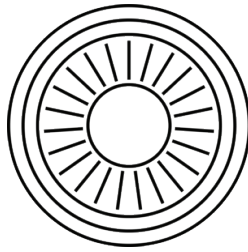





# HUMAN FLOURISHING AND YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN BHUTAN



དཔལ་འབྲུག་ཞིབ་འཇུག་ལྟེ་བ།

Centre for Bhutan & GNH Studies

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This Report presents the results of the Human Flourishing and Youth Entrepreneurship Survey conducted in 2023 as a catalytic extension of the national GNH Survey. It is the first of its kind and hopes to establish baseline indicators for youth flourishing and entrepreneurship in Bhutan.

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

CAPI	Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing
CBS	Centre For Bhutan & GNH Studies
CSI	Cottage and Small Industry
CSS	Circular Systematic Sampling
DWPSD	Department of Workforce, Planning & Skills Development
EA	Enumeration Area
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FI	Flourish Index
FS	Flourishing Scale
FYP	Five Year Plan
G2B	Government-to-Business
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHQ	General Health Questionnaire
GNH	Gross National Happiness
HS	High School
HSS	Higher Secondary School
LSS	Lower Secondary School
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoLHR	Ministry of Labour & Human Resources
MoESD	Ministry of Education & Skills Development
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
MSS	Middle Secondary School
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSB	National Statistics Bureau
OPHI	Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative
PPSWR	Probability Proportional to Size with Replacement
PSL	Priority Sector Lending
PSU	Primary Sampling Unit
RGoB	Royal Government of Bhutan
RUB	Royal University of Bhutan
SFI	Secure Flourish Index
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
SSU	Secondary Sampling Unit
SWB	Subjective Wellbeing
TV	Television
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TWCF	Templeton World Charity Foundation
USU	Ultimate Sampling Unit
WHO	World Health Organisation

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Human Flourishing and Youth Entrepreneurship Report presents various aspects of youth flourishing measured using the Gross National Happiness (GNH) Index alongside other measures of human flourishing and subjective wellbeing (SWB). It also provides information on youths' entrepreneurial awareness and attitude, including perceived employment prospects and aspirations.

The sampling for the Survey was designed to yield nationally representative estimates, as well as representative at regional levels, for a range of indicators. A total of 2,465 youths were randomly selected for the interviews. The Survey successfully interviewed 2,269 school-going youths and 133 out-of-school youths. The data was collected through face-to-face interviews using a Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) method.


## Demographic characteristics of the sample

Of the 2,402 respondents, 52.2 percent are females. The age ranges between 14-36 years of age, with 61.5 percent of the respondents between 16-19 years of age. Of the total school-going youths, 10.3 percent are studying at the lower secondary level, 34.6 percent at the middle secondary level, 38.5 percent at the higher secondary level, and the remaining 16.5 percent are pursuing certificate, diploma, or degree programmes.

## GNH Index

The GNH Index score for youths is 0.766, with males (0.796) enjoying higher GNH than females (0.739). By region, the GNH Index is highest among youths residing in the Central region (0.846), followed by Eastern region (0.761). It is lowest among those in Western (0.749) region.

On the GNH Index happiness gradient, 9.8 percent are 'deeply happy', 35.2 percent are 'extensively happy', and 48.2 percent are 'narrowly happy'. The



remaining 6.8 percent are 'unhappy'. The proportion of youths on both ends of the happiness gradient continuum varies across the three regions. While 16.6 percent of those from Central region are 'deeply happy', only 8.3 and 8.7 percent from the Eastern and Western regions, respectively, are 'deeply happy'. Youths who are 'unhappy' from the Eastern (8.4%) and Western (7.0%) regions are almost twice more than those from the Central (3.7%) region.

Good governance domain (12.8%) contributes the highest to the overall GNH Index followed by living standards and health domains with 12.4 percent each. On the other hand, cultural diversity (9.2%) contributes the least to the overall GNH Index, followed by community vitality (10.1%) and time use (10.2%).


### Flourishing Scale

Besides the GNH Index, youth flourishing was also assessed using Flourishing Scale (FS) and other measures of SWB. The overall mean FS score for youths is 7.5 on a scale of 0-10. Males (7.6) and females (7.5) have almost identical overall mean flourishing scores. Among the regions, those from the Central region reported a slightly higher mean flourishing score at 7.7, followed by Western region at 7.5. Youths from the Eastern region have relatively low mean flourishing score at 7.3.

### Subjective Wellbeing (SWB)

When assessed using Life Evaluation Wellbeing Index, about two in five (38.4%) are 'thriving' and 50.9 percent are 'struggling'. The remaining 10.6 percent are 'suffering'. The results show no significant difference in Life Evaluation Index between males and females. However, by region, a higher proportion of youths from the Western (39.9%) and Central (39.8%) regions are 'thriving' as compared to those from the Eastern (33.5%) region.

Happiness and life satisfaction was also assessed using single item questions. The subjective happiness score for youths is 7.3 and the general life satisfaction score is 7.1. The mean subjective happiness score for males is 7.5 against 7.2 for females. Similarly, the general life satisfaction score for males is 7.2 against 6.9 for females. By region, both subjective happiness and general life satisfaction are reported higher by youths residing in the



Central region than others. For instance, the general life satisfaction among those in the Central region is 7.2 against 7.1 and 6.9 among youths from the Western and Eastern regions, respectively. Similarly, the subjective happiness score among those in the Central region is 7.5 against 7.3 each for the Western and Eastern regions.

### **Social, community, and physical environment**

To assess the degree of social connectedness, information on the availability of confidants and close friends were collected. While 95.4 percent of youths report to having at least one close friend, only 87.6 percent report to having a confidant. Over 12 percent of the youths report that they do not have anyone with whom they can discuss intimate and personal matters indicating social isolation. In addition, about one-fourths (24.5%) of the youths are just one confidant away from being socially isolated, meaning that they currently have just one confidant.

In terms of prevalence of discrimination, a little over a quarter of the youths (27.4%) report to having faced some form of discrimination such as discrimination based on one's gender, age, ethnicity, health condition, religion, physique, or language or accent. The most prevalent discrimination faced is based on one's physique, such as being too tall or short, or too fat or thin, etc. Treating differently in a negative way due to physique, language or accent, and ethnicity is more pervasive among those youths from the Western region as compared to others.

About 30 percent of the youths experience some form of bullying in school. Unlike in the case of discrimination, bullying is more pervasive in Central (35.0%) and Eastern (33.8%) regions when compared to those in the Western (27.2%) region. The most common form of bullying seems to be getting something stolen (reported by 23.2% of the youths), followed by being mentally bullied (7.6%) and physically bullied by another student (3.6%).

Students' sense of connectedness to school is varied. While 44.1 percent of the students say that their sense of belongingness to their school is 'a lot' or 'quite a lot', about a quarter of the youths (24.5%) report that their sense of belongingness to their school is either very 'little' or 'not at all'.



## Health

In terms of self-rated health status, over nine in 10 youths (92.0%) report their overall health status as either 'good', 'very good', or 'excellent'. In terms of mental health, a composite index constructed using the 12-item general health questionnaire (GHQ) show that 79.2 percent of the youths enjoy 'normal mental wellbeing'. A higher proportion of males (85.9%) enjoy normal mental health as compared to females (73.0%).

The average number of healthy days in the past 30 days preceding the Survey is 26.4 days. Of those who report to suffering from physical or mental ill health in the past 30 days, 52.3 percent report activity restriction ranging from 1 to 30 days, while the remaining 47.7 percent report no activity restrictions.


About three percent of the youths report to suffering from a long-term health problem or disability that limits their normal daily activities 'a lot' and an additional 10.3 percent report that their health condition limits their normal daily activities 'a little'.

## Values, culture, spirituality, and emotional experience

About three-fourths of the youths feel that killing, stealing, creating disharmony in the society, and committing sexual misconduct can 'never be justified', reinforcing their strong belief in pro-social values. However, in case of lying, 59.9 percent feel that it can sometimes be justified.

The Bhutanese code of etiquette and conduct (*Driglam Namzha*) is perceived as 'very important' by 87.3 percent of the youths. A slightly higher proportion of those from Central (91.8%) and Eastern (90.6%) regions regard *Driglam Namzha* as 'very important' than those from the Western region (85.1%). In terms of perceived change in the observance and practice of *Driglam Namzha*, three in five youths (60.9%) believe that it is getting weaker over the last few years.

While 79.4 percent of the youths agree that 'nature is the domain of spirits and deities', only about two-third (65.1%) report that they feel 'highly responsible' towards the protection and conservation of the natural environment.



Pro-environmental behaviours of youths were also assessed using their behaviours and practices related to energy and environmental conservation during the course of their daily lives. Over half (57.1%) of the youths report that they 'always' switch off the lights when not using it, turn off electric appliances when not in use (61.2%), and turn off water taps when brushing (63.7%). When it concerns the management of solid wastes, only 44.7 percent report that they 'always' segregate their wastes. Habits like picking up litter whenever they see it around is reported only by 16.5 percent of the youths.

Youths were asked about the frequency of positive and negative emotional experience. Among positive emotions, the most frequently occurring emotions in descending order are compassion (94.4% experience it at least once a month), generosity (93.4%), forgiveness (89.4%), contentment (88.3%), and calmness (87.2%).

Of the negative emotions, the most commonly experienced emotion is worry (90.2%), anger (89.9%), fear (78.8%), and sadness (72.1%). Jealousy (50.4%) and selfishness (45.7%) are experienced by relatively lower proportion of youths as compared to other negative emotions.

Besides the frequency of different emotional experiences in the past four weeks reported by the youths, a set of positive and negative emotions experienced during the day preceding the Survey (yesterday) was assessed. The 'Positive Experience Index' score constructed using three positive emotion items of 'feeling well-rested', 'smile or laugh a lot', and 'enjoyment' is 72.7 percent indicating that little less than three-fourths of the youths experienced positive emotions during the day preceding the Survey. Similarly, the 'Negative Experience Index' score constructed using three negative emotions of worry, sadness, and anger during the day preceding the Survey is 66.4 percent, indicating that about two-thirds of the youths also experience negative emotions during the day preceding the Survey.

A slightly higher proportion of males (75.1%) report to experiencing positive emotions than females (70.5%) during the day preceding the Survey. On the other hand, a slightly higher proportion of females (68.0%) compared to males (64.6%) report to experiencing negative emotions.





## Education, learning, and skills

Among those youths attending school as day scholar, most report walking (61.4%) to school, followed by use of public transport (19.7%) and use of private vehicles (18.9%) as their usual mode of transport. While about 95 percent of day scholars in the Eastern region walk to school, only about 46 percent in the Western region walk to school.

The time taken to reach school from home by usual mode of transportation for 15.2 percent of the day scholar students is between 30 minutes and an hour. About 3.5 percent of the day scholar students report having to travel over an hour to reach school.

About one in 10 youths (10.5%) report to having attended ECCD as a child. By region, a slightly higher proportion of youths from the Western region (11.5%) report to have attended ECCD as compared to those from the Central (9.0%) and Eastern (8.8%) regions.

A little less than one-third of the youths (30.3%) report to having attended some form of tuition classes in addition to normal classroom-based learning sessions. A comparatively higher proportion of youths from the Western region (37.2%) attended tuition classes as compared to those from the Central (19.2%) and Eastern (18.2%) regions.

Knowledge and skills in any one of the 13 arts and crafts, commonly called *Zorig-Chhusum*, is reported by 47.4 percent of the youths. By type of arts and crafts, a relatively higher proportion of youths report to having knowledge and skills in painting (25.8%), followed by weaving (17.9%) and carpentry (11.7%).

The knowledge and understanding of different aspects of history, culture, and civic among the youths seem to be relatively poor. For instance, only about one-third of the youths report to having 'very good' or 'good' knowledge and understanding of traditional Bhutanese songs (35.3%) and the Constitution (34.5%). Similarly, only about two in five youths report to having 'very good' or 'good' knowledge and understanding of local legends and folktales (41.9%) and local festivals (43.0%).



## Economic and material situation

A large majority of youths report to owning a smartphone (94.5%), followed by a mobile phone other than smartphone (17.1%), and a tablet or iPad (12.7%). Similarly, most youths report to owning a dictionary (86.5%) followed by a book to help their schoolwork (85.3%) and access to Internet (84.4%). Owning a desk and having a quiet place to study is reported by 70.6 percent and 69.1 percent of the youths, respectively. An access to computer for use to assist schoolwork is reported by 59.2 percent of the youths. Less than half of the youths (45.2%) report to having a room of their own in their home.


About 42 percent of the youths report that their household is living comfortably on their present income and 38.5 percent mention that they are coping with their present income. However, 16.2 percent report that they were finding it difficult or very difficult on their household's present income.

## Time use

The average time spent sleeping by youths in the 24-hour period preceding the Survey is 7 hours 3 minutes, which is lower than the recommended amount of around 8 hours. Male report a slightly longer duration of sleep (7 hours 8 minutes) as compared to females (6 hours 58 minutes). Youths from the Central region (7 hours 32 minutes) report sleeping over half an hour more than those from the Eastern and Western regions (6 hours 58 minutes each).

Forty-two percent of youths report to spending some time watching television on a normal school day outside of school hours. Similarly, 41.4 percent of the youths report to spending some time playing or on computer games during normal school day outside of school hours.

In terms of the time allocated towards reading, 70 percent report spending some time reading stories and articles online during the normal school day outside of school hours. Similarly, 73.5 percent report spending time reading stories and articles from books during the normal school day outside of school hours.



Over three-fourths of youths report to having social media account such as Facebook (90.4% having Facebook account), Facebook Messenger (88.5%), YouTube (81.3%), and Telegram (75.4%). In terms of the amount of time spent on social media, youths, on an average, spends 2 hours 23 minutes per day on social media on normal weekdays during the term time. Males (2 hours 19 minutes) and females (2 hours 26 minutes) spend almost equal time on social media.

### Civic engagement


Youths depend on internet, friends or colleagues, and TV news as their main source of information to learn about what is happening in the country. For instance, 51.6 percent of the youths source information on the happenings in the country from the Internet daily, followed by talking with friends or colleagues (33.9%), and through TV news (18.0%). Not many youths seem to depend on print media and radio as a source of information as only 4.8 percent and 1.9 percent report accessing information from newspaper and radio daily.

Youth civic engagement was also assessed through indicators such as participation in community events, volunteerism, donations, and memberships to clubs or associations. The average days spent attending social and cultural activities is 5.0 days in the past one year. In terms of volunteering, 71.6 percent of youths provided some form of voluntary help in past 12 months to different cause or entity while the remaining 28.4 percent did not provide any voluntary help in the past 12 months. As regards to donations made in the last 24 months, 47.5 percent of youths reported donating either cash or in kind within the past 12 months.

About two in three youths (65.6%) are a member of Scouts. Over one-third of youths (37.8%) belong to school sports team and 29.5 percent reported belonging to school cultural club. However, only 2.4 percent report to being a De-suup.

### Youth entrepreneurship

The overall Entrepreneurship Awareness Index score is 4.3 on a 0-10-point scale indicating a low level of awareness of entrepreneurship. Males (4.4) score slightly higher Entrepreneurship Awareness Index than females (4.2).



By region, the mean Entrepreneurship Awareness Index is relatively higher among those youths from the Western region (4.4) compared to those from the Central (4.2) and Eastern (3.9) regions.

The overall Entrepreneurial Attitude Index score is 5.4 on a 0-10-point scale indicating neutral attitude towards entrepreneurship. Males (5.8) score slightly higher Entrepreneurial Attitude Index than females (5.1). By entrepreneurship attitude category, about three-fourths (75.2%) of the youths show either negative or neutral attitude towards entrepreneurship, suggesting that a large majority of youths do not consider entrepreneurship as a viable option for employment. Only about one in four (24.8%) youths show 'positive attitude' towards entrepreneurial activities.

The average entrepreneurship motivation score is 7.0, indicating moderate level of motivation for entrepreneurial activities. By broad category, 31.9 percent of the youths are classified under the 'high motivation' category and 58.3 percent under the 'moderate motivation' category. The remaining 9.8 percent falls under the 'low motivation' category.


In terms of entrepreneurship intention and readiness, the average score is 5.8, indicating a moderate level of entrepreneurial intention and readiness. By broad groupings, 16.1 percent of youths falls under the 'high intention and readiness' for entrepreneurship category. The remaining 52.9 percent and 31.0 percent fall under 'moderate intention and readiness' and 'low intention and readiness' categories, respectively.

### Employment prospects

Regarding plans within the next five years, 44.8 percent of the youths report that they will 'continue studying', followed by 'finding a job' (28.6%) and 'starting their own business' (15.0%) as their first-choice plan.

Among those who report that their plan within the next five years (n=1,353) is to seek self-employment, over half of them (57.0%) state that their preferred sector of employment is the 'civil service', followed by armed forces (13.8%), private business (11.3%), and private companies (10.6%).

When asked whether they consider moving in search of work and employment, a vast majority of the respondents (93.7%) consider moving to a new place. Among the youths who are considering moving to another



place in search for work and employment opportunity, about one-third (34.2%) are considering moving to Thimphu, the capital city of Bhutan, followed by 21.2 percent considering moving 'to another country or region'. And among those who intend to migrate to another country in search of work and employment, 39.3 percent state that they would prefer to move to Australia, followed by the United States of America (21.3%), the Middle East (10.9%), and Canada (10.2%).

Overall, about 40 percent of the youths have very high confidence (reporting a score of eight or above on a scale of 0-10) in getting employed in the future. On the other hand, about three percent of the youths rate their confidence in getting employed between zero and four, indicating very low confidence in getting employed.

# Introduction

The persistent search for a development model that promises to ensure holistic wellbeing and happiness of people continues. Different studies have proposed different frameworks for governments to consider while adopting a development approach towards ensuring holistic wellbeing and happiness. In Bhutan, Gross National Happiness (GNH), which promotes the collective happiness of a society, has been the guiding principle for the Bhutanese development approach. The GNH infused development approach argues that the material aspects of development are necessary but cannot alone offer sufficient conditions for individual and society to pursue holistic wellbeing and happiness. As such, the GNH-based development approach attaches equal importance to other aspects of human life and does not over emphasise on economic development alone.

The concept of GNH uses a domain-based framework involving nine dimensions that reflects and assesses a holistic range of conditions for pursuing a good and fulfilling life. To assess how people in Bhutan live their life along the nine domains of GNH, three nationwide surveys on GNH have already been conducted. The results from these surveys helped deepen the understanding of GNH and inform policy makers to develop GNH enhancing plans and policies at the national and local levels. An extension of the GNH Survey, specifically focussing on youths, a distinct population subgroup, was, therefore, planned to understand their wellbeing and happiness.

## 1.1 Background

There were an estimated 135,414<sup>1</sup> youths aged between 1–24 years old in Bhutan in 2023. This constitutes about 18 percent of the total Bhutanese

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<sup>1</sup> National Statistics Bureau (NSB), Population Projections Bhutan 2017 – 204, (Thimphu: Bhutan, NSB, 2017), 36.

population in 2023. An estimated 62,764<sup>2</sup> youths aged between 15-24 years are currently enrolled in schools, colleges, or training institutions within the country. Despite youths constituting a significant proportion of the total population, there was no separate assessment of their wellbeing and happiness conducted so far. Although the national GNH surveys do include youths, the number of youths intercepted by these national GNH surveys is disproportionately low. For instance, the GNH survey conducted in 2022 intercepted only 947 youths aged between 15-24 years constituting just 8.6 percent of the total sample for the 2022 GNH survey. Considering that the composition of the youth population to the total population is 18 percent, youths intercepted by the national GNH survey, constituting just 8.6 percent of the total sample, was an under representation. Therefore, the current study was conducted specifically focusing on youths to assess and evaluate their wellbeing and happiness.

Several approaches to the measurement of wellbeing and happiness currently exist. In addition, every year, an increasing number of new approaches to measuring societal progress holistically are proposed from around the world. Numerous indicators to measure psychological and subjective wellbeing to understand subjective happiness, life satisfaction, or emotional experience are developed and validated in different socio-economic and cultural settings. In order to capture the missing dimensions and make the wellbeing measure multidimensional and holistic, additional dimensions aimed at capturing various socio-economic conditions are proposed by different studies.

Bhutan adopted GNH as its development model and strives to promote holistic development by balancing the material aspects of development with non-material aspects such as cultural preservation, spiritual development, promotion of community vitality, and environmental conservation. GNH aligned plans and policies are designed to enhance wellbeing and happiness of the Bhutanese. The Bhutanese government is constitutionally mandated to promote enabling conditions for the people to pursue GNH. The Constitution of Bhutan stipulates that "The State shall strive to promote

<sup>2</sup> As per the student statistics collected from different schools and institutions through the help of District Education Officers (DEOs) and Principals for construction the listing frame based on 2022 academic year student strengths. However, when the listing was updated for those selected schools, the estimated student population aged between 15-24 years of age currently enrolled in educational institutions within Bhutan comes to only 50,831.

those conditions that will enable the pursuit of Gross National Happiness”.

The *GNH Index*, a multi-dimensional measure, offers an alternative approach to measuring the holistic wellbeing and happiness of people. The indicators of GNH not only encompass psycho-social and economic dimensions but also new and more innovative dimensions of wellbeing such as time use and balance, community vitality, cultural vibrancy, good governance, and environmental conditions<sup>3</sup>. The GNH Index is the yardstick by which Bhutan currently tracks its individual flourishing and societal progress.

Like the GNH Index, there are other measures proposed for measuring human flourishing. For instance, measures of flourishing proposed by Diener et al.<sup>4</sup> and VanderWeele<sup>5</sup> are some which are specifically named as ‘flourishing’ scale or index. Unlike conventional measures of psychological and subjective wellbeing, the flourishing measures of wellbeing consider a multidimensional approach in assessing the wellbeing of people by incorporating socio-economic alongside psychological and subjective wellbeing measures.

The *Flourishing Scale* (FS) by Diener et al. proposed eight separate statements to measure flourishing covering areas such as meaning and purpose, social relationships, engaged and interested, contribute to other happiness, competency and capability, living a good life, optimistic about future, and respect. The *Flourish Index* (FI) measurement, proposed by VanderWeele, encompasses five broad domains of human life with an option for an additional domain on financial security to construct the *Secure Flourish Index* (SFI). They are happiness and life satisfaction, physical and mental health, meaning and purpose, character and virtue, and close social relationships. The additional dimension proposed for computing SFI measure financial and material stability of people.

Human flourishing, which is a much broader concept than the conventional measures of psychological and subjective wellbeing assessed through subjective happiness or life satisfaction indicators, is measured in Bhutan

<sup>3</sup> Ura et al., *A Short Guide to Gross National Happiness Index*, (Thimphu: Bhutan, Centre for Bhutan Studies, 2012), 8.

<sup>4</sup> Diener et al., “New Well-being Measures: Short Scales to Assess Flourishing and Positive and Negative Feelings,” *Social Indicators Research*, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> VanderWeele, “On the Promotion of Human Flourishing,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 2017.



using the *Gross National Happiness (GNH) Index* through the nine-domain framework<sup>6</sup>. The GNH Index, besides having Psychological wellbeing as one of the nine domains, also includes eight other domains that are not normally found included in wellbeing and happiness measures. They are community vitality, cultural diversity, times use and balance, good governance, ecological diversity, health, education, and living standards. The GNH Index, therefore, attempts to measure the wellbeing and happiness of individuals holistically.

Bhutan's GNH influenced development approach aims to achieve a balanced development that considers spiritual, social, and environmental growth alongside material development. The GNH domains and indicators capture different aspects of human life and measure how individuals fare in these different dimensions. Therefore, as may be expected, there are overlaps as well as differences in what is being measured by the GNH Index and other flourishing measurement systems proposed by Diener et al. and VanderWeele. For instance, all three measurement systems try to assess the existence and strength of social relationships but in slightly different ways. While Diener et al. measures existence of supportive and rewarding relationships, VenderWeele measures contentment and satisfaction with close social relationships. In GNH, aspects of social relationships are measured through various indicators like satisfaction with family relationships, existence of social support in the form of number of people that can be counted on when in need, availability of confidants, sense of trust in neighbours, and frequency of socialisation with relatives, friends, and neighbours.

On the other hand, there are differences in what is being measured as well as the number of measurement items used in the Flourishing Scale, the Flourish Index, and the GNH Index. The Flourishing Scale does not include health dimension while the Flourish Index and the GNH Index include a domain on health. The Flourish Index measures health in terms of self-reported physical and mental health while the GNH Index measures health in terms of self-reported overall health status, experience of number of healthy days, mental health status, and disability and activity limitations due to existence of health impairments.

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<sup>6</sup> Ura et al., *A Short Guide to Gross National Happiness Index*, (Thimphu: Bhutan, Centre for Bhutan Studies, 2012).

In terms of the number of domains and indicators and the number of measurement items within the indicators, the GNH Index contains new dimensions and indicators which are not normally found in other wellbeing and happiness measurement systems. For instance, the GNH Index is computed using 33 indicators which in turn are constructed by using 126 different variables. These 33 indicators are grouped under nine domains of the GNH. Each of these nine domains, 33 indicators, and brief description of what is being measured by the 33 indicators is presented in Table 2. The new dimensions included in the GNH Index that are not captured by the Flourishing Scale and Flourish Index are measures related to time use and balance, culture diversity, community vitality, ecological diversity, education, and good governance. The description of the GNH Index and the weighting scheme are covered under the GNH Index measurement and methods sub-section.

One of the pathways to wellbeing and happiness is work and employment. And good education and entrepreneurial skills are pathways to work and employment. Therefore, in addition to the measurement of wellbeing and happiness, the current study also includes a section on entrepreneurship and employment prospects for the youth. Entrepreneurship and employment are topics that have received much attention in Bhutan over the past decade. Considering the critical need to promote entrepreneurship among the youths in Bhutan to help them find gainful employment, one of the goals of the National Youth Policy is to provide entrepreneurial education and training. It specifically mentions that the policy objective is “[t]o promote entrepreneurship capacity in all young people (both in and out of school).”<sup>7</sup> This indicates that job creation for youths is a top priority of the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB). It has become even more vital in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic which resulted in an economic downturn and an increase in youth unemployment rate.

While the RGoB has been facilitating the matching of jobs with the talents of job seekers, vital steps in promoting overseas employment and entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship at the grassroots level, and creating awareness of employment opportunities at the school and college levels are also taken. For instance, the setting up of Small and Medium Sized

<sup>7</sup> Department of Youth and Sports (DYS), National Youth Policy (Thimphu, Bhutan: Ministry of Education, 2011).

Enterprises (SME) options, fab labs for engendering business ideas, and introducing entrepreneurship classes or clubs in schools are a few initiatives undertaken to foster youth entrepreneurship. Besides, the government also established entrepreneurship promotion and incubation centres to create a supportive environment for aspiring young entrepreneurs. These centres offer resources such as mentorship, networking opportunities, access to low-cost financing, and shared workspaces.

Furthermore, Bhutan collaborates with international organizations, NGOs, and development agencies to enhance youth entrepreneurship. These collaborations bring in expertise, resources, and best practices from around the world. Numerous financial support and entrepreneurial capacity building assistance were extended by government agencies and NGOs in addition to programmes aimed at promoting entrepreneurship among the youths. Initiatives such as expediated business registration process through G2B (government-to-business) portals free of charge, business idea competitions, start-up weekend, Business Seedling Clubs, etc. were offered to promote entrepreneurship culture among the youths. However, the impacts of these initiatives on enhancing entrepreneurial awareness and employment prospects through entrepreneurial activities are unknown. Particularly lacking is the research on youths' views on employment prospects and barriers to becoming entrepreneurs in Bhutan. Drawing on the theoretical perspective of GNH, motivation for entrepreneurship, and employment prospects, the present study addresses this gap by examining the GNH Index as a measure of wellbeing and human flourishing for the Bhutanese youths. This research is important in that it will provide the first comprehensive assessment of youth flourishing in terms of GNH and other flourishing measures. It is also expected to shed new light on entrepreneurship in Bhutan and youths' views and perceptions on employment and future employment prospects, including perceived barriers to youth employment.

The current study on human flourishing in Bhutan targets two distinct populations groups - youths and people belonging to religious communities. However, this Report only presents the findings of the youth survey. The findings from the survey on flourishing among people belonging to religious community is presented through a separate survey report titled *Human Flourishing in the Monastic Communities*.

## 1.2 Objectives

The overarching objective of this study is to measure youth wellbeing and flourishing, assess entrepreneurial intentions and awareness, and find out employment prospects and barriers as perceived by the youths. Specifically, this Study expects to answer the following broad research questions:

1. How do the youths fare in terms of GNH and other wellbeing measures?
2. How does the youth GNH Index compare with GNH Index for the general population?
3. How do the youths perceive entrepreneurship, what are their intentions towards entrepreneurial activities, and what barriers to entrepreneurship do they perceive?
4. How do the youths view their employment and employment prospects?

# Study Methodology

## 2.1 Study Design

A cross-sectional study design was used for data collection for this Study. The following sections briefly describes the sampling design and coverage, data collection instrument used, and field survey enumeration approach adopted.

## 2.2 Sampling Design

The sampling for this Survey was designed to provide estimates for a holistic range of indicators representative at the national level as well as at the regional levels. The target population for the Survey includes those aged between 15-24 years, both currently enrolled in educational institutions and those out-of-school unemployed youths.

A stratified three-stage random cluster sampling design was adopted for this Survey. The first stage involved the selection of *dzongkhag* as Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) to represent each of the three regions using Probability Proportional to Size with Replacement (PPSWR) approach with the number of students in each *dzongkhag* as size variable. The 20 *dzongkhag* are grouped into three regions - Eastern, Central, and the Western regions.

Similarly, the second stage selection involved selecting Secondary Sampling Units (SSUs). The SSUs for the Survey was individual institutes or schools. SSUs were selected once again using Probability Proportional to Size with Replacement (PPSWR) approach with the number of students in each school/institute as size variable.

The third and final stage of the selection involved selecting the ultimate sampling unit (USU), in this case, individual students. The required number of students aged 15 years or older were selected for interview using Circular Systematic Sampling (CSS) approach.

### Coverage of the Survey

The Survey was designed to cover three regions of the country – Eastern, Central, and the Western regions. The Western region constitutes eight *dzongkhag* of Chukha, Gasa, Haa, Paro, Punakha, Samtse, Thimphu, and Wangdue Phodrang. The Central region is made up of six *dzongkhag* of Bumthang, Dagana, Sarpang, Trongsa, Tsirang, and Zhemgang. The remaining six *dzongkhag* of Lhuentse, Mongar, Pema Gatshel, Tashigang, and Tashi Yangtse form the Eastern region.

### Sampling Frame

The sampling frame for the Survey was constructed based on the administrative records of students studying in various schools and institutions during the academic year 2022. However, the listings for the selected schools and institutions were updated using administrative records of students for the academic year 2023 provided by the respective school management before the final selection of sample respondents.

Youths in this Study was defined as those 15 years or older enrolled in an academic institution or out-of-school individuals of similar age category currently actively seeking employment. Therefore, for this Study, youths are broadly categorised into two groups: school-going and out-of-school.

### School-Going Youth

The lists of school-going youth aged 15<sup>8</sup> years or older by *dzongkhag* were collected from schools, colleges, and institutions owned by both the public and private individuals. The sampling frame included a total of 62,975 school-going youth comprising 51,140 students from 338 schools, 8,788 undergraduate students from 12 colleges, and 3,029 trainees from 18 institutions. The sampling frame for school-going youths included only those involved in full-time learning or training.

Lists of both private and public schools by *dzongkhag* were collected from the Ministry of Education (MoE), now renamed the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD). For public colleges, the lists were compiled through the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB), and for private colleges, they were collected from their respective institutions.

Similarly, lists of trainees enrolled with public training institutions were compiled

<sup>8</sup> Although the sampling frame was constructed for students who are aged 15 years or older, six respondents who are all studying in class IX reported their age in completed years as 14. We have, however, not excluded them from the final analysis.

from the Department of Workforce, Planning, and Skills Development (DWPSD) and from respective training institutions. For students enrolled in private training institutions, the lists were collected from their respective institutions.

### Out-of-School Youth

The samples for the out-of-school youths for the current Study could not be selected using probability selection methods due to lack of a proper sampling frame. Instead, the sample selection was done based on random walk-in as well as using other non-probability sample selection methods like snowballing techniques, where the out-of-school unemployed youths already interviewed referred their peer, who are currently out-of-school and unemployed, to the survey team for interview.

### Sample Size Determination

In order to estimate the required sample size, Cochran's formula was used. The formula is as follows:

$$n = \{p(1-p) z^2 / e^2\} * d.f * k$$

where;

$n$  = required sample size,

$e$  = desired level of precision, 0.05 (i.e., the margin of error),

$p$  = the estimated proportion of the population with characteristic of interest,

$z$  = the z-value, extracted from a z-table. A 95 % confidence level gives Z value of 1.96,

$d.f$  = the sample design effect assumed to be 2.0 as per thumb rule and,

$k$  = the adjustment factor for an anticipated non-response of 5 %.

Using the above formula and considering the region as domain of selection, a minimum of 807 samples were required for each of the three regions. The final sample size of 834 was estimated for the Western region, 819 for the Central region, and 812 for the Eastern region. The overall total sample size for school-going youths was estimated at 2,465. In addition, a total of 133 unemployed out-of-school youths aged between 15-30 years from the three regions were successfully interviewed for the Survey.

### Sample Allocation

The total sample size estimated for each region was then proportionately allocated to each *dzongkhag* under the three regions based on the actual student population proportion. For instance, from the final sample size for the Western region of 834 samples, about 52 percent were allocated to Thimphu ( $n = 431$ ), followed by 31 percent to Chukha ( $n = 259$ ) and the remaining 17 percent to Punakha ( $n = 144$ ), which are the three *dzongkhag* sampled to represent the region.

Similarly, of the 819 samples estimated for the Central region, 599 were allocated to Sarpang and the remaining 220 allocated to Bumthang Dzongkhag. And of the 812 samples estimated for the Eastern region, 508 were allocated to Tashigang and the remaining 304 to Mongar Dzongkhag.

### Sample Weight

The sampling weights were determined using the following formulae. The sampling weight is determined as follows:

Where,

$$W_{hi} = \frac{M_h}{(M_{hi} \times n_h)} \times \frac{M^*_{hi}}{m_{hi}} \times \frac{m_{hi}}{m^*_{hi}}$$

$M_h$  = no. of students in stratum  $h$  according to existing frame

$M_{hi}$  = no. of students in EA  $i$  in stratum  $h$  according to existing frame

$n_h$  = no. of PSUs from the stratum

$M^*_{hi}$  = no. of students in EA  $i$  in stratum  $h$  according to updated listing

$m_{hi}$  = no. of students in the sample from EA  $i$  in stratum  $h$

$m^*_{hi}$  = no. of responding students in the EA  $i$  in stratum  $h$

All results in the Report were generated using the sampling weight estimated above, except otherwise specified. However, for those out-of-school youths, no sampling weight was attached.

## 2.3 Survey Instruments and Measures

This Study used structured survey questionnaire which was divided into five broad sections - demographic information, nine domains of GNH, flourishing scale measures, entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions, and employment prospects.



The demographic section sought information about the place of residence, gender, age, and current highest educational attainment of the respondents. In addition, information on parent's occupations and educational qualifications were also collected to assess the family background of the youths.

Under the *GNH section*, information related to the nine domains of GNH were collected with some additional questions specific to youth and school settings. In order to maintain comparability of the GNH domains and indicators to the national level GNH survey results, questions from the recent GNH survey 2022 were adapted for this Study. The data collected on GNH was then used for computing the GNH Index for youths which is roughly comparable to the GNH Index for the general population.

The *Flourishing section* used an 8-item Flourishing Scale assessment tool developed by Diener et al. to assess flourishing to complement the GNH Index.

The section on *entrepreneurship*, included questions on awareness, attitude, motivation, and intention towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial activities.

Respondents were then asked about their perspectives on their future *employment prospects* and preference, and their migration intentions for work and employment under the employment section. Information on perceived barriers to employment were also collected.

In addition to the structured survey questionnaire, focus group discussions (FGDs) were also conducted after the preliminary survey results were generated to triangulate the findings from the quantitative survey data with the qualitative information collected through FGDs.

In order to facilitate seamless data collection and accurate interpretation of the questionnaire, training for field survey enumerators was conducted to train them about field survey processes, interviewing techniques, and questionnaire interpretation and translation.

## 2.4 Field enumeration

A total of 69 enumerators, who were all CBS researchers, were deployed for field data collection in the three different regions covering 10 *dzongkhag*:

i.e., Thimphu, Punakha, and Chukha in the Western region; Sarpang and Bumthang in the Central region; and Mongar and Trashigang in the Eastern region.

The field survey enumerations were conducted between March-April 2023. Data collection was carried out by conducting face-to-face personal interviews through Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) methods using handheld computers.

A team of researchers collected qualitative information through FGDs in June 2023, involving both school-going and out-of-school youths.

## 2.5 Response rate

Of the total sample of 2,465 school-going youths, the Survey managed to successfully enumerate 2,269 students or trainees, yielding a response rate of 92.0 percent. The response rate was slightly lower than what was factored in while estimating the required response rate of 95 percent because samples from two institutes had to be dropped completely while from another institute had to be reduced due to unavoidable circumstances. After adjusting samples from these two institutions, the response rate comes to 95.0 percent. In addition, the Study interviewed 133 out-of-school youths to supplement information collected from those enrolled in formal educational or training institutes. The database, therefore, contains a total sample of 2,402 (2,269 + 133) school-going and out-of-school youths.

## 2.6 Data collection and processing.

Data collected through CAPI were checked by the respective field supervisors in the field and then further validated by a team at the head office. In addition, computer aided data validation, cleaning, and tabulations were carried out using the statistical software Stata to correct data errors and ensure data accuracy. The sampling weights were estimated and assigned to observations to be able to infer estimates for the total target population.

# Results and Findings

The results from the Survey are presented under different sub-sections starting with demographic information of the samples, followed by the GNH Index findings. The subsequent sub-section presents results from flourishing measures, followed by results on entrepreneurship and employment.

## 3.1 Demographic characteristics of the sample

Out of 2,402 total respondents, 52.2 percent are females and 47.5 percent males. Six respondents accounting for about 0.3 percent also identified their gender as 'others'. Ages range from 14 - 36 years. A majority of the respondents fall under the age category of 16-17 years (39.1%), followed by 18-19 age category (22.4%) and 20 years or older (21.0%). Those 15 years or younger constitute 17.5 percent of the total sample.

Of the total school-going respondents, a little over half (52.8%) report to residing in a boarding facility provided by schools while the remaining 47.2 percent are day scholars.

**Table 1** Demographic characteristics of the sample

	n	%
Sex		
Male	1,142	47.5
Female	1,254	52.2
Other	6	0.3
Age		
≤15	420	17.5
16-17	939	39.1
18-19	538	22.4
≥20	505	21.0
Respondent category		
Student	2,269	94.5
Out-of-school youth	133	5.5

	n	%
Student type		
Boarder	1,199	52.8
Day scholar	1,070	47.2
Highest educational qualification		
Lower Secondary	248	10.3
Middle Secondary	831	34.6
Higher Secondary	924	38.5
Certificate/Diploma/Degree	397	16.5
Academic programme		
Science	508	43.5
Commerce	319	26.7
Arts	343	28.7
Others	25	2.1
Region		
Eastern	796	33.1
Central	808	33.6
Western	798	33.2

Among school-going youths, 10.3 percent are studying in lower secondary level, about one-third (34.6%) in middle secondary level, 38.5 percent in higher secondary level, and the remaining 16.5 percent are pursuing certificate, diploma, or degree programmes.

Respondents who are currently studying in grade 11 or above (n = 1,195), including those enrolled in certificate or diploma level training courses, are asked about the course they are currently enrolled in. About 44 percent of the students studied or are studying the 'Science' stream, followed by 26.7 percent 'Commerce' stream, and 28.7 percent 'Arts' stream. The remaining 2.1 percent of the respondents report to studying 'Others' courses, which could be those enrolled in vocational training programmes.

Similarly, among out-of-school youths, most respondents (61.4%) have higher secondary education as their highest qualification, followed by 18.9 percent who studied up to middle secondary education level. Respondents with certificate/diploma or some college degree constitute 12.1 percent. About 4.6% have primary education and 1.5% have lower secondary school as their highest achieved grade. Monastic education and others (non-formal education) both represent 0.8 percent each. In terms of the course studied by those who studied 11<sup>th</sup> grade or above and are currently out-of-school,

over half (53.6%) studied 'Arts' followed by 'Commerce' (32.7%). Only 12.7 percent of the out-of-school youths studied in the 'Science' stream.

## 3.2 Gross National Happiness (GNH) Index

This section presents the results of the GNH Index used for assessing flourishing among for youths. Similar to the GNH Index constructed for the general population, this is constructed using 33 indicators under the nine domains of GNH, although some indicators between the two are not the same. The next section presents other GNH-related indicators used for assessing other aspects of wellbeing and happiness which are not used for the GNH Index computation but are important in their own right.

### 3.2.1 Choice of indicators for GNH Index

The GNH Index is a single number composite index constructed using Alkire-Foster<sup>9</sup> methodology developed for computing Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) measures. The GNH Index value range between zero and one with the higher value oriented towards higher happiness. The GNH Index for youths, like its national GNH Index, is computed using 33 indicators which in turn are constructed by using 126 different variables. These 33 indicators are grouped under the nine domains of GNH. Each of the nine domains, 33 indicators, and a brief description of what is being measured by the 33 indicators are presented in Table 2. The table also contains information on the domain weights as well as weights assigned to each of the 33 indicators under the respective domains.

The choice of indicators for the construction of the youth GNH Index is largely determined by the availability of indicators that are comparable with the national GNH Index. Therefore, of the 33 indicators, 14 indicators are exactly comparable with the national GNH Index, two indicators are highly comparable, seven are somewhat comparable, and the remaining 10 indicators are not comparable. However, they are good proxy for the original indicators used for constructing the national GNH Index.

### 3.2.2 Domain and indicator weights

The weights assigned to domains as well as the weights assigned to indicators under each domain are also comparable with the national GNH

<sup>9</sup> Sabina Alkire and James Foster, "Counting and Multidimensional Poverty Measures," OPHI Working Paper Series, 7 (2007); Sabina Alkire and James Foster, "Counting and Multidimensional Poverty Measurement," *Journal of Public Economics*, 95(7-8), 476-487 (2011).

Index construction weighting scheme. For instance, for the national GNH Index, all nine domains are equally weighted where each domain receive one-ninth of the total weight. Within the domains, indicators are generally assigned equal weights, but some indicators, depending on whether they are subjective or objective, or based on the perceived policy relevance of the indicator receive a slightly lower or higher weight. Objective indicators or indicators assessed as more relevant for shaping better public policies are assigned a slightly higher weight than others. For instance, under the health domain, while the self-reported health status indicator (which is a subjective indicator) receive 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the total domain weight, the healthy days indicator (which is an objective indicator) receive 3/10<sup>th</sup> of the total domain weight.

### 3.2.3 Sufficiency thresholds

Regarding sufficiency threshold, the threshold selected for each indicator is once again kept the same or as comparable as possible with the national GNH indicator sufficiency threshold. The thresholds are set deliberately high because the objective of the GNH Index is to aim for a very high level of human flourishing or holistic happiness and not the bare minimum. The sufficiency threshold set for each indicator is provided in Table 2 below.

Each of the nine domains are assessed through the four indicators except the Living Standards and Time Use domains which contain three and two indicators, respectively.

**Table 2** Domains, indicators, variables used for constructing GNH Index

Domain	Indicator	Indicator weight	Domain weight	Indicator description	No. of variables	Comparability with national GNH Index	Indicator value	Sufficiency threshold
Psychological Wellbeing	Life satisfaction	1/3		Life satisfaction indicator is constructed using satisfaction with health, standard of living, occupation/current responsibility, family relationships, and work-life balance. Each variable is measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). The life satisfaction indicator value ranges between 5 (low life satisfaction) to 25 (high life satisfaction).	5	Exactly comparable	5-25	≥19
	Positive emotions	1/6		Positive emotions indicator is constructed using frequency of experiencing calmness, compassion, forgiveness, contentment, and generosity in the last four weeks. They are measured on a 7-point scale where 1 indicates 'never' experiencing and 7 indicating experiencing 'few times a day'. The indicator value ranges between 5 – 35, where higher score represents better positive emotional experience.	5	Exactly comparable	5-35	≥21
	Negative emotions	1/6	1/9	Negative emotions indicator is constructed using frequency of experiencing anger, fear, worry, selfishness, and jealousy in the last four weeks. They are measured on a 7-point scale where 1 indicates 'never' experiencing and 7 indicating experiencing 'few times a day'. There are two sub-indicators for negative emotions: 1) anger, fear, and worry with a score of 3 - 21; and 2) selfishness and jealousy with a score of 2 - 14, where lower score indicates better negative emotional experience.	5	Exactly comparable	3-21; 2-14	≤11; ≤8
	Spirituality	1/3		Spirituality indicator is constructed using self-reported spirituality, consideration of Karma, frequency of pray recitation, and frequency of meditation. The indicator value ranges between 4 – 18 where higher score represents higher spirituality levels.	4	Exactly comparable	4-18	≥13

Table 2 Domains, indicators, variables used for constructing GNH Index

Domain	Indicator	Indicator weight	Domain weight	Indicator description	No. of variables	Comparability with national GNH Index	Indicator value	Sufficiency threshold
Health	Mental health	3/10	1/9	Mental health status is assessed using 12-item General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12). Each item is measured on a 0-3 scale. The indicator value ranges between 0 - 36. A score between 0 - 15 indicates 'normal mental wellbeing', a score between 16 - 20 indicates 'some mental distress', and a score between 21 - 36 indicates 'severe psychological distress'.	12	Exactly comparable	0-36	≤15 (normal mental wellbeing)
	Self-reported health status	1/10		Self-reported health status is measured on a 1-5-point scale, 1 representing 'poor' health and 5 representing 'excellent' health.	1	Exactly comparable	1 - 5	>3
	Healthy days	3/10		Healthy days is the number of days a person was free from both physical and/or mental ill health in a month. The values range between 0 - 30.	2	Exactly comparable	0-30	≥26
	Disability	3/10		Disability indicator is assessed by asking whether a person suffers from any health problem or long-term disability which restricts their normal day-to-day activities. The activity restriction is measured using a 3-point scale where 1 indicates 'yes, limited a lot', 2 'yes, limited a little', and 3 'no'.	1	Somewhat comparable	1 - 3	≤2
	Work	1/2		Time (number of hours) spent working within the past 24-hour period between 4:00 am of the day preceding the interview day and 4:00 am of the interview day.	1	Highly comparable	0-24	≤8
Time Use	Sleep	1/2	Time (number of hours) spent sleeping within the past 24-hour period between 4:00 am of the day preceding the interview day and 4:00 am of the interview day.	1	Highly comparable	0-24	≥8	



Table 2 Domains, indicators, variables used for constructing GNH Index

Domain	Indicator	Indicator weight	Domain weight	Indicator description	No. of variables	Comparability with national GNH Index	Indicator value	Sufficiency threshold
Education	Club membership <sup>10</sup>	3/10		Club membership means being a member of any associations such as Scout, De-suung, Sports club, Cultural club, etc.	4	Not comparable		Being member of at least one of the four associations
	Schooling <sup>11</sup>	3/10		Highest educational qualification completed by father and/ or mother.	2	Not comparable		≥6 for either one of the parents
	Knowledge	1/5	1/9	Knowledge indicator is constructed using historical, cultural, and civic literacy measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good). The indicator value ranges between 4 – 20 where higher score indicates better knowledge.	4	Somewhat comparable	4-20	≥15
	Values	1/5		The indicator is constructed using five different variable which assessed whether they think that it can be justified to kill, steal, lie, create disharmony, and commit sexual misconduct. The response options are 1 (can always be justified), 2 (can sometimes be justified), and 3 (can never be justified). For each of these five items, a score of '1' is given if the response is 'can never be justified' and '0' otherwise. The total score ranges between 0 and 5 where higher score indicates ascription to greater pro-social values.	5	Exactly comparable	0-5	≥4

<sup>10</sup> Unlike the assessment of respondent's ability to read and write in any languages in the national GNH survey, the youth survey assessed whether youths are members of any one of De-suung, Sports club, Cultural clubs, etc. Since the youths covered by this Survey are students who would obviously be literate, this alternative proxy indicator was used for literacy. This is because by being member of these associations, youths can acquire new dimensions of literacy other than the conventional literacy assessed though whether a person can read and write

<sup>11</sup> The national GNH Index use the years of schooling attained by the respondent. However, for the youth survey, since respondents are current students and had not attained the terminal grade, using the number of years of schooling of the youths seems inappropriate. Therefore, as a proxy indicator, the number of years of schooling attained by respondents' parents is used for the youth GNH Index

Table 2 Domains, indicators, variables used for constructing GNH Index

Domain	Indicator	Indicator weight	Domain weight	Indicator description	No. of variables	Comparability with national GNH Index	Indicator value	Sufficiency threshold
Cultural Diversity	Speak native language	1/5		This indicator assesses how well one can speak one's native language measured on a 4-point scale where 1 indicates 'not at all' to 4 'very well'.	1	Exactly comparable	1-4	≥4
	Cultural participation	3/10		Number of days spend participating in social and cultural activities in the community in the last 12 months.	1	Exactly comparable		≥6
	Zorig chusum skills	3/10	1/9	Knowledge and skills in 13 different traditional arts and crafts. They are weaving, embroidery, painting, carpentry, carving, sculpture, casting, blacksmithing, bamboo works, goldsmithing or silversmithing, masonry, leather works, and papermaking. The score reflects the knowledge and skills in the number of traditional arts and crafts.	13	Exactly comparable	0-13	≥1
	Driglam Namzha	1/5		The perceived importance of Driglam Namzha (traditional Bhutanese etiquette or ways of harmonious living) and perceived changes in practice and observance of Driglam Namzha over the years. The perceived importance of Driglam Namzha is measured on a 3-point scale (1 = 'not important', 2 = 'important', and 3 = 'very important'). Similarly, the perceived changes in the observance of Driglam Namzha is measured using a 3-point scale with response options marked as 'getting weaker', 'stayed the same', and 'getting stronger'.	2	Exactly comparable		Consider "Very important" or "important" and perceives that its practice and observance is "Getting stronger"

Table 2 Domains, indicators, variables used for constructing GNH Index

Domain	Indicator	Indicator weight	Domain weight	Indicator description	No. of variables	Comparability with national GNH Index	Indicator value	Sufficiency threshold
Good Governance	Government performance	1/10		The perception of government performance in seven different areas such as creating jobs, reducing gap between rich and poor, providing education services, providing health services, fighting corruption, protecting natural environment, and preserving cultural traditions are assessed using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ('very poor') to 5 ('very good'). The indicator value ranges between 7 – 35 where higher value indicates better government performance.	7	Exactly comparable	7-35	≥28
	Discrimination <sup>12</sup>	1/10		The experience of discrimination based on gender, age, ethnicity, disability, religion, physique, language/accents, or other such forms is assessed.	8	Somewhat comparable	0-8	<0; not experienced any forms of discrimination
	Services <sup>13</sup>	2/5	1/9	Travelling time to the school (for day scholars) and confidence in getting employed are assessed. The confidence in getting employed is measured using 1-1-point scale from 0 ('not at all confident') to 10 ('very confident').	2	Not comparable		Travel time less than or equal to one hour to school and the confidence in getting employed is >5 on a 0-10-point scale
	Political participation <sup>14</sup>	2/5		The frequency of accessing information on what is going on in the country from various resources such as newspapers, TV, radio, internet, and friends or colleagues is assessed using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 ('never') to 5 ('daily'). The frequency of discussions on political issues with friends with they come together is assessed using a 3-point scale ranging from 'never' to 'occasionally' to 'frequently'.	6	Not comparable		Accessing information or discussing political issues with friends

<sup>12</sup> Proxy indicator for fundamental rights indicator used for computing the national GNH Index

<sup>13</sup> For the national GNH Index, the information used for constructing the Services indicator are access to primary health care service, access to adequate (both quality and quantity) drinking water, access to safe waste disposal services, and access to electricity from grid

<sup>14</sup> For the national GNH Index, the information used for constructing the Political participation indicator are people's attendance in local government meetings (called Zomdue in Dzongkha) and the intention to participate in the upcoming general election

**Table 2** Domains, indicators, variables used for constructing GNH Index

Domain	Indicator	Indicator weight	Domain weight	Indicator description	No. of variables	Comparability with national GNH Index	Indicator value	Sufficiency threshold
Community Vitality	Donations	3/10		Information of the amount of donations made in the form of cash or kind in the last 12 months is collected. Similarly, the number of days volunteered in the past 12 months is also collected.	5	Somewhat comparable		Donated at least 10% of income and volunteered at least three days in the past 12 months; or 20% of income and no voluntary activities, or no donation and at least 6 days of voluntary activities
	Community relationships	1/5	1/9	People's sense of belonging to their local community is assessed using a 3-point scale ranging from 'weak' to 'somewhat strong' to 'very strong'. Trust in people in general is assessed using a 11-point scale from 0 ('you can't be too careful') to 10 ('most people can be trusted').	2	Somewhat comparable		≥3 and ≥5
	Friendship & social support <sup>15</sup>	1/5		Social support and friendship in terms of whether they get along well with, like to spend time with, feel supported by, and being cared by friends are assessed using 'yes' or 'no' responses.	4	Not comparable	0-4	≥4
	Safety/ Harassment/ bullying	3/10		Experiences of being physically or mentally bullied by another student or someone of higher position in terms of things stolen, physically bullied by another student, physically bullied by staff, mentally bullied by another student, mentally bullied by staff, or injured by others.	6	Not comparable		No experienced harassment/ bullying

<sup>15</sup> This is a proxy indicator for family index in the national GNH survey. The family index in the national survey assess the quality and strength of family relationships. However, since students, especially those who are in boarding schools, spend significant amount of their time with friends, an alternative indicator to assess the quality of friendship and social support is deemed more important than the family index

Table 2 Domains, indicators, variables used for constructing GNH Index

Domain	Indicator	Indicator weight	Domain weight	Indicator description	No. of variables	Comparability with national GNH Index	Indicator value	Sufficiency threshold
Ecological Diversity	Ecological issues	1/10	1/9	Existence of environmental problems related to noise and air pollution and littering in the neighbourhood is assessed by asking whether these issues are 'major problem', 'moderate problem', or 'not a problem'.	3	Somewhat comparable		No problem <sup>16</sup> for noise and air pollution and 'No problem' or 'Moderate problem' with littering.
	Urbanisation issues	2/5		Existence of problem due to heavy traffic in the neighbourhood is assessed by asking whether it is a 'major problem', 'moderate problem', or 'no problem'.	1	Somewhat comparable		No problem <sup>16</sup> of heavy traffic.
	Resp. towards environment	1/10		Feeling of responsibility towards conservation of natural environment, 1 "Not at all responsible" to 4 "Highly responsible".	1	Exactly comparable	1-4	≥4
	Pro-environmental behaviours <sup>16</sup>	2/5		Displaying pro-environmental behaviours and habits such as switching off lights, turnoff tap, turnoff electrical appliances, segregate waste, and picking up waste whenever they see it was assessed using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 'never' to 5 'always'.	5	Not comparable		Do 'quite often' or more frequently of all the listed activities

<sup>16</sup> This is proxy for human-wildlife interaction indicator in the national GNH survey

**Table 2** Domains, indicators, variables used for constructing GNH Index

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Domain	Indicator	Indicator weight	Domain weight	Indicator description	No. of variables	Comparability with national GNH Index	Indicator value	Sufficiency threshold
Living Standards	Access to e-gadgets <sup>17</sup>	1/3	1/9	Information on ownership of smartphone, tablet, or computer, and access to the internet is used for constructing the Access to e-gadgets indicator.	4	Not comparable		Own any one of the smart phone, tablet, or computer and have access to the internet.
	Room adequacy	1/3		Information on room adequacy is assessed in terms of having a room of their own or a quiet place to study.	2	Not comparable		Have a room of their own or a quiet place to study.
	Household income	1/3	Adequacy of household income is assessed using the perceived comfortableness with their current household income.	1	Not comparable		Living comfortable or coping well with the current household income.	

<sup>17</sup> This is a proxy for assets indicator in the national GNH survey where it captured information on the ownership of household appliances, land, and livestock

### 3.2.4 GNH Index computation

Once the indicators are selected and sufficiency thresholds applied, headcount ratios – the proportion of youths who have attained sufficiency in each of these 33 GNH indicators – are computed. This process creates a profile for each person, showing in which of the 33 indicators the person has achieved sufficiency (Figure 4). Weights are assigned to each indicator. Adding up the weighted score of those indicators for which an individual attained sufficiency gives each person a weighted sufficiency score, showing the share of domains or indicators in which a person has achieved sufficiency. If a person has attained sufficiency in at least two-thirds of the domains or two-thirds (66%) of the weighted indicators, the person is considered '*happy*' in terms of the GNH Index. A person failing to achieve sufficiency in at least two-thirds of the weighted indicators is classified as '*not-yet-happy*'.

The single number GNH Index is then computed using two distinct components: 1) the head count ratio, and 2) the average sufficiency score. Therefore, the GNH Index is the sum of the headcount ratio ( $H^H$  – proportion of happy) and the proportion of not-yet-happy ( $H^U$ ) times the average sufficiency ( $A^U_{\text{suff}}$ ) among not-yet-happy. This is mathematically represented as:

$$\text{GNH} = H^H + (H^U \times A^U_{\text{suff}})$$

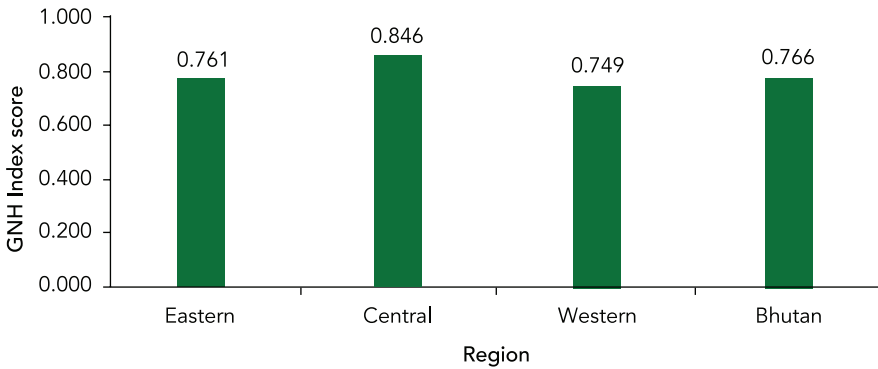
The proportion of youths who attained sufficiency in at least two-thirds or more across 33 weighted indicators is 45.0 percent. This is the headcount ratio of '*happy*' ( $H^H$ ) in the GNH Index computation formula presented above. The remaining 55.0 percent of youths have attained sufficiency in less than two-thirds across the 33 weighted indicators. This is the headcount ratio of '*not-yet-happy*' ( $H^U$ ) in the formula. The average sufficiency among those who are *not-yet-happy* is 57.5 percent. Substituting the formula with these numbers, we get the GNH Index score of 0.766 for youths in 2022 as shown below.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{GNH} &= \text{GNH} = H^H + (H^U \times A^U_{\text{suff}}) \\ \text{GNH} &= 0.450 + (0.551 \times 0.575) \\ \text{GNH} &= 0.766 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, the GNH Index score for youths is 0.766. The GNH Index values can range from 0 (the lowest score) to 1 (the highest score). By region,

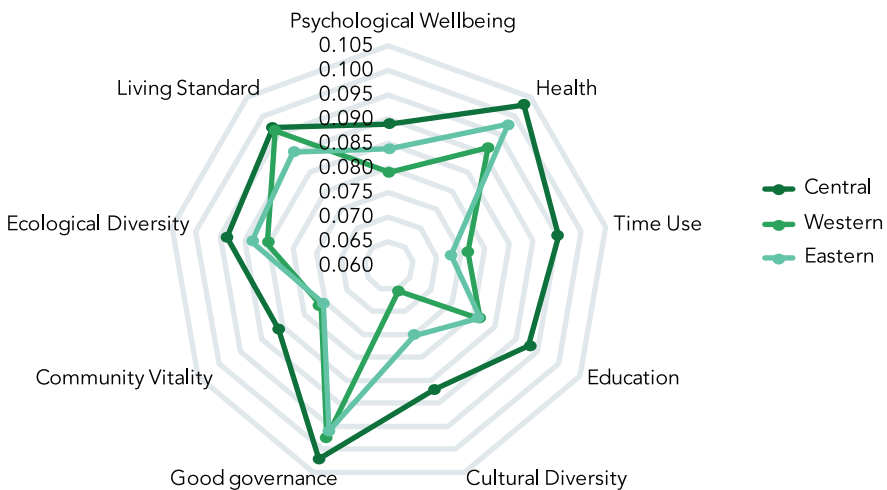
the GNH Index is the highest among youths residing in the Central region (0.846), followed by those residing in the Eastern region (0.761). It is lowest for those residing in the Western (0.749) parts of the country.

**Figure 1** GNH Index by region



The GNH Index score for males (0.796) is higher than females (0.739). At the domain level too, males score higher than females for all domains, although the intensity of male-female disparity differs across the domains. The male-female disparity at the domain level score is higher for cultural diversity and resilience (0.075 for males and 0.066 for females), psychological wellbeing (0.086 for males and 0.078 for females), and

**Figure 2** Domain level GNH Index by gender



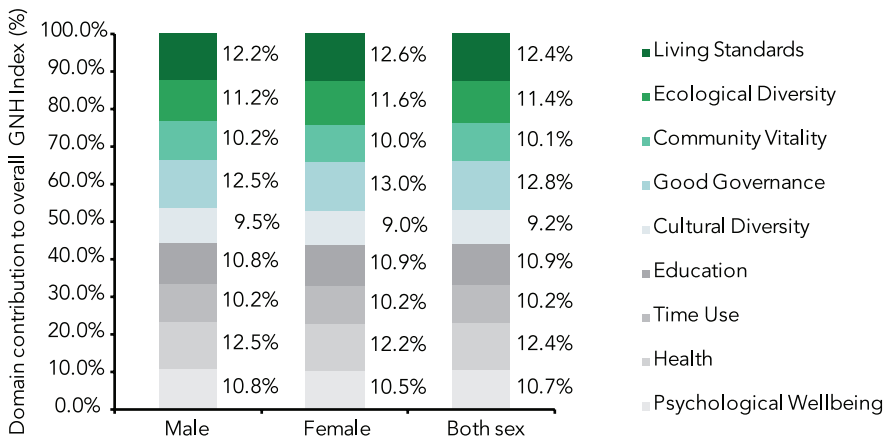


health domains (0.099 for males and 0.090 for females). The male-female differences are smaller for good governance (0.100 for males and 0.096 for females), ecological diversity (0.089 for males and 0.086 for females) and living standards (0.097 for males and 0.093 for females) domains (Figure 2).

In terms of domain contribution to the GNH Index, the good governance domain (12.8%) contributes the highest, followed by living standards and health domains with 12.4 percent each. On the other hand, cultural diversity (9.2%) contributes the least to the overall GNH Index, followed by community vitality (10.1%) and time use (10.2%). The domain contribution to the overall GNH Index disaggregated by gender is presented using the Figure 3.

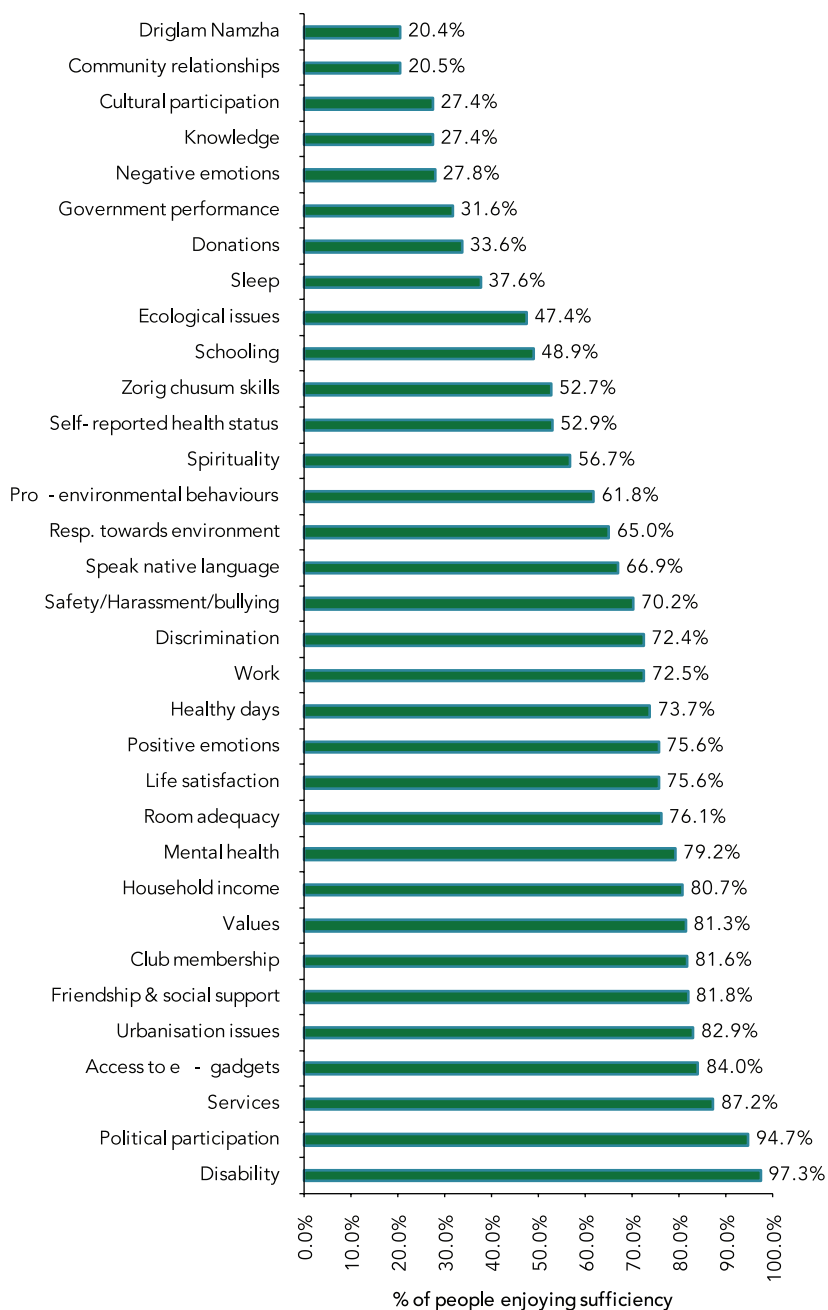
Gender difference is more pronounced for cultural diversity (9.5% for males against 9.0% for females) and good governance domains (12.5% for males against 13.0% for females). While the relative contributions from good governance, ecological diversity, and living standards domains are higher among females than males, the contributions from cultural diversity, psychological wellbeing, and health domains are higher among males than females. However, in terms of the absolute domain score, males outperform females in all the nine domains of GNH at the domain level.

**Figure 3** Domain contribution to overall GNH Index, 2022



The proportion of youths enjoying sufficiency in each of the 33 indicators is presented below in Figure 4. Over four-fifths (80%) of the youths enjoy sufficiency in income, values, club membership,

**Figure 4** Raw headcount ratio (% of youths enjoying sufficiency in each of the 33 indicators)



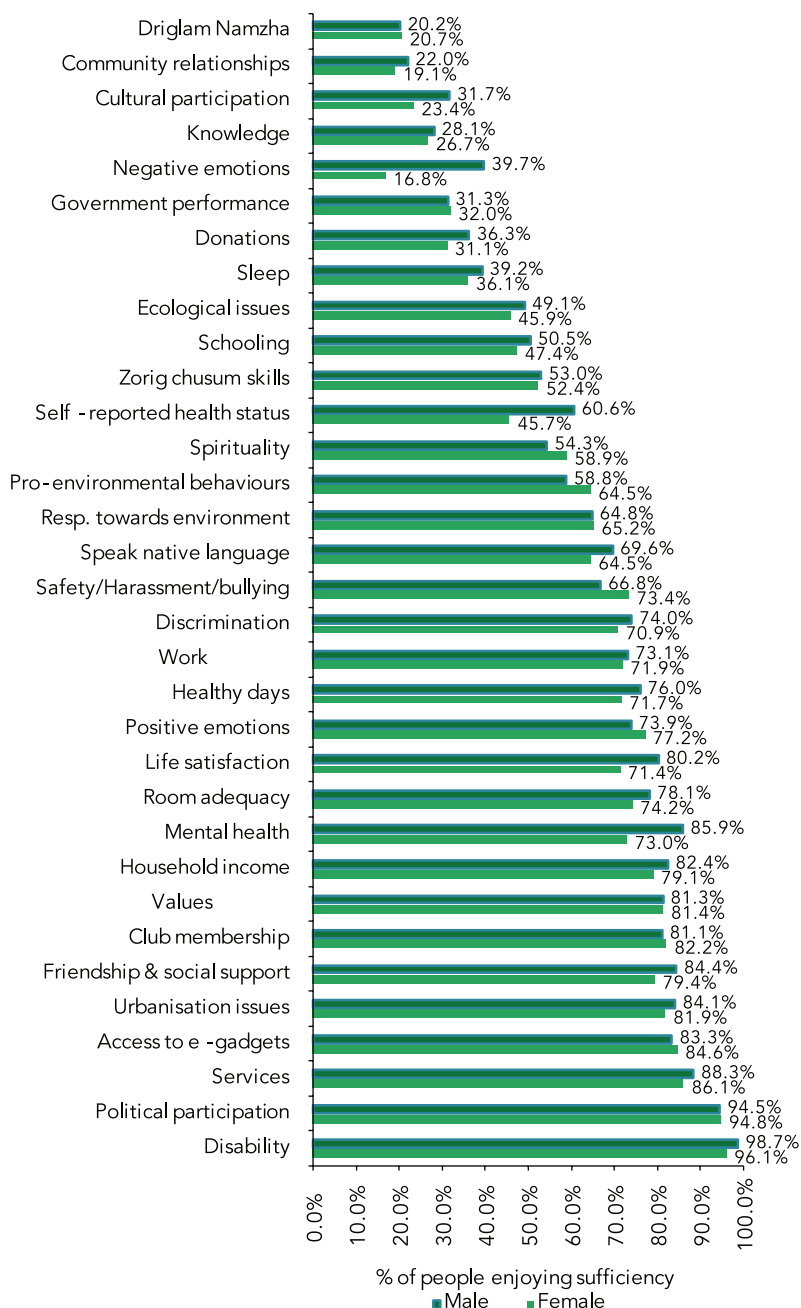
friendship and social support (a proxy indicator for family index in the national GNH Index), urbanisation issues, access to e-gadgets and internet connection (proxy for assets ownership), services, political participation, and disability indicators. On the other hand, less than one-third of the youths report to enjoying sufficiency in *Driglam Namzha* (20.4%), community relationships (20.5%), cultural participation (27.4%), knowledge (27.4%), negative emotions (27.8%), and government performance (31.6%) indicators.

Although there is no significant gender difference in the proportion of males and females enjoying sufficiency in the majority of the indicators (in 24 out of 33 indicators, the male-female difference is less than five percentage points), there are a few indicators with large gender disparity. For instance, gender difference in negative emotions indicator is 22.8 percentage points (39.7% of males enjoy sufficiency against only 16.8% of females). Similarly, a higher proportion of males enjoys sufficiency than females in self-reported health, mental health, life satisfaction, and cultural participation indicators (Figure 5). On the other hand, a higher proportion of females than males enjoys sufficiency in safety from harassment or bullying, pro-environmental behaviours, and spirituality indicators.

Besides presenting the GNH Index in the form of a mean score, another way of presenting the result of the GNH is to see the proportion of youths falling under different gradients of happiness. Based on the average sufficiency score across the 33 weighted indicators, the youths are grouped into four categories: deeply happy (average sufficiency between 77-100%), extensively happy (average sufficiency between 66-76%), narrowly happy (average sufficiency 50-65%), and unhappy (average sufficiency between 0-49%).

About one in ten youths are 'deeply happy', meaning that they enjoy sufficiency in at least 77 percent of the weighted indicators. On the other hand, about seven percent of the youths are 'unhappy', meaning that their sufficiency across 33 weighted indicators is less than 50 percent (Table 3).

**Figure 5** Raw headcount ratio (% of youths enjoying sufficiency in each of the 33 indicators), 2022

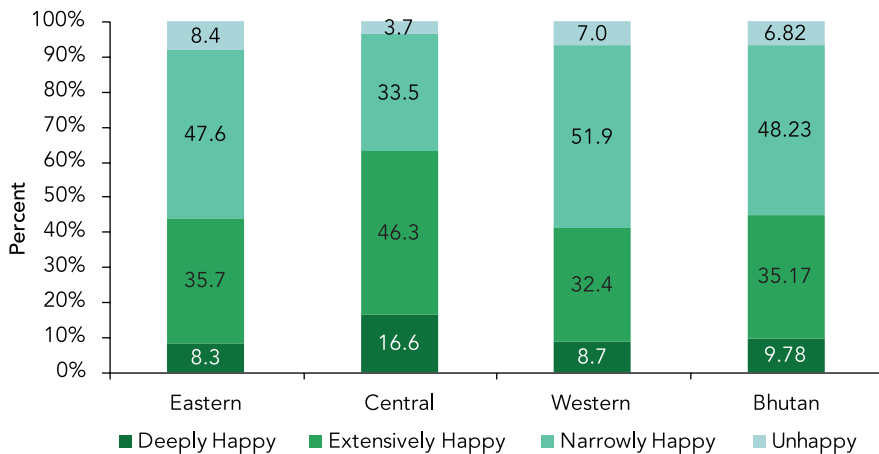


**Table 3** Categories of GNH, headcount, and average sufficiency

Happiness category	Definition of the group (sufficiency in)	Headcount (% of youths)	Average sufficiency across 33 indicators
Deeply Happy	77-100%	9.8%	81.6%
Extensively Happy	66-76%	35.2%	71.2%
Narrowly Happy	50-65%	48.2%	59.4%
Unhappy	0-49%	6.8%	44.5%

The proportion of those who are ‘deeply happy’ as well as ‘unhappy’ varies across the three regions. While 16.6 percent of those from the Central region are ‘deeply happy’, only 8.3 and 8.7 percent from the Eastern and Western regions, respectively, are ‘deeply happy’. On the other end of the happiness gradient continuum, the proportion of youths who are ‘unhappy’ from the Eastern (8.4%) and Western (7.0%) regions are almost twice more than those from the Central (3.7%) region.

**Figure 6** Proportion of youths’ happiness gradients by region



Among the males, 11.7 percent are ‘deeply happy’ while only 8.1 percent of the females are ‘deeply happy’. On the other hand, a slightly higher proportion of females (7.6%) are ‘unhappy’ as compared to their male counterparts (5.9%).

**Table 4** Proportion of youths in each happiness gradient by sex

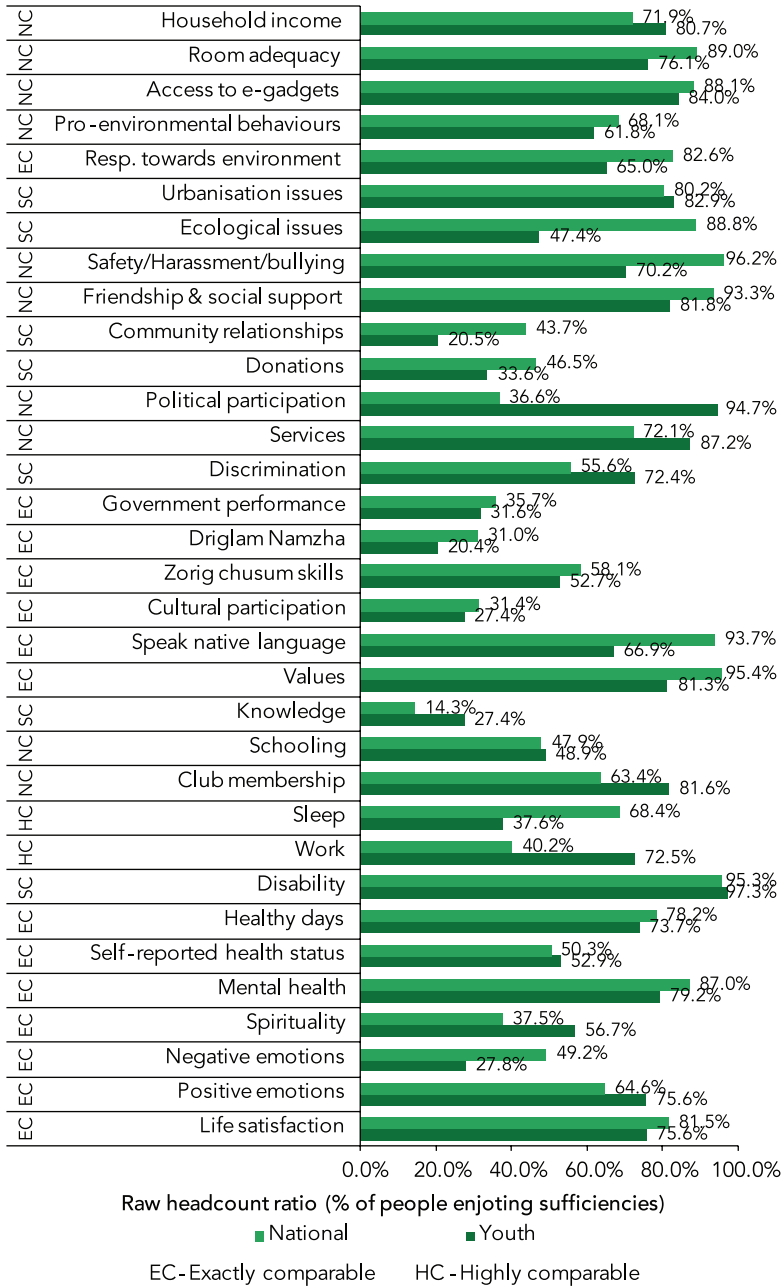
Sex	Deeply Happy	Extensively Happy	Narrowly Happy	Unhappy	Total
Male	11.7	40.0	42.4	5.9	100
Female	8.1	30.7	53.6	7.6	100
Both sex	9.8	35.2	48.2	6.8	100

### 3.2.5 Youth GNH Index vs the national GNH Index

The overall GNH Index score for youths (0.766) is slightly lower than the national GNH Index (0.781) of 2022. However, since only about half of the indicators used for the GNH Index computation are comparable between the national GNH Index and the youth GNH Index, it may not be conclusive to state that youths are worse off in terms of GNH than the general population. A more meaningful comparison between youths and the general population can be done at the indicator level, specifically focusing on the indicators that are either exactly or highly comparable between the two GNH Indices. The degree of comparability of indicators between the national level and youths is indicated by notations, where EC is exactly comparable, HC is highly comparable, SC is somewhat comparable, and NC is not comparable.

The headcount ratios of youths and general population across the 33 indicators are presented in Figure 7. In 13 of the 33 indicators, youths performed better than the national level headcount ratios. The headcount ratio for youths is over 10 percentage points higher than the national level headcount ratios in political participation, work, spirituality, literacy, fundamental rights indicators, services, knowledge, and positive emotions. However, in the remaining 20 indicators, the national level headcount ratios are higher than the youth headcount ratios. The difference in headcount ratios is over 20 percentage points for ecological issues, sleep, speaking native language, safety (harassment or bullying for youths), community relationships, and negative emotions.

**Figure 7** Raw headcount ratio (% of people enjoying sufficiency in each indicator)



### 3.3 Other Measures of Flourishing

Human flourishing is a broad concept. It is conceptualised and measured in multiple ways. While Bhutan uses GNH Index to measure how individuals and the society flourish, there are several other assessment frameworks and tools proposed in different parts of the world. Therefore, this section will present results of human flourishing assessed using alternative measures of wellbeing and flourishing proposed by different studies.

#### 3.3.1 Flourishing Scale (FS)

As presented in the introduction section, one of the measures of human flourishing is Flourishing Scale, which will be abbreviated as FS hereafter in this Report. A slightly modified version of the original 8-item FS assessment tool was used for assessing the flourishing of youths in Bhutan to complement the GNH Index. The response scale, which is originally a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) in the original FS assessment tool, was slightly modified to a 11-point response scale ranging from 0 (the lowest score) to 10 (the highest score) for this survey. This was done to have a comparable response scale with other measures of subjective and psychological wellbeing, such as subjective happiness, general life satisfaction, and Cantril Ladder of Life scale questions included in this questionnaire.

The FS measures a person's life in terms of self-perceived achievements in meaning and purpose in life, social relationships, being engaged and interested in daily activities, able to contribute to other's happiness, competency and capability in important activities, being good and living a good life, optimistic about future, and being respected. Considering the importance of autonomy, an additional single-item question that measures autonomy was added with the same response scale as described above. The 9-item flourishing measure demonstrated acceptable internal consistency reliability of the items ( $\alpha = 0.80$ ). All nine items load on a single factor with an eigenvalue of 2.72 and no other factors with eigenvalue above 1.0. Therefore, the FS score was computed by arithmetically averaging the scores of these nine items. The overall FS score, like its individual component score, ranges between zero and 10, with higher value indicating higher flourishing.

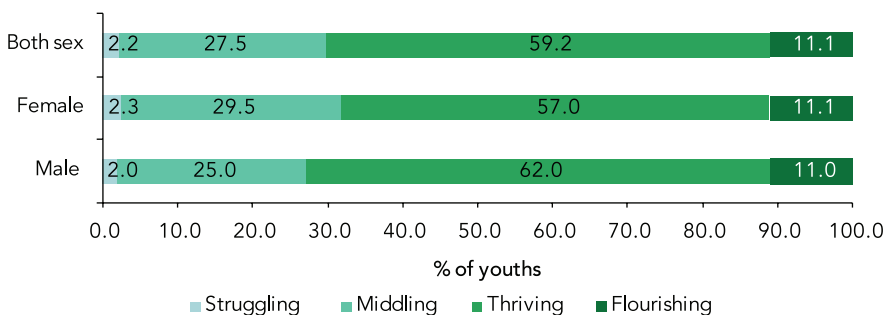


The overall mean FS score for youths is 7.5 which can be interpreted as, overall, youths in Bhutan are thriving. Males (7.6) and females (7.5) have almost identical overall mean flourishing score. Across the regions, those from the Central region report a slightly higher mean flourishing score at 7.7, followed by those from the Western region at 7.5. Youths residing in the Eastern region have a relatively low mean flourishing score at 7.3.

In order to see the distribution of youths across different levels of flourishing, they are grouped into four different categories of flourishing. These are struggling, middling, thriving, and flourishing, depending on their average FS score level (refer brief description of each category in Table 5). Over two-thirds (70.3%) of the youths are either 'thriving' (59.2%) or 'flourishing' (11.1%). On the other hand, a little less than one-third (29.7%) of the youths are either 'struggling' (2.2%) or 'middling' (27.5%).

Although nearly equal proportions of males and females fall in the 'struggling' and 'flourishing' categories, there is a slight difference in the proportions of males and females falling in the 'middling' and 'thriving' categories. For instance, a slightly higher proportion of males (62.0%) as compared to females (57.0%) are in the 'thriving' group. On the contrary, a higher proportion of females (29.5%) than males (25.0%) are in the 'middling' category. In the case of Flourishing Scale, the differences are considered not statistically significant.

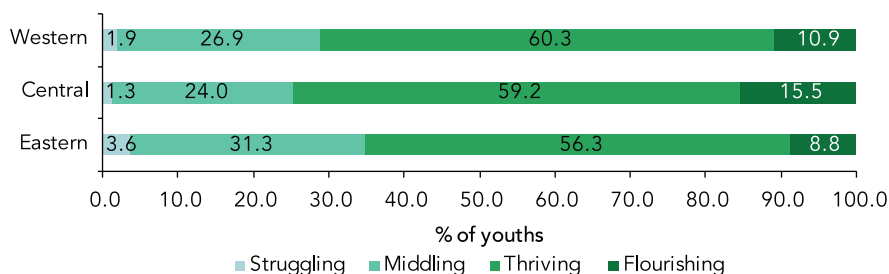
**Figure 8** Distribution of youths by flourishing level by gender



A higher proportion of youths from the Central (74.7%) and Western (71.2%) regions report to either 'thriving' or 'flourishing' as compared to those from the Eastern region (65.1%). The disparity in the proportion of youths falling in the two extreme categories of flourishing by region is quite striking. For

instance, almost twice the proportion of youths from the Central region (15.5%) are in the 'flourishing' category compared to those from the Eastern region (8.8%). On the other hand, almost three times the proportion of youths from the Eastern region (3.6%) are in the 'struggling' category as compared to those from the Central region (1.3%).

**Figure 9** Distribution of youths by flourishing level by region



**Table 5** Categories of FS and brief description

Mean FS score	Flourishing Category	Description
0-4.99	Struggling (Low)	In this category, individuals may experience challenges and difficulties that have a substantial negative impact on their overall flourishing. People who fall within this range might be facing various hardships, which could affect their physical, emotional, and mental states, limiting their ability to thrive in different aspects of life.
5-6.99	Middling (Medium)	The middling category represents a transitional phase where individuals experience a mix of positive and negative aspects in their lives. People falling into this range might be coping with ups and downs, making progress in some areas while facing challenges in others. This stage indicates that there is room for improvement in their overall flourishing.
7-8.99	Thriving (High)	Individuals in the thriving category are experiencing a notable sense of flourishing. They have achieved a state of relative contentment and happiness, and their lives are generally characterized by positivity and fulfilment. People within this range feel empowered to tackle challenges and actively pursue opportunities for growth and development of their lives.
9-10	Flourishing (Very High)	At the highest point of the scale, the flourishing category signifies exceptional well-being and a profound sense of fulfilment. People in this range feel deeply satisfied with their lives, experiencing high levels of happiness, purpose, and positive emotions. They have a strong sense to excel in various domains of life, contributing positively to their communities and society.

The mean score for each individual item ranges between 6.8 and 7.9. 'My social relationships are supportive and rewarding' is rated the highest with a mean score of 7.9, followed by 'autonomy in their daily lives' and 'I am a good person and live a good life', both rated with a mean score of 7.7 each. The lowest rated item is 'people respect me' with a mean rating of 6.8 (Table 6). The relatively low score in 'people respect me' could be attributed to Bhutanese humility, which is also a prevalent trait among the Asians.

**Table 6** Mean FS score and individual item score

Measures	National	Eastern	Central	Western	Male	Female
Purpose and meaning	7.3	7.1	7.7	7.2	7.4	7.2
Supportive relationships	7.9	8.0	8.0	7.9	8.0	7.9
Engaged	7.6	7.5	7.9	7.6	7.7	7.5
Contribute to others	7.5	7.3	7.7	7.5	7.4	7.5
Competence	7.6	7.4	7.8	7.6	7.7	7.5
Good person	7.7	7.3	7.9	7.7	7.7	7.6
Optimistic	7.6	7.6	7.8	7.6	7.6	7.6
Respected	6.8	6.5	7.2	6.9	6.8	6.9
Autonomy	7.7	7.3	7.6	7.8	7.8	7.5
Flourishing Scale score (9-item average)	7.5	7.3	7.7	7.5	7.6	7.5

By region, at the individual item level, youths from the Western region score higher than those from the Eastern region for all nine items except 'supportive social relationships', which was scored slightly higher by those from the Eastern region. The difference between the youths from the Eastern and Western regions is highest for 'autonomy'. The results, therefore, indicate that while the youths in the Eastern region enjoy higher supportive social relationships, those in the Western region enjoy higher degree of autonomy.

### 3.3.2 Cantril Ladder and Life Evaluation Wellbeing Index

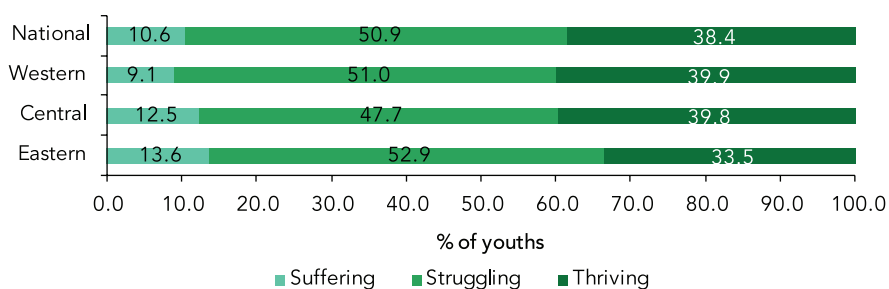
Another measure of wellbeing is Gallup's Life Evaluation Wellbeing Index. It is constructed using two items measuring current life situation and anticipated life situation in the next five years using Cantril Self-Anchoring Striving Scale numbered from 0-10. This scale asks respondents to imagine a ladder numbered from zero to 10, where zero represents the worst possible life and 10 being the

best possible life for them. They are then asked to indicate where they currently stand at this moment (current life evaluation) and where they anticipate they would stand in the next five years (future life evaluation). These two items are designed to measure current life satisfaction<sup>18</sup> and future life optimism.

The scores from these two items are then used for classifying people into three groups based on the Gallup's (2016) Life Evaluation Wellbeing Index<sup>19</sup> construction methodology. Youths who rated their current life situation as seven or higher and rated their anticipated life circumstances in the next five years as eight or higher are classified as 'thriving'. Those who rated their current life and the anticipated life in the next five years as four or lower are classified as 'suffering'. The rest who do not fall into these two groups are classified as 'struggling'.

About two in five youths (38.4%) are found to be 'thriving' based on the Life Evaluation Wellbeing Index measure. Half of the youths are found to be 'struggling' and the remaining 10.6 percent are 'suffering'. The results show no significant difference in the Life Evaluation Index between males and females. However, by region, a higher proportion of youths from the

**Figure 10** Distribution of youths by life evaluation by region



<sup>18</sup> Since this Report contains several measures of life satisfaction, it is important to clarify what each term means in this Report. Therefore, for this Report, the term 'life satisfaction' should refer to the life satisfaction indicator constructed using domain-specific life satisfaction variables for the computation of the GNH Index. The term 'general life satisfaction' should refer to the life satisfaction indicators assessed using the question 'all things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days'. The life satisfaction measured using Cantril Ladder of Life scales shall also be denoted by the terms 'current life satisfaction' and 'future life optimism'. The former is also sometimes referred to as Cantril Ladder of Life (present) and the latter as Cantril Ladder of Life (future).

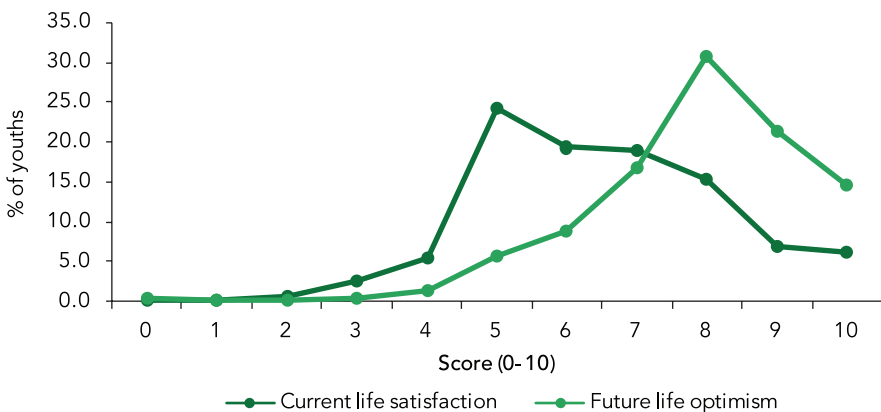
<sup>19</sup> Gallup. Understanding How Gallup Uses the Cantril Scale: Development of the "Thriving, Struggling, Suffering" categories, 2016. Available: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/122453/Understanding-Gallup-Uses-Cantril-Scale.aspx>

Eastern (13.6%) and Central (12.5%) regions are 'suffering' as compared to those from the Western region (9.1%). Conversely, a higher proportion of youths from the Western (39.9%) and Central (39.8%) regions are 'thriving' than those from the Eastern region (33.5%).

Besides using Cantril Scales to measure a single construct by combining the two scales, as discussed above, it is also presented as individual item measuring current life satisfaction and future life optimism both in the form of a mean score and a distribution along the 0-10-point scale. In terms of the mean score, the current life satisfaction score is 6.5 and future life optimism is 7.9. This indicates that the youths in Bhutan anticipate their life in the next five years to be comparatively better than what it is now.

In terms of the distribution along the 0-10-point scale, the distribution differs between the two measures. While the distribution for current life satisfaction peaks at '5', for future life optimism, it peaks at '8' (Figure 11). Overall, about two in three (66.7%) youths rated their current life above 5 on a 0-10-point scale. For future life optimism, 92 percent of the youths rated their life above 5. This result indicates that youths are optimistic about their future and expect their life circumstances to be much better than they currently are.

**Figure 11** Distribution of youths by Cantril Ladder of Life



### 3.3.3 Measures of subjective wellbeing (SWB)

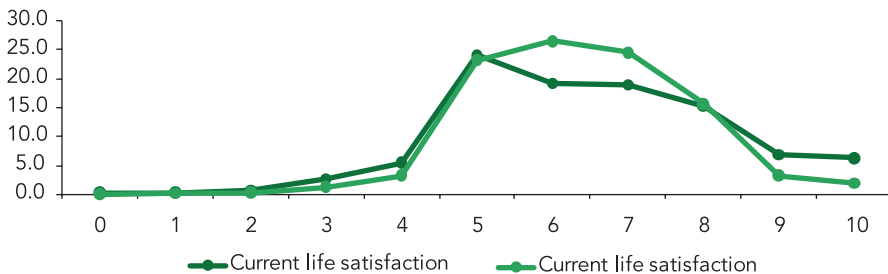
The single-item measures of happiness and life satisfaction are generally used as an assessment for subjective wellbeing (SWB) and by extension a measure for human flourishing and happiness. The single-item happiness scale in this survey is referred to as 'subjective happiness' and was assessed using the question '*Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are on a scale of 0 to 10?*'. Similarly, general life satisfaction was assessed using the question '*All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?*'. As in the case of subjective happiness, the responses for the general life satisfaction were rated using an 11-point response scale of 0-10, where 0 indicates not at all satisfied and 10 indicates very satisfied. In addition, a life domain satisfaction was also assessed, and the results are presented in the next section. Therefore, this section will present the results from the single-item measures of happiness and life satisfaction as discussed above.

In terms of the mean score, the subjective happiness score for youths is 7.3 and the general life satisfaction score is 7.1. For both subjective happiness and general life satisfaction, males reported a slightly higher mean score than females. The mean subjective happiness for males is 7.5 against 7.2 for females. Similarly, the general life satisfaction score for males is 7.2 against 6.9 for females. By region, both subjective happiness as well as general life satisfaction are reported higher by youths residing in the Central region than others. For instance, the general life satisfaction among those from the Central region is 7.2 against 7.1 and 6.9 among those from the Western and Eastern regions, respectively. Similarly, the subjective happiness score among those from the Central region is 7.5 against 7.3 each for the Western and Eastern regions.

In terms of the distribution of the youths across subjective happiness and general life satisfaction levels, the distribution pattern is almost similar (Figure 12). The distribution peaks at eight for both the measures, indicating that most youths report their subjective happiness and general life satisfaction at eight. About half (50.9%) of the youths rate their subjective happiness at eight or above. For general life satisfaction, 43.9 percent of youths rate their general life satisfaction at eight or above.

On the other hand, 4.1 percent of the youths rate their subjective happiness below five. Similarly, 5.6 percent of the youths rate their general life satisfaction below five on a 0-10-point scale.

**Figure 12** Distribution of youths by their level of SWB



### 3.3.4 Youth SWB compared with national SWB

The questionnaire on SWB was administered in both the national GNH survey conducted in 2022 as well as in the youth survey. Therefore, the results of SWB assessed using Life Evaluation Wellbeing Index, subjective happiness, and general life satisfaction can be compared between the youth and the general population (Table 7). The results show that current life satisfaction (Cantril Ladder of Life - present) for youth (mean = 6.5) and general population (mean = 6.4) is almost equal. However, in terms of the future life optimism, i.e., the expected ladder of life score in next five years, youths (mean = 7.9) scored relatively higher than the general population (mean = 7.3), indicating that youths are more optimistic about their life in the next five years than the general population.

In terms of the subjective happiness too, youths (mean = 7.3) report a slightly higher subjective happiness than the general population (mean = 6.9). However, both the youths and the general population seem to enjoy the same level of general life satisfaction, with each scoring 7.1. This result, i.e. the youth-general population disparity or rather the absence of it, is consistent with the findings of the current life satisfaction measured using Cantril Ladder of Life, although the absolute score is slightly higher for general life satisfaction as compared to current life satisfaction.

**Table 7** SWB score for youth and general population

SWB measures	Youth Survey 2023	National GNH Survey 2022
Current life satisfaction	6.5	6.4
Future life optimism	7.9	7.3
Subjective happiness	7.3	6.9
General life satisfaction	7.1	7.1

### 3.3.5 GNH, flourishing, and SWB measures compared

In order to see how the GNH Index, Flourishing Scales, and other subjective wellbeing indices compare with each other, a Pearson's pairwise correlation analysis was conducted (Table 8). The results indicate that the GNH Index score is positively correlated with other measures of flourishing and wellbeing such as Flourishing Scale ( $r = 0.35$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), subjective happiness ( $r = 0.29$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), general life satisfaction ( $r = 0.28$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and Cantril Ladder of Life (present) ( $r = 0.19$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 8** Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix for different measures of flourishing and wellbeing (pairwise correlation coefficients)

	N	Mean	SD	CV	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1) GNH Index	2,397	0.766	0.22	0.28	1				
(2) Flourishing Scale	2,397	7.5	1.19	0.16	0.35*	1			
(3) Subjective happiness	2,397	7.3	1.73	0.24	0.29*	0.46*	1		
(4) General life satisfaction	2,396	7.1	1.74	0.25	0.28*	0.42*	0.61*	1	
(5) Cantril Ladder of Life	2,397	6.5	1.78	0.27	0.19*	0.37*	0.35*	0.35*	1

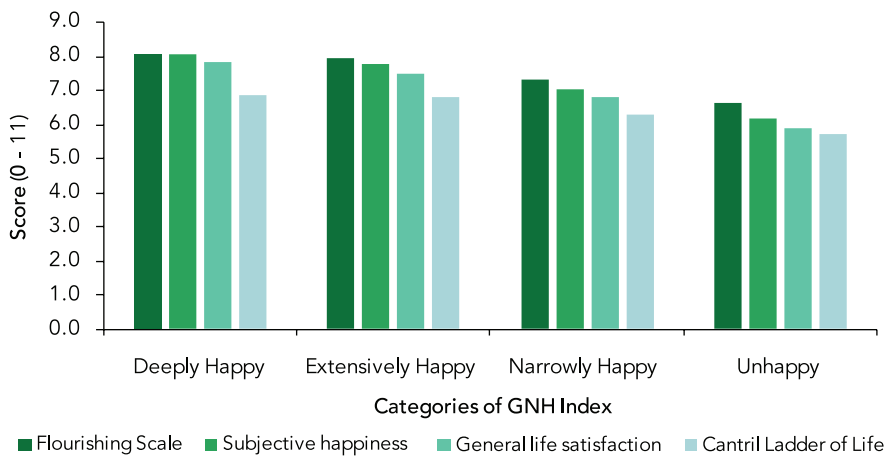
$p < 0.01$

The other method of assessing how two or more measures relate to each other and assess their validity is through assessing their convergent or divergent validities. Since GNH Index, Flourishing Scale, and other SWB indicators try to measure wellbeing and happiness in general, they should converge, meaning a higher value in one measure should generally correspond to a higher value in another measure. When the mean score of Flourishing Scale, subjective happiness, general life satisfaction, and Cantril Ladder of Life is checked against the different levels of GNH Index, the results show convergence. For instance, as shown in Figure 13, a higher level of GNH is associated with a higher mean score for all four measures of



wellbeing and happiness. For all four measures, the mean score is highest among those who are 'deeply happy', followed by 'extensively happy', and 'narrowly happy'. The mean score is lowest among those who are GNH 'unhappy'. This result once again confirms the positive correlation between the different measures of flourishing, wellbeing, and happiness.

**Figure 13** Mean flourishing and wellbeing score by GNH category



### 3.4 Life of a youth

Besides the indicators used for constructing the GNH Index, the questionnaire contains other indicators used from assessing different aspects of a youth's life, such as school environment, personal and social values, health and nutrition, access to material resources, education, learning and skills, etc. This section presents the findings in these domains.

#### 3.4.1 Social, community, and physical environment

Information about both the physical and social environment in which the children currently reside are assessed to understand the type of environment in which the youths are currently situated. Specifically, it covers areas such as friendship and social support, trust and belongingness, discrimination and bullying, exposure to pollutants, etc.

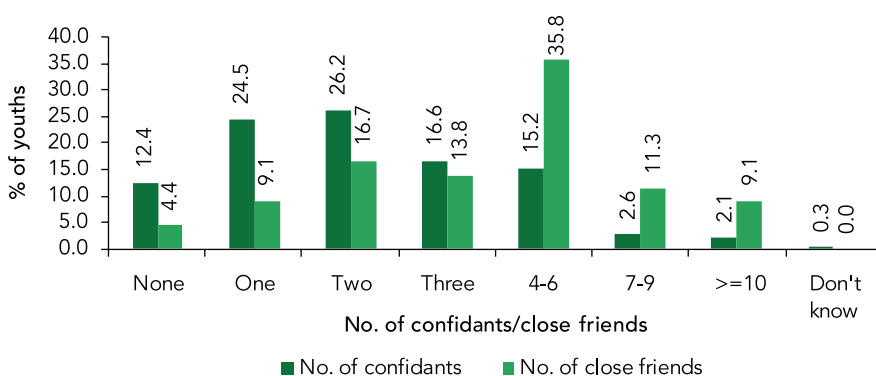
##### Friendship and social support

People's perception of safety and security is largely influenced by the availability of social safety nets. To assess the social connectedness or

social isolation, youths are asked to report the number of close friends they have and the number of people with whom they can discuss their intimate and personal matters.

The median number of close friends reported by youths is four (mean = 4.7). Males report a slightly higher median number of close friends than females (5 for males against 3 for females). In terms of the distribution, a little over two-thirds (69.9%) of the total youths report to having more than two close friends and 16.7 percent report to having two close friends (Figure 14). Conversely, 4.4 percent of youths report to not having any close friends, indicating that they are currently socially isolated. In addition, another 9.1 percent report to having only one close friend, indicating that they are just one friend away from being socially isolated.

**Figure 14** Distribution of youths by no. of confidants and close friends



In terms of the number of people with whom youths can discuss intimate and personal matters (confidants), 87.6 percent of the youths report that they have at least a person with whom they can discuss their intimate and personal matters. On the other hand, 12.4 percent report that they do not have anyone with whom they can discuss intimate and personal matters indicating social isolation. However, about one-fourth (24.5%) are just one confidant away from being socially isolated, meaning that they currently have just one confidant.

Those who report availability of more people with whom they can discuss intimate and personal matters also report, on average, a higher number of

close friends (Table 9). This result indicates that not all close friends can be confidants. For instance, those who report to having no confidant report to having two close friends (median).

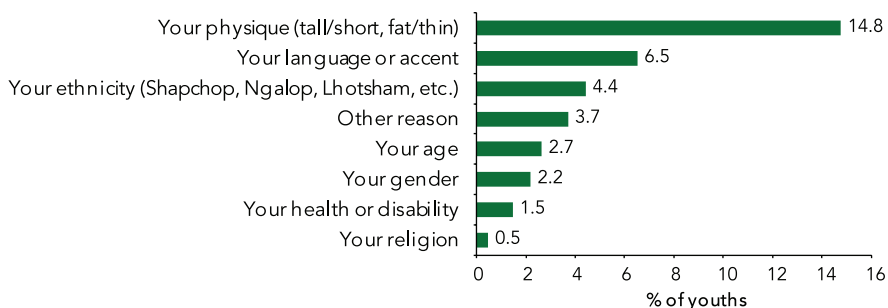
**Table 9** No. of close friend by no. of people with whom they can discuss intimate and personal matters

No. of people with whom they can discuss intimate and personal matters	No. of close friends (mean)	No. of close friends (median)
None	3.3	2
One	3.7	3
Two	4.3	4
Three	5.3	5
4-6	5.7	5
7-9	6.9	7
10 or more	15.7	10
Don't know	3.7	3
Total	4.7	4

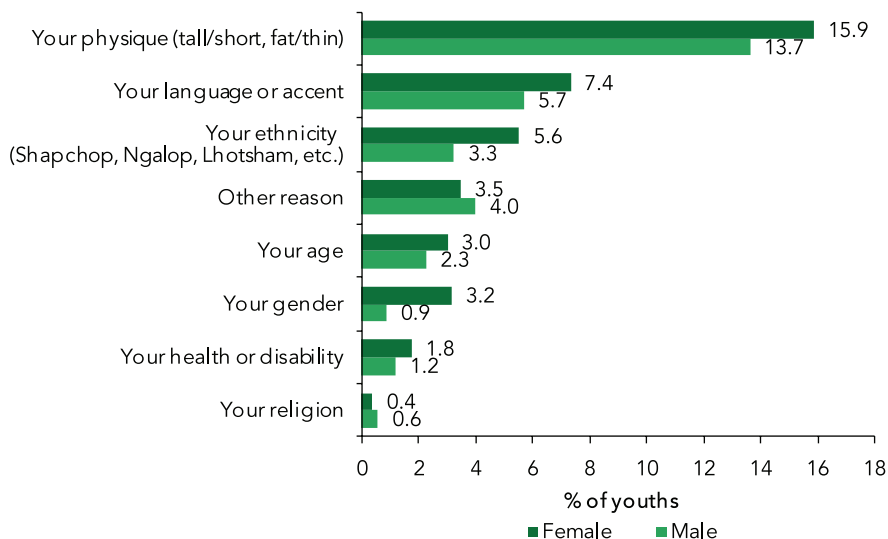
### Discrimination and bullying

Any form of discrimination and bullying can have a serious negative implication on the cognitive and learning outcomes of youths. Therefore, any form of bullying and discrimination should be prevented in schools and institutes. When asked whether they are treated differently, in a negative way, for various reasons in the past 12 months, 72.7% of the youths report not experiencing any forms of discrimination. However, a little over a quarter of youths (27.4%) report to having faced some form of discrimination such as discrimination based on one's gender, age, ethnicity, health condition, religion, physique, or language or accent.

The most prevalent form of discrimination seems to be based on one's physique, such as being too tall or short, or too fat or thin, etc. About 15 percent of youths report that they were treated differently because of their physique, which is followed by their language or accent (6.5%), and ethnicity (4.4%).

**Figure 15** % of youths who reported facing discrimination

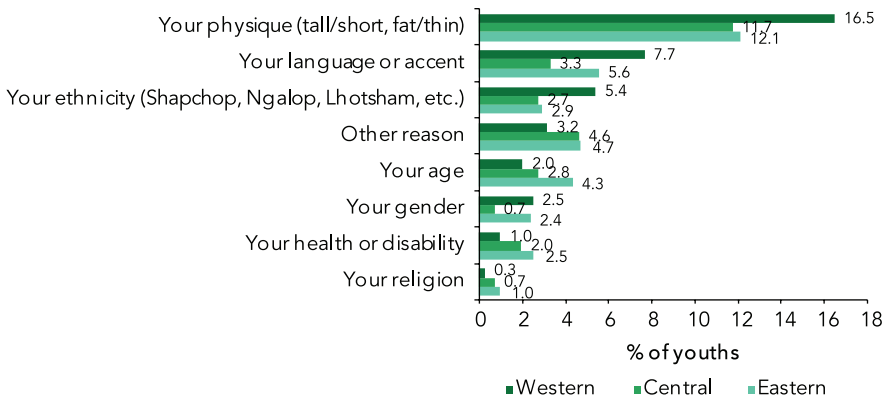
Treating differently in a negative way is more pervasive among females compared to males, except treating differently based on religion and other reasons (Figure 16). For instance, treating differently due to physique is reported by 15.9 percent of the females as against 13.7 percent of males.

**Figure 16** % of youths who reported facing discrimination by gender

By area of residence, treating differently in a negative way due to physique, language or accent, and ethnicity is more pervasive among youths in the Western region as compared to others (Figure 17).

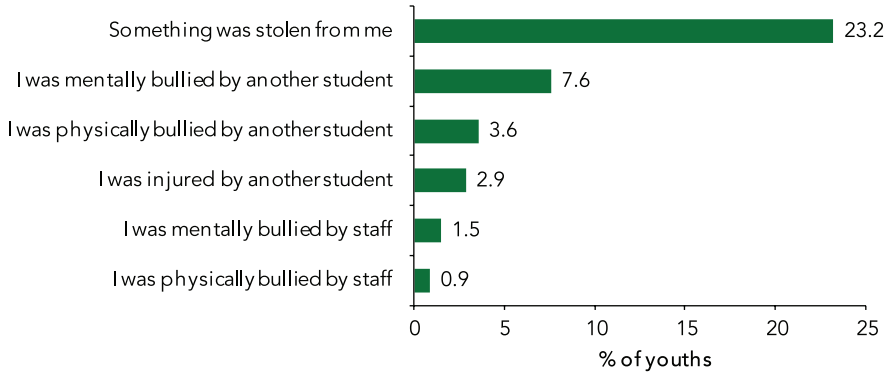
For instance, the prevalence of reporting of treating differently due to physique is 16.5 percent in the Western region as compared to 11.7 and 12.1 percent in the Central and Eastern regions, respectively.

**Figure 17** % of youths who reported facing discrimination by region

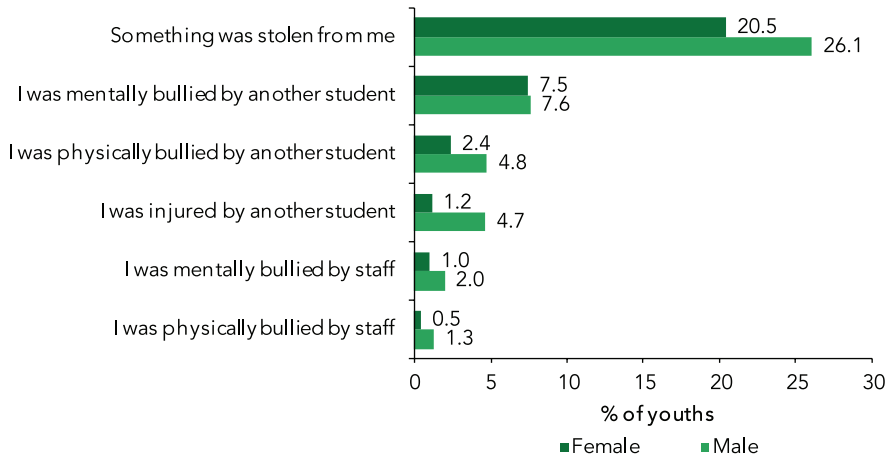


Like discrimination, bullying can be perpetrated in various forms such as physically or mentally, including having things stolen which is considered as another form of bullying. It is revealed that 70.2 percent of youths did not experience any form of bullying while the remaining 29.8 percent experienced some form of bullying in school. By gender, a relatively higher proportion of males (33.2%) reported experiencing bullying compared to females (26.6%). By region, a slightly higher proportion of youths from the Central (35.0%) and Eastern (33.8%) regions reported being bullied as compared to those from the Western (27.2%) region. The prevalence of bullying seems to be slightly higher among the boarder students (31.1%) compared to day-scholar students (27.5%).

By type of bullying, the most common form of bullying is getting something stolen (reported by 23.2% of the youths), followed by being mentally bullied by another student (7.6%), and physically bullied by another student (3.6%). Getting injured by another student is reported by 2.9 percent of the youths. Mental and physical bullying by staff are reported by 1.5 percent and 0.9 percent, respectively.

**Figure 18** % of youths who reported being bullied

Bullying is more prevalent among males than females irrespective of the types of bullying (Figure 19). For instance, although the prevalence is low, the likelihood of experiencing physical bullying by another student is twice more among males (4.8%) as compared to females (2.4%). Similarly, getting injured by another students is almost four time higher among the males (4.7%) compared to females (1.2%).

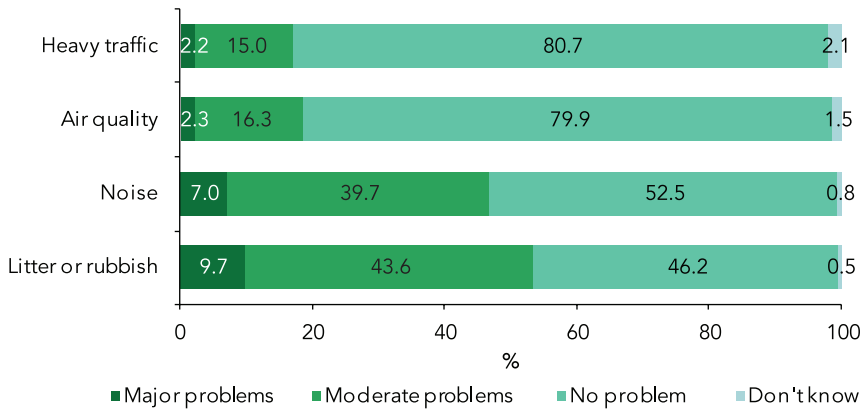
**Figure 19** % of youths who reported being bullied by gender

### Exposure to pollution

Exposure to undesirable physical environmental conditions can cause serious health and safety issues for children. When asked about various

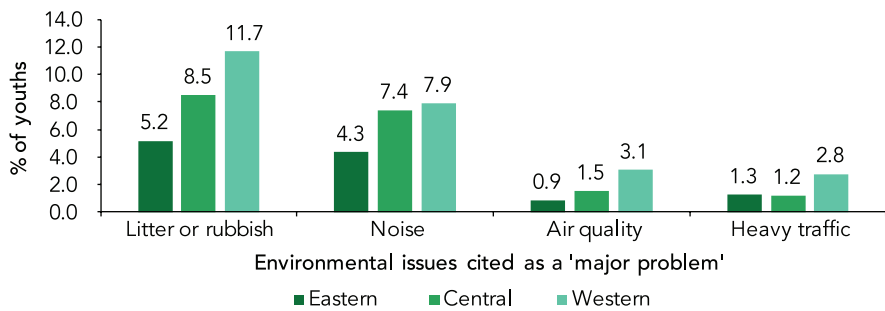
forms of environmental issues faced in their neighbourhood (Figure 20), a relatively higher proportion of youths report litter and noise pollutions as issues in their locality. Littering and noise pollutions as 'major problem' in their locality are reported by 9.7 percent and 7.0 percent of youths, respectively.

**Figure 20** Environmental issues faced in the neighbourhood



By region, a higher proportion of youths from the Western region reported all four environmental issues as a 'major problem' in their locality as compared to those from the Central and Eastern regions (Figure 21). This indicates that youths in the Western region are more exposed to undesirable environmental conditions compared to those in the Central and Eastern regions.

**Figure 21** Environmental issues rated as 'major problem' by region

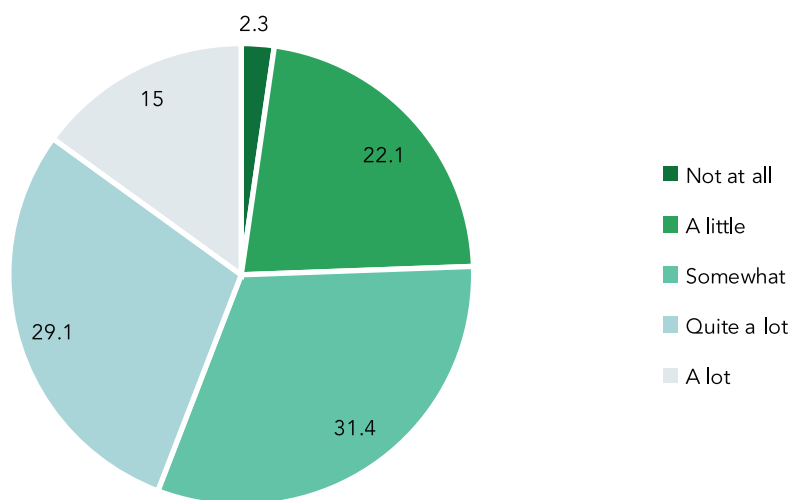


### Connection to local community and school, and trust in people

To assess the degree of youths' connectedness to their community and school, they were asked to report their sense of belongingness to their community and school. In terms of the sense of belonging to their local community (usual place of residence), more than half of the youths (53.3%) mention having a 'somewhat strong' sense of belonging and 36.1 percent report to 'very strong' sense of belonging to their local community. Only about 6.6% mention 'weak' sense of belonging while the remaining 4.1% report that they cannot assess their degree of sense of belonging to their local community.

A strong sense of belongingness or connection towards ones' school is reported by 15.0 percent of the youths. Additionally, 29.1 percent also report to quite a strong sense of belongingness to their school. On the other hand, about quarter of the youths (24.5%) report that their sense of belongingness to their school is either very 'little' or 'not at all' (Figure 22).

**Figure 22** Distribution of youths by degree of belonging to school



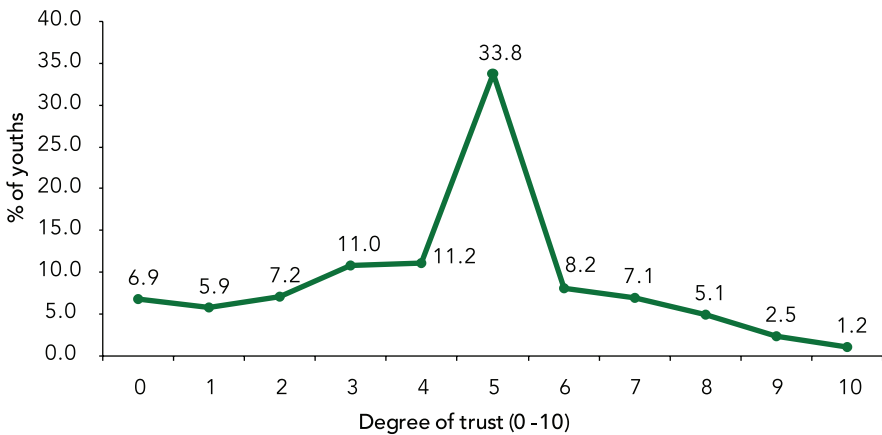
The degree of connectedness to school (those reporting 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' of belongingness to one's school) does not vary much by gender (44.4% of males against 43.7% of females) and region (44.9% of those from the Eastern, 46.6% from Central, and 43.2% from the Western). However, there is a marked



difference in the sense of belongingness to one's school by type of student. For instance, over half (51.1%) of the day-scholars report to a high connectedness to their school (report 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' of belongingness to school) while only 40.4 percent of the boarder students report the same.

The youth's degree of trust in people in general was assessed using an 11-point response scale number from zero to 10 with higher value indicating greater trust. The mean trust score is 4.4, which indicates low trust in people in general by youths. Generally, males (mean 4.5) have a slightly higher trust in people than females (mean 4.3). In terms of the distribution of youths along the 0-10 degree of trust continuum, about one-third (33.8%) rate the trust at five while 42.1 percent of youths rate the trust level below five.

**Figure 23** Distribution of youths by degree of trust in people in general



### 3.4.2 Physical and mental health, and nutrition

This subsection includes results on youths' health status and dietary intake. Health includes both physical health and mental health, including disability and activity limitations.

#### Self-rated health status

Self-reported health status formed the core in understanding the health condition among the youths. Over nine in 10 youths (92.0%) report their overall health status as either 'good', 'very good', or 'excellent'. The remaining eight percent report their health as either 'fair' or 'poor'.

A higher proportion of males (60,6%) report their health as 'very good' or 'excellent' compared to females (45.8%). On the other hand, females (10.3%) who report their health as 'fair' or 'poor' are about twice more than males (5.4%).

Having very good health is mostly perceived by youths from the Eastern (60.8% report their health as either 'very good' or 'excellent') and Central (58.0%) regions as compared to those from the Western region (48.9%).

**Figure 24** Distribution of youths by self-rated health status and region



### Mental health status

In order to assess the mental health conditions of people, a commonly used mental health assessment tool called general health questionnaire (GHQ-12), consisting of 12 items, was used. A composite mental health index was constructed using these 12 items after testing for internal consistency reliability of each item. The internal consistency reliability of items, when tested using Cronbach's alpha, showed acceptable level of reliability (Cronbach's alpha score = 0.76). Generally, an alpha value of 0.70 or higher is considered as an acceptable value.

The mental health index revealed that 79.2 percent of the youths enjoy 'normal mental wellbeing'<sup>20</sup>. A total of 6.5 percent of youths are found to

<sup>20</sup> The score ranges between 0-36. A score of 15 or less is considered as "normal mental wellbeing", 16-20 is considered as having "some distress" and a score above 20 is considered as having "severe mental distress".

be suffering from 'severe psychological distress' and the remaining 14.3 percent are suffering from some distress.

By sex, a higher proportion of males (85.9%) enjoy normal mental wellbeing as compared to females (73.0%). On the other hand, comparatively higher proportion of females (8.7%) are suffering from severe psychological distress as compared to males (4.0%).

**Table 10** Distribution of population by level of mental wellbeing by sex

	Severe psychological distress	Some distress	Normal mental wellbeing	Total
Male	4.0	10.1	85.9	100
Female	8.7	18.3	73.0	100
Both sex	6.5	14.3	79.2	100

### Healthy days

Healthy days is the number of days people enjoy good health over a specified period. Healthy days was calculated by taking into consideration the number of healthy days experienced in the past 30 days in terms of physical as well as mental health. The average number of healthy days in the past 30 days was 26.4 days. Males (27.0 days) report a slightly higher number of healthy days than their female counterparts (25.8 days).

Of those who reported suffering from physical or mental ill health in the past 30 days preceding the survey, 52.3 percent report activity restriction ranging from 1 to 30 days, while the remaining 47.7 percent report no activity restriction due to ill health. The average number of days lost to poor physical or mental ill health in the month preceding the survey among those who reported suffering from ill health is 1.9 days. Males (1.6 days) lost a slightly lower number of days to ill health in a month than female counterparts (2.2 days).

### Disability and activity limitations

To assess the prevalence of long-term health problems or disability that limits their normal daily activities, youths were asked to report about any long-term health condition that restricts their normal daily activities. About three percent of the youths report to suffering from a long-term health problems or disability that limits their normal daily activities 'a lot' and additional 10.3 percent report that their health condition limits their normal daily activities 'a little'.

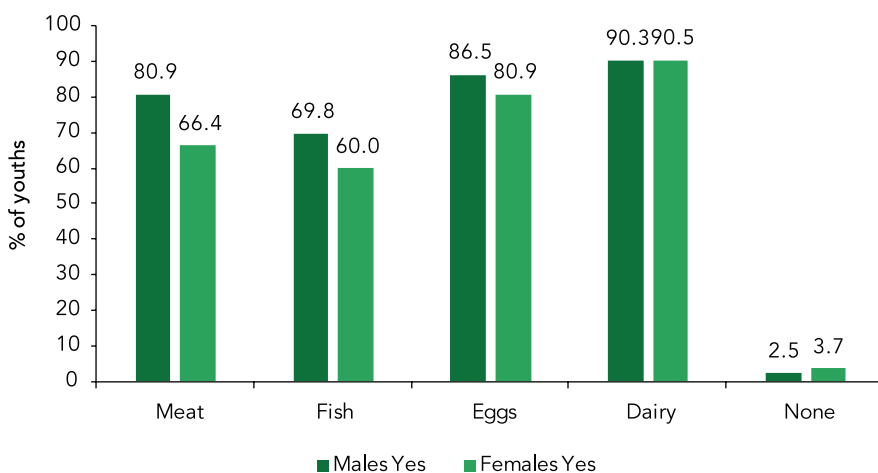
In comparison to male (1.9%), a higher proportion of females (3.9%) report to having disability impacting their normal daily activities 'a lot'. Similarly, a higher proportion of females (11.6%) report to having disability impacting their normal daily activities 'a little' than male counterparts (8.8%).

### Dietary intake

One of the most important sources of a healthy body is a healthy diet and the study revealed that 57.1 percent of youths take all four protein rich diets of dairy products, eggs, meat, and fish. By individual diets, most report consuming dairy products (90.3%), followed by eggs (83.5%), meat (73.3%) and fish (64.5%).

Females are less likely to consume meat and fish as compared to their male counterparts. For instance, the data revealed that only 66.4 percent of females report meat as part of their current diet as compared to 80.9 percent of males. Similarly, 60 percent of females report fish as a part of their current diet against 69.8 percent for males (Figure 25).

**Figure 25** Distribution of youths by type of current diet



### 3.4.3 Values, culture, spirituality, and emotional experience

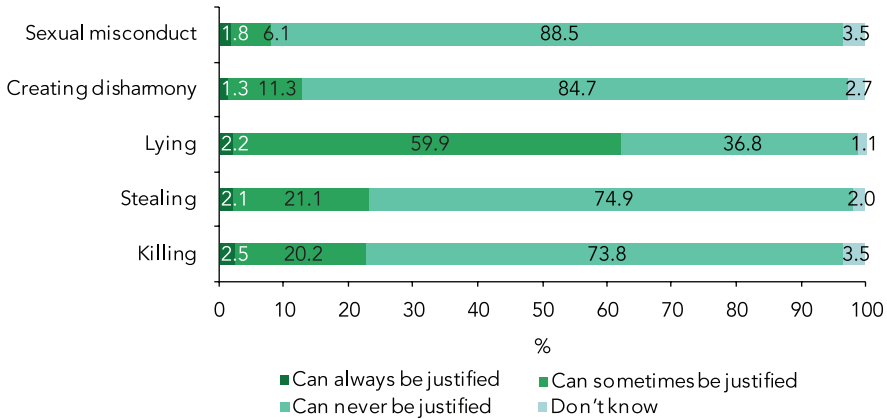
This subsection includes indicators related to language and language proficiency, ascription to core social and environmental values and behaviours, emotional experience, and spiritual practices.

### Core social values and behaviours

Core values were assessed using two distinct sets of values: one set drawn from traditional Bhutanese belief systems and another set drawn from conventional values system. For both sets of values systems, respondents were asked if they think that certain actions can be justified or not using a slightly different response scales for the two different sets.

The first set contains actions such as killing, stealing, lying, creating disharmony among friends and family, and sexual misconduct. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they think that these actions can 'never be justified', 'sometimes be justified', or 'always be justified'. About three-fourths of the respondents report that killing (73.8%), stealing (74.9%), creating disharmony (84.7%), and committing sexual misconduct (88.5%) can never be justified. However, only 36.8 percent of respondents believe that lying can never be justified and 59.9 percent believe that it can sometimes be justified.

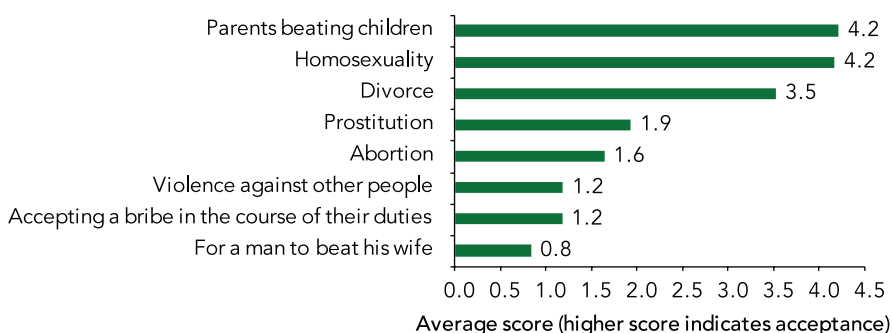
**Figure 26** Distribution of respondents by whether they think these actions can be justified or not



Core values were also assessed by asking whether they think that it is justifiable or not for actions such as accepting bribes, homosexuality, prostitution, abortion, divorce, violence against women, violence against children, and violence against people. Respondents were asked to rate their level of acceptance of these actions using an 11-point response scale, where 0 indicates that the particular action is never justifiable and 10 indicating that the particular action is completely or always justifiable.

As shown in Figure 27, youths indicate a relatively higher acceptance of parents beating their children and homosexuality, followed by divorce. On the other hand, youths exhibit a very low acceptance for violence against women, bribery, and violence against other people.

**Figure 27** Acceptance level (mean) for each of the actions



In addition, the perception towards traditional Bhutanese code of etiquette and conduct (*Driglam Namzha*) was also assessed to find out the importance youths attach to such time-tested social norms.

The survey asked people about the perceived importance youths attach to traditional Bhutanese code of etiquette and conduct (*Driglam Namzha*), and the perceived change in observance and practice of it during the last few years. Regarding the perceived importance, a majority (87.3%) report that it is 'very important'. A slightly higher proportion of those from Central (91.8%) and Eastern (90.6%) regions regard *Driglam Namzha* as 'very important' than those from the Western region (85.1%).

In terms of perceived change in the observance and practice of *Driglam Namzha*, three in five youths (60.9%) believe that it is getting weaker over the last few years. Only 18.3 percent of the youths believe that the observance and practice of *Driglam Namzha* is getting stronger.

### Pro-environmental values and behaviour

Bhutan has always played a central role in conserving its rich natural environment in pursuit of Gross National Happiness. Every citizen of Bhutan is responsible for the protection of the rich natural environment and biodiversity of the country. Therefore, to measure the degree of importance

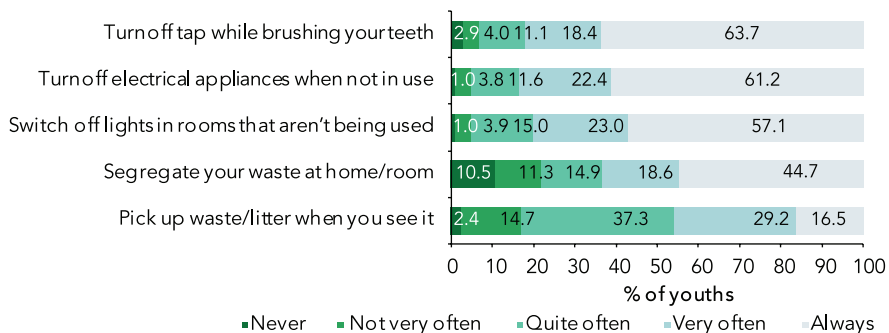
youths attach to the environment, their pro-environmental beliefs and behaviours were assessed.

The belief that 'nature is the domain of spirits and deities' is held by a large majority of youths with 79.4 percent either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' to the statement, indicating a high prevalence of pro-environmental beliefs among the youths. Of the remaining, 9.0 percent disagreed that 'nature is the domain of spirits and deities' and 9.8 percent neither agreed nor disagreed to the statement.

Another indicator used to assess the prevalence of pro-environmental beliefs among youths is their sense of responsibility for conserving the natural environment. About two-thirds (65.1%) report that they feel 'highly responsible' towards the protection and conservation of the natural environment with an additional 23.8 percent of youths reporting being 'somewhat responsible' for environmental conservation.

Pro-environmental behaviours of youths were also assessed using their behaviours and practices related to energy and environmental conservation during the course of their daily lives (Figure 30). Over half (57.1%) of the youths report that they 'always' switch off the lights when not using it, turn off electric appliances when not in use' (61.2%), and 'turn off water taps when brushing' (63.7%). When it concerns the management of solid wastes, only 44.7 percent report that they 'always' segregate their wastes. Habits like picking up litter whenever they see it around is reported only by 16.5 percent of the youths.

**Figure 28** % of youths reporting pro-environmental behaviours



## Spirituality

Under the spirituality section, respondents were asked a series of questions related to spiritual practices as well as their perception of the level of spirituality.

About 80 percent of youths report that they are either 'moderately' or 'very' spiritual. However, when it comes to actual spiritual practices, such as reciting prayer, practising meditation, or consideration of karma, the figures vary largely. As regards reciting prayers, 67.9 percent report that they recite prayers at least once a day or more frequently. However, there is also a substantial proportion of people who report to not praying regularly. For instance, 11.8% report to praying only on certain occasions and 2.4% report to not praying at all.

Meditation is reportedly being practised at least once a day or more frequently by 39.9 percent, while about one-fourth of youths (23.2%) report that they never practise meditation.

Most youths also seem to be conscious of their actions and their consequences. When asked how often they consider karma in the course of their daily life, 81.7 percent report that they consider it either 'occasionally' or 'regularly' during the course of their daily life.

## Emotional experience

People were asked to self-report the frequency of experience of 11 different emotions during the past four weeks preceding the survey. The list contains five positive emotions and six negative emotions. The five positive emotions are calmness, compassion, forgiveness, contentment, and generosity. The negative emotions include anger, selfishness, jealousy, fear, worry, and sadness. The distributions of people by frequency of experience of different emotions are presented in Table 11.

Among the five positive emotions, 94.4 percent of people report feeling of compassion with varying frequency from 'once or twice a month' to 'few times a day' during the month preceding the survey. The second mostly reported positive emotional experience is the feeling of generosity (93.4%), followed by feeling of forgiveness (89.4%), contentment (88.3%), and calmness (87.2%).



Of the six negative emotions, worry is the most commonly experienced emotion followed by anger, fear, and sadness. Experiencing worry with varying frequency from 'once or twice a month' to 'few times a day' during the month preceding the survey is reported by 90.2 percent, which is closely followed by anger (89.9%), fear (78.8%), and sadness (72.1%). On the other hand, jealousy and selfishness are the negative emotions experienced by a relatively lower proportion of youths as compared to other negative emotions. Experiencing selfishness 'once or twice a month' to 'few times a day' is reported by 45.7 percent and jealousy by 50.4 percent.

**Table 11** Frequency of experience of different emotions

Emotions	Few times a day	Once a day	Few times a week	Once a week	Once or twice in the last month	Not in the last month	Never	Total
Calmness	19.4	17.9	25.2	11.5	13.3	9.9	2.9	100
Compassion	19.9	20.1	28.7	11.9	13.8	4.7	0.9	100
Forgiveness	21.4	18.6	26.2	8.5	14.7	8.1	2.5	100
Contentment	16.7	17.6	26.5	12.8	14.8	9.4	2.3	100
Generosity	19.8	17.7	28.4	12.4	15.2	5.5	1.1	100
Anger	20.0	11.9	29.8	9.3	18.9	6.9	3.2	100
Selfishness	5.0	5.6	15.3	8.8	15.8	30.7	19.0	100
Jealousy	5.2	5.8	12.2	7.0	15.5	30.5	23.8	100
Fear	12.6	14.2	24.2	9.3	18.4	14.0	7.2	100
Worry	21.3	18.2	27.3	10.3	13.1	6.7	3.1	100
Sadness	10.7	8.8	21.9	11.4	20.2	19.6	7.3	100

Besides the frequency of different emotional experience in the past four weeks reported by the youths, a set of positive and negative emotions experienced during the day preceding the survey (yesterday) was asked. The three positive emotion items of 'feeling well-rested', 'smile or laugh a lot', and 'enjoyment' formed the 'Positive Experience Index' score by taking the head count ratio of affirmative responses indicating the proportion of youths who experienced these positive emotions during day before the interview. Similarly, the 'Negative Experience Index' score was constructed by taking the headcount ratio of affirmative responses to the three negative emotions of 'worry', 'sadness', and 'anger' during the day preceding the survey. The headcount ratios (affirmative responses by total responses) of

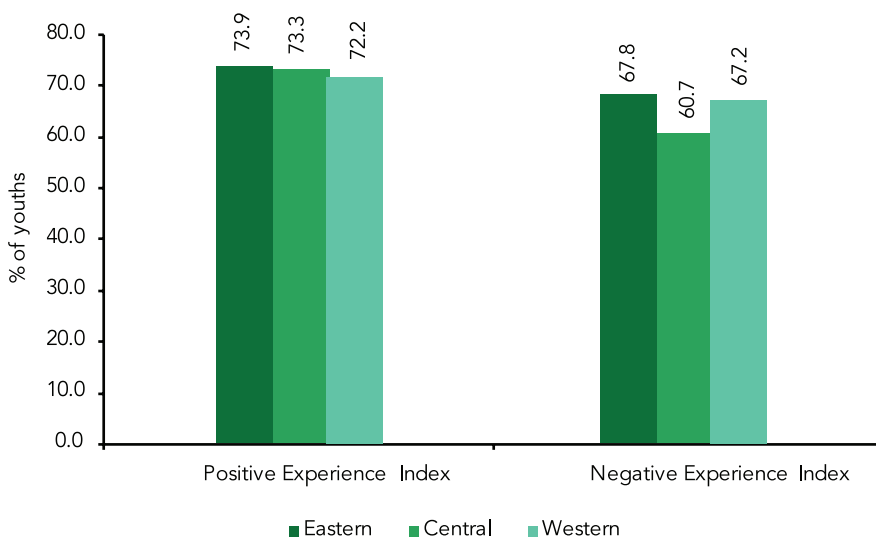
both the indices were then multiplied with 100 to express the percentage of youths experiencing positive and negative emotions on that day.

Overall, the Positive Experience Index score for youths is 72.7 percent, indicating that a little less than three-fourths of the youths experienced positive emotions during the day preceding the survey. Similarly, the Negative Experience Index score is 66.4 percent, indicating that about two-thirds of the youths also experienced negative emotions during the day preceding the survey.

A slightly higher proportion of males (75.1%) report experiencing positive emotions than females (70.5%) during the day preceding the survey. On the other hand, a slightly higher proportion of females (68.0%) compared to males (64.6%) report experiencing negative emotions.

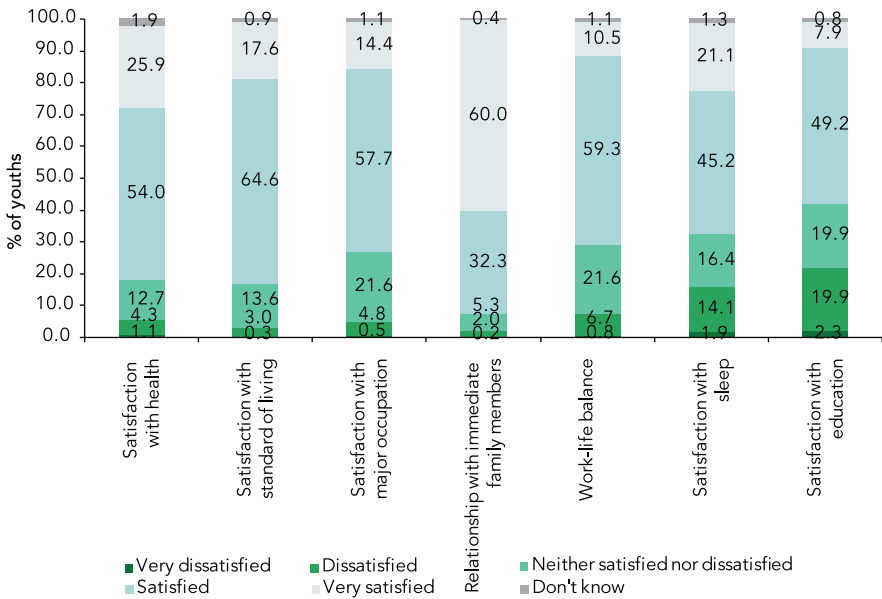
By region, almost equal proportions of youths reportedly experienced positive emotions in all three regions (Figure 29). However, when it concerns negative emotions, a relatively lower proportion of those from the Central region (60.7%) report experiencing negative emotions during the day preceding the survey compared to those from the Eastern (67.8%) and Western (67.2%) regions.

**Figure 29** Prevalence of positive and negative emotions



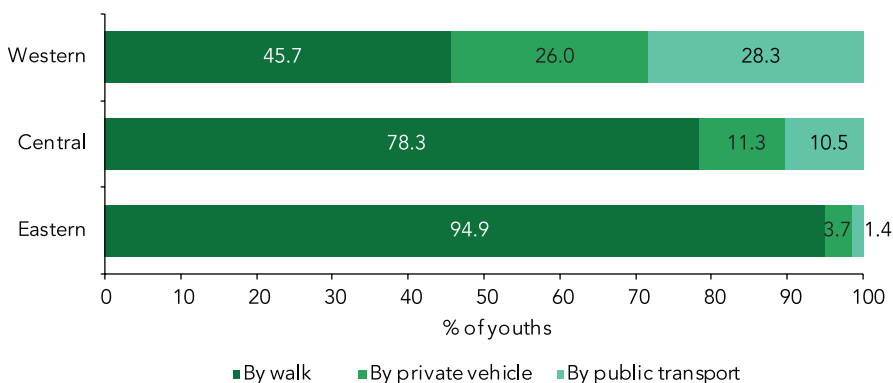
In addition to life satisfaction assessed using a single-item life satisfaction question which is presented under the subjective wellbeing section, youths' satisfaction with different aspects of their life, such as health, living standards, occupation, family relationship, work-life balance, sleep, and education were also assessed. Over three in four youths report being 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with family relationships (92.2%), standard of living (82.2%), and health (79.9%). The distribution of youths by their level of satisfaction in different domains is presented in Figure 30.

**Figure 30** Distribution of youths by their level of satisfaction in different life domains



### 3.4.4 Education, learning, and skills

Information on the usual mode of transportation used for commuting to school was collected. Among those youths attending school as day-scholar, most report walking (61.4%) to the school, followed by use of public transport (19.7%) and use of private vehicles (18.9%) as their usual mode of transport. While about 95 percent of day-scholars in the Eastern region walk to the school, only about 46 percent in the Western region walk to the school (Figure 31).

**Figure 31** Mode of travel to school and back home

Due to the relative remoteness of the Eastern and Central regions compared to the Western region, access to vehicular public transportation services is deemed to be very low. Moreover, family car ownerships in the Eastern and Central regions are comparatively lower than the Western region. This could be the reason why comparatively a higher proportion of day-scholar students from the Eastern (94.9%) and Central (78.3%) regions walk to their school as compared to those from the Western (45.7%) region.

Public transportation system as a usual mode of transport is reported by 28.3 percent of the youths from Western region in contrast to 1.4 percent of those from the Eastern region and 10.5 percent of those from the Central region. Similarly, the use of private vehicle as a usual mode of transport to commute to school is reported by 26.0 percent of those from the Western region as compared to 11.4 percent from the Central region and 3.7 percent from the Eastern region.

The time taken to reach school from home by usual mode of transportation for about half of the day-scholar students (52.6%) is under 15 minutes. The travel time for 28.8 percent of day-scholar students is between 15 - 30 minutes and for 15.2 percent, the travel time is between 30 minutes and an hour. About 3.5 percent of the day-scholar students report having to travel over an hour to reach the school.

A relatively higher proportion of those from the Eastern and Central regions (6% each) report spending an hour or more commuting to school as compared to those residing in the Western regions (only 1.8%).

**Table 12** Usual mode of transport to commute to school by region

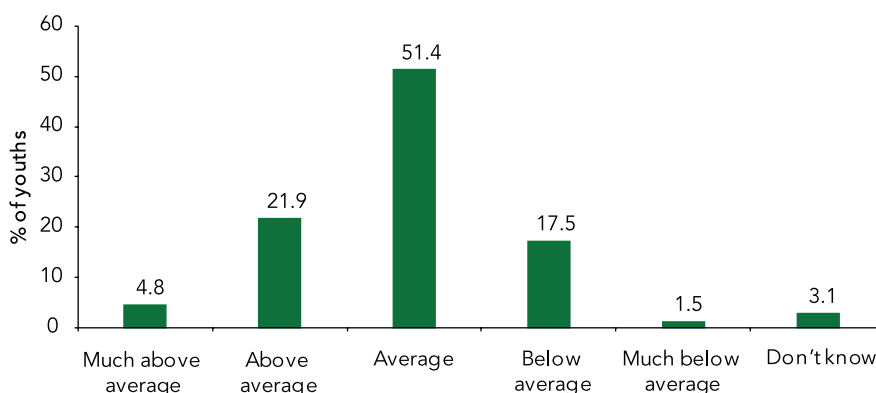
Region	≤15 minutes	>15 & <30 minutes	≥30 & <60 minutes	≥60 & <90 minutes	≥90 minutes	Total
Eastern	56.5	22.5	14.9	5.6	0.6	100
Central	47.5	32.8	13.6	5.2	1.0	100
Western	53.3	29.1	15.8	1.4	0.4	100
Bhutan	52.6	28.8	15.2	2.9	0.6	100

Bhutan's persistent effort in providing free primary education to all Bhutanese plays a vital role in increasing the country's literacy rate. A good grade indicates higher performance of students in their academics.

Under this section, youths were asked about their academic achievements in comparison to their colleagues. Further, information such as if they attended Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), and tutorial classes were also asked to assess access to educational services and learning outcomes.

The average score in percentage achieved by youths in the previous academic year is 68.9 percentage. The percentage scores achieved by youths do not differ much between males (68.4) and females (69.4) as well as across the regions (69.1 for the Eastern, 69.5 for the Central, and 68.7 for the Western region).

About one in four youths (26.7%) believes that their current academic performance relative to their classmates is either 'much above average'

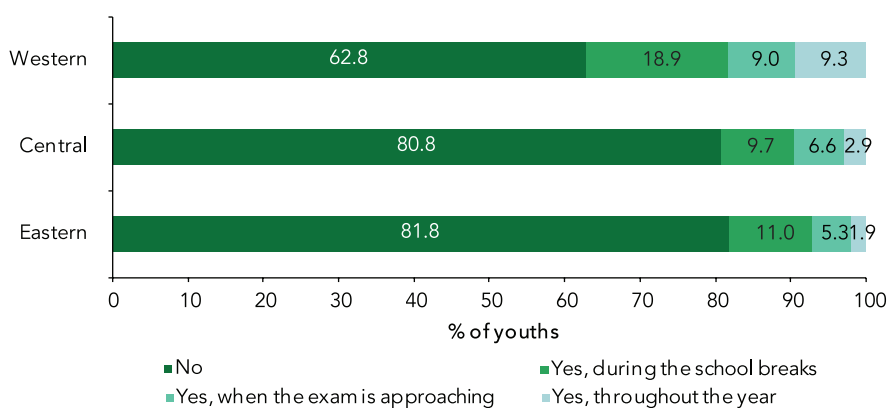
**Figure 32** Distribution of youths by their perceived current grade relative to their classmates

(4.8%) or 'above average' (21.9%). About half of the youths believe that their current academic performance in comparison to their classmates is average while about 19 percent believe that their academic performance is 'below average' (17.5%) or 'much below average' (1.5%).

Early Childhood Care and Development was initiated in the Bhutanese education system to harness the maximum potential of a child at an early age. About one in 10 youths (10.5%) report to having attended ECCD as a child. By region, a slightly higher proportion of youths from the Western region (11.5%) report to have attended ECCD as compared to those from the Central (9.0%) and Eastern (8.8%) regions.

A little less than one-third of the youths (30.3%) report to having attended some form of tuition classes in addition to their normal classroom-based learning sessions. Comparatively, a higher proportion of youths from the Western region (37.2%) report to having attended tuition classes as compared to those from the Central (19.2%) and Eastern (18.2%) regions.

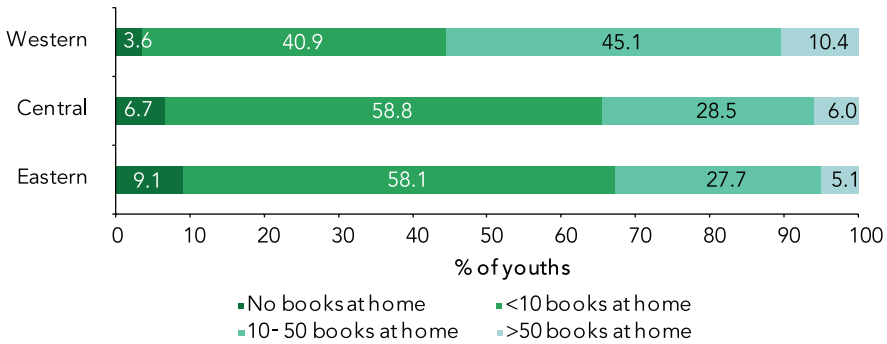
**Figure 33** Distribution of youths who reported attending tuition classes by region



Information on the availability of number of books, excluding magazines and school textbooks, at home of the youths was collected. About five percent of the youths do not have any books at home while 47.4 percent report to having less than 10 books. The remaining 38.7 percent report to having 10-50 books and 8.6 percent report having more than 50 books in their home.

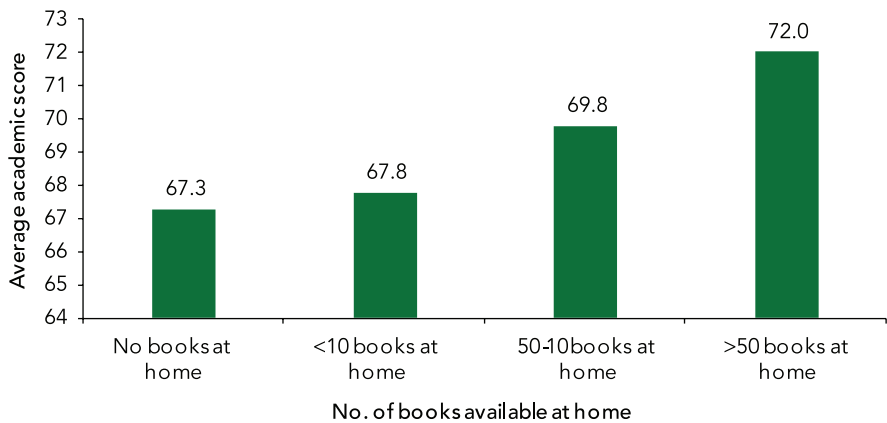
While over half (55.5%) of those from the Western region report to having 10 or more books in their home, only about one-third of the youths from the Eastern (32.7%) and Central (34.5%) regions report to having similar number of books in their homes (Figure 34).

**Figure 34** Distribution of youths by number of books available at home region



The data also seems to suggest that those who report availability of more number of books at home also report higher academic scores. For instance, the average academic score among those who report having no books at home is 67.3 percentage while those reporting more than 50 books at home report 72.0 percentage score in their academics.

**Figure 35** Average academic score by number of books available at home



Among the youths, 77.1 percent report reading at least one book, other than school assigned reading materials, in the past 12 months. A higher proportion of females (81.9%) report to reading at least one book in the past 12 months as compared to their male (72.3%) counterparts. Although youths from the Western regions report to having more books, the proportion of youths who report to reading at least one book in the past 12 months is relatively higher among those from the Eastern (81.0%) and Central (80.6%) regions as compared to those from the Western (74.9%) region.

### Historical and Cultural Literacy

Youths' historical, cultural, and civic knowledge and understanding were assessed using four indicators, such as the knowledge and understanding of local legends and folktales, local festivals, traditional Bhutanese songs, and the Constitution. About two in five youths report to having 'very good' or 'good' knowledge and understanding of local legends and folktales (41.9%) and local festivals (43.0%). Similarly, about one-third of the youths also report to having 'very good' or 'good' knowledge and understanding of traditional Bhutanese songs (35.3.9%) and the Constitution (34.5%).

**Table 13** Distribution of youths by level of knowledge and understanding of different aspects of history and culture

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very good	Total
Local legends and folktales	2.3	13.6	42.2	35.7	6.2	100
Local festivals	1.1	12.2	43.7	35.6	7.4	100
Traditional Bhutanese songs	2.8	22.3	39.7	30.1	5.2	100
The Constitution	2.6	14.3	48.6	31.0	3.5	100

Information on the youths' knowledge and skill in the 13 different arts and crafts, commonly known as *Zorig Chusum*, were collected. These 13 arts and crafts are: weaving, embroidery, painting, carpentry, carving, sculpture, casting, black-smithing, bamboo works, gold/silver-smithing, masonry, leatherworks, and papermaking. Knowledge and skills in any one of the 13 different arts and crafts is reported by 47.4 percent of the youths.

Of the 13 arts and crafts, painting is the most widely reported skill, with 25.8 percent of youths reporting some knowledge and skill in the art. Some degree of knowledge and skills in weaving and carpentry are reported by



17.9 and 11.7 percent of the youths, respectively. In contrast, none report to having any knowledge and skill in gold/silversmithing (Table 14).

By gender, as expected, knowledge and skill in weaving and embroidery are more prevalent among females than males. On the other hand, knowledge and skills in carpentry, masonry, and bamboo works are more prevalent among males than females.

There also seems to be a regional variation in the proportion of youths reporting knowledge and skills in some of the arts and crafts. For instance, 30.0 percent of youths from the Eastern region report to having knowledge and skills in weaving as compared to 17.3 and 13.6 percent from the Central and Western regions, respectively. Similarly, knowledge and skill in carpentry is more prevalent in the Central region (17.1%) as compared to those from the Western (11.0%) and Eastern (10.0%) regions. Regional variations are also evident for other arts and crafts, such as embroidery, painting, bamboo works, and masonry.

**Table 14** Youths reporting knowledge and skills in 13 arts and crafts (%)

13 arts and crafts	Overall	Male	Female	Eastern	Central	Western
Weaving	17.9	0.2	34.4	30.0	17.3	13.6
Embroidery	4.9	1.8	7.8	7.1	4.6	4.2
Painting	25.8	35.4	16.9	22.0	32.9	25.6
Carpentry	11.7	22.9	1.3	10.0	17.1	11.0
Carving	2.0	2.7	1.4	2.0	1.3	2.2
Sculpture	0.4	0.8	0.1	0.6	0.5	0.4
Casting	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.1
Black-smithing	0.8	1.4	0.2	0.9	1.6	0.5
Bamboo works	5.7	9.4	2.2	8.1	8.3	4.2
Gold/silversmithing	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Masonry	7.8	15.7	0.6	11.5	13.5	5.2
Leather works	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.0
Papermaking	3.7	2.2	5.1	4.8	9.4	1.9

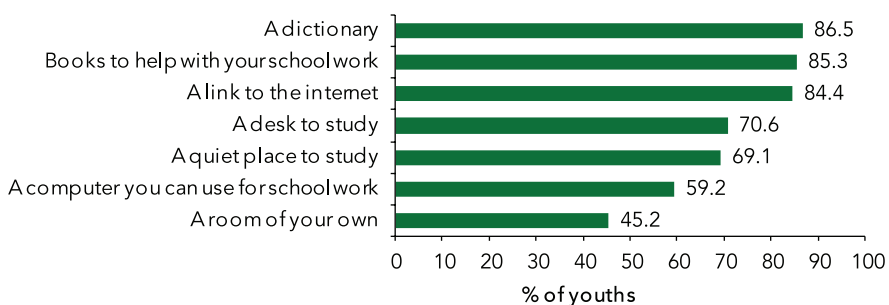
### 3.4.5 Economic and material situation

This subsection covers indicators related to family asset ownerships like house, land, and vehicles, and information on personal items owned such as mobile phones, a room of their own, a quiet place to study, and a computer with internet connection.

Among the four types of electronic gadgets, a large majority of the youths report to owning a smartphone (94.5%), followed by a mobile phone other than smartphone (17.1%), and a tablet or iPad (12.7%). Owning a gaming console or PlayStation is reported by only seven percent of the youths. A little over four percent of youths do not own any of these electronic gadgets.

The study also collected information on whether the youths possess or have access to various things that would assist them in their study or schoolwork. Most youths report to owning a dictionary (86.5%), followed by a book to help their schoolwork (85.3%) and access to the Internet (84.4%). Owning a desk and having a quiet place to study is reported by 70.6 percent and 69.1 percent of the youths, respectively. Access to computer for use to assist schoolwork is reported by 59.2 percent of the youths. Less than half of the youths (45.2%) report to having a room of their own in their home.

**Figure 36** Access to various things to assist in studying or schoolwork



Youths were also asked about whether their household owns any vehicles. Overall, 56.0 percent of the youths report that their household owns some type of vehicle. In terms of the type of vehicle owned, about half (52.0%) of the youths report that their household owns a family car. Owning vehicles other than family cars and two-wheel vehicles are reported by 6.3 percent and 4.5 percent, respectively.

Youths were also asked about the adequacy of their current household income to meet the necessary household expenses. Nearly 42 percent of the youths report that their household is living comfortably on their present income and 38.5 percent mention that they are coping with their present income. However, 16.2 percent of the youths report that they are finding it difficult or very difficult on their household's present income.

### 3.4.6 Time use

A good and adequate sleep is very important for a healthy and happy body, mind, and soul. The average time spent sleeping by youths in the 24-hour period preceding the survey is 7 hours 3 minutes, with male sleeping for 7 hours 8 minutes and females sleeping 6 hours 58 minutes. Youths from the Central region (7 hours 32 minutes) report sleeping over half an hour more than those from the Eastern and Western regions (6 hours 58 minutes each).

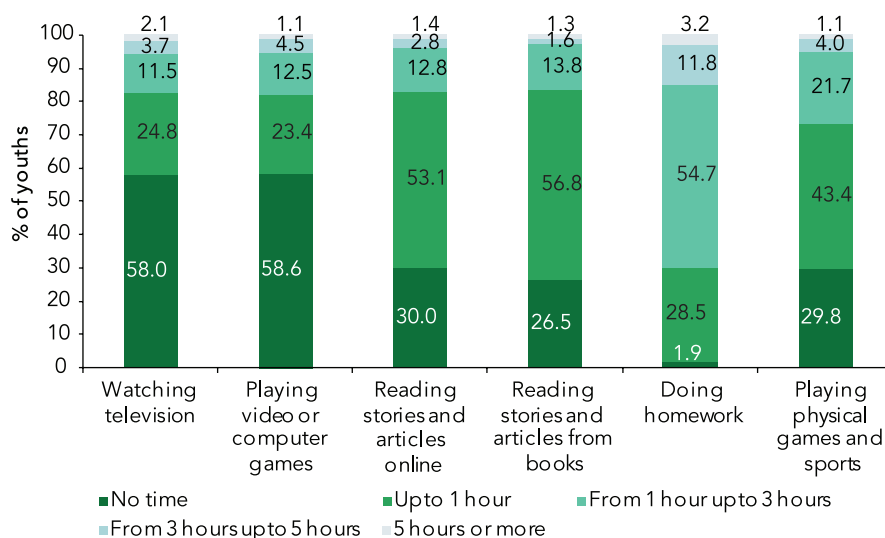
#### Time spent on different activities

Besides the time spent on working and sleeping, information on time spent on different activities like watching television, playing video games, reading online, reading books, doing homework, and playing games physically were also collected to assess youths' time use pattern (Figure 37).

As depicted in Figure 37, forty-two percent of youths report spending some time watching television on a normal school day outside of school hours. Similarly, 41.4 percent of the youths also report spending some time playing or on computer games during normal school day outside of school hours. On the other hand, over half of the youths report not spending any time on playing video or computer games (58.6%) and watching television (58.0%).

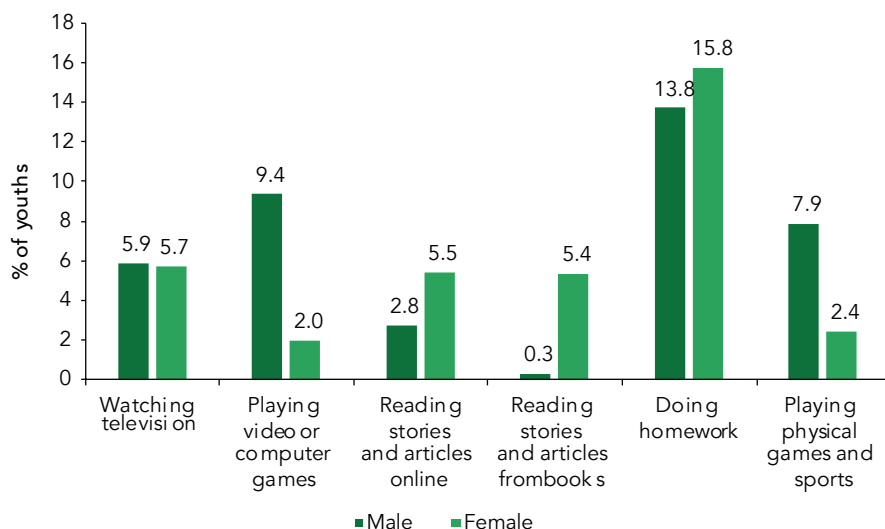
In terms of the time allocated towards reading, 70 percent of the youths report spending some time reading stories and articles online during a normal school day outside of school hours. Similarly, 73.5 percent also report to spending some time reading stories and articles from books during a normal school day outside of school hours. However, over one-fourth of the youths also report not spending any time on reading stories and books online (30.0%), reading stories and articles from books (26.5%), and playing physical games and sports (29.8%).

**Figure 37** Distribution of youths by amount of time spent on different activities



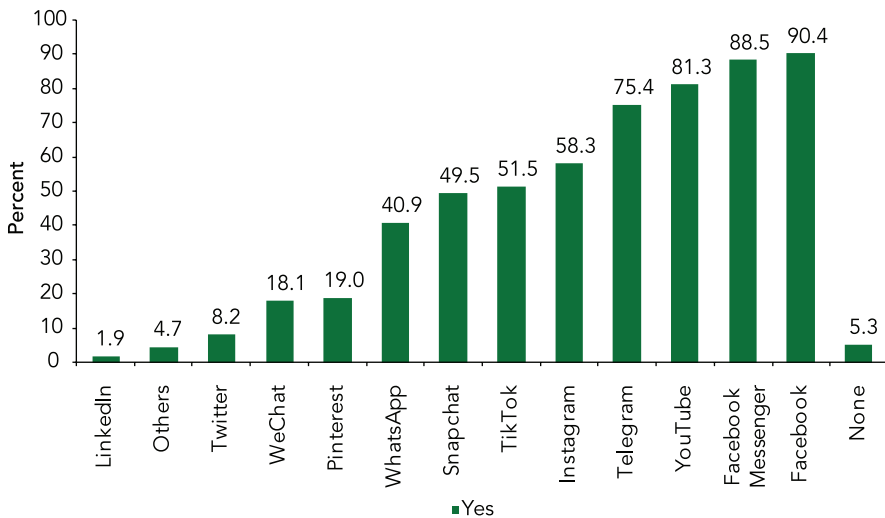
By gender, a higher proportion of males are more likely to spend three hours or more on playing video or computer games (9.4%) and physical games and sports (7.9%) as compared to two percent and 2.4 percent, respectively (Figure 38), of females.

**Figure 38** Proportion of youths who reported spending 3 hours or more on different activities by gender



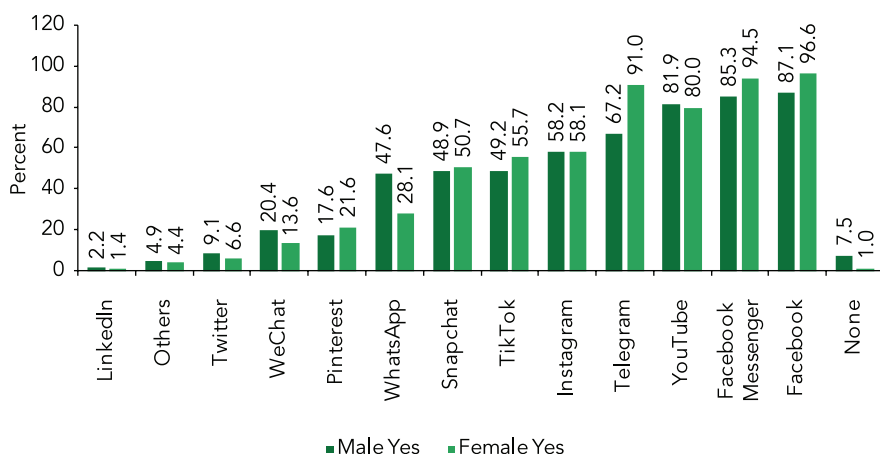
Social media and the internet have taken the whole world in their grips with almost every person having at least one social media handle<sup>21</sup>. Facebook, Messenger, YouTube, Telegram, Instagram, and TikTok are some popular social media platforms used by over half of the Bhutanese youths. For instance, over one in four youths report to using Facebook (90.4%), Messenger (88.5%), YouTube (81.3%) and Telegram (75.4%). LinkedIn (1.9%) and Twitter (8.2%) are the least used social media accounts among the youths in Bhutan.

**Figure 39** Proportion of youths using different social media accounts



When it comes to the use of social media accounts by gender, there are marked differences in the use of accounts like Telegram and WhatsApp. While Telegram seems to be more popular among females (91.0%) than males (67.2%), WhatsApp, is more popular among males (47.6%) than females (28.1%) as shown in Figure 39.

<sup>21</sup> It is reported that over 90 percent of the respondents are active user of at least one social media (see Bhutan Media Foundation. (2021). Social Media Landscape in Bhutan).

**Figure 40** Proportion of youths using different social media accounts by gender

### Time spent on social media

On average, youths spend 2 hours 23 minutes per day on social media on normal weekdays during term time. Males (2 hours 19 minutes) and females (2 hours 26 minutes) spend almost equal time on social media. When the average time spent on social media is compared at a regional level, it is observed that youths from the Western region (2 hours 29 minutes) and Eastern region (2 hours 23 minutes) spend slightly more time than those youths from the Central region (1 hour 54 minutes).

**Table 15** Time spent on social media on normal weekdays during term time

Group	Characteristics	Time (hh:mm)
Gender	Male	2:19
	Female	2:26
Region	Eastern	2:23
	Central	1:54
	Western	2:29
Age	≤15 years	1:42
	16-17 years	1:59
	18-19 years	2:20
	≥20 years	3:13
	Overall	2:23

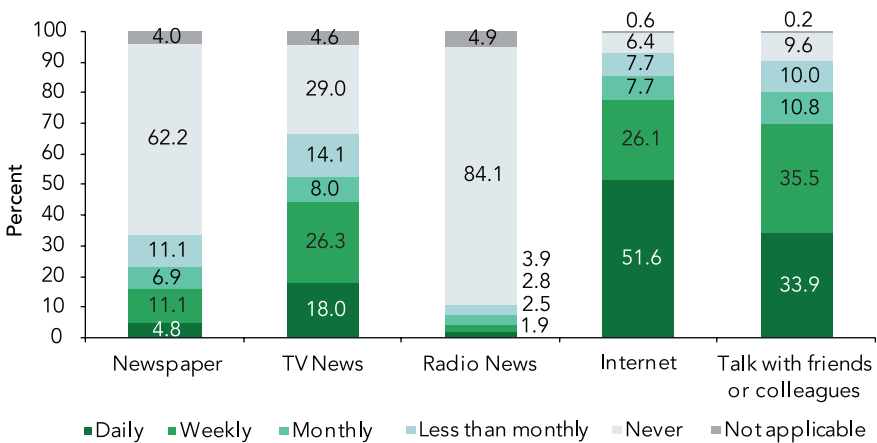
The amount of time spent on social media on normal weekdays during term time is higher among older youths as compared to younger ones. For instance, the average amount of time spent on social media among those 15 years or younger is 1 hour 42 minutes, followed by about two hours among 16–17-year-olds. It is highest among those who are 20 years or older where the average time spent on social media is 3 hours and 13 minutes per day.

### 3.4.7 Civic engagement

Keeping oneself informed about what is happening in the country is an indication of good civic engagement. There are various sources such as the newspapers, TV news, radio, internet, or from friends and colleagues to keep themselves updated with political initiatives in the country. The results indicate that youths depend on the internet, friends or colleagues, and TV news as their main sources of information (Figure 41) to learn about what is going on in the country. For instance, 51.6 percent of the youths state that the source information on the happenings in the country from the Internet daily, followed by talking with friends or colleagues (33.9%), and through TV news (18.0%). Not many youths seem to depend on print media and radio as their source of information as only 4.8 percent and 1.9 percent report to accessing information from newspaper and radio daily.

In addition to keeping oneself informed about the current happenings in the country, the survey also asked about the frequency with which they

**Figure 41** Source of news on current happenings in the country



discuss political matters with their friends. It is revealed that only 9.3 percent of youths discuss political matters frequently with their friends. Of the remaining, 61.9 percent report to discussing it occasionally while 28.7 percent do not discuss such matters at all with their friends.

Another form of civic engagement is keeping tabs on the functioning of the government and assess its performance in providing citizen-centric services. The government's performance during the last 12 months was assessed in terms of creating jobs, narrowing the inequality gap, providing education and health facilities or services, fighting corruption, protecting natural environment, and preserving culture and traditions.

Over two-thirds of the youths rate the government's performance relatively favourably (rating 'very good' or 'good') in providing health services or facilities (85.4%), providing educational services or facilities (72.7%), protecting the natural environment (72.4%), and preserving culture and traditions (66.7%). On the contrary, only about one-third of the youths rate the government's performance favourably (rating 'very good' or 'good') in creating jobs (36.5%), fighting corruption (31.1%), and reducing gap between rich and poor (30.2%).

**Table 16** Government performance level

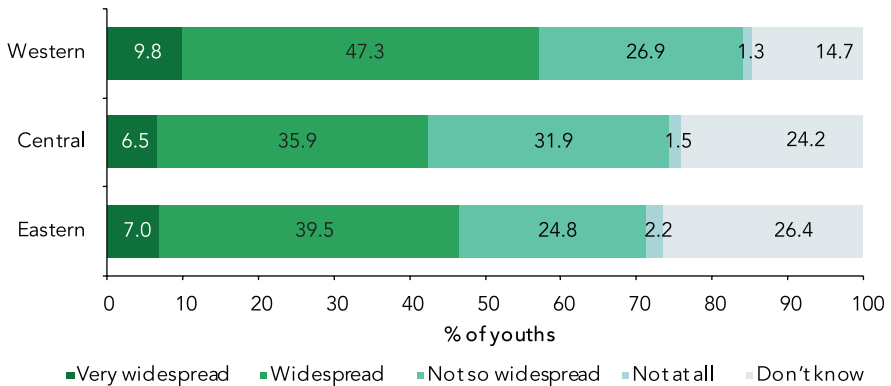
	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very good	Don't know	Total
Creating jobs	1.7	9.2	39.5	29.7	6.8	13.2	100
Reducing gap between rich and poor	3.1	15.2	35.9	23.5	6.7	15.7	100
Providing educational facilities/services	0.7	4.0	20.4	45.1	27.6	2.2	100
Providing health facilities/services	0.7	1.1	11.4	43.3	42.2	1.5	100
Fighting corruption	2.8	12.9	32.7	25.6	5.4	20.6	100
Protecting natural environment	0.4	2.1	20.9	43.9	28.5	4.2	100
Preserving culture and traditions	0.4	2.3	25.2	42.3	24.5	5.3	100

When asked about the perceived prevalence of corruption in the country, over half of the youths perceived that corruption is either 'very widespread' (8.7%) or 'widespread' (43.9%). By region, the proportion of youths who



report that corruption is 'very widespread' or 'widespread' is relatively higher in the Western region (57.1%) as compared to Eastern (46.5%) and Central (42.5%) regions.

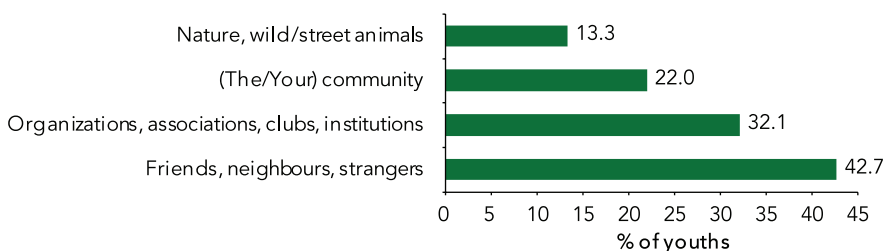
**Figure 42** Perception on the prevalence of the corruption



Besides keeping updated about the happenings in the country and government performance, the youths' civic engagement was also assessed through indicators such as participation in community events, volunteerism, donations, and memberships to clubs or associations.

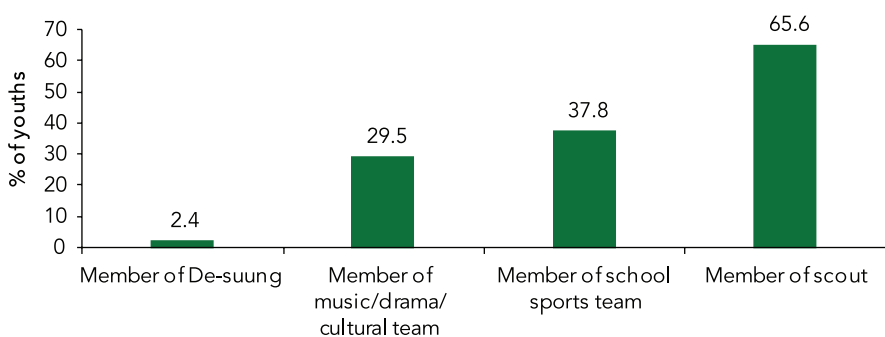
To assess youth's degree of participation in community events, the survey collected data on the average number of days spent attending social and cultural activities, such as community festivals or *choku* of neighbours, in the past 12 months preceding the survey. The average days spent attending social and cultural activities is 5.0 days in the past one year. Males (5.3 days) spend slightly more days participating in social and cultural activities as compared to females (4.8 days).

Overall, 71.6 percent of youths provided some form of voluntary help in past 12 months to different causes or entity, while the remaining 28.4 percent did not provide any voluntary help in the past 12 months. By type of voluntary activities, 42.7 percent of the youths report volunteering for friends, neighbours, or strangers. Similarly, 32.1 percent indicate volunteering for various organizations or associations. Extending voluntary assistance to their community is reported by 22.0 percent of youth. Finally voluntary works for nature or animal care is reported by 13.3 percent of the youths.

**Figure 43** % of youths who reported volunteering

Regarding donations made, 47.5 percent of the youths report donating either cash or in kind within the past 12 months. The average amount donated is Nu 831 (median Nu 300).

Membership to different school-based clubs or associations as well as other associations provides students with opportunities to develop holistically. Therefore, information on the membership to different associations or clubs was collected. About two in three youths (65.6%) report that they are a member of the Scouts. Over one-third of youths (37.8%) belong to a school sports' team and 29.5 percent report belonging to a school cultural club. However, only 2.4 percent report that they are De-suup<sup>22</sup>.

**Figure 44** % of youths who are member of association/club

### 3.5 Youth Entrepreneurship

This section presents the findings on youth's awareness, attitude, motivation, and intention towards entrepreneurship.

<sup>22</sup> Guardians of Peace (National Volunteer group)

Numerous government and civil society organisations have worked towards changing attitudes and behavioural attributes among youths in promoting entrepreneurship. These were carried out through training, provision of infrastructure facilities, increasing access to low-cost financing, and other support services. This section presents the results of youth entrepreneurship attitudes and behaviours. The subsection will specifically cover survey results related to awareness, attitude, motivation, and intention of being an entrepreneur among the youths.

### 3.5.1 Entrepreneurship Awareness

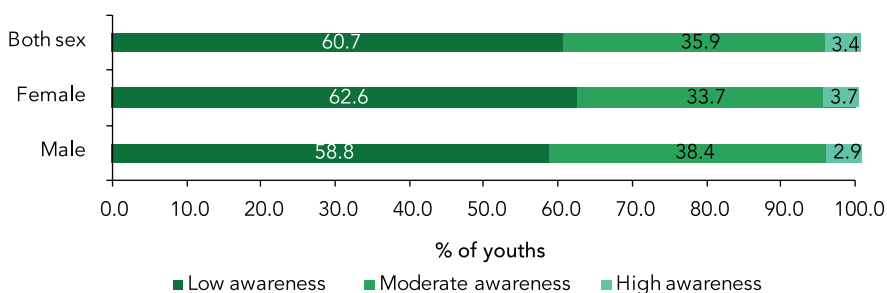
Entrepreneurship awareness was assessed by asking whether the youths were familiar with the term 'entrepreneur' or 'entrepreneurship', awareness about entrepreneurship related training, programs and competitions held in schools and institutions, and government's policies facilitating entrepreneurship in the country.

A single number *Entrepreneurship Awareness Index* was constructed by taking the arithmetic mean of the 10 different items used for assessing the entrepreneurship awareness in different dimensions. Each of these 10 items was assessed using an 11-point scales, ranging from 0 ('not aware at all/strongly disagree') to 10 ('fully aware/strongly agree'). The internal consistency of the measure assessed using Cronbach alpha showed a value of 0.88. Although the items load on two different factors with an eigenvalue of 4.27 and 1.20 each, the three items - awareness of CSI loans, PSL lending, and Fiscal incentives which load on factor2 also load equally or more strongly on factor1. Therefore, only one factor was taken and a single number index to measure entrepreneurial awareness was constructed by taking the arithmetic mean of these 10 different items.

The overall Entrepreneurship Awareness Index score is 4.3 on a 0-10-point scale, which indicates low level of awareness of entrepreneurship. Males (mean = 4.4) score slightly higher Entrepreneurship Awareness Index than females (mean = 4.2). By region, the mean Entrepreneurship Awareness Index is relatively higher among those youths from the Western region (mean = 4.4) as compared to those from the Central (mean = 4.2) and Eastern (mean = 3.9) regions.

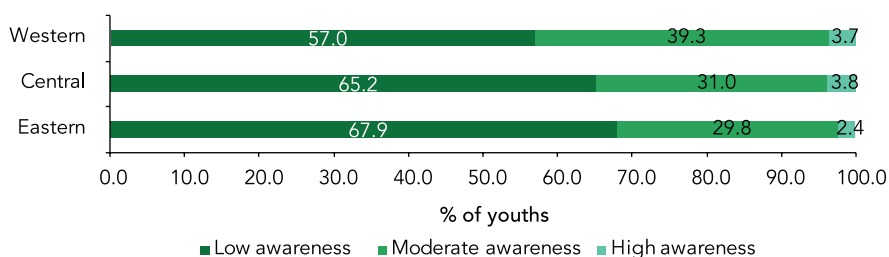
Besides presenting the mean scores for entrepreneurship, the results can also be meaningfully presented in distinct categories. Therefore, based on the overall Entrepreneurship Awareness Index, youths are grouped into three categories: low awareness (mean score = 0-4.99), moderate awareness (mean score = 5-7.99), and high awareness (mean score = 8-10). The result indicates that a significant proportion of the youths (60.7%) have a low level of entrepreneurship awareness. When evaluating gender difference in entrepreneurship awareness, the results indicate small gender differences<sup>23</sup> (Figure 45).

**Figure 45** Distribution of youths by entrepreneurship awareness level and gender



By region, a higher proportion of youths from the Western region (43.0%) report 'moderate' or 'high' levels of entrepreneurial awareness as compared to those from the Central (34.8%) and the Eastern (32.1%) regions<sup>24</sup>.

**Figure 46** Distribution of youths by entrepreneurship awareness level and region

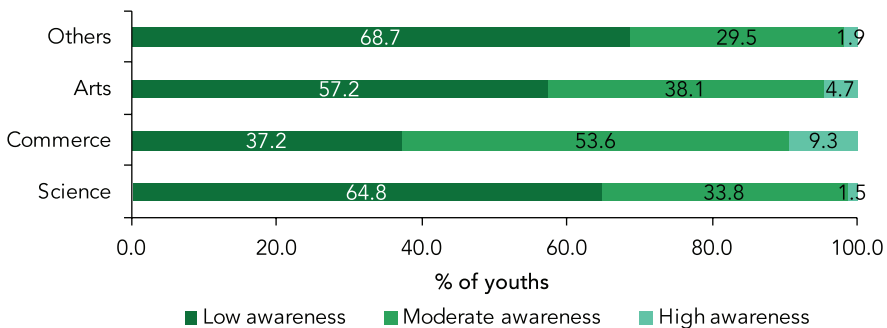


<sup>23</sup> However, the statistical tests indicate that there is no statistically significant relationship between gender and levels of awareness of entrepreneurship (chi-square with two degrees of freedom = 1.0139,  $p = 0.062$ ).

<sup>24</sup> The statistical tests also indicate that there is statistically significant relationship between region and levels of awareness of entrepreneurship (chi-square with four degrees of freedom = 35.2947,  $p = 0.000$ ).

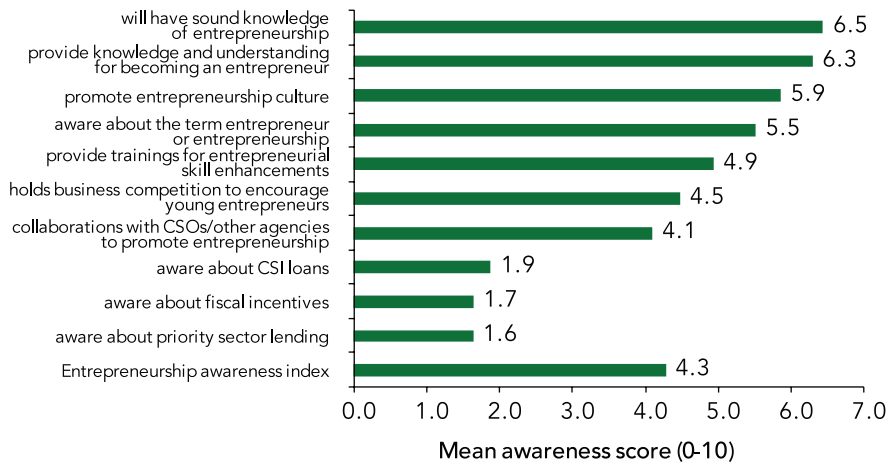
By the type of academic course, a relatively higher proportion of youths enrolled in Commerce programme reported 'moderate' or 'high' level of entrepreneurial awareness as compared to others<sup>25</sup>. For instance, 62.9 percent of youths enrolled in Commerce programme report 'moderate' or 'high' level of entrepreneurial awareness, followed by those enrolled in Arts programme (42.8%) and Science programme (35.3%). Those enrolled in general programmes have the lowest proportion of youths with 'moderate' or 'high' level of entrepreneurial awareness (Figure 47).

**Figure 47** Distribution of youths by entrepreneurship awareness level and academic programme



The mean scores of each of the 10 items used for constructing the overall entrepreneurship awareness index are presented in Figure 40. Items like '*I will have sound knowledge of entrepreneurship by the time I graduate*' (mean = 6.5) and '*education curriculum in my institute provide knowledge and understanding for becoming an entrepreneur*' (mean = 6.3) score relatively higher compared to others. On the other hand, youths' awareness on government's fiscal incentives for promoting entrepreneurship, such as cottage and small industry (CSI) loans (mean = 1.9), other fiscal incentive (mean = 1.7), and priority sector lending (PSL) loans (mean = 1.6) score very low, indicating their lack of awareness on the availability of these fiscal support systems.

<sup>25</sup> The statistical tests also indicate that there is statistically significant relationship between academic programme and levels of awareness of entrepreneurship (chi-square with six degrees of freedom = 154.1771, p = 0.000).

**Figure 48** Entrepreneurship awareness level (mean score)

### 3.5.2 Entrepreneurship Attitude

*Entrepreneurial attitude* was assessed using a 3-item questionnaire. These three items were measured on an 11-point scale (0 – 10), where 0 is marked as 'strongly disagree' and 10 'strongly agree'. These three items individually measure the attractiveness of and expected satisfaction from the entrepreneurial activities. All three items load on a single factor with an eigenvalue of 1.94 and no other factors have eigenvalue above 1.0. The internal consistency of the items shows an alpha value of 0.80. Therefore, a single item Entrepreneurial Attitude Index to measure the entrepreneurial attitude was constructed using the three separate items by taking their arithmetic mean.

The overall Entrepreneurial Attitude Index score is 5.4 on a 0-10-point scale, which indicates neutral attitude towards entrepreneurship. Males (5.8) score a slightly higher Entrepreneurial Attitude Index than females (5.1).

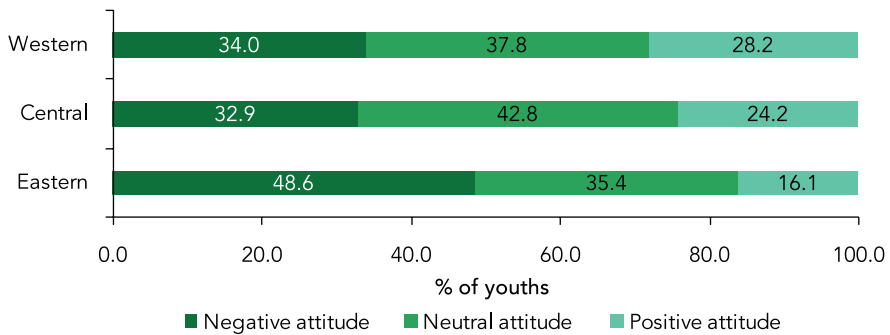
Based on the overall Entrepreneurial Attitude Index score, youths are grouped into three categories: negative attitude (mean score = 0 – 4.99), neutral attitude (mean score = 5 – 7.99), and positive attitude (mean score = 8 – 10). Over a third of the youths (37.2%) are found to have 'negative attitude' towards entrepreneurial activities while another 38.0 percent show 'neutral attitude'. Only about one in four (24.8%) youths show 'positive attitude' towards entrepreneurial activities. The fact that about

three-fourths (75.2%) of the youths show either negative or neutral attitude towards entrepreneurship suggests that a large majority of the youths do not consider entrepreneurship as a viable option for employment.

A relatively higher proportion of females (41.7%) report negative attitude for entrepreneurship as compared to males (32.5%). On the other hand, a relatively higher proportion of males (30.1%) exhibit positive attitude towards entrepreneurship compared to females (20.0%).

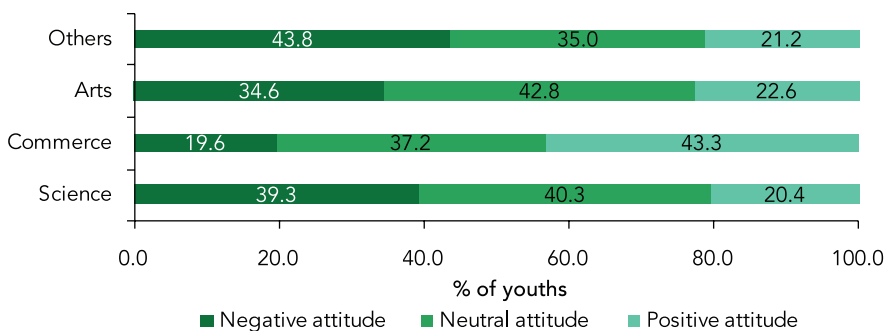
By region, while almost half (48.6%) of the youths from the Eastern region show negative attitude towards entrepreneurship, only about one-third of those from the Western (34.0%) and the Central (32.9%) show negative attitude towards entrepreneurship (Figure 46). Inversely, a higher proportion of those from the Western region (28.2%) indicate positive attitude towards entrepreneurship as compared to those from the Central (24.2%) and the Eastern (16.1%) regions.

**Figure 49** Distribution of youths by attitude towards entrepreneurship by region



Unsurprisingly, a higher proportion of those enrolled in the Commerce programmes (43.3%) demonstrate positive attitude towards entrepreneurship as compared to those enrolled in other academic programmes (Figure 47). The proportion of those enrolled in Commerce programmes demonstrating positive attitude towards entrepreneurship is twice as high as those enrolled in other programmes such as Science (20.4%), Arts (22.6%), and other courses (21.2%). This result suggests that those in Commerce programmes are twice more likely to opt for entrepreneurship than others.

**Figure 50** Distribution of youths by attitude towards entrepreneurship by academic programme



In terms of youths' attitude towards each specific items used for measuring entrepreneurial attitude, the mean score (measured on a 0-10 scale where 0 indicating strong disagreement and 10 indicating strong agreement) is 6.9 for the statement '*being an entrepreneur would give me great satisfaction*', followed by 6.0 for the statement '*career as an entrepreneur is attractive to me*'. However, for the statement '*among various options, I would rather be an entrepreneur*' is 4.7 indicating that youths are not likely to opt for entrepreneurship over other employment opportunities.

### 3.5.3 Entrepreneurship Motivation

*Entrepreneurial motivation* was assessed using a 17-item questionnaire. The items were grouped into internal motivation factors (5 items) and external motivation factors (12 items). All the items were measured once again using an 11-point scale ranging from 0 'strongly disagree' to 10 'strongly agree'. Fourteen of the 17 items measuring entrepreneurship motivation load on the first factor with an eigenvalue of 6.82. Of the remaining three items, one loads on the second factor, one on the third factor, and last one does not load on any factor. The item that does not load on to any factor is '*pressure to run family business*'. Since any factor for consideration should have at least three items loading onto it, we have excluded the second and third factors which have only one item loading to it. All these 14 items recorded factor loading of at least 0.50 or above with the highest loading of 0.79. The Cronbach alpha value was 0.93 indicating high internal consistency among the items measuring the entrepreneurship motivation. Therefore, the Entrepreneurship Motivation Index was constructed using 14 items by taking the arithmetic



mean of these 14 items. The Index value ranges between 0 and 10 where higher score indicates higher entrepreneurship motivation and vice versa.

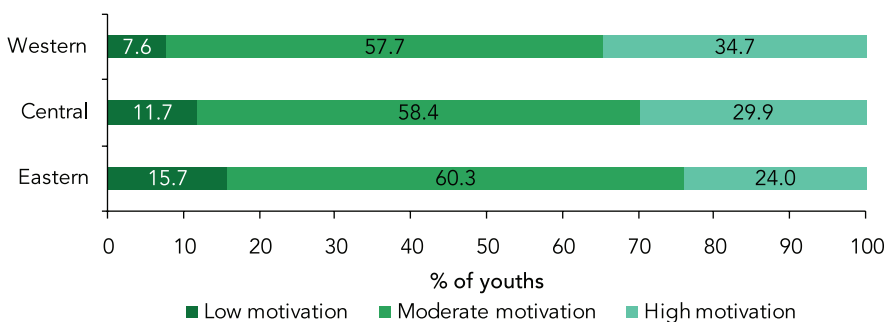
The average entrepreneurship motivation score is 7.0 with almost equal score for males and females. Youths from the Western (mean = 7.2) and Central (mean = 7.0) regions exhibit a relatively higher entrepreneurship motivation than those from the Eastern region (mean = 6.6).

By entrepreneurship motivation category, 31.9 percent of the youths fall under the 'high motivation' category (average score of 8 or higher) and 58.3 percent under the 'moderate motivation' category (with mean score of 5-7.99). The remaining 9.8 percent fall under the 'low motivation' category (mean score less than 5).

Results show that both males and females have similar patterns in terms of their level of entrepreneurship motivation. For instance, 32.8 percent of males and 31.0 percent of females show 'high motivation' for entrepreneurship. On the other hand, 9.1 percent of males and 10.7 percent of females show 'low motivation' for entrepreneurship.

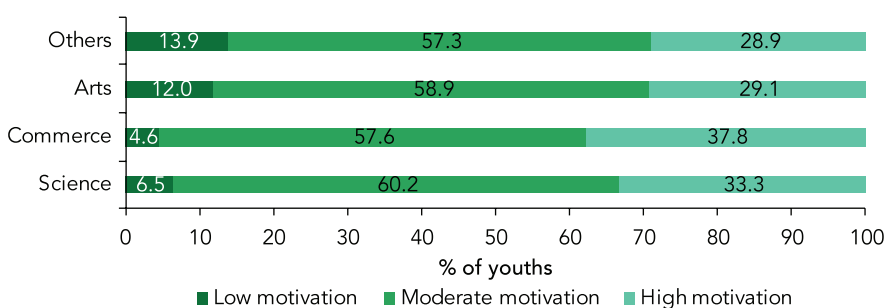
The results show regional differences in the level of motivation for entrepreneurship (Figure 51). While over one-third (34.7%) of youths from the Western region demonstrate 'high motivation' for entrepreneurship, less than a quarter (24.0%) of those from the Eastern region show the same level of motivation. Instead, almost twice the proportion of youths from the Eastern region (15.7%) exhibit 'low motivation' for entrepreneurship as compared to those from the Western region (7.6%).

**Figure 51** Distribution of youths by entrepreneurship motivation by region



A relatively higher proportion of youths enrolled in the Commerce programmes (37.8%) report 'high motivation' for entrepreneurship, followed by those enrolled in the Science programmes (33.3%). On the other hand, a relatively higher proportion of those enrolled in 'Other' programmes (13.9%) and the Arts (12.0%) report 'low motivation' for entrepreneurship than those enrolled in Commerce (4.6) and Science programmes (6.5%).

**Figure 52** Distribution of youths by entrepreneurship motivation by course



At the individual item level, among the five intrinsic entrepreneurship motivation factors, the mean score is highest for '*to prove I can do it*' (7.3 on a scale of 0-10), indicating that it is the greatest motivator for entrepreneurial activity for youths, followed by '*to be able to use my interest and past experience*' (7.0). At a mean score of 6.6, '*to realise my ambitions*' scored the lowest among the five intrinsic entrepreneurship motivation factors (Table 17).

Among the 12 extrinsic entrepreneurship motivation factors, '*family/friends/siblings will be supportive*' scored the highest at 7.7, indicating that it is the greatest motivator for entrepreneurial activity, followed by '*to satisfy my own need for achievement and growth*', and '*to increase my income*' at 7.6 each (Table 16). On the other hand, entrepreneurship motivation factors such as '*pressure to run family business*' (3.2), '*I am inspired by family/siblings/relatives who are already into entrepreneurship*' (4.7), and '*adequate support from government for entrepreneurial activities*' (5.5) scored comparatively low, which indicates that these factors are the least motivators for entrepreneurial activity for youths.

**Table 17** Average score of entrepreneurship motivation factors

Entrepreneurship motivation factors		Mean
Intrinsic factors	To prove I can do it	7.3
	To be able to use my interest and past experience	7.0
	To use skills learned in schools/institution	6.8
	To be my own boss and maintain autonomy at work	6.7
	To realize my ambitions	6.6
Extrinsic factors	Family/friends/siblings will be supportive	7.7
	To satisfy my own need for achievement and growth	7.6
	To increase my income (profitable venture)	7.6
	To be closer to family	7.3
	To build a business to pass on	7.1
	To provide jobs to family members	7.0
	To always have job security	6.9
	To gain recognition in the society	6.5
	I am inspired by a successful entrepreneur	6.3
	Adequate support from government for entrepreneurial activities (Licensing and clear policies)	5.5
	I am inspired by family, siblings and relatives who are already into entrepreneurship	4.7
Pressure to run family business	3.2	

### 3.5.4 Entrepreneurship Intention and Readiness

*Entrepreneurial intention and readiness* were assessed using a 7-item questionnaire. They are grouped into intention (4 items) and readiness (3 items). The four indicators measuring intention are willingness to do anything to becoming an entrepreneur, setting entrepreneurship as a professional goal, putting efforts to start a business, and determination to establish a firm in the future. The three indicators measuring entrepreneurial readiness are possession of necessary technical skills, managerial skills to start a firm, and the willingness to start a business if opportunity and resources are available.

All the seven items were measured once again using an 11-point scale ranging from 0 'strongly disagree' to 10 'strongly agree'. All seven items load on a single factor with an eigenvalue of 4.17 with no other factors

with eigenvalue more than 1. The Cronbach alpha value is 0.91, indicating high internal consistency among the items measuring the entrepreneurship intention and readiness. All seven items recorded factor loading of 0.68 or above. Therefore, the **Entrepreneurship Intention and Readiness Index** was constructed by taking the arithmetic mean of these seven items.

The mean Entrepreneurship Intention and Readiness Index score is 5.8. Males (6.0) score slightly higher than females (5.6). By region, youths from the Western region (6.0) score slightly higher than those from the Central (5.6) and Eastern (5.5) regions.

When the Entrepreneurship Intention and Readiness Index score is categorised into low (mean score less than 5), moderate (mean score of 5 and less than 8), and high (mean score of 8 or above), 16.1 percent of youths fall under the 'high intention and readiness' for entrepreneurship category. The remaining 52.9 percent and 31.0 percent fall under 'moderate intention and readiness' and 'low intention and readiness' categories, respectively.

A slightly higher proportion of males (17.1%) compared to females (15.1%) falls under the 'high intention and readiness' for entrepreneurship category. By region, a higher proportion of those from the Central (17.1%) and Western (16.5%) regions indicate 'high intention and readiness' for entrepreneurship as compared to those from the Eastern region (13.9%).

Comparatively, a higher proportion of youths in the Commerce programmes indicate high intention and readiness for entrepreneurship compared to others. For instance, 29.6 percent of youths studying Commerce fall in the 'high intention and readiness' category, followed by those studying Arts programme (17.8%) and 'Other' courses (14.6%). Only 6.8 percent of those enrolled in the Sciences fall in the 'high intention and readiness' category.

At the individual item level, the mean score ranges from 4.7 (possessing necessary managerial skills to start a firm) to 7.2 (for willingness to start a business if opportunity and resources are available) as shown in Table 17. This indicates that there is a relatively low level of entrepreneurship readiness in terms of possessing necessary managerial skills (mean = 4.7) and practical details needed to start entrepreneurship (mean = 4.9).

**Table 18** Average score of entrepreneurship intention and readiness factors

Entrepreneurship intention and readiness factors	Mean
I am ready to do anything to be an entrepreneur	6.0
My professional goal is to become an entrepreneur	5.3
I will make every effort to start and run my own business	6.5
I am determined to create a firm in the future	6.2
I know the necessary practical details needed to start a firm	4.9
I have all the managerial skills to start a firm	4.7
If I had the opportunity and resources, I would like to start a firm	7.2

### Relationship between different entrepreneurial indices

The relationship between entrepreneurship awareness, attitude, motivation, and intention and readiness was assessed using Pearson's pairwise correlation matrix.

The results indicate that there is only moderate positive correlation between entrepreneurship awareness and entrepreneurship attitude ( $r = 0.43$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), entrepreneurship awareness and entrepreneurship motivation ( $r = 0.45$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), entrepreneurship awareness and entrepreneurship intention and readiness ( $r = 0.41$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

However, there is very strong positive correlations between entrepreneurship attitude and entrepreneurship motivation ( $r = 0.70$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), entrepreneurship attitude and entrepreneurship intention and readiness ( $r = 0.71$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Similarly, there also exists a very strong positive correlation between entrepreneurship motivation and entrepreneurship intention and readiness ( $r = 0.70$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 19** Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix for different measures of entrepreneurship (pairwise correlation coefficients)

	N	Mean	SD	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(1) Entrepreneurship Awareness	2,401	4.3	2.1	1			
(2) Entrepreneurship Attitude	2,402	5.4	3.1	0.43*	1		
(3) Entrepreneurship Motivation	1,677	7.0	1.8	0.45*	0.70*	1	
(4) Entrepreneurship Intention & Readiness	1,676	5.8	2.1	0.41*	0.71*	0.70*	1

### 3.6 Employment Prospects for Youth

This section presents results related to youth's perspectives on their future plans, employment prospects, perceived barriers to getting employed.

#### 3.6.1 Future plans

To assess how youths perceive their future employment aspirations and outlook, they were asked about what they plan to do within the next five years, preferred sectors of employment, plans to migrate for employment, and perceived barriers to employment.

Using a predefined list of 10 probable future plans, including two options marked as 'no plans' and 'other', youths were asked to opt three choices in the order of their preference, what they plan to do within the next five years. The first option for 44.8 percent of the youths is to 'continue studying', followed by 'finding a job' (28.6%) and 'starting their own business' (15.0%) as their first-choice plan.

For their second option, 31.6 percent of the youths report it as 'finding a job', followed by 'starting their own business' (17.4%) and 'continue studying' (14.7%).

For the third option, 19.0 percent report it as 'starting their own business' followed by 'following their passion such as singing, dancing, screenplay, etc.' (16.7%) and 'finding a job' (11.8%).

**Table 20** Activities youths plan to do within the next five years

Future plans	Not an option	First option	Second option	Third option	Total
No plans	90.6	1.7	0.8	7.0	100
Study	32.0	44.8	14.7	8.6	100
Enrol in a TVET programme	93.1	1.2	2.8	2.9	100
Apprenticeship/Internship or volunteer	85.9	1.7	5.5	6.9	100
Get married and be a home maker	95.1	0.2	0.8	3.9	100
Start my own business	48.6	15.0	17.4	19.0	100
Find a job	28.0	28.6	31.6	11.8	100
Work at home	84.4	1.0	4.9	9.8	100
Follow my passion	65.8	5.2	12.4	16.7	100
Others	94.5	0.8	1.4	3.3	100

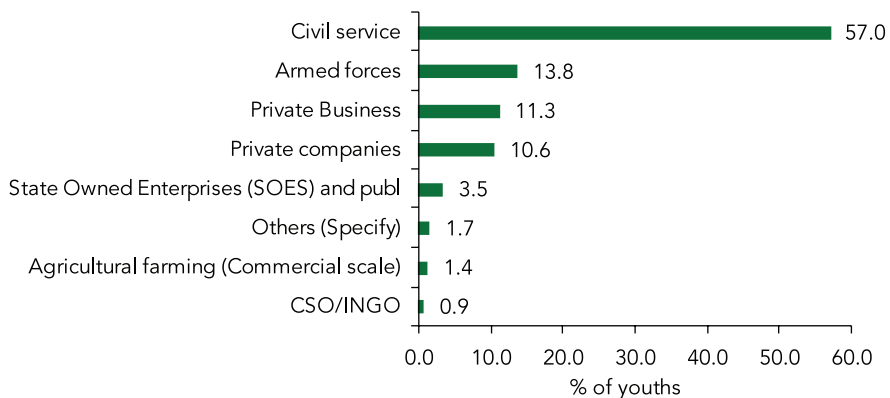
Starting their own business is neither the first, second, nor third option for about half of the youths (48.6%), indicating entrepreneurial activities is not considered an option for future employment by the youths in the next five years (Table 20).

For an overwhelming majority of the youths (93.1%), enrolment into a TVET programme is not an option they are considering within the next five years. Only about seven percent say enrolment in TVET programme is either their first, second, or third choice plan in the next five years. This indicates TVET programmes' very low appeal for our youths. It has even lower appeal than 'working at home', where 15.6 percent of the youths said it is either their first, second, or third choice plan in the next five years which is twice more than wanting to enroll in a TVET programme.

### 3.6.2 Preferred sector and reasons

Among those who report that their plan within the next five years (n=1,353) is to find a job, rather than seek self-employment, over half of them (57.0%) state that their preferred sector of employment is 'civil service', followed by the armed forces (13.8%), private business (11.3%), and private companies (10.6%).

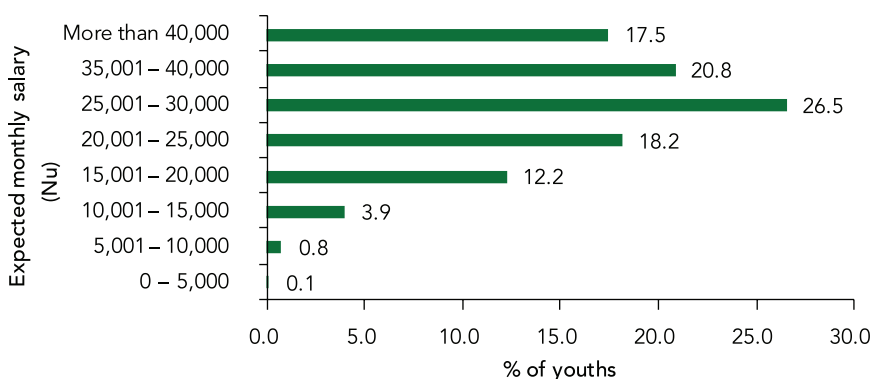
**Figure 53** Distribution of youths by their preferred sector of employment



Among those youths who prefer to get employed within the next five years, the expected monthly salary for about two-thirds (64.8%) of them is over

Nu 25,000<sup>26</sup> per months (Figure 51). A higher proportion of males (70.7%) than females (60.3%) expects their salary to be above Nu 25,000 per month. However, the differences are not statistically significant.

**Figure 54** Distribution of youths by their expected monthly salary



### 3.6.3 Migration for employment

People move from one place to another in search of work and employment. When asked whether they consider moving in search of work and employment, a vast majority of the respondents (93.7%) considered moving to a new place. By gender, a slightly higher proportion of females (94.8%) considers moving for work and employment as compared to males (92.1%). Among the regions, a higher proportion of youths from the Western region (95.3%) considers moving for work and employment, followed by Central region (92.8%). A relatively lower proportion of youths from the Eastern region (88.3%) report that they consider moving for work and employment.

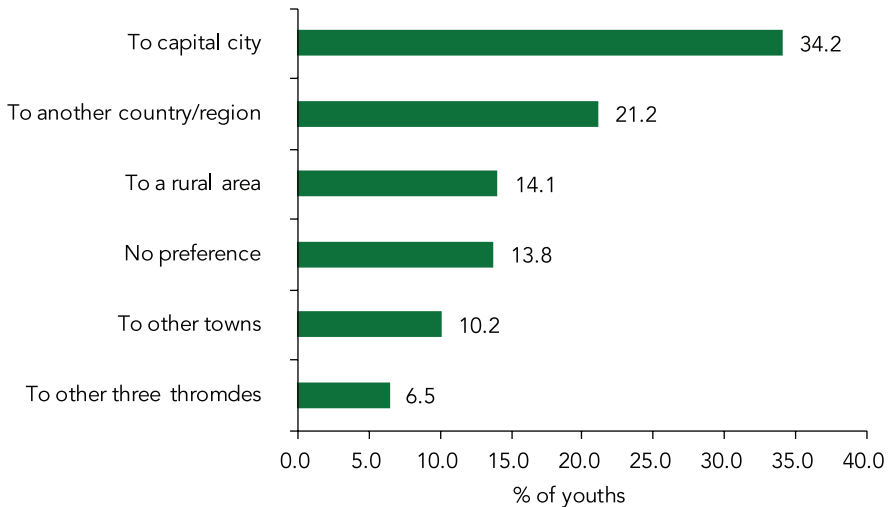
Among the youths who are considering moving to another place in search for work and employment opportunity (Figure 51), about one-third (34.2%) are considering moving to Thimphu, the capital city of Bhutan, followed by 21.2 percent considering moving 'to another country or region'. Surprisingly, 14.1 percent reportedly prefer to move to a rural area. The proportion of youths who report that they would prefer to move to a rural area in search of job and employment is even higher than those who report preferring to

<sup>26</sup> This is equivalent to the current monthly pay (basic pay plus house rent allowance) of an entry level civil service officer at the time of the field survey. This was before civil service salary revision which underwent significant upward revision.



move to other towns (10.2%) and thromdes (6.5%) within Bhutan. Among all, about 13.78% have no preference for a particular place or country but are thinking to migrate in search of job and employment.

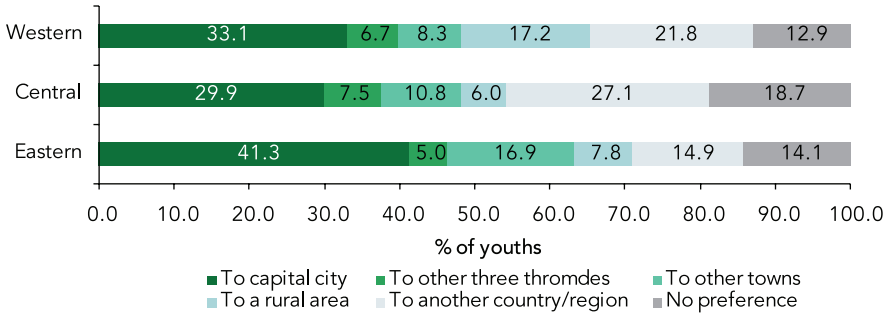
**Figure 55** Distribution of youths by preferred destination



By region, 41.3 percent from the Eastern, 33.1 percent from the Western, and 29.9 percent from the Central regions report that they are considering moving to the capital city in search for work and employment. The capital city seems to be, comparatively, the most attractive destination for youths looking for employment opportunities, including for those who are currently residing in the Western region (Figure 56).

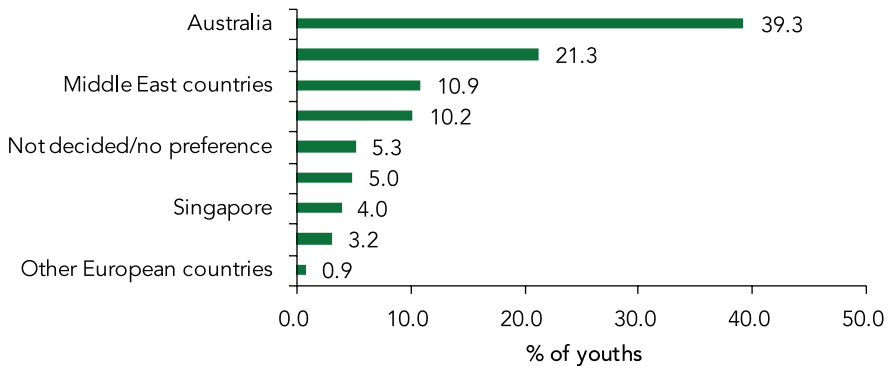
In terms of those contemplating to move abroad in search of employment, youths from the Central region are almost twice as likely to move abroad as compared to those from the Eastern region. For instance, while 27.1 percent from the Central region report considering moving abroad in search of employment, only 14.9 percent from the Eastern region reported the same. A little over one in five (21.8%) youths from the Western region considers moving to another country in search for work and employment.

**Figure 56** Distribution of youths by preferred destination by region



Among those who intend to migrate to another country in search of work and employment, 39.3 percent state that they would prefer to move to Australia, followed by to the United States of America (21.3%), the Middle East (10.9%), and Canada (10.2%).

**Figure 57** Distribution of youths by preferred destination country for migration

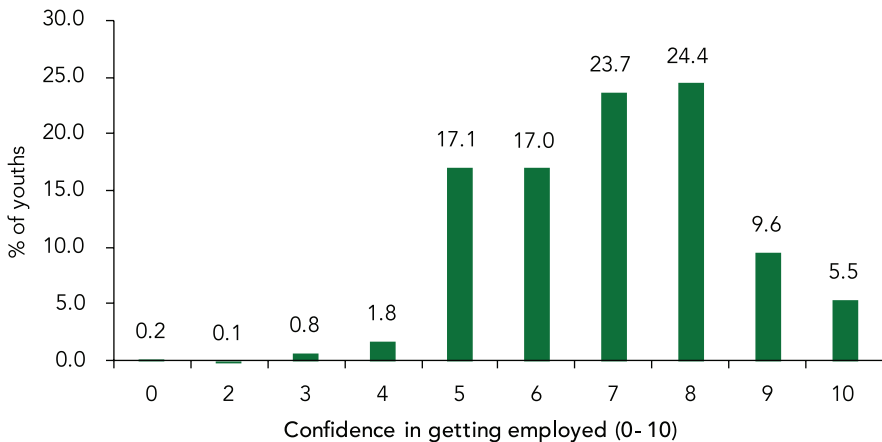


### 3.6.4 Confidence in getting employed

Youths’ confidence in getting employed in the future was assessed using a 11-point scale ranging from zero to 10, where higher scores are oriented towards greater confidence in getting employed and vice versa. Overall, about 40 percent of the youth rate eight or above, indicating a very high confidence in getting employed. However, about three percent of the youth rate their confidence in getting employed between zero and four, indicating a very low confidence in getting employed.

Confidence in getting employed in the future is slightly higher among than males. For instance, while 38.1 percent of males report their confidence in getting employed eight or above, 40.4 percent of females report the same. By region, the confidence in getting employed is much higher among youths from the Central region as compared to those from the Eastern and Western regions. While 46.0 percent of the youths from the Central region report their confidence in getting employed at eight or above, only 38.9 and 37.0 percent of the youths from the Western and Central regions, respectively, report the same.

**Figure 58** Distribution of youths by level of confidence in getting employed

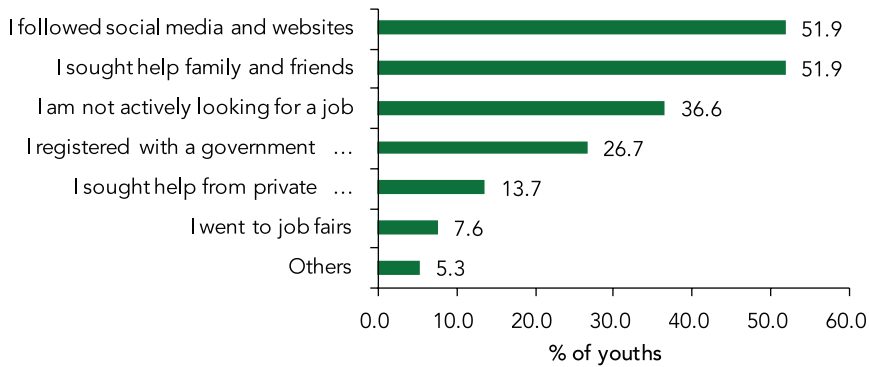


### 3.6.5 Steps taken to find job

Youths who are 'out-of-school' (n = 133) were asked about the major steps undertaken to find an employment using a predefined list with multi-select response option. Over half (51.9%) of the out-of-school youths report to following social media and websites, and seeking help from family and friends as the major steps undertaken to find employment (Figure 56). Over one-quarter (26.5%) of the youths registered with a government employment agency and 13.7 percent sought helps from private employment agencies as their major step towards finding employment. Attendance in job fairs is reported only by 7.6 percent of the out-of-school youths.

On the other hand, over one-third (36.6%) of the out-of-school youths are not actively looking for employment although they are currently unemployed.

**Figure 59** Proportion of out-of-school youths (n=133) who reported taking different steps towards finding an employment



### 3.6.6 Perceived barriers to future employment

Questions pertaining to perceived barriers to future employment were also asked to find out the probable barriers for youths in getting employed. The assessment was conducted using a series of 11 statements with response scale ranging between zero and 10 with higher score oriented towards higher perceived barrier for employment.

Of the 11 items, six items load on to factor1 with an eigenvalue of 4.17 and the remaining five items load on to factor2 with an eigenvalue value of 1.70. Based on the items clustering under each factor (Table 20), factor1 can be termed as 'social barriers' and factor2 can be called 'personal competency' or rather, lack of it. The internal consistency reliability tested using Cronbach's alpha is 0.92 for factor1 and 0.74 for factor2 indicating acceptable level of internal consistency. Therefore, two separate indices of barriers to employment were constructed by taking the arithmetic mean. These two indices measure the social barriers and barriers due to lack of personal competency in getting employed.

In terms of social barriers, about three-quarters (74.5%) of the youths report low social barriers for employment. Of the remaining, 18.2 percent report moderate social barriers and 7.4 percent perceive existence of high social barriers to getting employed.

When it concerns personal competency as a barrier to employment, only about one-third (32.3%) perceive low barriers due to lack of personal competency. Over half (55.4%) of the youths view their lack of personal

competency as barrier to employment and the remaining 12.3 percent view that severe lack of personal competency is the barrier to getting employed.

**Table 21** Mean score and factor loading of each item measuring perceived barriers to employment

Barriers to employment	N	Mean	SD	Factor1	Factor2
I lack work experience	2,399	6.1	2.5		0.56
I lack confidence	2,399	5.6	2.8		0.55
I lack relevant education qualifications	2,400	5.7	2.8		0.62
I have few contacts or information	2,399	5.6	2.5		0.55
I have criminal record	2,400	2.6	3.9	0.87	
Pressure to run family business	2,399	2.2	3.0	0.59	
Being a single parent	2,400	2.5	3.2	0.56	
Not having the right skills	2,399	5.5	2.8		0.56
Mental health issues	2,400	2.9	3.5	0.84	
Physical disability	2,400	2.6	3.7	0.93	
Alcohol or drug dependency	2,399	2.6	3.8	0.92	
Other barrier	2,401	1.6	2.9		

By individual items, youths perceive 'lack of work experience' (mean = 6.1) as the greatest barrier to employment, followed by lack of 'relevant educational qualifications', 'few contacts or information', 'lack of confidence', and not having 'right skills' (Table 20). On the other hand, 'pressure to run family business', 'coming in conflict with law', 'substance dependency', 'belonging to single parent', and 'physical and mental health conditions' are perceived as low barriers to employment.

# Discussions and conclusion

The Study on human flourishing and youth entrepreneurship establishes baseline information on several indicators of wellbeing, happiness, entrepreneurship, and employment prospects for youths of Bhutan. More specifically, this Study produced detailed information about youth wellbeing and happiness, assessed using different measurement tools such as the GNH Index, Flourishing Scale, and Subjective Wellbeing Measures. In terms of youth entrepreneurship, youths' entrepreneurial attitude, motivation, intention, and readiness for becoming entrepreneurs in the future were assessed. Similarly, youths' perception of employment prospects, preferences, and perceived barriers to employment were also assessed.

Results from this Study is expected to bridge the information gap currently existing on the issues of youth wellbeing, entrepreneurship, and employment. It is hoped that the insights from this Study will fuel further investigations and help in shaping policies to create necessary conditions to enhance wellbeing and happiness, fostering and strengthening entrepreneurial knowledge and attitude among the youths, and initiating strategies for employment for youths of Bhutan.

The overall flourishing, as measured by the GNH Index, for youths is 0.766 (measured on a 0 - 1-point scale with higher value representing greater flourishing or happiness). This is slightly lower than the general population GNH Index score for 2022 which was 0.781.

At the indicator level, the sufficiency ratios for youths in 10 of the 33 GNH indicators are less than 50 percent indicating that over half of the youths are suffering from deprivations in these 10 indicators. These indicators are schooling (parents' education qualification), ecological issues, sleep, donations, government performance, negative emotions, knowledge, cultural participation, community relationships, and *Driglam Namzha*. For instance, the sufficiency ratio for ecological issues indicator is 47.4 percent. Since environmental issues was assessed by asking whether the community

in which the youths currently reside is faced with problems related to noise and air pollution and littering, it means that over half of the youths (52.6%) reside in communities where one or more of these three environmental issues are of 'moderate' or 'major' concern.

Similarly, the sufficiency ratio for sleep is 37.6 percent. This means that only a little over one-third (37.6%) of the youth reported allocating adequate time for sleep while the remaining 62.4 percent spent less than the recommended duration of sleep. Since suboptimal sleep time is associated with various negative behaviours<sup>27</sup> and poor health outcomes<sup>28</sup>, it is important for parents and school administrations alike to come up with appropriate strategies to increase sleep duration to the recommended levels among the youth.

Like the GNH Index, flourishing was also alternatively measured using the Flourishing Scale. The overall Flourishing Scale score (measure on a 0-10-point scale with higher score oriented towards higher flourishing) is 7.5. The Cantril Ladder of Life (present) score is 6.5, subjective happiness score is 7.3, and general life satisfaction score is 7.1. The Cantril Ladder of Life (present) score (6.5) which is also sometimes used as a measure of current life satisfaction is lower than general life satisfaction (7.1). This finding is consistent with the findings reported elsewhere<sup>29</sup>.

GNH Index showed positive correlation with other alternative measures of flourishing and subjective wellbeing. The correlation between GNH Index and other alternative measures of flourishing and wellbeing range between 0.19 (with Cantril Ladder of Life – present) and 0.35 (with Flourishing Scale). The statistically significant positive correlation between GNH Index and other alternative measures of flourishing and wellbeing indicate that they are measuring the same higher-level construct of flourishing and wellbeing. A low correlation strength between the GNH Index and other alternative measure of flourishing and wellbeing can indicate that they are not measuring the same thing at the specific measurement items level.

Therefore, since the GNH Index contains numerous actionable indicators

<sup>27</sup> Widome et al. (2019). Correlates of short sleep duration among adolescents. *Journal of Adolescence*, 77, 163-167.

<sup>28</sup> Steptoe, Peacey, and Wardle. (2006). Sleep duration and health in young adults. *Archives of Internal medicine*, 166(16), 1689-169.

<sup>29</sup> OECD. (2023). Methodological considerations in the measurement of subjective well-being. In *OECD Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Well-being*.

and the index is also decomposable by sub-groups, a GNH-based measure of flourishing, wellbeing, and happiness makes it a strong candidate for measuring and monitoring individual and societal progress and development. Moreover, the statistically significant moderate positive correlation between the GNH Index and other measures of flourishing and wellbeing increases its potential for assessing flourishing, wellbeing, and happiness alternatively at a higher conceptual level.

Prevalence of undesirable social conditions such as social isolation (12.4 percent reported not having any confidants and another 24.5 percent just one confidant away from social isolation), experience of bullying (29.8 percent experiencing some form of bullying), experience of discrimination or feeling of being treated differently in a negative way (15 percent reporting it), feeling of disconnectedness to ones' school (24.5 percent reported the sense of belonging to their school is low or not at all) are issues that may need policy attention.

Access to material resources for educational and personal uses such as having a room of their own (45.2%), a computer for use for schoolwork (59.2%), a quiet place to study (69.1%), and a desk to study (70.6%) are not owned by all youths which would greatly enhance their learning.

In terms of time use, or for that matter time misuse, it is observed that a higher proportion of males (9.4%) reported spending three or more hours playing video or computer games per day than females (2.0%). As screen time among the youth is increasing each year, it is important to study this issue in greater detail to develop appropriate strategies to address this undesirable issue.

Entrepreneurship awareness among the youth is very low at 4.3 out of the possible maximum score of 10. Over 60 percent of the youth are classified as having low entrepreneurial awareness. Only a meagre 3.4 percent of youths demonstrated high entrepreneurial awareness. With such low level of entrepreneurial awareness, expecting youths to take up entrepreneurship as an employment choice would be futile.

Higher entrepreneurial awareness is positively associated with higher intention to start their own business. For instance, while 45.4 percent of those who have low entrepreneurship awareness reported that starting their



own business is one of their options for employment in the next few years, 72.8 percent of those with high entrepreneurship awareness reported the same.

The findings also highlight the disparity in the levels of entrepreneurship awareness by region and the type of courses youths are enrolled in. For instance, youths from the Eastern and Central regions as well as those enrolled in the Arts and Science courses exhibited low entrepreneurship awareness than the rest. Students enrolled in the Arts seem to have a notion of irrelevance of entrepreneurship for them. For instance, an Arts student said:

*Coming from arts and humanities background, I am not quite sure what entrepreneurship actually means, though I do know that it deals with business ideas, new innovation and all to do with business backgrounds, but I do know that Sherubtse College has started to focus and stress a lot on entrepreneurship.*

This survey also highlights the need to familiarise the youth about the availability of various financial incentives and low-cost financing mechanisms to support entrepreneurial activities. Currently, most youths seem to have very low awareness about the availability of low-cost financing services extended by government through financial institutions to spur entrepreneurship in the country.

Interventions in areas of mind-set shift from being employed in a regular job to becoming an entrepreneur are deemed necessary. Finding a regular job is a first option for employment in the next five years for 28.6 percent of the youth, while only 15.0 of the youth reported starting their own business as first choice option. A similar finding was also reported by the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources<sup>30</sup> (MoLHR) where only 707 out of 6,003 (11.5%) of jobseekers<sup>31</sup> reported that their first preferred employment is to get self-employed.

Shift in youths' attitude towards entrepreneurial activities as viable options for employment can be achieved through better awareness of the subject and avenues of achieving it, such as through loans, grants, and various

<sup>30</sup> MoLHR. Jobseeker Survey Report 2022.

<sup>31</sup> Not all jobseekers are unemployed. Some of the jobseekers are currently employed, but are looking for alternative jobs.

government schemes. In addition, mentorship initiatives to potential future entrepreneurs will further inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs. Attitude towards becoming an entrepreneur is still low, when provided with an option of a regular employment. This could be because of the risk-averse nature of our youths, compounded by the preference for 9-5 job. This can be corroborated by a youth who said:

*I wouldn't prefer to choose entrepreneurship because usually entrepreneurship activities involve lots of risks, they have to put a lot of effort from commencement itself where they have to do work beyond 9-5, which means they have to spend more on it and lots of risk they have to handle. But I am not really good at handling such risks. As we judge from outside, entrepreneurship is somehow more attractive and cooler one but for me it's not really attractive because of my weakness in handling those risks.*

Plans to enrol into technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programme within the next five years was considered by only about seven percent of youths. This indicates TVET programmes' very low appeal among our youths. Nonetheless, those who are currently enrolled in TVET programmes seem to have a positive outlook of their future employment and entrepreneurship prospect. A TVET trainee said:

*After five years, I want to start a service-related business. I have completed a course on house ware and transmission line. Currently I am undergoing a training in welding. Combining all of these training I received, I want to open service-related business to solve a problem.*

*From my perspective, I want to start a fabrication business. I wish to work at someone's firm for about three years and after that I want to start my own business.*

A sizable proportion of youths (21.2%) who plan to look for employment in the next five years are planning to move abroad in search of better employment opportunities. This mirrors the current trend of youths seeking employment abroad, especially in the Middle Eastern countries. The desire to migrate to other countries in search of employment is much higher among unemployed jobseekers. For instance, 44.8 percent of the 3,994 unemployed jobseeker

interviewed by MoLHR<sup>32</sup> responded that they are currently applying for overseas employment as one of the means towards getting employed. And when asked what support unemployed jobseekers would need to find employment, 46.9 percent of 4,452 unemployed jobseeker said they need 'support and guidance to pursue overseas employment'<sup>33</sup> which suggests people's overwhelming preference for overseas jobs. The same report by MoLHR found that only 12.0 percent of these 4,452 unemployed jobseekers said they would need support in the form of 'entrepreneurship knowledge or information to set up own business' towards getting employed, indicating very low prevalence of entrepreneurial intentions among the unemployed. The motivation for youths to explore and seek employment abroad seems to be due to the comparatively higher earning opportunities as one youth reasoned:

*Employment opportunities is available in our country but only difference is earning. As a young mind, earning more money and living comfortably is first priority so, even if an opportunity is available I think going abroad could mean making more earning. Rather staying in Bhutan for thirty-forty years and building one house, I better go outside, returning after five years and building one house. Thereby, I can help my family and those who are suffering. If in case, doing small job within country where I cannot live happily and cannot help parents, on top of that I might end up depending on them.*

The survey reveals that the majority (57.0%) of those who plan to look for a job within the next five years would prefer a job in the civil service over employment in other sectors. This is in line with the findings reported in other studies<sup>34</sup>.

However, they perceive lack of work experience, mismatch in their qualification or skills with skills requirement for the job, lack of confidence, and lack of information as major barriers to getting employed. A student said:

<sup>32</sup> MoLHR. Jobseeker Survey Report 2022.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. It is reported that, 46.6 percent of 6,003 jobseekers interviewed stated that their first-choice sector of employment is 'government organisation'. Similarly, 89 percent of 921 students interviewed in 2016 stated that their preferred sector of employment is government job (refer Utha et al. Entrepreneurship Education in Bhutan: Perception, Culture and Challenges, 2016).

*I don't know if I am right or wrong, I think it is experiences requirement in the job, as one of my brother said experiences is required even for the internship, what they asked is did you work before, as we are fresh graduate we don't have experiences except internship but even if we do intern we are not really that much consider in one of the company I don't know which company is it so, work experiences is really needed. Some of the office is giving opportunities but not really that much.*

Lack of experience as a barrier to employment perceived by the youths seems to be confirmed by other studies. Out of the 4,758 unemployed jobseekers interviewed by MoLHR, 11.8 percent reported that the reason for their current unemployment is due to lack of work experience. Policy makers and the government should, therefore, target interventions that will resolve these issues.