



The 9th AAAH Conference

“Global HRH strategies 2030: from strategy to implementation”

Closing the gaps between HWF needs, demands, and supply

Country Presentation: **Bhutan**

Mr. Wangchen Norbu, Senior Human Resource Officer

The Ministry of Health, Bhutan



- Country Background & Situation of HRH
- HRH investment,
- Situation of self-reliance HWF production in country that full self-reliance, and
- Rely on expatriates, challenges; and way forward.

Geography and Demography

- Mostly mountainous and heavily forested
- Area =38, 394 square kilometers
- Total Population 634, 982



Health Status

- Free access to public health services
- Today 94.8 percent of Bhutanese live within a maximum of 3 hours distance to a health facility.
- Life expectancy has increased significantly since 1950s, from 36.1 years to 70 years at present.
- Bhutan has 260 health centers with 4722 Health Workers



HRH investment

- The state shall “provide free access to basic public health services in both modern and traditional medicines” as enshrined in the constitution of the country. Therefore,
 - ❖ the Government predominantly finances the Health System.
 - ❖ The government continuously supports development of HRH (in-service and pre-service training in the country and overseas).
 - ❖ The government supports the capacity development of Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Science of Bhutan (KGUMSB).
 - ❖ *The focus area of investment is in continuing professional education particularly specialist such as Aneesthesiologist, Gynaecologist, General Surgeon, Orthopaedic Surgoen, Radiologist, Pathologist etc.*



Situation of self-reliance HWF production in country that full self-reliance

- Bhutan faces shortage of specialists (doctor)
- Bhutan will be able to meet the required number for general doctors and nurses by 2020 (*188 MBBS doctors are expected to join the MoH*)
- Although Bhutan lacks colleges to enroll medical students particularly MBBS, BDS and other technical categories of health professionals, Bhutanese students go abroad to pursue Bachelor Degree.



Cont

The Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Science of Bhutan (KGUMSB) is the only medical university in the country.

1. The Faculty of Postgraduate Medicine under KGUMSB offers only Postgraduate residency courses, which was opened from July 2014.
2. The Faculty of Nursing and Public Health offer courses to Diploma and Certificate level of Health Workers.
3. The Faculty of Traditional Medicine offers course to Traditional Physician (Dungtsho) and Traditional Physician Assistant (sMenpa).



Rely on expatriates

- ❖ Bhutan continues to rely on expatriates doctor (Specialist)
- ❖ 45 expatriates were working in Bhutan till end of 2015
- ❖ 1 expatriate still working



Challenges

1. Shortage of human resources for health particularly specialist
 - a) Less number of General Medical Officer (MBBS) in pool
 - b) No Medical University until Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Science of Bhutan (KGUMSB) was established in 2013 and P G courses started in July 2014.
 - a) Human resources: lack of specialized human resources in the various specialty subject matter.
 - b) Teaching and learning: Lack of teaching learning materials, lack of journals and textbooks, lack of IT and online learning facilities, lack of clinical simulations etc.
 - c) Infrastructure: insufficient dormitory for students and other facilities such as a convention hall and recreation facilities for students and staffs.
2. Experienced and specialized health personnel are now applying for long duration of leave and trying for employment abroad with better pay and allowances.



Cont:

3. Expatriates are demanding more salary
4. Inadequate fund to support for Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
5. Retention of health workers in the rural areas.



Way forward

- RGoB has to provide financial support to KGUMSB for faculty development
- The Ministry of Health has to closely work with agencies since they have paramount roles to play.
- Government to continuously provide financial support for scaling up health professionals' education and retention of health workforce in rural areas.



THANK YOU

