

Kingdom of Bhutan under Pandemic

Bhutan is a landlocked nation between two giant and powerful nations in the planet, China to the north and India to the south. It is a very unpleasant year all over the world, and we see all nations were thriving to fight against pandemic. Most notably, small countries like Bhutan lacked economically to challenge pandemic and traditionally backward to equip scientific medical sufficiency. Bhutan was unheard of coronavirus until its first case on March 5, first confirmed patient was one of the American tourists who is a 70-year-old man. On the day of testing positive, under the initiatives of government conducted collection of data on first primary contact of infected tourist, and all primary contacts were quarantined for 14 days to stop pandemic spread speed. This is very challenging for a poor country like Bhutan, yet then Bhutan didn't cry for help, rather under the golden words of visionary king, Bhutan collectively prepared to fight against pandemic. First confirmed case was released unofficially via social platform Facebook, and on day of testing positive government has ordered to suspend the schools and universities in three districts, Punakha, Thimphu and Paro. Ugyen Thinly, a 23-year-old student from Royal Thimphu College shares his views on first confirmed case in Bhutan, "I felt deeply sorry for infected tourist and at the same time I think he should be happy as our medical staff is taking good care of him. It is unexpected and unpleasant news hearing early in the morning, and we the students were not yet prepared to fight against pandemic" said Ugyen Thinly.

When the world is under lock down, government of Bhutan took extra tension of their people and they have started intake of Bhutanese living outside the country. Till date Bhutan doesn't have any confirmed cases on local peoples, all confirmed cases were among the outsiders returning home. As per of June 13, Bhutan has 61 confirmed cases and they were all among outsiders returning home. Bhutan even though very poor and underdeveloped nation, it has taken good measure in

withholding spread of pandemic, when the person were coming home, they were quarantined for 21 days and they will undergo thorough medical inspection. During the quarantined period, they were under the care of government. Phurpa Dema, A 23 year old girl from Institute of Charter Financial Analyst of India (ICFAI), has been quarantined for 21 days, she shared her views on pandemic, “I was not series about pandemic until I see some post over media advocating large number of death in Italy, after that I felt little bit scared and I was worried that I will not able to meet my parents and friends in my country. Yet then with the help of our government we the Bhutanese students studying in India got a bus arrangement to return home. After I reached back to country I was quarantined for 21 days, I felt very angry for 21 days quarantined as it is too long days for us, yet then when I experienced quarantined I felt great and very thankful to my government. On the other hand I felt like I had served my nation fulfilling the duties of quarantined and I felt great about myself that at least I am going to save spread of pandemic if I were infected”.

While whole nation were fighting against COVID-19 Pandemic, Bhutan worried about education accessibility to their nation, because of the pandemic Bhutan has increased their number of intake and gradually increased number of confirmed cases, therefore, Bhutan have closed all schools and universities across the country. Government didn't left students empty minded, students were equipped with E-Learning and all education facilities were made accessible across the nation. Leki Dorji, A 17 year's old students from Zhemgang Higher secondary School shares his views on E-learning, “this is very first time I am using my mobile phone for studies purpose, it is very difficult for me to adapt with E-Learning method as it is completely new world for me. Yet then I have learned and I adapted to it somehow, but we the students of poor family background faces challenges with Internet Packages, therefore, we received Sim programming messages which will add bonus net package on students' Sim on every recharge they do. This helps me a lot and

pandemic have not affected my studies and flows of my learning”. Pema Khandu, studying in Sherabtshe College shared his views on his process of learning under pandemic, “Bhutan is not digitalised country, yet then our government stand behind us and made my learning very good. I don’t feel bad about pandemic, because it teaches me how to do online things, which I have never experienced in my life before, moreover our government is providing every needs and all students were learning a lot”.

Bhutan is not celebrating the victory, rather Bhutan is balancing its normal life, Bhutan had foreseen the aftermath of pandemic and government were currently working to continue aftermath of pandemic. We see the world fighting against pandemic, but Bhutan have not stopped its regulation of happiness, when everyone is after materialistic well-being, we the Bhutanese prepared for pandemic and we act accordingly. The fact is Bhutan is poor country and constantly receiving world aids in its development programme, yet then it is myth that Bhutan don’t have large number of pandemic cases and myth of zero mortality when world grieved for high mortality. Bhutan have incumbent government as new elected, we feel very lucky to have incumbent government in time of pandemic, because Prime Minister Dr. Lotay Tshering and Health Minister Dechen Wangmo has their professional background in medical studies and that made government to decide without delaying in fight against pandemic. This is the story of Pandemic in Bhutan, and how Bhutan is now is how Bhutan was then.