

Editorial

This issue of the Bhutan Journal has focused partly on language—the most specifically the changing needs and status of the language of the Bhutanese diaspora. When the Royal Government of Bhutan wanted to reduce its potential political opposition, one of the major criteria in its target list was Nepali language and its users. The evicted people- who were mostly of Nepalese descent- reached Nepal where they reinvigorated their skills in Nepali language and literature that had almost extinguished in Bhutan. During their migration for resettlement, for many literate people, Nepali language or literature was the only possession they carried with them.

Once resettled - they were scattered and the language they had carried with them was of little value to them. Only use of the language was to those people who translated or interpreted for them for a fee.

There are sporadic attempts to teach Nepali language to younger generations in the resettled countries without a unanimous rationale or much success. About a score of people from among the tens of thousands of youths and seniors who carried linguistic skills with them were able to publish books either in Nepali or English language.

Learning Nepali language in the resettled country is valued as a ticket to membership of a Bhutanese-Nepali community and provides a sense of belonging.

The seniors carry a longing, middle-aged strive for its conservation and the younger generation is yet to discover its value. Nepali is a *lingua franca* of the Bhutanese diaspora but there are more than fifty groups and ethnicities within the Bhutanese diaspora who have different first languages. They never had an opportunity to formally learn their first language-neither in Bhutan nor in the refugee camps. Learning their first languages in the resettled countries is a herculean task. At this juncture, when people are in a dilemma of conserving or laying down the language they carried till date, the Nepali language enthusiasts have taken time to revisit the history of the Nepali language in Bhutan, refugee camps and in the resettled countries and contributed articles to this issue.

Language, a marker of civilisation gives identity to its speakers. The question arises ‘what will happen if the Bhutanese-Nepali diaspora shakes-off the Nepali language?’ The questions will hunt not just the current generation but will have immense impact on how our future generation will identify themselves.

The common notion is that their stories must not end with the present generation. There are no written histories of the people about the terms and conditions of their migration. We have a rich history to write and cherish. The stories must pass on to the many generations. This requires collective and augmented determination. Any attempt to revisit the past is best done with the contemporary language. That is where our first languages have a value.

This volume primarily divulges in captivating the status of language and the linguists – current status of their attempts in sustaining our languages and histories.

We recognise the difficulties faced by the linguists, their efforts towards keeping their languages alive. We appreciate and motivate all individuals and organised efforts for this noble cause.

We encourage for sustained determinations. The onus of keeping it flourishing lie not just on the linguists but every one of us who share the glorious past. Every contribution will be valuable in the history.

Besides language, there are stories of youth unemployment and its challenges for Bhutan, and Lhotsampa expulsion analysed through constructivists theory are also included in this edition of the journal.

Enjoy reading them.