



# **BHUTANESE WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE: THEIR LIVELIHOOD, HAPPINESS INDEX & WELL-BEING**



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# Presentation Outline

1. Introduction to Bhutan
2. Agriculture Sector of Bhutan
3. Women in Bhutan
4. Gender sensitive policies, programs, projects & practices
5. Conclusion and Recommendations





# 1. Introduction to Bhutan

- A landlocked country with a population of 768,577, sandwiched between China & India
- Consists of fragile mountain ecosystem with large areas of snow & glaciers.
- Bhutan has 71% of its area under forest cover with 51.44% under protected area; only 7.8% of total land is arable & only 2.93% is cultivated.
- A country that wants its agriculture to be totally organic, measures happiness & economic growth together, wants remain as a carbon neutral country & bring its citizens into the 21<sup>st</sup> C while retaining its traditional culture.



# 1. Introduction to Bhutan

- Development philosophy of Gross National Happiness articulated the idea & vision of a just & harmonious society
- All policies to be screened using GNH screening tool, with gender equality as one parameters.
- In 2008, Bhutan become a constitutional democracy
- Numerous steps taken to empower women - NCWC, CSOs, etc.
- The Constitution provides framework for the promotion & protection of equal rights of women;





# Land use & Agriculture

Land Cover Map of Bhutan

**Legend**

- ROADS
- RIVER

- Dryland Agriculture
- Tseri
- Wetland Agriculture
- Forest broadleaf
- Forest Coniferous
- Forest scrub
- Horticulture
- Landslides / Rocks
- Marshey Area
- Snow Glaciers
- Water Spreads
- Pasture
- Settlement



Source: IMS, PPD, Ministry of Agriculture.

0 9,000 18,000 36,000 54,000 72,000 Meters



## 2. Agriculture Sector

- Agriculture land in general is located along steep terrain, >31% of agriculture land is on slopes > 50%.
- Agriculture is the main driver for food self-sufficiency & inclusive green socio-economic development.
- Agriculture provides livelihoods to 62.2%, contributes 16% of GDP, 4.3% of exports, remains the key source of employment & driver for poverty reduction.
- With free trade agreement with India & Bangladesh, export of commercial crops have increased sharply.
- Notwithstanding economic gains in the past decade, sector's growth remained insufficient to adequately address poverty & attain food security.







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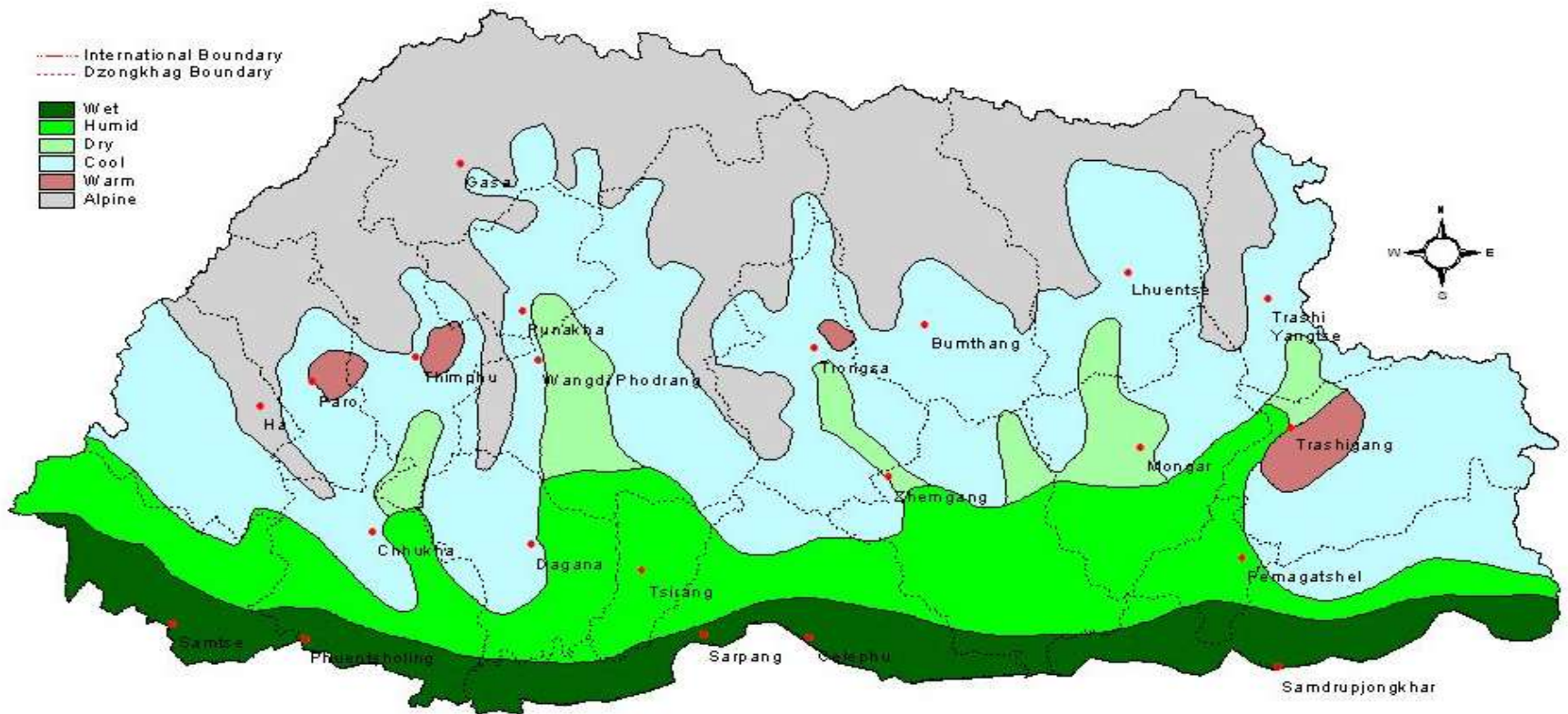
## 2. Agriculture Sector

- The current agriculture production is not enough for domestic consumption resulting in high imports.
- Recurring challenges:
  - decreasing public investment, loss of agriculture land, under-developed infrastructure, labor shortage, rural urban migration, human wildlife conflict & inadequate credit opportunities.
- As a mountainous country, Bhutan is particularly vulnerable to climate change.
- Climate Change is having destructive impact on agriculture & necessary infrastructures, risking the livelihood of 60%
  - crop yield decline & soil fertility loss.



# The agriculture environment

Figure 1: Agro-ecological Zones of Bhutan



Source: MoA/ISNAR, 1992



## 2. Agriculture Sector

- Mounting difficulty of working in agriculture result in out migration of farmers, leaving their land fallow.
- Around 23% of rural HHs leave their land fallow. Of the cultivable land, 26.3% is left fallow.
- Under nutrition (women & children) is a challenge to socioeconomic development, particularly rural areas.
- Nutritional status (stunting) while reduced from 56% (1988) to 34% (2010) to 21% (2015), it is still high.
- Studies indicate that stunting (21.2%), wasting (4.3%) & underweight (9%) among children (0-59 months) are still major public health concerns.



## 2. Agriculture Sector

- Although there has been rapid decline in anaemia (80.6% in 2003 to 43.8% in 2015), according to WHO it is still a moderate public health problem.
- Overall poverty rate has improved (31.7% in 2003 to 25% in 2007 to 12% in 2012) but still a rural phenomenon
- Unless resilience of agriculture to Climate Change is enhanced, livelihood & food security will be severely undermined.



## 3. Women in Bhutan

- Women comprise of 48.1% of total population.
- Bhutanese women enjoy freedom & equality in many spheres of life with relatively high status
- Because of a largely equality between women & men, overt discrimination against women does not exist.
- Family inheritance is not specific to men nor women. The law defined the obligation of parents to decide.
- No dowry system for daughters and there is no preference for sons in particular.
- Female infanticide, dowry deaths, bride burning, acid attacks & organized trafficking in women are absent.



Friday, August 11, 2017

Horticulture Di



## 3. Women in Bhutan

- All persons are equal before the law; our unique approach to development of GNH stress on individual development irrespective of gender
- Women's participation in labour force, particularly in the modern sector of economy, remains modest.
- Female workforce is overwhelmingly engaged in rural sector - majority of work force in agriculture
- Of the total population residing on farms, 51.2% are females (130,817) and 48.76% are males (124,476).
- Few ingrained socio-cultural perceptions hold women as less capable & confident.







## 3. Women in Bhutan

- Sometimes women face double work burden as a result of gender stereotypes, cultural & social perceptions.
- Regional disparities persist - Poverty in rural areas (16.7%) is higher than in urban areas (1.8%)
  - Rural phenomenon, feminization of poverty & farm labor.
- Lower levels or lack of education with women represents a constraint to full gender equality
  - women being less employable, particularly urban centres.
- Most women remain concentrated in low-skilled & low-paid jobs.
- Review of credit patterns still indicates the leading role of men in taking most investment decisions.



## 3. Women in Bhutan

- Despite equal opportunities, entitlements & legal status, some differences are seen in tertiary education, enterprise development & governance, employment, & leadership posts.
  - 8% of politicians are women
  - <10% of executive posts in civil service are women
  - 4 of 36 judges; 3 of 22 asst. judges & 4 of 16 lawyers are women.
- Study showed that major barriers to participation of women in public & private sectors were:
  - work burden; lack of childcare facilities & domestic help; limited education level



## 3. Women in Bhutan

- Bhutan's rank in terms of Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) fell from 93 out of 136 (2013) to 121 out of 144 countries (2016).
- GGGI report shows that there is disparity against women in economy, education, health & politics.
- It highlighted the widening gender gaps in female labor force participation, estimated earned income & wage equality.
- This calls for efforts towards enhancing women's representation in governance & addressing women's social & economic development issues through gender equality policies & strategies.



## 3. Women in Bhutan

- GNH 2015 index shows that happiness of our people has increased from 0.743 (2010) to 0.756 (2015).
  - 91.2 % of people reported experiencing happiness, and 43.4% of people said that they are deeply happy.
- The survey also generated some significant findings:
  - ✓ our people are healthier,
  - ✓ educated people are happier than uneducated
  - ✓ living standards have improved
  - ✓ people living in urban areas are happier than those living in rural areas
    - ✓ poverty is a rural phenomenon, life is not easy with human-wildlife conflict, limited accessibility, basic facilities & limited opportunity for white color jobs.



## 3. Women in Bhutan

- ✓ farmers are less happy than other professions,
- ✓ men are happier than women
  - ✓ work burden on women, women were less educated & were participating less in governance.
- ✓ government services need to be improved,
- ✓ More to be done to strengthen culture & traditions
- ✓ people feel less responsible for conserving environment.
- Contributing factors for GNH index growth were prominent increase in material well being & improved access to services (electricity, water, etc)





## 4. Gender sensitive policies, programs, projects & practices

- Ratified CEDAW in 1981.
- National Women's Association of Bhutan was established on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1981
- National Commission for Women and Children was established in 2004.
- A Royal Decree was issued in 1988 which underscored the importance of women's representation in public life.
- Relevant acts adopted (Child Care & Protection Act 2011, Child Adoption Act 2012, Domestic Violence Prevention Act 2013).





## 4. Gender sensitive policies, programs, projects & practices

- Gender Focal Persons expanded in all Ministries & districts
- Gender Action Plans is in the process of development for implementation in the 12<sup>th</sup> FYP
- Clear targets with specific indicators on gender mainstreaming in Ministries' programs and plans.
- Childcare & early child development centres in the Ministries and by CSOs in rural areas.



## 4. Gender sensitive policies, programs, projects & practices

- All policies to be screened using GNH screening tool, which had gender equality as one of parameters.
- Gender-responsive planning & budgeting started in 2013 to ensure that gender mainstreaming is translated into actions.
- In November 2016, Women and Child Bench in Thimphu was set up.
- Almost all judges had been trained in new domestic violence legislation & other relevant laws.



## 4. Gender sensitive policies, programs, projects & practices

- The maternity leave for women in civil service was extended from 3 months to 6 months since 2016.
- Government is negotiating with private sector for maternity leave extension
- Extended leave up to 2 years made available to either parents
- Extended classroom system was introduced to increase girl enrolment into education system.
- Initiated programs to ensure equal employment opportunities: Guaranteed Employment Schemes



## 4. Gender sensitive policies, programs, projects & practices

- Gender equality diagnostic was launched in August 2014 with selected sectors like agriculture
- Measures put in place to ensure gender-friendly teaching & that teachers are trained.
- Technical & vocational educational curricula were also made more women-friendly.
- Central schools were put in rural places to address the distance problem which kept girls from school.
- Gender Equality Policy developed to increase political representation of rural women.



## 4. Gender sensitive policies, programs, projects & practices

- Awareness building of gender equality at all levels so that people are aware of women's rights.
- 11<sup>th</sup> FYP contained flagship programs like Rural Economy Advancement Program & National Poverty Alleviation Program
- Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction Program required equal participation of women.
- Continued efforts made to address constraints & combat societal prejudices & other barriers.
- Female friendly technologies were introduced and promoted – mini tillers, drips, etc.



# 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan (2013-2018)

*Objective: "Rural Prosperity, Urban Well-being"*



*Green Economic Growth*



*Inclusive Social Growth*



*Poverty Alleviation*



*Climate Smart Natural Resources  
Management*

11<sup>th</sup> FYP framework was based on Four Pillars of GNH – Good Governance, Sustainable Socio-economic development, Preservation & promotion of culture; Environment conservation.

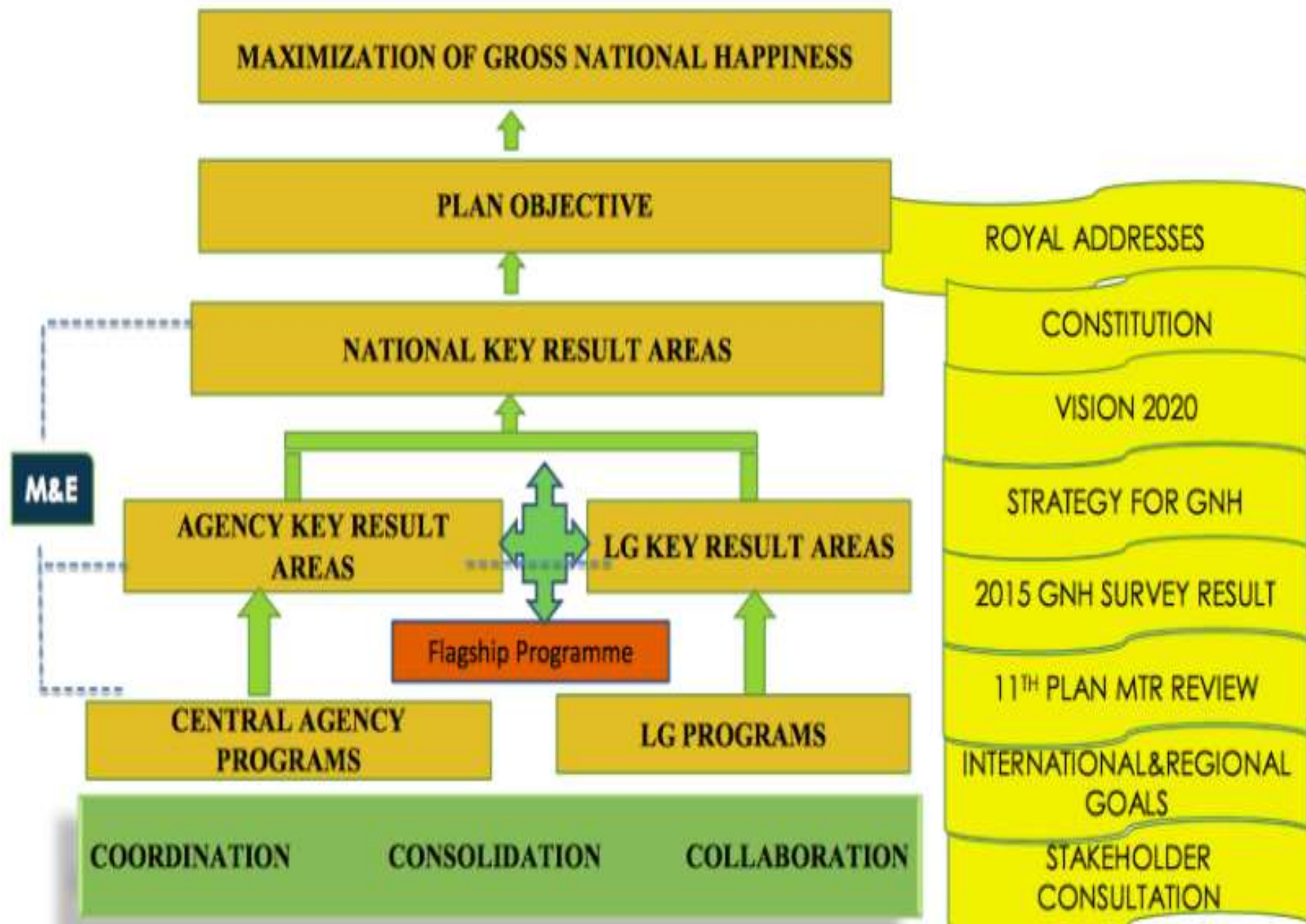


# 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan (2018-2023)

*Objective: “Just, harmonious and Sustainable Society through enhanced Decentralization”*

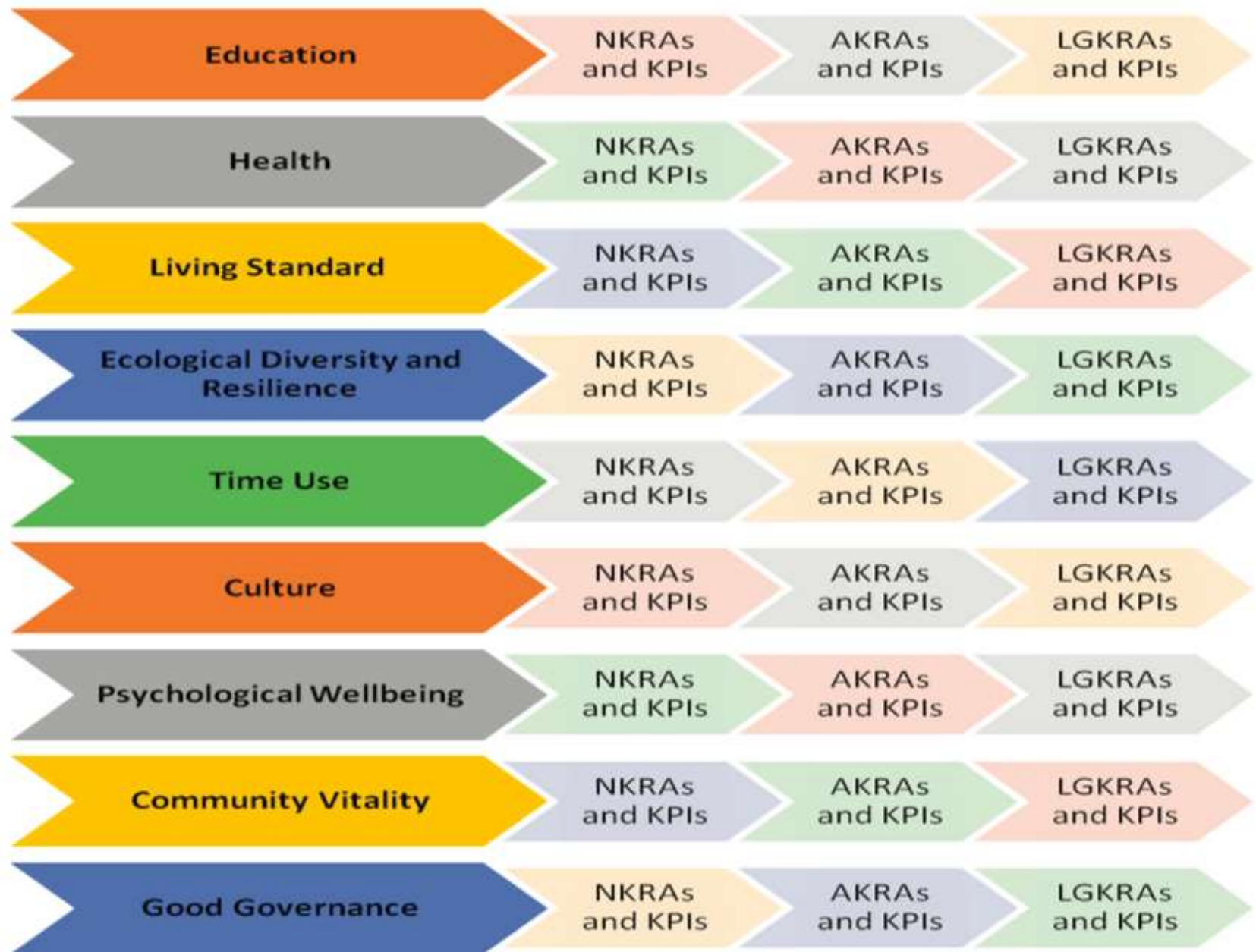
- Planning started since January, 2016
- Extensive consultation with all relevant stakeholders took place
- 12<sup>th</sup> FYP planning framework is based on Nine Domain of Gross National Happiness
- Enhanced administrative authority and greater capital budget allocation to local governance from 30% in the 11<sup>th</sup> FYP to 50% in the 12<sup>th</sup> FYP

**Figure 1: Strategic Framework**





**Figure 2: GNH Integration Framework**



### Figure 3: The Sixteen NKRA

1. Macroeconomic Stability Ensured	5. Healthy Ecosystem Services Maintained	9. Infrastructure, Communication and Public Service Delivery Improved	13. Democracy and Decentralization Strengthened
2. Economic Diversity and Productivity Enhanced	6. Carbon Neutral, Climate and Disaster Resilient Development Enhanced	10. Gender Equality Promoted, Women and Girls Empowered	14. Healthy and Caring Society Enhanced
3. Poverty Eradicated & Inequality Reduced	7. Quality of Education and Skills Improved	11. Productive & Gainful Employment Created	15. Livability, Safety and Sustainability of Human Settlements Improved
4. Culture & Traditions Preserved & Promoted	8. Water, Food and Nutrition Security Ensured	12. Corruption Reduced	16. Justice Services and Institutions Strengthened



## 5. Conclusion & Recommendation

- Feminization of poverty & farm labour
- Lower happiness index for women, farmers & rural dwellers needs attention
- Provide broad range of support services for women in informal sector & create market access facilities.
- Increase enrolment of girls at higher levels of education, thus improving female literacy.
- Expand non-formal education to address girls' & women's illiteracy.
- Encourage pregnant girls and married girls to continue their education.



## 5. Conclusion & Recommendation

- Implement gender equality policies, strategies, programs, projects and plans to
  - Eliminate gender stereotypes associated with traditional roles in family, workplace & society at large
  - Prevent emergence of new stereotypes that are discriminatory against women.
- Translate gender mainstreaming in policies/budget into concrete actions to address gender gaps
- Media to create awareness about the importance of gender equality
- Take measures to increase women's full, active and equal participation in public & political life



## 5. Conclusion & Recommendation

The 2015 GNH study identified priorities for action:

1. Farmers: To prioritize farmer's needs.
2. Youth: To engage and energize youths.
3. Psychological well-being: Interventions to increase the psychological well-being
4. Education: To embrace GNH by teachers, profiled in training institutions & reflected in curriculum.
5. Political Engagement: Strengthen courtesy & political exchange to engage & motivate citizens.
6. Rural-urban Migration: To improve conditions in rural areas to stem migration from rural to urban



# TAKE HOME MESSAGES

With strong commitment from the highest decision making body and utmost desire of the citizen, efforts will be made to make Bhutan the :

1. First organic and self reliant country
2. Champion of environment conservation, thereby remain as a carbon neutral country
3. Gender equal country
4. Just, harmonious and sustainable country



*Kadrin che la*  
**Arigato Gozaimashta**  
**Thank you!**