

Bhutanese Refugees History and Present Situation with Emphasize on Education

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1. Bhutanese history and ethnic distribution

The first people who lived in the area of present Bhutan seems to be the Sharchop , a Burma-Tibetan(Mongoloid) ethnic group, which is speaking Sharchop language and following Tibetan Buddhism, mainly of the Nyingmapa-sect.

Then came the ethnic group of the present king of Bhutan, called Ngalong, driven out from Tibet in the 8th century, speaking Dzongkha, a Tibetan dialect and following the Drukpa Kagyupa- sect of Tibetan Buddhism.

There are publications, which claim that Nepali ethnic groups migrated into present Bhutanese territory as early as in the 7th century (Dr. P. D. Kausik, "Bhutanese Nepalis: Their Problems of cultural assimilation" in: R. B. Basnet & D. N. S. Dhakal, "Bhutan Political Problem", July 2001, Nepal, p.20).

Most of the publications are stating, that the third of the three main ethnic groups of present Bhutan came later, namely in the first half of the 17th century, and then other groups in the following centuries, whenever Bhutan needed manpower. Most of them came at the end of 19th and beginning of the 20th century, some after Second World War and some in the 70s. These people consist of many different ethnic groups we can also find in Nepal, therefore it is appropriate to say "Bhutanese of Nepali ethnic origin" and not define them as only "Nepali" as so many publications (even UNHCR) do.

(Nobody says "Tibetans" when referring to the Ngalongs, therefore nobody has a right to say "Nepali", only because they have been the latest group to arrive, or because Bhutanese government claims [without proving it], that these refugees are Nepali and not Bhutanese.)

We have to be very careful in using terms which could be interpreted either as being a citizen of a certain country or somebody, belonging to a certain ethnic group.

Bhutan became a monarchy in 1907, with the help of the British and also with the consensus of the feudal chiefs in southern Bhutan, who had come from Nepal at an earlier time.

For many years to come Bhutan' s society enjoyed a harmony between the different ethnic groups.

2. Background of the making of refugees – political and jurisdictional issues (1958-85)

2.1. Population figure

The 1958 Citizenship Law established for the first time in Bhutanese history the modern concept of citizenship. The same year the National Assembly of Bhutan stated during the 11th Session, in Resolution No.8, that the Nepalese inhabitants enjoy equal rights as Bhutanese citizens in society and National Assembly.

One main problem is the issue of the number of people of Nepali origin and the number of Bhutan's population as a whole.

In the beginning of the 20th century we have some numbers by British officers, like 100.000 people of Nepali origin living in the south of Bhutan.

We have also to admit that in Bhutan, until now, there had never been a demographic census like in modern democracies, which will be explained later.

In the late seventies and the beginning of the 80s, the Bhutanese government "felt" that the number of the southern Bhutanese of Nepali origin, the Lotshampas, as they are called officially, has started to rise, or seemed to be higher than estimated.

But of course we have to clarify that there has been no factual proof like a census and also the census of 1988 gives no evidence of a demographic threat of the Nepali speaking population, which has been rated as 35% by the government of Bhutan. This figure too is perhaps not coinciding with reality, because Bhutan has never published detailed data about the ethnic distribution in towns and villages and seems to have no data at all (Ringhofer,M., "Bhutan nanmin no kyouiku no rekishi to genjou (Bhutanese refugees education – history and present) in: Kyoto Daigaku Himalaya Kenkyuukai "Himalaya Gakushi" No.7, June 2000, p.115).

A further proof that we should doubt population figures published by Bhutanese government is for example the data provided by the research Institute affiliated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan, called APIC, which is publishing every year an ODA (=Official Development Assistance) white paper, mentions in the 1996 publication a population figure of 1,675 million in Bhutan for the year 1994. But the 1994 population "decreases" in the 1998 publication to only 675.000.

A very clear sum, just 1 million people less. Of course these data are provided by the Bhutanese government, therefore we have to ask, if we can really trust one of these figures and data given by the Bhutanese authorities.

The first time Bhutan's population "passed" the million line seems to be related with the participation at the Colombo plan in the 60s and with the entry in the UNO, when Indian politicians advised the former King of Bhutan to state the number of more than 1 million to receive assistance from UN organizations.

A former Indian advisor to the King of Bhutan, Nari Rustomji said that all data, which Bhutan's government provided at Colombo had been simply invented by him and the King's sister (responsible for the data preparation), because they had no statistics available

and needed urgently some to be eligible for attending the conference (Nari Rustomji, "Bhutan The Dragon Kingdom in Crisis", 1978, Delhi, p.32).

2.2. Census of 1988

The demographic fear of the Bhutanese government influenced the amendment of the law concerning the Citizenship in 1985. It stated, that foreign born citizens who had married a genuine Bhutanese loose their Bhutanese citizenship together with their children. This violates Article 15 of The Human Rights Convention.

Some thousands citizens had been affected by this law, but it seems not being implemented strictly. Therefore it did not become a social issue until 1988.

But in 1988 during a national census the citizens of Bhutan had been divided into the following 7 categories, which had an enormous impact on Bhutanese society.

1. Genuine Bhutanese (both parents born in Bhutan)
2. Returnees
3. Drop out
4. Married to a foreign born woman
5. Married to a foreign born man
6. Adopted
7. Non Nationals (migrants and illegal settlers)

But jointly with the introduction of this law the census teams asked the Nepali speaking Bhutanese to provide them proof that they have lived in Bhutan in 1958 and have paid land tax in that year (30 years back!). If they could not give the proof they have been called "non-nationals" and put in category 7 (AHURA Bhutan, "BHUTAN a Shangrila without Human Rights", 1993, Jhapa, Nepal, p.18-22)

Of course a lot of people living for generations or more than 100 years in Bhutan and in possession of citizenship cards had been affected by this measure. It is an issue of the legitimacy of this law, but also we have to realize that many of these farmers had no or only a very basic education, so that some did not pay attention in keeping these documents. There are not many societies worldwide which have experienced such a kind of retroactive law. It is not an exaggeration to say, it is about the same, if the US-government would expel for example the Italian-Americans, if they cannot provide the proof of having paid tax 30 years ago.

In addition it is important to recognize the complicated tax system, which existed in southern Bhutan until the 1960's combined with the pre-modern land ownership system (H. P. Adhikari, "Chain Survey, Table Survey and Illegal Land" in: R. B. Basnet & D. N. S. Dhakal, p.15-18).

These above mentioned laws seemed to have targeted mainly or only the Nepali speaking part of the population, and in no way the ethnic group of the King.

People who had participated in the demonstrations for democracy in 1990 had been declared anti-national, even when they had the 1958 - year proof.

2.3. Implementation of the Assimilation Policy: One Nation, one people

Driglam Namzha, an ancient code of social etiquette of the western Bhutanese, Ngalongs, how to behave in daily activities and before authorities, became now compulsory for all people and in case of not obedience a fine or prison was imposed.

Parallel with the census the authorities in Bhutan implemented an assimilation policy, which required to wear at any time the dress of the King's ethnic group, the Ngalongs, which is called Gho and Kira. Wearing ethnic Nepali dress was forbidden and people without the proper dress got fined or have been put in prison (since 1990) or simply were refused being given social services, like medical treatment etc. which resulted sometimes in the death of the refused patient.

It is also important to notice, that Gho and Kira are dresses for an ethnic group living in mountains and this dress is not appropriate for rural work in southern Bhutan's hot climate. It is also quite expensive so that not everybody could afford it to buy this dress for the whole family, because also the children were forced to wear it.

Bhutanese refugees also stated that in many cases the local authorities in charge of the control of the ethnic dress wore themselves only short-pants during their duty.

The government of Bhutan stated, that their culture was in danger to be extinct, because of the rising of Bhutanese of Nepali ethnicity. The government claimed that a big influx of illegal settlers since the 70s changed the demographic balance.

Against this governments viewpoint speaks the fact, that these settlers got official permission to settle and also got their Bhutanese citizenship cards between 1985 and 1988.

Also 85% of Bhutanese refugees in the refugee camps in Southeastern Nepal had citizenship cards, additional 10% had only land tax receipts, 3% had school certificates or other official documents and only 2% had no certification, because in most cases their documents had been confiscated by the authorities before leaving Bhutan. This survey had been conducted by the Home Ministry of Nepal in February 1995 (AHURA Bhutan, "Bhutanese Refugees Victims of forced Eviction", Nepal, 1999, p.24).

Another explanation for this policy was the fear of the Bhutanese authorities to become a second Sikkim, which also had been a Tibetan-Buddhist Kingdom and had vanished in 1975 through annexation by India, because of the population rise of people of Nepal origin. This also scholarly widely accepted view is challenged by a minority, which claims, that most of the Nepali population in Sikkim backed the King and had not been the decisive cause of the annexation (Dixit, K.M., "Looking for Greater Nepal", 1993, London).

The Bhutanese government's argument is also weak, because India, a neighbor with whom Bhutan enjoys friendly bonds, will not annex Bhutan, because of geopolitical reasons concerning China. On the other side, Nepal also has no intention nor the capability to do such a move, which also would not be allowed by India too.

Another point sometimes mentioned by the Bhutanese elite is the loyalty of the Nepali Bhutanese towards the King of Nepal and not to Bhutan's King, for which the pictures of

the Nepalese King in their homes are a proof.

The author of this article could not verify this argument, but it is of course possible, that some part of the Nepali Bhutanese, especially the “newcomers” still have a feeling of loyalty to their original country’s monarch. But this does not mean that they have no loyalty to the King of Bhutan. Such a more or less twofold loyalty does not pose a threat to the survival of the Bhutanese state and can be seen as a transit period in the process of acculturation.

Another fear often mentioned by the Government of Bhutan and reproduced by a lot of scholars is the high reproduction rate of the Nepali-Bhutanese.

But where is the proof for such an argument? If you look at the families in the refugee camps in Nepal you will find a lot of them having 5 or more children, but also a lot having 3 or less. There exists no analyze of this demographic data. One Bhutanese high ranking elite told the author that in his town half of the population had been Nepali speaking, but the number of their children is the same like the other ethnic groups, the Ngalong included. Of course there is the possibility, that the high reproduction argument is the reality, which can be anticipated in view of the more labor-intensive agricultural occupation of the Nepali-Bhutanese in a very fertile soil combined with a hot and humid climate, compared with the Ngalongs traditional life style in more or less mountainous regions.

2.4. Democratic movement

These political measures against the Nepali speaking population of Bhutan met with resistance by some political and scholarly elite.

The first who spoke out, was an advisor of the King of Bhutan, Tek Nath Rizal, who with another member of The Royal Advisory Council, presented the King on April 9,1988 a petition, asking for more respect of human rights during the census of 1988. Only Rizal was then viewed as a traitor, because he made statements against TSA WA SUM , which means obedience towards King, Country and the Government (or King , Country and People) of Bhutan. The reason behind his arrest and striping of all his official functions was not his petition as such, but his responsibility for publishing details about misuse of money of Official Development Assistance, accusing high ranking politicians, like the mayor of Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan, and relatives of the King. His arrest was a revenge for his honesty, because he was perhaps the first who spoke out so openly about corruption cases. Only January 28, 2002 has seen the first time in Bhutan’s history the publication of a multitude of cases of irregularities in the government ministries (KUENSEL). Political prisoners normally faces death in Bhutan, but he was too famous, so he had been released after three days, yet under very strict conditions, which can be termed somehow a kind of house arrest. Rizal could not bear the situation and decided to flee to Nepal, where he started 1989 a democratic movement which became form on July 7, the People Forum for Human Rights Bhutan, aiming for introduction of human rights and cultural freedom for the Nepali ethnic part of Bhutan’ s population.

In November 1989 he was hijacked with two other activists from his house in Eastern Nepal and put into a Bhutanese prison, being labeled as the main culprit of the movement.

In 1990 Amnesty International declared him prisoner of conscience, which made him well known worldwide and resulted in the first trial of a political prisoner in Bhutan. The verdict had been lifelong imprisonment, but has been changed some days later by the King himself, who declared that he would be released when the problem of the Bhutanese refugees has been solved. But under worldwide pressure Mr. Rizal has been released on December 1999 after 10 years in prison. The international pressure upon Bhutan forced the government to release him, before the solution of the refugees issue has been found, contrary to what the King had said in November 1993, when changing his verdict after the trial. At present Rizal is staying inside Bhutan and fights for human rights, release of political prisoners and the early repatriation of the Bhutanese refugees. (He can be called the Mandela of Bhutan, because despite ideological differences within the refugee leadership, everybody regards him as the father of the human rights movement in Bhutan).

After his and other main activists arrest in autumn 1989 the government of Bhutan thought it had solved this issue, and got shocked when in September 1990 in many parts of southern Bhutan mass demonstrations erupted, calling for democracy and human rights. The main force behind these activities had been the Nepali speaking part of the population, but also members of other ethnic groups had joined them.

This happened not in all parts of southern Bhutan, therefore the oppressive and brutal methods of the authorities to quell this movement could not be observed in all municipalities as some Japanese volunteers stated. But this does not mean, that there has been no killing of demonstration participants or suspected one, because it was nearly impossible to realize what happened in the nearby village or town. The reason for that lies in the absence of a telecommunication network in southern Bhutan at that time.

The figures of how many people have been killed during and in the aftermath of the demonstrations vary between 0 and more than thousand and will never be known exactly. That many people have been killed can be concluded through the testimonies of refugees and foreigners, mostly English language teachers, working in Bhutan at that time.

2.5. An issue of democracy and human rights, not a pure ethnic conflict

The two years between 1988 and 1990 gave the impression of an ethnic conflict, but the following years are proofing that it is basically a conflict of new ideas like democracy and human rights against an old feudal hierarchic and absolutistic system.

One of these proofs is the fact that hundreds of refugees do not belong to the Nepali speaking part of the population, but to the king's group, Ngalongs, and the Sharchops, most of whom are known to be members of the elite, like high ranking bureaucrats or town mayors, village heads, etc. These people too participated at the demonstrations or assisted the democratic movement.

This author learnt, that in 1992 few representatives who were either Ngalongs or

Sharchops, and working as government representatives in southern Bhutan, were ordered by the government to cut the population of their towns or villages to a half within one year, and again to do that in the following year. This kind of orders had to be followed even in places where no demonstration took place, and where the King had visited to thank them for their loyalty.

A further proof is the statement by refugee leaders, that in the beginning of the establishing of the camps also Ngalongs had lived in the camps, but because of the repressive politics by the Bhutanese government, the tension between the Nepali – Bhutanese majority and this minority had been too strong and they had to move out.

The most convincing proof is the 1994 founding of the “Druk National Congress, DNC” a political party in exile in Nepal, by Rongthong Kunley Dorji, a Sharchop, a high ranking politician and a brother in law of Bhutan’s former Police President.

This party tried to pool the efforts of Ngalongs and Sharchops refugees in Nepal and India. Two reports in 1994 and 1996 stated some incidents of misuse of authorities power not only against non-Ngalongs, but also against members of the King’s ethnic group itself, mostly living in rural areas.

This party tried to strengthen the democratic movement within Bhutan and Rongthong Kunley Dorji even succeeded in 1997 in establishing the “United Front for Democracy, UFD”, which saw a reuniting among the rival refugee groups. This prompted the Bhutanese government to ask the Indian government for help in the arrest of the leader in New Delhi in 1998. After spending about one year in prison and becoming prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International he got released, but is confined to stay within the city compounds of New Delhi. His extradition, which the Indian government is asked by Bhutan, is still at large, because his case is connected with the activities of Indian guerilla groups operating on Bhutanese soil, an issue we will discuss later.

This move by the Bhutanese government not only weakened the unity among the refugees, but finally even resulted indirectly in the recent (2001) splitting of the Druk National Congress party itself.

But the formation of the DNC in 1994 was a clear proof of the non-ethnic character of the refugee issue. At least from that time on, we can say that it is not a simple ethnic conflict we have to deal with, despite the fact of presenting the case as an ethnic issue, by scholars and by the refugees themselves.

We can say, that on the macro level it is an issue of democracy, human rights, etc., because people who do not belong to the Nepali-Bhutanese ethnic groups also have been affected directly or indirectly by the policy of the Government of Bhutan. It forced people with awareness of human rights out of the country and also expelled in a very direct way people who opposed the government’s policy and had been active in democratic movements, like for example the monks of the Nyingmapa sect.

At the micro level the issue escalated in something like an ethnic cleansing through the actions by local authorities, which often went beyond the government’s directives in

excesses, which in content and scale (in relation to the population involved) can be compared with the atrocities done in the Balkan Peninsula, but never reached the international media in the same intensity until now.

2.6. Expulsion of about 20 % of the population

From October 1990 on, the Bhutanese government and authorities, shocked by the mass movement, started to drive the Nepali-Bhutanese out of the country at any cost and with a lot of different methods. It seems that despite some governmental orders, not in all parts of southern Bhutan the same policy or same methods had been implemented. But it seems clear that the authorities tried to get rid of people who had been involved or suspected to be in the democratic movement and of such people who had been in a position to do so in future, like wealthy farmers or members of the intellectual elite.

The methods used by the authorities, by police and military varied, but included all kind of intimidations, rape (even in front of whole families), burning of houses and books written in Nepali, arrest of not complying with the assimilation policy and release only under the condition to leave the country with the whole family. Many had also been forced at gunpoint to sign voluntary migration petitions, written in Dzongkha language, which is normally not understood by a Nepali-Bhutanese farmer. Others had no other choice than to fill out voluntary migration forms, because of the threatening atmosphere around them, which made them conclude, that they will be the next victims of the authorities brutal policy. These people had been forced out indirectly and it is not fair to say that they migrated on their own will. Who will leave their homes, where they have lived for generations only to face an uncertain future in a crowded refugee camp?

AHURA Bhutan (=Association of Human Rights Activists Bhutan), a NGO founded in 1992 by Bhutanese refugees, mostly Amnesty International former prisoners of conscience has analyzed the methods of expulsion in the following way:

1. People taking part in the peaceful demonstration of 1990 or those who paid cash donations to the movement were targets for official harassment. They were kept under constant watch by the authorities and were liable to be arrested at any time. Upon arrest they were invariably compelled to leave the country.
2. The member(s) of the family arrested and imprisoned by the security forces were subjected to severe torture to extract statement in which they would offer to leave the country upon their release from the prison. After their release the entire family was evicted.
3. While a member of the family was undergoing severe torture in jail the government official coerced the family members at home to offer to leave the country as a precondition for the release of their family member from the prison. The official often threatened the family of dreadful consequences to their imprisoned family member(s) if they did not oblige. Under such circumstances, the family had only one option— to agree to leave the country.

4. If a member of a family, fearing persecution, fled the country, particularly after the crushed peaceful demonstration, the family left behind was ordered by the authorities to hand over the fleeing member. Failing to produce the family member in a stipulated time, the whole family had to leave the country.
5. Families whose members were suspected of having involvement in the movement were officially declared as ‘anti-nationals’. The security personal were sent to the houses of such families and they were driven out of the country.
6. The people were threatened with re-arrest if they did not leave the country upon their release.
7. Some families were compelled to leave the country owing to continued harassment like frequent raids at night by the security force and government officials intimidating them to leave the country. Such raids involved molestation or threat of rape to female members of the family.
8. The government authorities from the district, the village headmen or the security personnel conducted public meetings in the villages where village folks were threatened with dire consequences if they ignored authorities order to leave the country. Several families decided to leave the country out of fear from these threats. Often the government authorities issued written orders to families through village heads ordering them to leave the country.
9. The security forces committed rape and torture during the regular house raids. In many instances, the security forces ordered the villagers to supply female volunteers to help in their barracks and gang- raped them. The security forces burnt or demolished their houses forcing people out of their homes. These circumstances forced the people to escape to safety.
10. The census officials declared them as non-nationals during the census exercise and were forced out of the country. Since 1990 census exercise has become an annual affair.
11. As a punishment for having opposed or protested against the government policies by members of the family by participating in rallies the entire such families were subjected to compulsory labor for prolonged period of time. After they could no longer bear the sufferings, some families left the country.

(AHURA BHUTAN, Bhutan a Shangrila without Human rights, March 2000, pp.82)

In Bhutanese government publications we can find reports of visits by the King in some municipalities, asking these farmers who had filled out the voluntary migration form to stay in the country, because their labor force is needed. But “despite the kings efforts many of the families left the country the following day” (MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, “The Southern Bhutan Problem – Threat to a Nation’s Survival”, 1993, Thimphu, Bhutan, p. 39).

The king of course never got information what kind of treatment by the local authorities these people got before they decided to leave their land. Refugees told the

author, that about three days before a visit by the king, people who had been suspected of speaking out, had been forcibly moved to another place during the king's visit.

The Bhutanese government arguments that these refugees have been persuaded to live in the camps and that they have been promised a lot of land or property on their return to Bhutan by the refugee leaders, is an extremely weak "explanation" of the real situation. Nobody in the refugee camps is happy with the high population density, the infrastructure and environment within the camps.

Another aspect which still can be found until recently is the religious one. For example in 1989 during the implementation of the assimilation policy in many parts of southern Bhutan the female members of the families were forced to cut their long hair, an affront towards the Hindu tradition.

Also Christians had been expelled from 1993 on, viewed as a quite different religion than Buddhism or Hinduism and also suspected as a hotbed for democratic movements (*Ahura Bhutan, a Shangrila without Human Rights, 1993, p.98-103, see also <http://bhutan4christ.com/>*).

Recently in 2001 we could read in Internet, that during the Easter festival, in some parts of southern Bhutan, Christians had been arrested and asked to leave the country or give up Christianity. The consequence was the arrest of a not known number of Christians.

3. Refugee camps in Nepal

3.1. Camp Management

With a variety of methods many people from Southern Bhutan had been expelled after the demonstration for democracy in autumn of 1990. Most of them had been Nepali-Bhutanese, but also thousands of people from other ethnic groups.

At that time the relations between India and Bhutan had not been as clouded as since very recent years, therefore India did not allow the establishment of refugee camps on Indian soil. The only option for the refugees was to flee to Nepal through India

But even then it took some time until they had been verified as refugees by UNHCR. Finally in 1990 the Maidhar camp has been built in a riverbed, which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of children, because of the outbreak of diseases like cholera during the rainy season. This situation led to the abolishment of this camp after one and a half years.

Then the Nepalese government provided land for the building of other camps in the southeast of Nepal in Jhapa and Morang districts. Until 1993 seven camps, Goldhap, Timai, Beldangi I, II, Extension, Sanischara and Khudanabari had been established, which population rose steadily and reached 100.000 in the second half of 2001, exactly 100.764 persons at the end of December 2001 (see Appendix, Table 1).

The administration of these camps lies in the hands of UNHCR with coordination of RCU (=Refugee Coordinating Unit) a branch of NUCRA (= Nepal Unit for Coordination of Refugee Affairs) an organization within the Nepal Home Ministry.

A number of International NGO's is or has been active, for example Caritas Nepal in charge of the education, World Lutheran Service responsible for Non Formal Education and job training, Oxfam also for Non Formal Education and job training, Save the Children Fund (SCF-UK) for health care, hygienic issues, LWF (Lutheran World Service) for building of huts, drink water system, AMDA for medical care with a hospital outside the camps, also open for local people.

Bhutanese refugees select a Camp Secretary for each of the 7 camps who has to coordinate the running of the camps with UNHCR and RCU (Refugees Coordination Unit) and NUCRA (Nepal Unit for Coordination of Refugee Affairs).

World Food Program is responsible for the food and petrol distribution in the camps.

3.2. Educational system in the camps

3.2.1. Starting the school system

The first schools from PP to class 8 had been established at Maidhar camp at the end of 1991 and at the same time an identical system was introduced in Timai camp. All of these schools had been open air schools with 3 shifts a day, starting from 6:30 a.m. to about 4:30 p.m.

At the end of 1992 in each of two camps, Timai and Beldangi I, the first school building with about 60 cm high concrete walls with bamboo sticks on it and tin roofs had been erected.

But these two buildings had been the last of his type, because the Government of Nepal introduced the obligation to build only temporary houses and schools, because it wanted to destroy all the huts in the camps after the return of the refugees to Bhutan and restore the nature in that camp area. All the schools built after 1993 had only bamboo stick walls and are prone to weather conditions, like wind and rain, which causes dust and muddy ground in the classrooms.

3.2.2. School administration

The responsibility for the schools lies in the hand of Caritas Nepal, which gets budget from UNHCR for PP to class 8 and is financing class 9 and 10 with Caritas budget.

It seems that UNHCR is only giving limited education to refugee children, which means that nobody could go for higher studies, except very wealthy families kids. This contradicts the fundamental rights for education children should have and further means, that without help from other organizations, like Caritas or NGOs or private sponsors nobody of the refugee community could go to university or other advanced studies. In the long term this means the impossibility of creating a new intellectual elite, which can also lead to severe problems in future.

3.2.3. School attendance

If you look at table 2, you will find that girls outnumber boys until class from class 2 to class 6, but in the upper classes their percentage is decreasing. The high rate in lower classes can be interpreted by the mind change of their parents after coming to the refugee camps, because traditionally the attendance rate for girls is in Bhutan lower than for boys. That means the parents became somehow aware of the importance of education.

But another important factor is that the Bhutanese teachers in the camps decided to deny reentry to students who had dropped out of school. That means that the attendance rate is often cited as 100% (UNHCR: Bhutanese Refugee Education Programme in Camps, 18 March 1998, Kathmandu, Nepal, p.1).

For the lower rate after class 6 two factors are important to mention. First, girls after the age of 10 are often kept at home helping in the household, and second, because of becoming refugee and not able to attend schools for some years, the girls age in higher classes is above the norm, which means they are already in marriage age, therefore many of them leave the schools after getting married (information by a camp teacher March 2,1996).

3.2.4. Syllabus

The first two years, 1991 and 1992 the syllabus has been the Nepalese one, but due to a lack of experience by the Bhutanese teachers to implement it, they started in 1993 together with the help of Caritas to create their own textbooks following the Bhutanese syllabus. The core of these Bhutanese teachers action since November 1991 had been the Students Union of Bhutan (SUB), but because of its too political character, it was replaced after some months by the Bhutanese Refugees Education Coordinating Committee (BRECC), which was in charge from Dec.1992 to March 1993. From April 1993 on, Caritas Nepal has been ordered by UNHCR to guide the renamed organization, now called Bhutanese Refugee Education Programme (BREP) (Information by Father Amalraj, Caritas Nepal Office in Damak, 2000 March, 10).

The same year 5 Irish volunteers, one coordinator and four teacher trainers started to make a huge contribution to the rising of the Bhutanese refugees education (Brown, Timothy, "Improving Quality and Attainment in Refugee Schools: The Case of the Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal", 2001, p.128)

The teaching medium is English, except Nepali and Dzongkha language classes.

Presently the syllabus is the Nepalese one starting with class 4, but at the same time the Bhutanese one is still implemented, in subjects like English, Social Studies, Mathematics and especially Dzongkha language, the ruling Bhutanese elite language, which was introduced as a pilot project in 1996 and in all schools since 1997 as compulsory from class 4 to class 8. Since 2001 the Dzongkha classes starts already with class 3. This fact proves the refugees intentions to go back to their motherland and to be able to be integrated. We have to have in mind, that the Bhutanese government has since the 1990' s

stressed the importance of the learning of Dzongkha language for the unification of the country. The refugees responded to this policy in introducing Dzongkha language learning in the camp schools (see App., Table 3 and 4).

It is interesting to see, that despite the effort of the Bhutanese government in promoting Dzongkha through the assimilation policy, a lengthy article in Kuensel laments that this language is not popular and may be called the national language, but it is still not the official language (KUENSEL, DEC. 4, 2001).

Class IX and X follow the Nepalese curriculum, because of the SLC-test after class X, which is a Nepalese one (see App., Tab.5).

3.2.5. Refugee schools textbooks

The level of the textbooks produced by the refugee teachers and Caritas has a quite high standard and with the help of other INGO's every student gets a book for all the subjects. But reference material like dictionaries or encyclopedias are very rare and the libraries are also poorly equipped. The same situation is seen in the poor state of natural science equipment (M. Ringhofer, 2000, pp.119).

The following three short analyses of English, History and Environmental Studies textbooks should give a glimpse on what kind of books are used in the camps.

a) Textbooks for English class 1 to 3

Because of English as the medium, great weight is given to English, especially in class 2 and 3 with each 10 hours of English classes a week.

The basic concept is to teach practical English "Studying English not through explanations, but through using it" (Bhutan Refugee Education Programme "Class III, English Teacher's Manual", Caritas Nepal, 1996, p.275).

Therefore an active and holistic approach is used and the content is related to the living conditions in the camps. Besides that, from class 1 on, emphasize is also laid on hygienic issues and good behavior ("Class I English/EVS", Caritas Nepal, BREP, Birtamod, Jhapa, Nepal, 1994, p.25).

A lot of the sentences refer to the living conditions in the camps. For example the location of the classroom or their hut in relation to international NGO's buildings, etc.

(Bhutanese Refugee Education Programme "Class II English Teacher's Manual", Caritas Nepal, 1995, p.7, 11).

For the purpose of self-introduction, from class 1 on they learn to say their birthplace, district and also the camp name and address inside the camps.

Also Bhutanese culture is well represented through a lot of sentences referring to dress, food and housing, the King, the airline Druk Air etc.

Especially from class 3 on, emphasis is laid on developing an identity as a Bhutanese (for example how they became refugees, same as above, p.211).

In the class 3 textbook the content also is becoming more international, for example through stories about Robinson Crusoe, Anne's diary, the introduction of world religions,

human rights awareness, analysis of discriminatory language and teasing, and also insight in the situation of handicapped people.

The names of people in sentences in class 1 and 2 reflected only Bhutanese and Nepali ethnic groups, but in class 3 the ethnic names of different cultures had been introduced.

The textbooks are very systematic, in blocks, separated in weekly targets.

b) History textbook for class 6 – A comparison between refugee camps and Bhutanese textbooks

Structure: The refugee camp textbook has 11 chapters, while the textbook used inside Bhutan has 12. Of these, 8 chapters are identically, referring to Tibetan Buddhism, religious history and unification of the country, the establishment of the monarchy, the national flag and hymn, and the national language. Only the sequence of the chapters varies slightly.

Characteristics of the refugee textbook

In chapter 2 the country and population is introduced with a distribution of ethnic groups, in which the Nepali ethnic groups are stated with 45% of the population, but without any concrete data proof.

In chapter 3, the beginning of Nepali immigration into Bhutan is set in the year 649, and it is stated, that the immigration in 1640, based on a friendly relationship, is historically documented.

Besides the Bhutanese history it contains an introduction in history and country of Nepal, a chapter about democracy, United Nations organizations, evolution of mankind, and about the civilizations of India and China.

The part about Bhutan's history has 59 pages, that of Nepal's history has 28. There are no color photos, only black and white ones, and the cover shows Bhutan and the neighboring countries.

Characteristics of the textbook used inside Bhutan

Chapter 5 contains the history of the Druk sect (Tibetan Buddhism) to which the kings family belongs.

Chapter 11 explains "Driglam Namzha", the cultural characteristics of the ethnic group which the king belongs, especially the wearing of the national dress (which is compulsory), the code of conduct and language use. This reflects the assimilation policy which started in 1988.

Besides that, there is a chapter more about a religious important figure and an explanation about the pronunciation of Dzonghka language.

The book has 84 pages with a lot of color photos and the Imperial Palace as the cover photo.

c) Environmental Studies Textbook for class 2

The textbook used by the refugees is concentrated on life in the camps, the different kinds of buildings, the activities of INGO' s and also on hygienic issues. The last problem

is very drastically and understandably analyzed and reflects the still difficult hygienic situation, which leads to gastric, eyesight and other illnesses.

The textbook used inside Bhutan is quite different, showing in a more or less academic way the environment, flora and fauna, of Bhutan.

These Environmental Studies textbooks used in the camps and in Bhutan have perhaps the most divergent content among all the subjects taught.

3.2.6. SLC=School Leaving Certificate (National Examination after class 10)

The secondary education schools are available only in 5 of the seven camps and are supported by Caritas. At the end of these two years the students have to pass the SLC examination. Bhutanese refugees attended 1992 these examinations for the first time.

For the coming years they could only sit for these tests at places outside the camps, but since 1998 the Government of Nepal gave permit to have the tests in the camps schools (Caritas Nepal, Sub-Report, p.9). The passing rate of Bhutanese refugee students has been low for only the first two years, but than it surpassed the Nepali rate (around 40%) and lied mostly around 80% until 1999 (see App., Table 6).

As reasons count the high level of Bhutanese teachers, but also their dedication in the classroom teaching, which the author of this article had seen many times. A further reason is the importance the refugee society is paying to education as a tool to escape and/or ameliorate the situation as refugees or that of the whole society. The point that they want to contribute to society after their return to Bhutan should also not be forgotten.

3.2.7. Camp schoolteachers qualification

Since 1991 teachers who got their qualification in Bhutan taught at the camps school, but after 1996 the trend started to teach in Nepalese schools surrounding the camps. Their qualification in general and also high level English proficiency attracted many Nepalese schools. For the teachers too the benefits are a 3 to 4 fold increase in salary, compared to that they received in the camps. Caritas counted alone in the year 1999, 400 teachers, who had left the camp schools, some for further studies, some for teaching at Nepalese schools (information from Caritas Office Damak, March 10, 2000).

In March 2000 a newspaper article stated, that every morning about 10.000 refugees leave their camps by bus to look for work in the vicinity, which has increased the tensions between refugees and local people. The refugees can work for lower salary than the Nepalese, because food and housing are provided. Therefore they are not well received by the Nepalese labor force. Among these are also a lot of school teachers (The Kathmandu Post, March 6, 2000, p.1).

The loss of qualified teachers can only filled through the hiring of assistance teachers, that means people who have just finished their class X (Caritas Nepal "Final Sub-Project", p.13).

In spite of this awful situation the quality level of education remains high, which is

documented through the high pass rate at the SLC examinations. The dedication and efforts by all the teachers has to be lauded, a phenomenon the author of this article could himself verify through numerous occasions.

Teachers training is high on agenda with numerous workshops held every year, arranged by Caritas and held by lecturers and facilitators from India, Nepal and European countries (Caritas Nepal "Final Sub-Project", p.14: during 1998 29 workshops with 1,876 participants had been hold).

In addition, every Saturday the research teachers are holding workshops for their colleagues to raise their abilities.

Looking at the low number of female teachers you have to consider the absence of Bhutanese female teachers in Bhutanese schools. Therefore raising the number of female teachers in the camp schools will contribute to gender equality and show a role model for female students.

In the camps there is also a Teacher's Day celebrated, following the Nepalese school tradition, when the students show their skills through music, dance, theater and singing performances. There is no such a costume in Bhutan. The author had also the chance to participate at such events and also attending the preparations and rehearsal of the performances. Teachers and students complained that due to a lack of adequate or well functioning speakers and instruments, they often cannot perform in the way they wanted to do it.

3.2.8. Scholarship system

After class X and passing the SLC examination there is no chance for further studies at the camps, therefore students who want to continue their studies have to attend schools outside the camps in Nepal or in India. But most of the refugee families cannot afford such studies and are dependent on scholarships offered by some institutions and NGOs.

Caritas Nepal

Caritas Nepal started in 1997 to give scholarships to 787 teachers for distant education to stop the outflow of teachers and also to give 275 teachers scholarships to finish class XI and XII through distant education. The sum has been 4,463,750 Nepali Rupees (NRS) for the first group and 728.000 NRS for the second. For class XI and XII studies Caritas provided 1998 269 teachers 1,262,590 NRS, and for the same purpose in 1999, 446 teachers with 1,361,785 NRS (Information from Caritas Nepal, March 10, 2000).

But due to the high number of students who passed the SLC examinations in 2001, Caritas has been forced to stop financial assistance for class XI and XII students. At the end of 2001 a donation from CAFOD (=Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, London) enabled Caritas to give assistance (paying the school fees) to all students for further studies (information by Father Amalraj, Caritas Nepal, Damak, March 3, 2002).

DAFI=Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative

Since 1993 more than 100 refugee students with excellent marks got scholarships for university education or vocational training. 1998 six of 60 students could finish their studies, but from that year on no new scholarships have been awarded, because there have been irregularities in distributing and using the scholarship money by some refugees. This stop of scholarships shocked the young refugee students (UNHCR Branch Office "Briefing Update, January 1998, Bhutanese refugees in Nepal, p.2.

Caritas Nepal "Final Sub-Project", p.8. Caritas Nepal tried to ask DAFI to resume the scholarship system in 2001, but without success (Information by Caritas Nepal, March 13, 2000).

UNHCR

UNHCR provided mostly scholarships for vocational training, about 35 to 50 and beside this number also 15 scholarships for class XI and XII students (Caritas Nepal, "Final Sub-Project, p.11). But UNHCR also stopped to give scholarships for class XI and XII from 2001 on.

BRAVVE= Bhutanese Refugee Aiding Victims of Violence

This NGO founded by Bhutanese refugees started 1993 with projects for torture and rape victims and 1998 with scholarships for class XI and XII, counting for 50 and 47 students in March 2000, providing in average 20.000 RNS for one year (Information by Mangala Sharma, chairperson of BRAVVE, March 13, 2000).

But about four months later this scholarship system stopped, because the oversea donor suddenly ended the donation, which brought a lot of difficulties for the affected students.

AHURA JAPAN (Association of Human Rights Activists Japan)

This NGO has been established 1993 in Japan to assist the Bhutanese refugees and started 1994 with scholarships for class XI and XII. 1994 5 students got scholarships to study at schools (most are missionary schools) in India to get a scholarly level, which enables them to go further to universities. In 1996, 12 students, in 1998, 22 students, in 1999, 18 students and also 18 in the following years received scholarships. At present the amount for one year is about 30,000 RNS.

3.2.9. Education for the special need children

In 1995, in two camps, Timai and Khudunabari, a project started with 10 children each, which was implemented in all the camps the following year. The main purpose was to bring these children to school, which they did not attend before. Save the Children Fund (SCF) has been in charge for this project and together with a Caritas affiliated teacher from Ireland, Bhutan and the parents they succeeded with integrated education from PP class to class X

in all the camps. In 1996, 1,259 children have been recognized for that project (UNHCR SUB OFFICE JHAPA, "Bhutanese Refugees in UNHCR assisted Camps in Nepal – Briefing Note", November 1997, Nepal, fifth sheet), in August 2000 the number was 1,085 (Brown, T., p.133).

Awareness education has been given to all schoolteachers, and also the "Children Forum" founded by SCF-UK, has been active in implementing the system.

Children with hearing difficulties learned lip-reading and in each camp 10 teachers had been trained in learning Braille. With the cooperation of NAWB (=Nepal Association for the Welfare of Blind) also the children were able to learn Braille (Caritas Nepal, Final Sub-Project, p.15).

At the end of 1996 some 7 specialists from NADH (=Nepal Association for the deaf and hard of hearing) trained concerned teachers, health workers, parents and their children in 3 groups. The children themselves learned how to teach sign language and are now teaching it to their friends (Information from Gauri Giri, member of the SCF-project team, March 12, 2000).

The system established in the camps for the education of these children got high marks by foreign visitors and the author of this article could see one part of it, when visiting the classes for the children after having attended the integrated classes. But in September 2000 during a visit in the camps and a lengthy contact with the children, some of them complained that some teachers in the schools have no awareness of their conditions and often neglect them in the integrated classes.

3.2.10. NFE (=Non Formal Education)

OXFAM started in 1994 with a budget provided by UNHCR with the implementation of NFE classes in the camps. The first level of this program consists of 7 month teaching of Nepali language and calculating, the second level concentrates on teaching English for 4 months and the third level is training for self-learning and awareness, which lasts also for 7 months.

After finishing each level a month long training is conducted in legal consulting and solving of daily life problems.

During 1997 4,982 illiterate refugees, 4,330 women and 652 men, studied in this program and 4,799 could finish it (4,159 women and 640 men).

In these NFE classes a lot of different issues are introduced, like health, nutrition, family planning, environment, polygamy, early marriage, gender, camp rules etc., which also means that these classes can also be called empowerment classes (UNHCR NEPAL "Bhutanese Refugee Education Program in Camps", 18 March 1998, pp.3).

1999 LWS (=Lutheran World Service) took over the responsibility for this program (Information from Caritas Nepal, March 13, 2000).

4. Search for a political solution

4.1. Bilateral talks

Because of the government of India's passive role in efforts to solve the refugee issue, this task had to be taken up by Bhutan and Nepal, starting in October 1993 with bilateral talks. For that purpose the Bhutan-Nepal Joint Ministerial Level Committee has been in charge and in the first round of talks, the Bhutanese side succeeded in dividing the refugees in four categories:

1. Genuine Bhutanese who have been forcibly evicted.
2. Bhutanese who have been migrated.
3. Non-Bhutanese people.
4. Bhutanese who have been committed criminal acts

(Category 4 comprises people active in the democratic movement or in the different political parties and organizations founded by the refugees in exile).

This division has been criticized by the refugees, a move which made the Nepalese side to agree to only two categories, namely Bhutanese and Non Bhutanese from 2001 on.

Therefore this divergent issue concerning the categories has not been solved in the following 10 talks and the 12th bilateral talks, scheduled for March 2002 (after repeated delay by the Bhutanese side) give no hope in solving this problem, despite the fact that already more than 12,000 refugees from Khudanabari camp have been verified during March and December 2001, and are waiting for the results of this verification process.

Most of the refugees had given up any hope in these bilateral talks, often called only ceremonial ones, but the verification process also revived hopes for repatriation in the near future.

4.2. Repatriation movements

AMCC

Between 1995 and 1997 a mass movement, organized by the Appeal Movement Coordinating Council (AMCC) conducted mass meetings, demonstrations in Nepal and India, press conferences, workshops and seminars for the Bhutanese refugee activists, which finally tried from January 1996 on in many waves, to carry out their right to return to their country. These peace marchers were in many cases stopped and beaten by Indian police and the 50 refugees who entered Bhutan on August 15 were arrested and returned to India. The attempts by two other groups in November and December 1996, with 51 and 1500 participants had been repulsed by Bhutanese and Indian authorities.

AMCC undertook also strong international advocacy through a network of INGOs and support groups which succeeded in internationalizing the issue of the refugees and had Positive response by different governments which finally also influenced the resolution of the EU parliament in 1996, in which a repatriation under the auspices of the Red Cross had been demanded and also in the statement of the chairman of the Sub Commission on

Human Rights in Geneva, August 1998.

For detailed information refer to AHURA BHUTAN "Bhutan A Shangrila without human rights", p.65-73.

BRRRC

This Bhutanese Refugees Representative Repatriation Committee formed in February 1999 gathered 10,000 petitions signed by the heads of Bhutanese refugee families and sent it in April 1999 to Ms. Mary Robinson the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. They demanded an independent verification team, which should also create the conditions for an early repatriation.

The same organization also draw a mass rally with 20,000 refugees in Damak (a city near the refugee camps) on June 1st, 1999 to pressure the King of Bhutan to declare the following day, the Silver Jubilee celebration of his enthronement, a royal decree for the return of the Bhutanese refugees to their homes in Bhutan. (Ahura Bhutan, Bhutan a Shangrila without Human Rights, p.92)

BGNLF

Bhutan Gorkha National Liberation Front supporters entered in June and August 1999 on two occasions Bhutan, but had been expelled like previous attempts by the AMCC movement activists (Ahura Bhutan, same as above, pp.93)

But it is important to note, that this organization has very little support in the camps, contrary to the claims by the Government of Bhutan.

4.3. Verification

Because of international pressure after 1998 by many governments, UN organizations, and INGO's and a strong effort by the US-government at the end of the year 2000, Bhutan finally agreed to start a joint verification team with the Nepalese government and in an unprecedented speed announced at the start of the new year the names of the 5 person team. For the refugees this was a ray of hope after about 10 years in the camps, but they also had mixed feelings about Bhutan's intentions, because the head of this verification team was a Dr. Sonam Tenzin, the man who was the most responsible person for their eviction from Sarbhang district, the home of 36% percent of the refugees.

After some delay the verification started March 25th 2001, but at a slow pace of only 10 families a day, which arose a strong international pressure to accelerate the speed, a move both governments agreed and from August on with 2 teams working and shortening of the procedure, the verification of the first camp, Khudunabari, covering 12,090 persons, finished December 13.

But after the verification, the Bhutanese side, neither published the findings, nor the time schedule of a repatriation program, and also gave no indication when it would start with the other camps verification process.

A big obstacle for the Bhutanese side could be the resettlement policy, which the government has started in 1997. The houses and land belonging to the refugees are given to other ethnic groups and therefore it is now in many cases impossible for the refugees to return to their homes or land.

Habitat International Coalition undertook a fact-finding mission from September 23rd to October 1st 2001, to find out about the scale of the resettlement in Samchi and Sarbhang districts. This mission could verify the scale of the resettlement, which gave land to Northern Bhutanese on properties belonging to refugees (South Asia Regional Programme Habitat International Coalition Housing and Land Rights Committee, "Report of Fact Finding Mission by Habitat International Coalition On Resettlement on Lands of Bhutanese Refugees", January 2002, New Delhi).

4.4. Another obstacle for repatriation:the presence of militant groups in Southern Bhutan

ULFA(=United Liberation Front for Assam), NDFB(=National Democratic Front of Bodoland) and BLT(=Bodo Liberation Tigers) are three guerilla groups fighting for their independence from India and using Bhutanese soil for retreat, when challenged by Indian military or police. This started already more than 20 years ago and it is quite clear that many of the killings and robberies the Bhutanese government had accused the Nepali Bhutanese in the first three years of the 90' s had been the work of these organizations. Some refugees also stated, that these guerilla groups have even been used by Bhutanese authorities to drive them out of the country.

During the 90' s the presence of these groups became so strong in southern Bhutan, with the building of military bases and encroaching more to the northern part, so that they became a threat to Bhutan' s security itself.

The National Assembly of Bhutan decided to throw them out of the country, but so far they had not succeeded to persuade them. The leader of ULFA had even stated in 2001, that his group wants to stay on Bhutanese soil so long until Assam becomes an independent country.

Since 2001 the Bhutanese government is demanding from the people in southern Bhutan, mostly of Nepali origin, but often from lower casts and not so well off, to fight against these guerilla organizations, when the government decides to do so (KUENSEL, April 7, 2001).

If these Nepali-Bhutanese would refuse this order, they would be expelled, if they obey, the chances of being killed by the guerillas with their more sophisticated weapons are very high.

Bhutanese authorities claim that ULFA and NFDB are supporting the Nepali Bhutanese, which is completely unfounded (Dr. S. Chandrasekharan, "Refugee verification: a step toward the resolution", in: R. B. Basnet & D. N. S. Dhakal, p.8).

Another aspect is the reject of the extradition of the prominent Sharchop and exile

leader of DNC, Rongthong Kunley Dorji, who was arrested 1998 and put into an Indian prison on request of the Government of Bhutan, because he succeeded in 1997 to unite the different refugee parties and organizations to form a United Front for Democracy (UDF), which started to pose a serious threat to the Bhutanese government. India denied his extradition to the Bhutanese authorities as long as Indian police and military is not allowed to enter southern Bhutan to fight the guerilla groups. Rongthong Kunley Dorji is still in India, released, but not allowed to leave New Delhi.

Conclusion

Despite the lobbying of Indian NGO's and the efforts of some politicians, the government of India, which has still great influence in Bhutan, remains indifferent to solve the refugee issue.

UNHCR too and the UN-organizations in Geneva have had not enough impact through their efforts to force Bhutan to accelerate the solving of the refugee problem.

EU Parliament and US government had been among others dedicated to find a solution, but still could not force the Bhutanese diplomacy to act in a more concrete and fair way so far.

It seems that the government of Bhutan feels little disturbed to resettle people on the land which had belonged to the refugees and even to strengthen their assimilation policy in altering the names of districts, like Samchi into Samtse, or Chirang into Tsirang, or the names of blocks, like Lalai into Umling, or Suray into Jigme Choling, or villages, for example Bistadara into Dumeng and Katusay into Rizong, a policy which started in 1997 (South Asia Regional Programme Habitat, p.57).

It is also clear that the Bhutanese government is highly interested in trying to convince the outside world, especially the donors, how democratic the country is ruled. But it is not difficult to see, that this democratic structure is only a pseudo one and that the ruling elites only tries to hold on their positions and benefits, which leaves no room for a solution of the refugee crisis. (Dhurba P. Rizal, "Bhutan Decentralization and good governance", Delhi, 2001, p.59-71). This tendency can also been observed in Bhutan's start of drafting a written constitution, but without a single member of the Nepali-Bhutanese in the drafting committee (KUENSEL, Nov. 30, 2001). This move has been criticized by the refugee leaders (The Kathmandu Post, Jan. 16, 2002).

Also the unresolved problem of Indian guerilla groups is an obstacle in one way, but in another way repatriated refugees could be used as a human shield and soldiers against these organizations.

Of course the differences between the Bhutanese in exile and the insecurity of Nepalese politics further contributes to a postponing of the solution and favors the Government of Bhutan. In recent years also a trend towards assimilation into Nepal's culture and society can be observed.

Education in the camps provides the young refugees with a quite high general academic level, which they could not have reached to such an extent, if they had stayed in Bhutan. Despite some problems, like lack of materials or classrooms, no computer education (no electricity) etc., the teachers and students are highly motivated and the school life is well organized, a phenomenon the author of this article could verify many times.

But otherwise it is questionable, if they can find appropriate working places after their return to Bhutan. Also their knowledge about human rights and democracy, which they receive during their education in the camps could make them suspicious in the eyes of the Bhutanese authorities. As Brown is writing in his findings "they want to contribute to nation building, compete for leadership and fight for justice", this kind of eagerness could be a threat to the present leadership of Bhutan (Brown, T., p.138).

Appendix

Table 1: Population distribution in 7 Bhutanese refugee camps (31st Dec.2001)

Camp	Families	Persons
Beldangi-I	2,524	17,338
Beldangi-II	3,359	21,532
Beldangi-II Extension	1,671	10,925
Sanischaré	2,796	19,786
Goldhap	1,346	8,989
Timai	1,364	9,563
Khudunabari	1,962	12,631
Total	15,022	100,764

(Caritas Nepal, Damak, March 5th 2002)

Table 2: Students Statistics

		CARITAS Nepal Bhutanese Refugee Education Programme.											Students statistics as of 31January 2002								
		CLASS /STANDARDS																			
S/ N	Camps (School)	PP	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	V III	IX	X	TOTAL	% Boys/ Girls	TEACHING			NON-TEACHING			GRAN D TOTAL
															M	F	TOTAL	M	F	TOTAL	
I	BELDAN (Green Vale DI-I Academy)																				
# Sector Schools	(Classes PP to III)																				3
# Extensio ns																					3
# Sections	9	11	11	11	12	13	14	13	12												106
Boys	288	345	332	304	377	368	404	383	365												3166 50.28
Girls	296	319	360	354	389	422	425	329	237												3131 49.72
Sub-total(B+G)	584	664	692	658	766	790	829	712	602	0	0	6297	100	108	36	144	24	1	25	169	
II	BELDAN (Pancha- Oti English GI-II School)																				
# Sector Schools	(Classes PP to III)																				6
# Extensio ns																					2
# Sections	11	15	15	18	24	12	16	16	17												144
Boys	321	470	413	482	525	385	419	479	517												4011 50.74
Girls	312	420	451	491	544	402	448	418	407												3893 49.25
Sub-Total (B+G)	633	890	864	973	1069	787	867	897	924	0	0	7904	100	146	50	196	26	0	26	222	
III	BELDAN (Marigold GI-IIExt. Academy)																				
# Sector Schools	(Classes PP to III)																				3
# Extensio ns																					1
# Sections	7	4	8	7	9	7	10	9	9												70
Boys	232	131	218	186	236	175	245	233	266												1922 50.14
Girls	203	133	236	211	244	192	269	230	193												1911 49.86
Sub-Total (B+G)	435	264	454	397	480	367	514	463	459	0	0	3833	100	76	33	109	17	0	17	126	
IV	SANISC (New HARE Horizon Academy)																				
# Sector Schools	(Classes PP to III)																				9
# Extensio ns																					3
# Sections	15	11	13	12	16	12	15	20	10	8	3	135									
Boys	419	304	353	355	487	337	442	613	349	273	126	4058	51.96								
Girls	413	366	400	362	462	350	456	537	208	147	51	3752	48.04								
Sub-Total (B+G)	832	670	753	717	949	687	898	1150	557	420	177	7810	100	145	39	184	30	0	30	214	
V	GOLDH (Blooming AP Lotus English School)																				
# Sector Schools	(Classes PP to III)																				1
# Extensio ns																					
# Sections	4	4	8	6	8	6	7	8	7	5	2	65									
Boys	104	110	222	173	227	166	193	232	240	170	75	1912	53.36								
Girls	96	90	233	181	217	193	192	206	133	91	39	1671	46.64								
Sub-Total (B+G)	200	200	455	354	444	359	385	436	373	261	114	3583	100	80	22	102	9	0	9	111	

Table 3: Subjects taught from class PP to class III

Subject	PP	Class I	Class II	Class III
English	5	5	10	10
Mathematics	5	5	10	10
Environmental Studies	5	5	8	8
Nepali	5	5	7	8
Dzongkha	0	0	0	2
Total	20	20	35	38

(Caritas Nepal, Damak, 11th March 2000, 5th March 2002)

Table 4: Subjects taught from class IV to class VIII

Subject	Class IV	Class V	Class VI	Class VII	Class VIII
Nepali	8	8	8	8	8
Mathematics	9	9	9	8	8
English	10	10	10	9	9
Social Studies	5	5	6	6	6
Science	6	6	6	7	7
Dzongkha	3	3	3	3	3
Moral Studies	1	1	1	1	3
Total	42	42	42	42	42

One class has 40 minutes, but in the 2001 school year it changed to 45 min.

From class 4 on additional Co-curricular activities are held for 2 hrs. a week, in which debate, games, quiz, cultural activities, writing and speech contests, sports activities are done (Caritas Nepal, Damak, March 11th 2000 , March 5th 2002)

Table 5 Subjects taught at class IX and class X

Subject	Class IX	Class X
Nepali	5	5
Mathematics	6	6
English	5	5
Science	5	5
Social Studies	5	5
Health, Population	4	4
Environment	1	1
Moral Studies		
Total	42	42

(Caritas Nepal, February 29th 2000; also 2 hours co-curricular activities are added to the 42 classes)

Table 6 SLC-Test Results

Year	Students	Passed	%
1992	11	2	18
1993	92	58	63
1994	103	92	81
1995	213	176	83
1996	303	229	75
1997	342	291	85
1998	425	308	73
1999	582	546	94
2000	1,026	618	55

CARITAS NEPAL, Sub-Report, p.6, CARITAS NEPAL, Jhapa, Father Amalraj March 10th and 13th 2000, March 5th 2002
 (The results for the school year 2000 is low, because of a sudden change in Nepal's SLC- examination system, but it is still higher than the Nepalese average passing rate.)

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