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# Kuensel

Weekend Magazine



## The endangered bookworm

*With competition from cable TV and the internet, books may be becoming passé*



Dear Reader,

From an oral tradition that we are, moving on to visuals and into the digital age today, reading is becoming an activity that is getting squeezed out.

Not that it ever was a habit that Bhutanese in general engendered but what little we might have had of inculcating is going to be all the more an uphill struggle.

Unlike in most English-speaking nations, where reading is a leisure activity that people, including little children indulge in, reading for most Bhutanese is work.

Little wonder that many Bhutanese take weeks, months and even years to complete a novel, what might take hours for those living in western nations.

In most developed nations, inculcating the habit starts during the early stages of life as love for books begins even before a child can read.

The early years are considered the best learning period in a person's life.

For a culture like ours oral tradition is still strong that is fast taking to the visual media, establishing a reading culture could take ambitious reading plans until such a time when reading is a fun activity.

Keep reading and happy reading!

Kinga Dema

*Write to us at [kinleygyel@gmail.com](mailto:kinleygyel@gmail.com). Send birthday greetings, contribute for the last page or send your feedback.*

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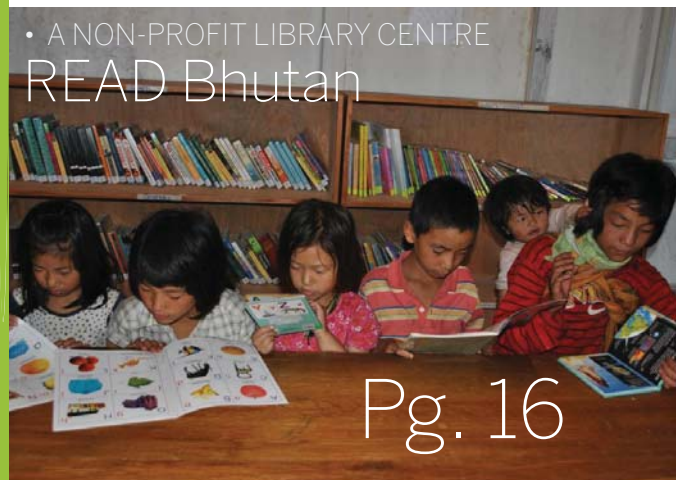
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Children at the Rongthong centre: All READ centres hold reading programs at least once a week

A NON-PROFIT LIBRARY CENTRE

# READ Bhutan

 Gyalsten K Dorji

**W**ith a mission to empower communities with relevant information, knowledge and skills, READ (rural education and development) Bhutan has established centres in the country in which non-profit libraries are paired with for-profit ventures.

Having established its first centre in Ura, Bumthang, in 2010, the organisation today has five centres, with plans to establish one more within this year.

Through these centres offering library

and resource services, communities are able to access books, computers, educational materials, job training, health services, and workshops on leadership and conflict resolution. The aim is for individuals, families, and communities to be able to access the resources required for them to reach full potential.

READ Bhutan development officer, Ngawang Phuntsho, said that both Dzongkha and English books are available in its community libraries. "The books are chosen to cater to adults, young adults, and children," he said. "In addition to it, a reference section providing access to encyclopedias is also available."

“Community members are also invited to narrate folk tales to children.”

■ **Ngawang Phuntsho**

READ libraries also keep prayer books or scriptures which local communities can borrow for rimdros and events.

In order to encourage a reading habit among young adults and children, all READ centres hold reading events at least once a week, where adults are invited to read to children, or peer reading sessions are held where young adults or children read for each other, said Ngawang Phuntsho. “Community members are also invited to narrate folk tales to children.”

In two of its centres, READ Bhutan in collaboration with the education ministry also hosts non-formal education classes. “This is to make

community members learn to read, and make better use of the available resources,” said Ngawang Phuntsho.

He pointed that the READ centres also offer access to ICT (information communications technology) and audio visual technology for the communities.

If interested in contributing books or funds to READ Bhutan, the organisation’s office is located in Thimphu above the RICB colony, and can also be reached by email ([info@readbhutan.org](mailto:info@readbhutan.org)) or phone (02.337415).

Students at the Chuzagang centre

