

## Editorial

*Rig Tshoel* – Research Journal of the Royal Thimphu College is an open-access peer-reviewed journal that aligns with a key mission of Royal Thimphu College ‘To be a crucible of new ideas and knowledge that serves to enrich people’s lives and enhances the welfare of society.’ This inaugural issue of *Rig Tshoel* disseminates research carried out by RTC faculty on a range of topics, themes, and theories. What binds the nine essays of this publication together is therefore not a shared field of interest, theoretical proclivity, or methodology, but that they have all been written by members of the RTC faculty. The essays published here represent a number of departments and symbolize the wide-ranging interest and expertise available among the faculty. The essays are meant to address a wide audience, including other members of the faculty, students, scholars, and the interested general public. While understanding the essays may require some prior knowledge of the topic, the contributors have attempted to present their data and arguments in a language that is accessible to non-specialists.

Each essay has gone through an internal review process and I would like to thank Shiva Raj Bhattarai, Samir Patel, Nawang Yangden, Janet Schofield, G.P. Sharma, Sanjeev Mehta, Sarbajeet Mukherjee, and Sonam Deki for lending their expertise to this project.

The first four essays broadly concern the interaction between people and the environment in Bhutan, as well as, in the case of one essay, Sikkim. The first essay by Jesse Montes and no fewer than nine of this students is titled ‘Assessing Sustainability of Ecotourism Ventures in Bhutan.’ It applies empirical data derived from three different ecotourism ventures to assess whether conservation goals were being achieved, and in doing so offers a set of crucial insights and recommendations on how sustainability of ecotourism can be guaranteed in the country. The second essay is by Rabilal Dhakal and is titled ‘Changing Patterns of Cattle Herding in the Dorokha Region, Bhutan.’ It focuses on how the tradition of migratory herding has come under considerable strain in the Dorokha Region, particularly after the passing of the Land Act of Bhutan which saw the nationalization of the grasslands that are frequented by herders. This essay is followed by a contribution from Tshering Wangchuk that is titled ‘Cultural Wisdom and Sustainable Development in Satsam Chorteon.’ This essay formulates a critique of approaches to sustainable development that focus on science, technology, and innovation. Instead, the author points to the continuing relevance of Bhutanese traditional, cultural, and spiritual wisdom, which, he argues, provide a home-grown repository of knowledge and techniques that could, and should, be applied to balance development with environmental preservation and protection. The final essay that deals with the environment is by Kausila Timsina. This is a technical paper that is titled: ‘Analysis of Trend of Spatial and Temporal Characteristics of Temperature: A Case Study of Teesta-Dikchu Watershed, Sikkim’, and which

evaluates behavioural changes of the Teesta River in relation to recently constructed hydro-projects.

The fifth and sixth essays of this publication are in the domain of English Studies. Vanlallawmkimi, in her article 'Glimpses into Pre-Christian Mizo Past as seen through Folktales', invites the readers to reflection on two Mizo folktales in order to explore the religious practices, the status of women, and the wider societal values that characterized traditional Mizo society. This is followed by an essay by Priyali Ghosh that is titled: "Exotic Blossom" or Cosmopolitan Victorian? Toru Dutt and and Fin-de-Siècle London and Calcutta.' In this essay Priyali Ghosh presents the life and literary work of the Bengali author Toru Dutt (1856-1877), which, she argues, should be read in a context of 'social cosmopolitanism.'

The seventh essay published here is by Saurav Chaliha and carries the title: 'Central America's "Failing" Democracies: The Case of Honduras. A normative theory of democracy is applied to evaluate the existence of liberal ideals and values in Honduras,' and Central America more widely. Doing so, enables the author to identify a number of challenges and pitfalls countries in this region grapple with as they transitioned, and continue to transition, into modern democracies. The penultimate essay is by Jason Hopper and is titled: 'The Early History of Contemporary Art in Bhutan.' Through a combination of life histories of artists and archival work a connection is drawn between contemporary art, a changing society, and cultural modernity. The final essay is by Leishipem Khamrang and is titled 'Changing Socio-Spatial Structures and Growing Urban Issues in the Quest of Making Thimphu a Dream City.' This essay applies concepts of human geography to critically examine new forms of urban space that are emerging in Thimphu. In so doing, it identifies challenges and formulates a critique to projections of Thimphu as a 'dream city' for all.

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Editor