



"On this International Day of Democracy, let us redouble our efforts to support all people, in particular the young – the drivers of this year's momentous events – in making democracy a working reality. This Day belongs to them. Let us honor their commitment to a lifelong journey in democracy."



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon Message for the International Day of Democracy 2011

INTRODUCTION

Yeonphula LSS joins the nation and the rest of the world in commemorating the International Day of Democracy. The International Day of Democracy which is celebrated on the 15th of September was established by the United Nations in 2007 as an opportunity to review the state of democracy in the world. The school could not celebrate on 15th as it fell on Sunday however, carried out various activities on the 16th.

The day celebrates the values of freedom; respect for human rights and the principle of holding genuine elections by universal suffer age across the universe. The United Nations goes on further to highlight that democracy is a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their own political, economic, social, cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives.

The Club captain, in his speech Convinced to the masses that, the ultimate goal of democracy is to preserve and promote the dignity and fundamental rights of the individual, achieve social cohesion and justice, foster economic and social development in a niche to guarantee social stability and well-being of every citizen.

This year's theme was celebrated under the banner of, *Strengthening Voices for Democracy*. The theme emphasizes the importance of people's voices, both expressed directly and through their elected representatives in today's political, economic, social, developmental, environmental and technological debates.

Therefore, the ability of people to raise their voices and decide how they are governed lies at the heart of democracy. For this, democracy to be achievable and sustainable there is a need to build strong institutions. These institutions have to ensure good governance, accountability, equality and justice for all citizens.

The studies of Election Commission of Bhutan found that only 45% of the Bhutanese casted their vote in the NC election 2013 and 66% for the NA. This figure justifies the need for strengthening local community voices in ensuring accountability of public institutions, their transparency and responsiveness to their needs and expectations.

The democracy club at YLSS always emphasizes the need for tolerance of diverse views as an important ingredient to a truly democratic state and society. I always remind my club members to know their fundamental rights and duties which constitution of Bhutan allows every citizen to raise their voice. I have even talked to the children about their rights of raising their voices in classroom situations and in the school campus, if and when they come across problems and issues related to their fundamental rights.



Background

The UN general assembly decided on November 8, 2007, to make September 15th. as the annual date to observe the International Day of Democracy. The International Day of Democracy was first celebrated in 2008 in order to recognize a fundamental truth about democracy everywhere – *that democracy is the product of a strong, active and vocal civil society. The UN tries to achieve its goals of peace, human rights and development. It believes that human rights and the rule of law are best protected in democratic societies.*

International Democracy Day – Message through art on the theme *strengthening voices for democracy*

In order to mark the international democracy day on 15th September 2013, as a democracy club coordinator of Yeonphula Lower secondary, I have organized various activities for club members and students of the school. The aims and objectives to organize such activities were as follows.

- *Encourage the students to participate in the democratic government*
- *To integrate into the curriculum since **Democracy** was taught in the class*
- *Share knowledge and information with regard to democracy*
- *Discuss the issues related to democracy and the voices of the public*
- *Disseminate the information on importance of freedom of expression and a tolerant culture.*

In order to achieve the above objectives the following activities were carried out:

Activity I

*Firstly, the celebration of international democracy day on the theme **strengthening the voices for democracy** was started from morning assembly. The democracy club Captain Mr.Tenzin Dorji spoke on the importance of the day. Please find a copy of the speech attested herewith..*

Speech on international democracy day 2013

Good morning to you all, Respected, Principal, vice-principal, teachers and my friends. I am Representing democracy club would like to present you about the facts and news of international democracy day. To begin with, **I unquote** the message of Secretary-General of UNO, Ban Ki-moon:

"On this International Day of Democracy, I call on leaders to hear, respect and respond appropriately to the voices of the people, whether expressed directly or through elected representatives."



Democracy is a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives.

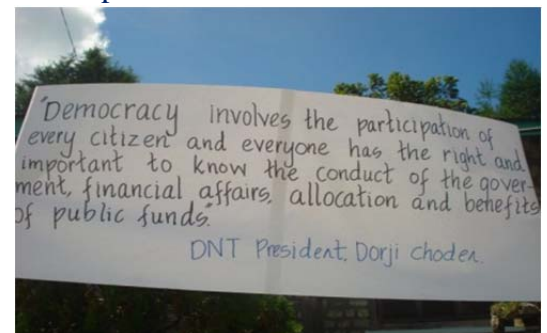
In 2007, the UN General Assembly, in resolution (2007) decided that each year, 15 September should be observed as the international day of democracy to encouraged Governments to strengthen national programs devoted to the promotion and consolidation of democracy.

The subject of this year's theme -- Strengthening Voices for Democracy -- *aims to shine a spotlight on the importance of people's voices, both expressed directly and through their elected representatives, in today's political, economic, social, developmental, environmental and technological debates. The ability of people to raise their voices and decide how they are governed lies at the heart of democracy.*

Inside Bhutan, Democracy had been an overwhelming experience for the Bhutanese people. Bhutan's democratic philosophy is the value of Gross National Happiness it holds in every developmental plan. Therefore, we can see Bhutan towards its way to emerge as a democratic nation judging by the pace it's moving towards the modern age with its strong identity in terms of traditions and cultures and preserved ecology, inspiring powerful nations of the way the Bhutanese plan to enlighten. But the world we are living in now has drastically changed. It has become a much difficult place to live.



Bhutan had seen a lot of phases under a single man known as our king but things are different now. Democracy has swept in and the government is based on a power to make decisions and another power to object it by raising one's voice. There are big questions about dealing with economy and political diplomacy to make Bhutan's way towards development. What will happen is uncertain. But all we do know is that democracy has been a blessing to us. Our monarchs had nurtured its people like their children, entrusting the country's ancient and unique cultures and traditions and by building a strong foundation of tha-damtse and ley-jumdrey, the moral principles so that one day we would be independent and become responsible for ourselves and our decisions. We could have never made it though where we are presently without our monarchs. It is an immense rush of gratitude that these monarchs had their trust in us to turn over 'their' country to its people as they had always believed that the country belonged to its people.



So, lastly, I would like to inform all of you that speak out and listen.

No matter where you live or who you are, you can use 15 September to reach out to your fellow-citizens and fellow-legislators. Speak your mind as clearly as you can, and listen to what they have to say. Democracy isn't perfect. But strengthened voices make it better.



Presentation by club captain on the importance of international democracy day



Activity II

Second activity was mainly focused on students.

*Interested candidate from class VI, VII and VIII were involved in the poster competition. They were provided with char papers, marker pens, cello tape and other necessary materials. The art competition was focused on the theme-**strengthening your voices for democracy**. The criteria were: Relevancy, Clarity, creativity and originality. Each criterion carries 10%. **For this activity the best artists were awarded prizes.***




THE ME: STRENGTHENING VOICE OF DEMOCRACY

Democracy means by it define as a people's government.

Points of Democracy.

- Unity: peace and harmony
- Right: to information, security, speech, opinion and expression
- HAPPINESS: HAPPY and Harmony
- Freedom: thought, conscience, religion and other forms of economic discrimination etc. etc. etc.
- Justice: equality with peoples of country and other opportunities.



DEMOCRACY.

Democracy is like a hand's finger. With each fingers containing each points. Like each finger in a hand. It also contain power which helps to keep country harmony, peace and safe. If one point is missing in it, the government would be fail to create happiness and peace. Just like a hand's one finger which is missing, it can't be much useful than before where it was most useful to us.

This points of democracy is important as it make all the peoples of world would have better life. It not only help people but also make a better country to live.

Name: Anisha Rai
 Class: VIII
 Rollno: 17
 School: Yanphula Lower Secondary School
 Year: 2013.

STRENGTHENING VOICE FOR DEMOCRACY

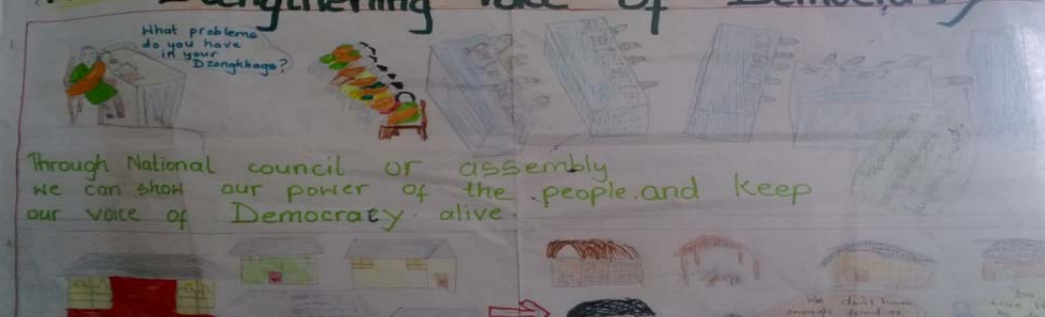


by Ugyen Tobgay

15th Sep 2013

Theme: Strengthening Voice of Democracy

What problems do you have in your Dzongkhago?



Through National council of assembly we can show our power of the people and keep our voice of Democracy alive.

Activity III

After the main activities students of class VI,VII and VIII were engaged in the discussions by going through the art. There was question answer sessions between the participants and observers. Through such activities ,students learn their role and responsibilities and also their participation in the democracy.



Display of poster and interactive learning on the theme



Assessing the best artists.



Figure 1. Anisha Rai, CI-VIII receives 1st price from the principal



Figure 2. Gembo Dorji, CI-VIII 2nd price



Figure 3. Ugyen Tobgay 3rd price

Later, all the students were given the refreshment, and were reminded to disseminate the information to their parents and public in their communities.





Conclusion

The celebration of international democracy day was a major success in the school, since most of the students actively took part in the activities which were conducted on that day. I was able to reach the ideas, roles and responsibilities as a active/young youth to the students of the school. The students were able to understand their own importance and how to react accordingly.

Lastly, I would like to request your office to look into avenues to conduct workshops for the school spearheaders so, as to further take the message of democracy to every individuals. In the absence of a through and indepth background knowledge handicaps the club coordinators to catter such activities successfully to the students and the colleagues ,and the community as awhile. Therefore, in the light of these few justifications and suggestion I, look forward to seeing workshops being conducted in the near future for the successful implementation of such activities in the schools.

Looking forward for your valuable support and suggestion please.

"On this International Day of Democracy, I call on leaders to hear, respect and respond appropriately to the voices of the people, whether expressed directly or through elected representatives."

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon Message for the International Day of Democracy 2013

Reported by

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