the Tantric sage who is credited with founding the Nyingma school of Mahayana Buddhism. He entered Bhutan during the eighth century upon the invitation of a king of Bumthang to subdue demons and placate local deities. He is more commonly known as ‘Guru Rinpoche’.
marked the creation of Bhutan’s hereditary monarchical system of governance, which now has extended across five generations of kings. In 2008, the king of Bhutan introduced democracy in the kingdom. Nonetheless, Buddhism still remains the “spiritual heritage” of this new constitutional monarchy, with the *Druk Gyalpo* (Dragon King) and *Je Khenpo* (leader of Central Monk Body) sharing authority over all matters of religion and state.

Bhutan is a multiethnic country with the *Ngalong* peoples (of Tibetan origin) concentrated in the western and northern districts; *Sharchops* (originally from northern Burma and northeast India) concentrated in eastern districts; and *Lhotshampas* (of Nepali origin) concentrated in the southern foothills. The *Ngalongs* have long been politically dominant, which can be reflected in the fact that Buddhists make up about 80 per cent of the population, and the *Ngalon* practice of Tibetan-style Mahayana Buddhism penetrating all facets of Bhutanese life, even though the southern region of Bhutan has majority of Hindu and Christian populations. Dzongkha, the *Ngalong* language, is the official language of the country, although many other Tibeto-Burman languages predominate in the central and eastern parts of the country and Nepali is spoken in the south. This dominance of *Ngalong/Buddhist/Dzongkha* populations has often continued to be detrimental to ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities.

In 2006, King Jigme Singye Wangchuk stepped down from the throne and in his place his son, Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuk was declared the new king of Bhutan. The young king administered the nation’s first legislative elections in 2008, which marked Bhutan’s transition to a democratic constitutional monarchy. While Bhutan has traditionally delegated authority to the local level, the country is now administratively divided into 20 *dzongkhags* (districts) and 205 *gewogs* (blocks), with district-level development committees administering local projects and articulating local needs. This decentralized governance structure has provided a basis to address Bhutan’s policy focus on GNH, presenting a new paradigm based on human happiness and the wellbeing of all life forms as the ultimate goal, purpose and context of development.

GNH is a system of espousing holistic development by redefining development as the advancement of political, economic, social, and cultural goals. The root of the happiness policy can be traced back to Bhutan’s 1729 legal code, which stated that “if the
Government cannot create happiness (dekid) for its people, there is no purpose for the Government to exist.” (Ura, et. al, 2012 a: 6; Ura, et. al, 2012 b: 6; Chauhan, 2012 :159) Immediately after his succession to the throne in 1972, the fourth king declared that he would reform Bhutanese policy to achieve economic self-reliance, prosperity and happiness. Coining the term ‘Gross National Happiness’ (and proclaiming it morally superior to Gross National Product), he formalized happiness as a national policy goal and a means to transform the Kingdom.

To reorient the nation toward GNH by making happiness the official goal of all policies, the Bhutanese government has sought to realize equitable and sustainable socio-economic development, environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and good governance. The constitution of Bhutan as codified this national commitment to GNH by stating that “The State shall strive to promote conditions that will enable the pursuit of Gross National Happiness” (The Royal Government of Bhutan, the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008: 18). Surveying its citizens to assess happiness, the government of Bhutan now distributes GNH surveys to representative samples to assess nine domains: (a) psychological well-being, (b) health, (c) education, (d) culture, (e) time use, (f) good governance, (g) community vitality, (h) ecological diversity and resilience, and (i) living standards. There are multidimensional questions on each of the domains, which provide respondents an opportunity to rank their satisfaction on a scale from ‘deeply unsatisfied’ to ‘incredibly satisfied’. Based upon these rankings, individuals are classified as unhappy, narrowly happy, extensively happy, and deeply happy. Furthermore, the government examines the aggregate happiness levels in the national GNH Index, and then distributes resources to increase the proportion of happy people and decrease the insufficiencies of the not-yet-happy people. The promotion of GNH has drawn the attention of international bodies with UN General Assembly also coming up with a resolution on “Happiness: Towards a Holistic Approach to development” in 2011. There were 68 countries which endorsed this move by the UN General Assembly to adopt Bhutan’s holistic approach to development. These efforts to promote GNH have provided the Bhutanese government with an oversized voice in the UN agenda, allowing this small state to host a 2012 High-Level Meeting on “Happiness and Wellbeing: Defining a New Economic Paradigm.” The GNH model continues to reverberate in UN development debates, with Bhutan held up as a
model for translating happiness into policy under the Sustainable Development Goals. As a reflection of Bhutan’s global efforts to advance happiness in development, the UN General Assembly has declared March 20th to be International Happiness Day.

However, the four measures that comprise GNH, while commendable, fail to include an important element that affects a nation’s residents: the equal treatment of minority populations. A significant portion of the country’s history reflects a disturbing side of the otherwise peaceful state; a part of country’s history which continues to vex a significant portion of the population today. Bhutan’s ethnic minorities have suffered profound mistreatment in the form of “ethnic cleansing” in the aftermath of the 1988 census. The Nepali-Bhutanese, or Lhotshampas, in particular, have been the victims of the country’s practices and policies of racial intolerance.

One of the various aspects of the Lhotshampa issue is the differences in religion, language and ethnicity. The Ngalong⁴, the minority ruling class in Bhutan, are Buddhist and speak Dzongkha, while the Nepali-Bhutanese, who have traditionally resided in southern parts of Bhutan, are primarily Hindu and speak Nepali. Adding to these ethno-religious differences, growing fears of spill over of events near home (such as the Gorkhaland movement of 1986) led to the Bhutanese government to formulate policies of singling out ‘the other’ within the country. For instance, a centuries-old code of conduct called Driglam Namzha, originally meant to offer guidance on dress and etiquette, was reinterpreted in ways that restricted the language and customs of Nepali-Bhutanese.

By the late 1980s discrimination against the Nepali-Bhutanese took several forms. First, in addition to continuing cultural and linguistic discrimination, the jobs and landholdings of many Nepali-Bhutanese were taken away. Second, in 1988, a first-of-its-kind census, applied strictly only in the south where Nepali-Bhutanese primarily lived, divided the population, including units of individual families, into different categories of genuine citizens and non-citizens. Finally, beginning in 1989 and continuing through the early 1990s, tens of thousands of Nepali-Bhutanese had their documentation (land certificates, ⁴The Ngalongs are the dominant ethnic group of Bhutan; they primarily follow Buddhism and are spread all across the country, especially the western Bhutan. For more details, refer to Chapter III: Bhutan and its Minorities on page no. 76
voting records and the like) taken away and left the country. They crossed through India and into Nepal, where between 80,000 and 100,000 lived for more than two decades in refugee camps. Bhutanese refugee camps were established at five different sites: Timai, Goldhap, Beldangi and Khudunabari in Jhapa district, and Sanishchare (Pathri) in Morang (Hutt, 2005: 48). Started from the late 1990 with a few hundred asylum seekers, the Bhutanese refugees in Nepal had reached over 70,000 by the end of 1992 (Khanal, 1998: 152). Since September 1991, the UNHCR undertook the work of assistance to the refugees on the request of the government of Nepal. The year 1992 witnessed the largest influx of refugees averaging 300-600 new arrivals a day. In 2006, some 108,000 Bhutanese asylum seekers resided in the camps of Jhapa and Morang Districts of eastern Nepal. The UN refugee agency and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) launched a resettlement programme of over 100,000 Bhutanese refugees from Nepal to third countries in 2007. These refugees are resettled in countries like Australia (5,554), Canada (6,500), Denmark (874), New Zealand (1002), the Netherlands (327), Norway (566), the United Kingdom (358) and the United States of America (84,819) (Deepesh Das Shrestha, 2015). At present, there were only two camps in Nepal and the refugee population stands at less than 18,000 people (Deepesh Das Shrestha, 2015).

Today, Bhutan estimates that 25 per cent of its population is Nepali-Bhutanese. Many live in southern Bhutan still with fears of losing their jobs, fearful to advance their rights, distrustful of their leaders, and ever cautious of having their status revoked. Access to information about this population and the situation they live in is a difficult endeavour. Bhutanese government and media are not vocal about the issue of these minorities, while visits of people from outside are highly constrained. Any information on the Nepali Bhutanese and the refugee issue comes from those who were exiled and those who left.

So, are there any hopes for the Nepali-Bhutanese who remain as refugees in the camps of Nepal, and those who have desire to return home? Are there any opportunities for those living in the country to enjoy political representation, freedom of speech and security of status? This thesis will, therefore, enquire some of these aforementioned issues. It will look into whether the “Gross” in Bhutan’s Gross National Happiness framework includes all its citizens? When one speaks of happiness in Bhutan, whose happiness does
one speak of? Do preservation of culture and socio-economic development, as two important pillars of GNH, restricted to the majority populace or include other minorities as well? It is along these issues that this study will explore in detail Bhutan’s GNH in the context of its minority policy, citizenship and human rights.

1.2 Bhutan’s Gross National Happiness Framework

Initiated in the 1970s as a part of Bhutan’s developmental policies, Gross National Happiness development philosophy was built upon the 1792 legal code\(^5\) which stated that “if the government cannot create happiness (dekidk) for its people, there is no purpose for the government to exist” (Ura, et. al, 2010: 4; The Centre for Bhutan Studies, 2012: 1 a; The Centre for Bhutan Studies, 2012: 9 b). Bhutan officially became a constitutional monarchy in 2008. With the establishment of new democracy in the country, King Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuk, the Fifth King of Bhutan, sought to create development policies and programmes in line with the objective of promoting happiness. The Constitution of Bhutan states that the State shall ‘promote those conditions that will enable the pursuit of Gross National Happiness’ (Article 9). GNH has identified four significant areas that are elements in the overall direction of the developmental process as the pillars of the GNH concept. They are: (a) preservation of culture, (b) good governance, (c) environment conservation and (d) socio-economic development (The Centre for Bhutan Studies, 2012). These four pillars are discussed in brief in the following paragraphs.

1.2.a Preservation of Culture

Bhutan has always given high significance to Bhutanese culture and its preservation. A distinctive culture of Bhutan promotes the country’s sovereignty as well as provides Bhutanese people an identity (Ura et. al, 2012: 144). The government has stressed on the importance of happiness in achieving the goal of preservation of Bhutanese culture, thereby integrating happiness in its development policies. Cultural resilience can be understood as the capacity to maintain and develop cultural identity, knowledge and practices, and able to overcome challenges and difficulties from other norms and ideals.

---

5The Legal Code date 1729 is attributed to the 10th Desi Mipham Wangpo while he was serving on the Golden Throne of Bhutan, as representative of the Zhabdrung Rimpoche, and based on the Zhabdrung’s earlier work.
Culture is a dynamic concept, as it keeps evolving due to various factors involving external forces as well as internal cultural and social change (Ura et. al, 2012: 144). As such there is a need to develop cultural resilience in order for the Bhutanese culture to sustain. Preservation of culture is carried out in formal ways through the obligation to wear the traditional clothing on any official occasion; for all buildings to adhere to the national architecture standards; and mandatory mindfulness training in schools. Bhutan has incorporated the age old tradition of Driglam Namzha into the GNH policy for the purpose of retaining the Drukpa culture. Another approach of upholding culture is by celebrating festivals or ‘Tsechu’ as they display the rich Bhutanese culture and heritage through dance, song and performance.

1.2.b Good Governance

Another pillar of GNH according to the Bhutanese government is good governance. The key elements of good governance are participation, rule of law, transparency, accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness, equity empowerment and inclusiveness (Ura et. al, 2012: 155). Bhutan has employed various policies, programs and processes in order to ensure that these elements are embedded in social policy. The Constitution of Bhutan directs the State ‘to promote those conditions that will enable the pursuit of Gross National Happiness’ (The Royal Government of Bhutan, The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008). To uphold these conditions, Bhutan transformed from a monarchy to a parliamentary democracy. With a democratic government in power in Bhutan, greater efficiency, transparency and accountability are expected to improve overall governance and that of GNH.

1.2.c Environmental Conservation

Being a Buddhist society, Bhutan has accorded environment with a significant role in human development. As the third pillar of GNH, environmental conservation not only provides critical services such as water and energy but it is also believed to contribute to aesthetic and other stimulus that can be directly healing to people who enjoy vivid colours and light, untainted breeze and silence in nature’s sound. More than 80 per cent of Bhutan
is covered with natural forest and more than 60 per cent is protected by law (The Royal Government of Bhutan, the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008: 12).

1.2.d Socio-economic Development

Another pillar of GNH is socio-economic contributions of households and families, free time and leisure given the roles of these factors in Happiness. Since Bhutan is a developing nation it has a small growing business economy. While traditional industries are strong, Bhutan is faced by much competition from outside market forces. There are public policies in Bhutan which aims at protecting local industries from cheaper imports outside Bhutan. Local partnerships and community service programs help strengthen the local industry in Bhutan.

1.3 Domains and Indicators of Bhutan’s GNH

These four pillars of GNH were further classified into nine domains to reflect the totality of its range. These include living standards, education, health, environment, community vitality, time-use, psychological well-being, good governance, and cultural resilience and promotion. A GNH index was developed from 33 indicators, categorized under these domains based upon a robust multi-dimensional methodology known as the Alkire-Foster method (The Centre for Bhutan Studies: 2012: 4 a).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domains</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Domains</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Domains</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Domains</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living Standard</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assets</td>
<td>Ecological Issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community Vitality</td>
<td>Ecological Diversity and Resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Per capita income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Relationship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>Value</td>
<td>Driglam Namzha</td>
<td>Political Participation</td>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Urbanization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>Speak Native Language</td>
<td>Government’s Performance</td>
<td>Donations (Time and Money)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Cultural Diversity and Resilience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Government’s Performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Governance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamental Rights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Wildlife damage (rural)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility towards environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Diversity and resilience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking Native Language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government’s Performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations (Time and Money)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecological Issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Wellbeing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Emotions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Emotions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>Healthy Days</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Artistic Skills</td>
<td>Services</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Wildlife damage (rural)</td>
<td>Household Per capita income</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Domains and Indicators of the GNH Index
1.4 Buddhist Philosophy of Happiness and GNH

Happiness, according to Bhutan’s Gross National Happiness paradigm, results from conditions where people are able to pursue wellbeing in sustainable ways. Bhutan’s GNH holds that happiness should be pursued as a common public good. Therefore, progress should be viewed not only through the lens of economics but also from spiritual, social, cultural and ecological perspectives. The concept of GNH has become a guiding principle in the minds of Bhutanese and an overarching objective in almost all official documents of the country.

The concept of happiness in Bhutan’s GNH is inspired by Mahayana Buddhism, which was the state religion of Bhutan in the early 1970s and still has a substantial influence today, has been intricately intertwined with culture and politics, including Gross National Happiness, in Bhutan (Givel, 2015: 14). A deep understanding of Mahayana Buddhism is necessary to understand why and how GNH operates as a primary policy influence in modern Bhutan. The primary purpose of Mahayana Buddhism is to spread happiness and compassion to everyone in the world. This includes that by awakening to the Ultimate Truth, one obtains greater clarity and insight about the true nature of the universe, leading to internal peace and happiness. This happiness results in joy in human relations. Through obtainment of the Ultimate Truth, greater and positive potentialities of the enlightened beings are unlocked. All common folk have the inner Buddha nature, and thus can obtain this happiness.

As the concept of Gross National Happiness is deeply rooted in Buddhist philosophy and culture, it envisions a people-centric holistic development which is an effective way to arrest the growth of material poverty and spiritual decline, both of which have undermined human dignity and the value of human life. The traditional way of measuring human progress by using the instrument of Gross National Product was found inadequate in addressing the concept of happiness. The GNP measurement falls short because it addresses only superficial or conditional phenomena in the world (Tashi, 2004: 484). Buddha explained that looking outward or relying on external support for the achievement of happiness is incorrect and erroneous. True bliss or happiness does not depend on external conditions. For achieving happiness, one has to cultivate inner
contentment. Buddhist philosophy states that relying on such external factors as the source of happiness will only lead to unhappiness. As such, in order to give birth to a GNH state, Bhutan tried to develop both economic and spiritual spheres together; the spiritual aspect as the base from which they would start (Tashi, 2004: 484). Buddhist philosophy also teaches about the importance of positive moral attitudes, especially non-violence, the significance of right livelihood, positive human communication skills, the essential equality of all human beings, respect for others, honoring their right to make up their own mind and live in the way they want (Lokamitra, 2004: 478). It shall be noted that the above statements will be imperative in the chapters to follow where the rights of minorities of Bhutan is discussed.

The goal of GNH is based on Mahayana Buddhist principles to increase happiness for everyone. This occurs through governmental policies and programs that promote material needs balanced with becoming enlightened. As such, Bhutan uses the Gross National Happiness index and a series of instruments of policy to construct policies that promote happiness. The shift from GNP to GNH was made due to a number of shortcomings in the usage of GNP index. According to GNP indicator, even if most people in a country are worse off from one year to the next, GNP may reflect an increase if a few people are doing well. As such, GNP fails to capture the distribution of wealth and income. Also, GNP is derived from prices. So when prices are not based on reality, when they are distorted, then the measures derived from them are also distorted. Further, GNP does not reflect what money is spent on in society. The indicator grows as long as more money is spent, no matter what the money is used for in society. GNP also fails to capture the environmental and social externalities of economic growth. Another issue that GNP fails to capture, especially in developing nations, is when a lot is produced in a country but most of the profits go abroad.

For these reasons, as well as the lack of people-centric approach to development in the neoliberal free market capitalism, Bhutan has chosen to take a more holistic and sustainable approach to development and progress. With the development of Gross National Happiness (GNH) index, institutions and policies in Bhutan revolve around maximizing GNH rather than GNP.
1.5 Bhutan and its Minorities

Bhutan is a small, land-locked South Asian country that is situated in the eastern Himalayas. It is spread across an area of 38,394 sq. km. and is bordered by the Tibet region of China and the Indian states of Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh (National Statistics Bureau, 2016). According to the 2005 census, the total population of Bhutan is 634,982 persons out of which 333,595 persons are male and 301,387 are females (National Statistics Bureau, 2016). Based on the exponential growth rate of 1.8 per cent derived from population projections (2005-2030), the population for 2014 and 2015 were projected at 745,153 and 757,042 respectively (National Statistics Bureau, 2016). Like its neighbouring countries in South Asia, Bhutan is ethnically diverse as its population is made up of various ethnic groups. The population of Bhutan can be classified into four broad categories: the Ngalongs, the Sharchops, the Lhotshampas, and several small, indigenous groups.

Figure 1. Bhutan’s Ethnic Composition

The Ngalongs, which means ‘first risen’, are the people of Tibetan origin who inhabit western Bhutan (Hutt, 2003: 4). The Ngalongs are politically dominant community of Bhutan and their language Dzongkha has been Bhutan’s National language since 1961
They are mainly the followers of Buddhism. The *Sharchops* are the people of Indo-Mongoloid origin, and like the *Ngalongs*, they also follow the Tibetan style of Mahayana Buddhism (Hutt, 2003: 5). The language they speak is known as *Tsangla*, however, they also speak several other local dialects (Upreti, 2004: 38). They are mainly spread across eastern Bhutan and the term ‘*Sharchop*’ also means ‘easterner’ (Hutt, 2003: 4). The *Lhotshampa*s are the ethnic Nepali community, spread across southern Bhutan. They primarily follow Hinduism. Lastly, among the minor communities of indigenous tribes include Dayas, Lepchas, Birmis, and so on. These tribes comprise approximately fifteen per cent of the entire population (Country Watch, 2017). In the case of Bhutan, the minorities are the *Lhotshampa*s/Nepalese and several aboriginal people including *Brokpas*, *Mons*, *Birmis*, *Dayas*, *Lepchas*, *Bodos*, *Kochs*, *Khens* and *Tephoos*. The *Lhotshmapas* make up to 35 per cent and the indigenous tribes make up to 15 per cent of the total population (Country Watch, 2015).

The first population census in Bhutan was taken in the year 1969 and after that in 1980 (The Royal Government of Bhutan, National Statistical Bureau, 2005: 1). The population figures for those early years stood large at 1,731,074 persons due to the influx of large number of migrants from the neighbouring countries as labour force as Bhutan was under a large-scale infrastructural development and expansion (The Royal Government of Bhutan, Statistics Division Planning Commission, 1985: 1). Most of these migrants were the Nepalis, who later settled in southern Bhutan.

Before 1969, estimates of the total population of Bhutan ranged from 300,000 to 800,000 persons. In 1969, a national census was said to have revealed the presence of a population of Bhutan just over one million (1,034,774 persons), subsequently revised to a total of 930,614 persons (Rose, 1977: 41) All literatures on Bhutan from this time onward, including that published by the Bhutanese government itself, assumed the presence of a population of over one million, a figure which was adjusted upwards on an annual basis to allow for population growth. The emphasis on development soon changed to human resource development, as such large number of migrants “moved out” which resulted in the population to stand at around 600,000 in 1996 (The Royal Government of Bhutan, 2005). See [http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/bhutan/people.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/bhutan/people.htm) accessed on 23/4/2014
National Statistical Bureau, 2005: 1). This figure has since become the baseline from which the official census figure is calculated. However, the fact that the exact size of the portion of population that can be labeled ‘Bhutanese’ remains contested and in doubt.

Estimates for the proportion of the total population of Bhutan that may be claimed for each ethnic category have varied widely. In July 1947, the Bhutan Agent in Kalimpong asserted in a memorandum to the Viceroy of India that the people of Bhutan were ‘all Mongolian in race’ and divided them into two categories: the ‘Natives of the country known as ‘Drukpas’’ and ‘the Nepalese immigrants from Nepal and Sikkim’ who accounted ‘for little under 25 per cent of Bhutan’s whole population which is about five hundred thousand’. Recent estimates show 38 per cent for the Ngalongs, 12 per cent for the Sharchops, 35 per cent for the Lhotshampas, and the remaining 15 per cent for various indigenous and migrant tribes (Central Intelligence Agency, The World Factbook).

1.6 Ethnic Problem in Bhutan

The ethnic conflict between the Drukpas and the Lhotshampas started after the promulgation of Driglam Namzha or ‘Bhutanization’ by the King in April 1988 and the Census conducted in the same year to identify the ‘illegal’ migrants who are mainly of Nepali origin. The census was based on the Citizenship Act passed in 1985. The cut-off year selected for the census was 1958. As per the official version, the 1988 Census and the implementation of Driglam Namzha were taken to project the ‘unique national identity’ of Bhutan and to make it ‘one nation, one people’ (Joseph, 1998: 116). The promulgation of ‘Driglam Namzha’ in 1988 and the census conducted in the same year were not overnight developments. They were the natural culmination of the political-economic developments in the country created by the modernization process. To understand political dynamics of the ethnic conflict between the Drukpas and the Lhotshampas and to locate the main reasons behind the ethnic cleavage between the Drukpas and the Bhutanese of Nepali origin, the socio-political as well as economic developments in the country must be examined, which will be examined in the next chapter, Bhutan and its Ethnic Minorities.

While the government saw a strong national identity as a necessary condition for cultural survival of the Drukpas (Ngalongs) against external demographic pressure, which
is evident in the importance given to the cultural preservation as one of the pillars of their
development policy in the form of acts like Driglam Namzha, the ethnic Nepalese saw it as
a sign of cultural imperialism. Ethnic Nepalese have often alleged that a policy of
discrimination is being pursued against them by the Bhutan’s ruling elite. The citizenship
acts of 1977 and 1985 have laid down more stringent clauses for anyone to qualify for
Bhutanese citizenship. In 1988, Bhutan conducted a census to address illegal immigration
in southern Bhutan. A number of Lhotshmapas had to forfeit their status of citizenship and
they eventually faced eviction from the country. All these were seen as an initiative
designed to reduce the size of the ethnic Nepali population of Bhutan. The Nepali
community took these measures as a serious threat and began to protest for civil and
cultural rights. Various organizations like the People’s Forum for Human Rights (PFHR)
were formed to protest the government policies. However, as protests swept across Bhutan,
the government alleged them as a ‘terrorist movement’ (Hutt, 2005: 47). The protesters
were labeled ‘anti-national terrorists’ and were considered threats to national security.
Many of them were arrested and jailed, some claim they were tortured during their
imprisonment. Prisoners and their families were forced to sign voluntary emigration forms
in order to secure the prisoner’s release. Most of them fled the country due to fear of
witnessing what was happening to the members of their community.

The overall position of minorities within Bhutan remains uncertain. The primary
minority, ethnic Nepalese continue to claim that they have suffered from forced expulsions
and non-rehabilitation in their native lands, and discrimination in civil service and public
sector employment. However, these claims were rejected by the government. The
Bhutanese refugee crisis began from 1990 with a few hundred asylum seekers and soon by
the end of 1992 the figure increased to around 70,000. Until 2007, there were over 100,000
Bhutanese who have been forced to become refugees in Nepal. Almost all of these are
ethnic Nepalese, who were stripped off of their nationality by the new Bhutanese
Citizenship law. However, with the initiative of the UN refugee agency and the
International Organization for Migration, a resettlement programme was launched in 2007
and eventually around 100,000 refugees were resettled in countries including Australia,
Canada, Denmark, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and the
United States of America (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2015).
Today, the number of refugees in Nepal is found be around 18,000 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2015). Among the grievances faced by the Bhutanese refugees include denial of the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, discriminatory treatment by the police in matters of identification, the imposition of a dress code on the entire population, and lack of access to justice. However, Bhutan has chosen to deny any responsibility, instead choosing to focus on promoting the country on its Gross National Happiness index.

A deeper examination of Bhutan’s GNH shows that the policy framework for Bhutan’s GNH imposes values which do not promote diversity or individual rights. Within this view, all citizens of Bhutan must adhere to one particular identity. An example of this attempt of homogenization is how the government has strategically glorified the festivals of Tshechu, Kharam, Lha, Roop, Kharphu, Chodpa, Zhundra and Boedra, Sangmo, Lozey, the blended culture of the followers of Mahayana Buddhism and Bonism, which are all festivals that the Drukpas celebrate. At the same time, it has systematically ignored the rich cultural aspects of other ethnic minority groups, like those of the ethnic Nepali community, who have been in the country for generations. This brings us to the question: Is GNH inclusive in this sense? It begs for the answer to who actually is the happiness for. It also arises skepticism on the positive values of GNH if it is simply a mechanism for the government to dictate over the general public. It is in this context that this study will address the issue of “Bhutanization” campaign as a significant matter in Bhutan’s GNH and its policy towards the minorities. The ‘Bhutanization’ campaign resulted in the expulsion of thousands of ethnic Nepalis from Bhutan beginning from the 1980s, an event which coincided with the framework of GNH was being conceptualized in Bhutan.

These ethno-religious differences, in existence for decades, were highlighted by the Bhutanese government’s growing fears in the 1970s and 1980s that the separatist movements in nearby regions would manifest in Bhutan. The ‘annexation’ of neighbouring Sikkim in 1975 by India, in which Nepalese played a significant role, fuelled suspicions and existing prejudices against further immigration of ethnic Nepalese. The number of immigrants across open and porous borders increased in the early 1960s at a time when the Bhutanese government was attempting to initiate a process of economic modernization.
Gradually the government portrayed Nepali immigrants as a threat to national stability and sovereignty. Thereupon, during the 1980s, the royal administration of Bhutan, supported by the monastic authorities and the conservative *Drukpa* middle class, implemented a restrictive migration policy and an integration policy to draw the *Lhotshampa* into the national mainstream. The *Lhotshampa*, in turn, feeling marginalized and discriminated against, began to perceive this integration as harmful to its own identity and felt the need to resist this process of assimilation into a dominating and exclusive *Drukpa* culture. Major steps towards the ‘Bhutanization’ of the population of Nepali origin includes the promulgation of Dzongkha as the national language and the only official languages at school, the Bhutan Marriage Act 1980, and the implementation of *Driglam Namzha*, Bhutan’s cultural policy. In addition to continuing cultural linguistic discrimination, the jobs and land-holdings of many Nepali-Bhutanese were taken away.

Discrimination against the Nepali-Bhutanese took several forms, however, most significant were the passing of citizenship acts passed in 1958, 1977 and 1988. The latter act ‘defined the requirements for citizenship, introducing seven categories of residents and non-residents from ‘F1’ (full citizen) to ‘F7’ (non-national)’. *Lhotshampas* had to provide documentary evidence that they – or both parents – had resided in Bhutan since 1958. Ethnic Nepalese who had migrated to the country after 1958 were labeled as illegal or non-national, raising tensions particularly as large numbers were expelled and forced to live as refugees in camps across the borders in Nepal and India. The crisis reached its flashpoint when the Bhutanese census of 1988 identified a significant number of illegal immigrants and landholdings, portrayed by the government as a planned and systematic infiltration of southern Bhutanese districts by the Nepalese. Using the Bhutanese Armed Forces, these people were forced to leave the country, many refugees reporting violations of human rights and the eviction of people who possessed correct citizenship certificates. Especially the 1988 consensus aroused much criticism regarding the remarkable violent and coercive approach by the security forced in conducting it. The aim was to detect illegal immigrants and to expel them.

Beginning in 1989 and continuing through the early 1990s, tens of thousands of Nepali-Bhutanese left the country. They crossed through India and into Nepal, where
between 80,000 and 100,000 lived for more than two decades in refugee camps. Bhutan’s position is that the Nepali-Bhutaneses left willingly, while those who lived in the refugee camps in Nepal speak of a damming expulsion of up to one-sixth of the country’s population. Today, 35 percent of the total Bhutanese population belongs to the Nepali-Bhutaneses. Many live in southern Bhutan, fearful of losing their jobs, afraid to promote their rights, suspicious of local leaders, and ever wary of having their status revoked (Banki, 2014). There is little triangulated information about this remaining population because media do not cover the issue and international visitors to the region are highly restricted. Most information that does exist comes from those who have left. And those Nepali-Bhutaneses who now live abroad say that relatives who remain within Bhutan will not discuss these issues by email or telephone for fear of retribution.

So far, no change in Bhutan has been forthcoming. Neither national nor local elections have produced candidates willing to take up the Nepali-Bhutanese issue (despite the election of some Nepali-Bhutanese), and it is a taboo topic in the public domain. While the Nepali-Bhutanese diaspora in resettlement countries has increased exponentially in recent years, its members are too young to maintain a sole focus on reforms in Bhutan. Websites intended to reach out to Nepali-Bhutanese worldwide currently emphasize resettlement issues, rather than Bhutanese politics. Till date, not one Nepali-Bhutanese has been permitted to return to Bhutan.

It is worth noting that pressing domestic issues like unemployment and corruption has come under the radar but the issue of ethnic minority treatment is not even on the horizon.

1.7 Literature Survey

This section discusses the arguments of some of the existing publications pertaining to the theory of happiness, the Gross National Happiness framework and the issue of minorities in Bhutan. They have been thematically reviewed and presented in the following paragraphs.

On the concept and theory of happiness, the basic books are The Oxford Handbook of Happiness edited by Susan A. David, et.al. (2013), The Human Pursuit of Wellbeing: A
Cultural Approach by Ingrid Brdar (2011), The Pursuit of Happiness: An Economy of Wellbeing by Carol Graham (2011), What is this thing called Happiness? by Fred Feldman (2010), Social Happiness: Theory into Policy and Practice by Neil Thin (2012), and lastly, Measuring Happiness: The Economics of Well-Being by Joachim Weimann, Andreas Knabe, and Ronnie Schob (2015). These works give a detailed and in-depth account of ‘new science’ of happiness and wellbeing, the history of happiness theory, how it is measured, and so on.

There are different definitions and conceptions of happiness that these works, among many others, review; however, the two basic approaches to the understanding of happiness are the hedonic approach and the eudaimonism approach. Research within the hedonic tradition defines happiness as “the pursuit of positive emotion, seeking maximum pleasure and a pleasant life overall with instant gratification”, whereas “the eudaimonic approach looks beyond this, and is concerned with change, growth and breaking homeostatis.” (Susan A. David, et. al., 2013) The Oxford Handbook of Happiness consists of contributions from various authors with training in psychology as the common ground. This volume features ten sections that focus on psychological, philosophical, evolutionary, economic and spiritual approaches to happiness; happiness in society, education, organizations and relationships; and the assessment and development of happiness. There are information on psychological constructs such as resilience, flow, and emotional intelligence; theories including broaden-and-build and self-determination; and explorations of topics including collective virtuousness, psychological capital, coaching, environmental sustainability and economic growth.

In The Pursuit of Happiness: An Economy of Wellbeing, Carol Graham (2011) explores what we know about the determinants of happiness, across and within countries at different stages of development. The book looks into both the promise and the potential pitfalls of injecting the “economics of happiness” into public policymaking. Graham spends a considerable amount of the book talking about the meaning of inequality, the signal which inequality sends. Does inequality send a positive signal that inequality represents an opportunity or a reward for hard work when everyone has an opportunity to advance economically, or does it send a negative signal that a relatively small group has
advantages due to family income and the majority is virtually prevented from advancing? These signals not only differ in different societies but they change over time.

What is this thing called Happiness? by Fred Feldman (2010) deals with the nature and value of happiness. This book is divided into three parts, wherein Feldman has criticized some leading accounts of the nature of happiness, then he goes on to defend his own account of both the nature and the value of happiness. Lastly, he discusses the relevance of his findings of empirical research. Having rejected other views on the nature of happiness, Feldman proposes his own view, which he calls Attitudinal Hedonism about Happiness (AHH). This view invokes the concept of attitudinal, as opposed to sensory, pleasure. Sensory pleasure is a feeling or sensation; its "opposite" is pain. Attitudinal pleasure is a propositional attitude directed toward some state of affairs; its opposite is displeasure. Roughly, according to AHH, someone is happy to the extent that he is more pleased than displeased about things.

Measuring Happiness: The Economics of Well-Being by Joachim Weimann, Andreas Knabe, and Ronnie Schob (2015) examines the evolution of happiness research, considering the famous “Easterlin Paradox”, which found that people’s average life satisfaction didn’t seem to depend on their income. They question whether happiness research can measure what need to be measured. One of the major strengths of the book is its interrogation of the definition of happiness, rightly separating evaluations from experiences, and hedonic or ‘pleasure’-based happiness from eudemonic or ‘purpose’-based happiness. Weimann, Knabe and Schob have made a very important contribution to this field with original empirical work revealing that although people who are unemployed are less satisfied with their lives overall, they are not unhappy according to their experiences because they use their free time quite well.

Besides the aforementioned books, there are a plenty of work done, both books and articles, on the concept of happiness. To name some, Stephen G. Salvever’s (1978) article “Rousseau and the Concept of Happiness”; Wayne Davis’s (1981) article “Theory of Happiness”; Alan S. Waterman’s (1993) article “Two Conceptions of Happiness: Contrasts of Personal Expressiveness (Eudaimonia) and Hedonic Enjoyment”; Ruut Veenhoven’s (2012) article “Happiness: Also known as ‘life satisfaction’ and ‘subjective well-being’”;

The second set of literature relates to the concept of Gross National Happiness. The books are as follows: Sonam Gyamtsho’s (2011) *Gross National Happiness and Social Progress: A Development Paradigm of Bhutan*, Karma Ura and Karma Galay’s (2004), *Gross National Happiness and Development: Proceedings of the First International Conference on Operationalization of Gross National Happiness*, and “Gross National Happiness” by Karma Ura (2005) were reviewed. Sonam Gyamtsho (2011) reflects on Bhutan’s development philosophy of ‘Gross National Happiness’ which has received overwhelmingly global attention, as the concept opposes the measure of ‘Gross Domestic Product’ which is one sided in dimension to measure the actual societal progress. Gross National Happiness, on the other hand is a multidimensional development concept taking care of all aspects of development, such as culture, environment, social, economic, etc. If happiness is the ultimate goal of every human being, then there is no better development paradigm than ‘GNH’ which can possibly save the planet earth from its destruction due to human greed.

*Gross National Happiness and Development* consists of an amalgam of both formal papers and discussions written by various authors. They subscribed to the great principle of Gross National Happiness unanimously; however the concept meant different things to different authors. One group emphasized happiness itself as the objective of GNH. Another emphasized GNH as leading to the context in which happiness may develop but not explicitly to happiness itself. Some discussed happiness as a personal matter and defined it as such; some described happiness as a social condition that maybe conducive to personal happiness but does not guarantee it. Finally, there were those who emphasized Buddhism as the underlying foundation of Gross National Happiness and those who considered Gross
National Happiness to be consonant with Buddhism and inspired by, but not necessarily synonymous with, it.

Meanwhile, Karma Ura (2005) in his article “Gross National Happiness” argues that happiness or subjective well-being must be established and incorporated as the core value within the institutional structures and processes of governance. Contemporary measures of progress do not usually specify happiness as a dominant end; it is assumed to be the collateral result of social and economic policies. The article discusses five reasons that show the desirability of happiness as a dominant value and Ura comes to a conclusion that social and welfare policy must be concerned with happiness, and happiness has to be a criterion of welfare and public policy. Towards this end, techniques and methods, however imperfect, must be developed to measure and monitor the conditions and causes leading to happiness.

Since the study examines how Bhutan reconciles the concept of happiness between the Buddhist philosophy and Liberal paradigm, literature on the Buddhist development paradigm is important. Similarly, literature on religion and happiness was also studied, focusing on the role of Buddhism in GNH. Literary works of Apichai Puntasen (2007), “Buddhist Economics as a New Paradigm Towards Happiness”, and Khenpo Phuntsok Tashi, “The Role of Buddhism in Achieving Gross National Happiness” discuss what makes Buddhist economics the most efficient economics as opposed to the liberal market economics. Unlike mainstream economics, Buddhist economics advocates sustainable development. While the mainstream economics also known as capitalism considers capital as the mode of production, Buddhist economics suggests that paa, or the ability to understand everything in its own nature be the mode of production. The economy under this mode of production is known as paa-ism. Buddhist economics, argues that sukha happiness, defined here as the opposite state to pain, which implies peace and tranquility, rather than the usual meaning of prosperity, pleasure and gratification is the result of the emergence of paa. Therefore, Buddhist economics is the most efficient economics in term of resources used. It is the kind of economics that advocates sustainable development, especially in the world, which is now close to the blink of catastrophe from global warming due to inefficiency in consumption, the concept that cannot be clearly understood.
in the mainstream economics. The most difficult part in Buddhist economics is how to cultivate \textit{paa} for as many people as possible.

Phuntsok Tashi in his article ‘The Role of Buddhism in Achieving Gross National Happiness’ explores the relation between Buddhist philosophy and happiness, and explains how Buddhism can foster the implementation of GNH in Bhutan. Meanwhile, Tashi Wangmo and John Valk in their article, “Under the Influence of Buddhism: The Psychological Well-being Indicators of GNH”, discusses the role played by religion in the political, economic, and social lives of Bhutanese, and to what extent has Buddhism influenced the GNH index and its domains and indicators. The authors seek to know if the indicators reflect Buddhist principles. As such the article looks briefly at some key foundational doctrines of Buddhism which might lie behind the GNH index and indicators. Colin Ash (2007) on the other hand, discusses the issue of a Buddhist perspective on happiness and economics and how Buddhist practices provide skilful means for the mind to control the mood, in his article “Happiness and Economics: A Buddhist Perspective”. However, he also throws a caution to the wind by asking: in what sense, if any, is the “greatest happiness” the Buddhist goal? The article goes along to discuss the progress of the neuroscience of happiness that made it possible to measure happiness, in principle at least. Economic analysis of the relationship between economic progress, as measured by GNP, and happiness, measured by average population scores from surveys, show that income or any change in income does not matter much when it comes to an individual’s happiness. This occurs because of adaptation and social comparison. Ash returns to Layard’s identification of seven factors which research shows do have a significant impact on our well-being: family relationships, financial situation, work, community and friends, health, personal freedom and personal values or philosophy of life. Happiness research consistently reveals that, once a fairly basic level of real income has been achieved, extra income or consumption gives very little additional happiness, compared with enjoying such relatively time-intensive relationships as family, friends and within the community. It is argued that social relationships have a greater impact on happiness that income. This is because adaptation to them is basically incomplete as people never fully adjust back to their baseline level of happiness after getting married or losing their job. The psychological impact of changes in social relationships which impinge upon our very identity are more
profound than transitory hedonic stimuli. Also, the quality of government matters: administrative efficiency and effectiveness, stability, accountability, and democracy, including democracy at local level, all enhance the well-being of citizens. As such, appropriate policies, different from the current, orthodox thinking is required. And the answer lies in the Buddhist paradigm. Religious behavior is positively correlated with individual life satisfaction, when controlling for other possible influences. Besides the utility from expected afterlife rewards that individuals derive from religious practice, religion may act as a buffer against stressful life events for example unemployment and divorce, and religious affiliation can be an important source of social support. Unhappiness, according to Buddhism is mainly due ignorance in the sense of not understanding through experience and insight what from the Buddhist perspective are, the three fundamental characteristics of existence – impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and selflessness or emptiness – and dependent origination. In a nutshell, suffering arises through attempting to sustain a mistaken identity built on attachment to transitory mental and physical phenomena. The process by which this comes about is dependent origination.

The article “Mahayana Buddhism and Gross National Happiness in Bhutan” by Michael Givel (2015) discusses the basic conceptual features of Mayahana Buddhism as Bhutan’s Gross National Happiness paradigm relate to the Mahayana Buddhist view of happiness. The primary purpose of Mahayana Buddhism is to spread happiness and compassion to everyone in the world. This includes that by awakening to the Ultimate Truth, one obtains greater clarity and insight about the true nature of the universe, leading to internal peace and happiness. As the article shows, the goal of modern Gross National Happiness is also based on Mahayana Buddhist principles to increase happiness for everyone. This occurs through governmental policies and programs that promote material need balanced with becoming enlightened.

There are various critiques of the GNH framework which were important for the study. One of the major arguments comes from Dr. David (2012), whose major concern is not in the philosophy of GNH itself but in the area of operationalization, i.e., Bhutan taking the “lead” in advocating GNH when so much basic work is needed to be done home and for the people of Bhutan, and the deleterious effect the pursuit of this model, particularly
“happiness” component is and will continue to have on the people of Bhutan. Similarly, Public (2012) in his work “Beyond Gross National Happiness: a Critic of GNH” is concerned with the same issue of Bhutan being the advocator of GNH while being faced with a challenge regarding sustainability. Since 1980s, Bhutan’s political activities have been absorbed by economics, particularly economic growth. Certainly, electricity, sewage systems, health, education and transport infrastructures are beneficial to enhance the well-being of people but such a growing economic activity is a means, not an end. The end is the good quality of life of people. Economic growth allows certainly for development and progress, but its autonomous and abiding proliferation gives rise to fatalities. Even though moderated through GNH, economic growth is both unsustainable for already developed countries, and inappropriate for developing ones. Alan Beattie (2014) in his article “Gross National Happiness: a bad idea whose time has gone” critiques the GNH concept for two reasons. First, Bhutan’s GNH, defined from the top by an autocratic monarch, was deeply illiberal means of legitimizing undemocratic tile and failed utterly to prevent grotesque abuses of human rights. Second, it has distracted from much more constructive and democratic ideas of running countries in the interests of their citizens’ wider wellbeing. The autocratic monarchy that ruled Bhutan until the first elections in 2008 substantially failed to deliver better lives for most of its duration. Moreover, GNH has proved no guarantee of individual human rights, argues Beattie, taking into account the ethnic cleansing policy against the country’s Nepali-speaking minority.

On the issue of minority rights, the books that have been studied are *Minorities: A Question of Human Rights?* edited by Ben Whitaker (1984), *Equal Recognition: The Moral Foundations of Minority Rights* by Alan Patten (2014), *Minority Identities and the Nation-State* edited by D. L. Sheth and Gurpreet Mahajan (1999), and *Protection of Ethnic Minorities: Comparative Perspectives* edited by Robert G. Wirsing (1981) reflect upon the concept of minorities and examine the claims of minority communities (within the nation-state). D. L. Sheth places the discourse of minorities in the context of the nation-state and argues that the nation has operated as a ‘culturally majoritarian and politically hegemonic entity’. Gurpreet Mahajan emphasizes the need to locate contemporary western discourse on minority rights in its specific historical context. None of the above mentioned scholars represent a particular viewpoint in regard to minority rights. Some view minority
protection in its regional (multistate) context, others deal with it within the context of a single state, and yet other opt for case studies of one or more minorities through which to explore issues of protection. There is no uniform definition of minority rights or, for that matter, agreement that minorities should have rights distinguishable from everyone else’s. There are, moreover, many ways to try to protect minorities, at both the national and international level, and each has its defenders. The protection of minorities is a many-sided phenomenon, shaped by a large array of factors internal and external to the minority group and the state that houses it. It can be defined in many ways; but it can neither be well understood nor effectively promoted if dealt with simply as the prescription of uniform legal remedies for afflicted ethnic minorities. Their afflictions are as diverse in origin and impact as they are numerous. Protecting against them should begin with understanding of that diversity.

The book *Equal Recognition* focuses on the moral foundations of minority rights, a debate situated in contemporary normative political philosophy and multiculturalism. It seeks to answer the following question: to what extent and on which moral basis might minorities legitimately formulate their demands for cultural, religious and linguistic rights in a liberal democratic society? Alan Patten proposes a clear answer that is sensitive to the scarcity of the resources available for competing interests that public policies must take into account in a context of diversified societies. The book argues in favour of ‘equal recognition’ of national majority and minority cultures as a necessity of liberal neutrality. This is because ‘in certain domains, the only way for the state to discharge its responsibility of neutrality is by extending and protecting specific minority cultural rights’.

The present study deals specifically with the minorities of Bhutan. As such, the books and articles that were reviewed in this area were Michael Hutt’s (2003) *Unbecoming Citizens: Culture, Nationhood, and the Flight of Refugees from Bhutan*, D. N. S. Dhakal and Christopher Strawn’s *Bhutan: A Movement in Exile*, John Bray’s (1993) article “Bhutan: The Dilemma of a Small State”, and “Finding a future for minorities in Bhutan’s emerging democracy” by Susan Banki. Michael Hutt gives a detailed and in-depth account of the *Lhotshampas*, Nepalese migration to Bhutan, their culture, their history and finally their flight to Nepal and India (adjoining states of West Bengal and Assam). It introduces
several prominent and non-prominent figures, their history and their struggles for justice and rights. It also discusses on how the *Lhotshampas* had been wrongfully evacuated from their native homelands by various policies (Acts/Laws) created by the Bhutanese government for the purpose of ethnic cleansing. Michael Hutt (2003) gives a micro detail analysis of the *Lhotshampas* until the mass evacuation. Meanwhile, Banki argues that the four measures that comprise GNH, while laudable, fail to capture one important element that affects a nation’s residents, and one that is quite relevant for Bhutan: the equal treatment of minority populations. The article discusses the ‘dark chapter of Bhutan’s history’ involving the profound mistreatment of the ethnic minorities, especially that of the *Lhotshampas*. Although Bhutan has adopted democracy, Banki is doubtful that the issue of ethnic minorities will be resolved anytime soon in the near future, and argues that there is still a long way to go. D. N. S. Dhakal and Christopher Strawn (1993) give a detailed and in-depth account of the *Lhotshampas*, Nepalese migration to Bhutan, their culture, history and the account of how they fled to Nepal and India. The book mainly discusses how the *Lhotshampas* were wrongfully evacuated from their native homelands due to various policies created by the Bhutanese Government for the purpose of “ethnic cleansing”.

Finally, John Bray (1993) discusses the problems faced by the country in its development process. Common to most developing countries, Bhutan’s dilemmas include the trouble of balancing tradition with modernity, how to stimulate popular participation without creating instability, and how to promote economic growth without damaging the environment. In addition, Bhutan also faces the problems of a small, land-locked state which depends heavily on India and at the same time wishes to preserve the independence and integrity of its decision-making. Addressing the issue of Nepalis, the article examines the choices that Bhutan will have to make —and the contradictions that it faces—as it struggles to sustain its culture and independence into the next century. Both the *Drukpa* and *Lhotshampa* communities believe that they are fighting for their survival. The article concludes by stating that unless they recognize their common interest in creating a modern state which genuinely recognizes unity in diversity, both sides will lose out.

Similarly, books on the history of Bhutan with a special focus on its ethnic problem were also taken for the study. A.C. Sinha’s (1988) *Bhutan: Ethnic Identity and National Dilemma* is a comprehensive study of the political developments in Bhutan. It throws light
on the processes that are at work when a traditional society begins to take the trail of political modernization. He traces how a society which is characterized as “frontier feudalism” struggles to evolve to a modern nation-state, through a transitional period of theocratic system. It focuses on the obstacles to Bhutan’s political modernization. First, there is a strong political culture, oriented away from modernization, backed up by vested interests with a stake in continuing the status-quo. Secondly, there is an absence of the material prerequisites for political modernization–modern communication culture, technology, and infrastructures. Sinha suggests that the Drukpa national identity draws its support on two phenomena: the traditionalization of modern functional roles ad paternalistic populism. The entrenched political culture, centered round the absolute and dynastic policy, suns counter to the participator political culture presupposed by political modernization. As for the other problem of building a Bhutanese national identity, the elite confront four critical challenges –the challenge of ethnic diversity, the monarchy, elitism, and frontier particularism. On the author’s showing, the political modernization of Bhutan seems to be an immensely formidable task. But then he believes that Bhutan cannot escape for long the global fate of modernization.

On the concept of citizenship, the main articles were Gerrard Khan’s “Citizenship and statelessness in South Asia”, Matthew F. Ferraro’s “Stateless in Shagri-La: Minority Rights, Citizenship, and Belonging in Bhutan”, Jelena Dzankic’s paper entitled “Montenegro’s Minorities in the Tangles of Citizenship, Participation, and Access to Rights”, Leighton McDonald’s “Regrouping in Defence of Minority Rights: Kymlicka’s Multicultural Citizenship”, and Annelies Verstichel’s “Understanding Participation and Representation of Minorities and the Issue of Citizenship”. Gerrard Khan purports to examine the state of statelessness in South Asia, one of the regions in which the phenomenon thrives and is much underrated. It will look at three rejected peoples of the subcontinent: The Estate Tamils in Sri Lanka; the Bhutanese in Nepal; and the Biharis in Bangladesh. Questions that is addressed include: what are the conditions giving rise to statelessness in the three cases; how the various parties involved interact with each other including the states, affected peoples and international bodies; what measures have been undertaken to address the phenomenon and with what success are these met. The author argues that the phenomenon of statelessness needs to be seen as part of the larger post-
colonial nation building framework still under construction in the subcontinent. In particular, statelessness emerges out of narrow and exclusionary citizenship and membership policies perpetuated by the region’s central authorities which fail to match the complex contours of multiple identities experienced by the polity. The tragedy that has resulted has been the disincorporation of large segments of the region’s population whose identities and aspirations seep through the confines of the monolithic, nationalist, ‘official’ ideologies pursued by the state.

Matthew F. Ferraro adds to the existing literature by examining the citizenship rights (or lack thereof) of those minorities who remain within the country but are not considered national under the constitution. It shows that while “ethnic nationalism” is not unique to Bhutan, the government’s actions are hypocritical given its full-throated embrace of international human rights norms. These policies are also likely inconsistent with international law – specifically the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Bhutan has ratified – and under customary international law, more generally. Finally, this article shows how the constitution contains sufficient ambiguity to allow for dynamic interpretation.

Jelena Dzankic examines the relationship between citizenship, participation, cultural and socio-economic rights of minorities in Montenegro by focusing on the divergence between policies and their implementation. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, it combines insights from law with ones from social and political studies. The paper is divided into three sequential analytical section. The first section focuses on the definition of minorities of Montenegro, examining the relation between the status of minority and citizenship. The second section related the previously analyzed concepts of citizenship and minority to representation and participation. It seeks to examine electoral legislation within the framework of ‘authentic representation’ of minorities, enshrined in the 2007 Constitution of Montenegro. The final section assesses minority access to cultural (group) and socio-economic (individual) rights. The section brings forward the argument that, despite the existing legal guarantees, many of these rights are too complex to realize in practice, particularly those related to language and education in one’s own language.
Leighton McDonald outlines and critically examines Will Kymlicka’s reconstructed defence of minority rights. Although various doubts are cast on Kymlicka’s own thesis, it is argued that there are alternative strategies – strategies that Kymlicka too hastily dismisses – available to defenders of (collective) minority rights. Further, any vindication of minority rights makes urgent the separate question of what (if any) institutional expression they should receive. One important question overlooked by Kymlicka is whether, contrary to widespread assumptions, minority rights are in fact appropriate candidates for constitutional entrenchment.

Annelies Verstichel has investigated the right of persons belonging to minorities to effective participation in public affairs in the light of the implementation and monitoring practice and in all its aspects: content, justification and aims, and possible limits. Ethnic, religious and linguistic identity constitutes a reality, which needs to be taken into account. However, there are limits. This article tried to describe the problematic aspects of minority participation and representation, which need to be taken into account when devising special minority participation and representation mechanisms. To paraphrase Joseph Marko, the civic versus ethnic dichotomy should be superseded and a good mixture of both elements should be aimed at.

sexual activities, and human trafficking. Organizations representing exiled Nepali-speaking Bhutanese claimed that Nepali-speaking Bhutanese were subjected to discrimination and prejudice in employment, but the government stated they were proportionally represented in civil service and government jobs. The UN committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concern about the rights of minority children, specifically the Nepali-speaking minority, to take part in their culture, practice their religion, or use their language. Bhutan’s constitutional law does not provide for the granting of asylum or refugee status, and the government has not established a system for providing protection to refugees. Implementation of a nationwide census in 1985 resulted in the denaturalization of many Nepali-speaking individuals within the country because they lacked land ownership documents dated before 1958, which were required to retain citizenship. The census was repeated in 1988-89 in the southern districts, and those who lost citizenship in 1985 were at that time permitted to reapply for citizenship provided they met certain conditions. The government then labeled as illegal immigrants whose who could not meet the new, more stringent citizenship requirement and expelled them to refugee camps in Nepal. According to NGOs, stateless persons remained in Bhutan, mainly in the south, but their number was unknown. Stateless persons cannot obtain no objection certificated and security clearance certificates, which limited their access to employment, business ownership, and school attendance at higher-level institutions. In case of the political participation, The Druk National Congress (DNC), established in 1994 by Bhutanese refugees in exile, continued to claim the government denied independent parties the ability to operate effectively. The DNC was unable to conduct activities inside the country. Also, the government reportedly did not permit human rights groups established by the exiled Nepali-speaking minority to operated since it categorized them as political organization that do not promote national unity.

Similarly, Raju Thapa and I. P. Adhikari, in their report, have showcased failure of the elected government of Bhutan to adhere with the very essence of the democratic values and human rights. It claims that under the veil of Gross National Happiness, Bhutan continues inhuman practices even after accepting democracy and open politics. The report begins with a brief background of the country, intended to provide the reader with the general understanding on Bhutan and the challenges it has been facing as a landlocked and
least developed country. The report concludes by suggesting that if the government of Bhutan is sincere to its commitments, it should eliminate all discriminations against Nepali-speaking population with guarantee that no more will be evicted in future. The government must abolish the system to ensure that all Bhutanese citizens receive new citizenship cards without discrimination, and allow all adult Bhutanese citizens to register as voters and entertain all children in schools scrapping NOC provisions. It also recommends the international community to work towards repatriation of Bhutanese refugees who are not willing to resettle in third countries ensuring their right to housing, land and property restitution. The report calls for the Bhutanese government to invite the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to establish it office in Bhutan in order to facilitate the return and reintegration of refugees who wish to return. The report also expresses the need for establishment of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in order to monitor and protect the human rights.

Lorenzo Pellegrini and Luca Tasciotti’s contend that we should look at the Bhutanese experience not only from the perspective of the happiness project but there also must be a mention of the human rights abuses in the country. Assessments of the Bhutanese experience with happiness are often oblivious of the blatant violations of human rights perpetrated by the Bhutanese state. In fact, this blindness serves –knowingly or unknowingly –the purpose of identifying a “paradise on earth”, a symbol of oriental otherness and a direction to overcome the social, spiritual and environmental failings of modern Western culture. This utopian society is incidentally increasingly integrated in the global capitalist economy without corrupting its Orientalist charm and demonstrates that a Shangri-La can adopt the best of two worlds: ruled by a benevolent dictatorship caring for the happiness of citizens and powered by a modern, growing and internationally integrated economy.

On the issue of refugee problem in Bhutan, the following articles were reviewed. Myron Weiner’s article “Rejected Peoples and Unwanted Migrants in South Asia”, Dhurba Rizal’s article “The Unknown Refugee Crisis: Expulsion of the Ethnic Lhotshampas from Bhutan”, Krishna P. Khanal’s “Human Rights and Refugee Problems in South Asia: The
Case of Bhutanese Refugees”, lastly Micheal Hutt’s article “The Bhutanese Refugees: Between Verification, Repatriation and Royal Real Politik”.

Myron Weiner discusses a wide range of refugee problems in South Asia. Particularly on the Bhutanese refugees, Weiner argues that the external socio-political developments like the annexation of Sikkim and agitation in Darjeeling and the growing and largest ethnic Nepalese in Southern Bhutan proved a threat to the internal security of Bhutan. He also explains, apart from India’s legal commitment of non-interference in the 1949 Friendship Treaty, one reason for India’s non-involvement is the concern in New Delhi over a ‘Greater Nepal’ movement which might attract support from the substantial Nepali population in the adjoining states of Bhutan.

Krishna P. Khanal, discusses the refugee crisis with a larger background and focuses mainly on the Bhutanese refugees. The author primarily highlights how human rights violation and refugee crisis are intertwined. This nexus is visible in the case of Bhutanese refugees where the state was directly and indirectly involved in such violations.

Michael Hutt brings out the plight of about one hundred thousand Nepali refugees from Bhutan who were forced to flee the country by the Monarchical state in late 1980s and early 1990s. The refugees are, by and large, ignored by the world that is otherwise quite supportive of democratic movements like the one the refugees had launched in Bhutan in response to highly constrictive legislations relating to marriage and dress passed by the state since 1980s, including the census of the southern Bhutan with a clear view to de-nationalizing the so-called ‘Lhotshampas’. The paper further shows how the negotiation between Bhutan and Nepal, the identification of the bonafide nationals of Bhutan in the refugee camps of southern Nepal, the terms and conditions for such identification and repatriation, etc. were all dictated by Bhutan ignoring the UNHCR, acquiesced by Nepal, and tacitly supported by India. Finally, the author examines the circumstance forcing Nepal to ‘kowtow’ before Bhutan and questions the stand taken by India, which supported anti-establishment in Nepal and opposed anti-establishment in Bhutan.
1.8 Research Gaps and Scope of the Study

On the concept of happiness, a lot of academic work has been done, in addition to non-academic ones too. Similarly, on the concept of Gross National Happiness, a plenty of scholarly literature is available. On Bhutan’s Gross National Happiness, there are a good number of works by academics, journalists, travel-writers and so on. However, when it comes to the question of Bhutan’s GNH vis-a-vis its minorities, the challenge is here since there are a limited number of works being done in this subject which belong to unreliable sources which cannot be validated. There is a scarcity of authentic sources regarding the issue of Bhutan’s GNH and the rights of minorities. In this way, the study is important to bring forth the issue of minorities in Bhutan’s GNH debate.

The issue of minorities has taken a backseat when it comes to the subject of Gross National Happiness in Bhutan. The rhetoric on Gross National Happiness conceals the fundamental problems in the Bhutanese development model. The idea of Bhutan as a ‘Shangri La’ is indeed an inspiration for the world to adopt the philosophy of GNH in their own countries. However, the subject that needs attention now, among many others, is to bring in certain changes in the GNH policies which give the same amount of priority to the minorities as well for the objective of GNH to be realized in its full potential.

The present study is as such important considering the rise in the importance of Gross National Happiness as a contemporary debate. Bhutan’s development philosophy of GNH emerged as an opposition to the measure of Gross Domestic Product to cater to the need for a multidimensional development concept involving not only the economic aspect but also other aspects of development such as cultural, environmental, social etc. However, as the country’s Prime Minister Jigme Y. Thinley has expressed, Bhutan has not attained GNH completely; it is still struggling to provide the basic needs to its people. Therefore, the scope of the study is to understand the exclusion of the ethnic minorities (Lhotshampas) from the purview of Bhutan’s GNH. The ethnic-Nepali minorities or Lhotshampas are mainly concentrated in the southern region of Bhutan. However, since the 1980’s when Bhutan adopted the “One Nation, One People” policy, many Nepali-Bhutanese were expelled from Bhutan and rendered refugee in Nepal, India and elsewhere.
With the rights of the *Lhotshampas* and other ethnic minorities vis-à-vis Bhutan’s GNH as a background, this study is important to generate answers to the research problem.

The study also paves way for future research on the operationalisation of GNH in other countries as well. One could explore the challenges and prospects of adopting the Bhutanese model of development considering the unique characteristics of the target country. Like Bhutan, the majority-minority dichotomy is characteristic to every country in the world. As such, the future agenda of this study could be answering the question of minority rights in the whole scheme of GNH model.

The proposed study will, therefore, focus on critically examining the Bhutan’s GNH policy vis-à-vis its minority policies. It will explore the existing loopholes within the framework which hinders the realization of GNH in Bhutan. With these objectives in mind, the study has two fundamental questions as to how does Bhutan reconcile the concept of happiness between the Buddhist philosophy and Neo-liberal paradigm, and what are the impacts of the Bhutanese GNH framework on the minorities?

### 1.9 Objectives of the Study

The study is based on three main objectives:

1. To examine the concept of ‘happiness’ in Bhutan’s Gross National Happiness framework.
2. To examine the concept of ‘happiness’ in relation to the concept of rights and citizenship in Bhutan.
3. To explore the impact of Bhutan’s GNH policy on the minorities.

### 1.10 Research Methodology

The research methodology applied is descriptive as well as analytical. The study adopts qualitative method. The study is primarily based on available primary sources which include government documents, reports of UNHCR, UNDP, Amnesty International, and other agencies. In addition, the research is supplemented by the use of secondary sources such as books, journals, articles and research papers on Gross National Happiness and also the plight of minorities in and those expelled from Bhutan. The information and
data is retrieved from selected websites from the internet by following standard practice. The work is mainly carried out in the libraries of Sikkim and Delhi.

1.11 Research Questions

The study employs the following three research questions:

1. How does Bhutan reconcile the concept of happiness between the Buddhist philosophy and neo-liberal paradigm?
2. Is GNH an inclusive concept when it comes to the question of Bhutan’s minority rights and citizenship?
3. What are the impacts of the Bhutanese GNH framework on the minorities?

1.12 Organization of the Study

The study is structured into six major parts including the introduction and conclusion.

Chapter I: Introduction

The introduction discusses the nature of the study, the framework of the study while introducing the main objectives, the research questions around which the study revolves. The methodology and organizational structure of the study is also discussed.

Chapter II: Conceptualizing Happiness in the Framework of GNH

The second chapter “Conceptualizing Happiness in the Framework of GNH” deals with the theory of happiness and also examines Bhutan’s Gross National Happiness paradigm. It is mainly an overview of the concept of happiness as used in Bhutan’s GNH, which is mainly inspired by the Buddhist philosophy. Doing so, it lays a theoretical foundation for the analysis of Gross National Happiness.

Chapter III: Bhutan and its Minorities

The third chapter “Bhutan and its Minorities” is exclusively on the subject of minorities in Bhutan. Along with a brief history of Bhutan, this chapter discusses the various minority groups in Bhutan. Although the dominant group in Bhutan are also small in number, the term ‘minorities’ is mostly used to distinguish other ethnic, linguistic and religious groups
from the ruling class, namely the *Ngalongs*. This chapter basically draws attention to the plight of the minorities and forms the background of critique of Bhutan’s GNH policy of the study.

**Chapter IV: Citizenship and the Rights of Minorities in Bhutan**

The fourth chapter “Citizenship and the Rights of Minorities in Bhutan” deals with the various laws and acts imposed by the government of Bhutan regarding citizenship, along with those relating to marriage and customs which had both direct and indirect impact on the citizens of Bhutan. By addressing to these acts and laws, the chapter tries to explore the socio-economic consequences they had on the citizens of Bhutan, especially to its minorities. The chapter attempts to make detailed analysis of these acts and laws, and it is done so in a chronological order starting from the first citizenship act of 1958.

**Chapter V: Bhutan’s Gross National Happiness and Rights of Minorities**

The fifth chapter “Bhutan’s Gross National Happiness and Minority Rights” examines Bhutan’s GNH vis-à-vis its minority policy. It extensively deals with the marginalization of the minorities in Bhutan and critically examines the GNH policy.

**Chapter V: Conclusion**

The conclusion is a critical assessment of Bhutan’s GNH and an attempt towards addressing the main research questions the study seeks to find answers to.