



# **A Primary Study on the Practical Implementation Practices and Issues of Community Contracting Protocol in Dewathang Gewog, Samdrup Jongkhar Bhutan**

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## **Author's contribution**

*The sole author designed, analyzed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

Recently, media reports of community contracts have increased due to problems with the implementation of the Community Contracting Protocols (CCP) among the policymakers and local government officials in the Kingdom of Bhutan. Most of the media reported that it played a crucial role in promoting economic and social development in the community, but also reported common challenges related to project failures and other technical difficulties. The Dewathang Gewog(Block) under Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag(district), Eastern Bhutan is one of the active CCP implementers in the country. As a result, the gewog officials and community contractors have been confronted with a series of challenges and difficulties like most other Gewogs faced in Bhutan. However, the claims must be meticulously validated through academic research and inform the public accordingly because they may carry incomplete assumptions of the CCP in the country. Few or no previous study has been conducted in Bhutan so far using statistical tests to assess the practice and implementation issues of the CCP. This study focuses on identifying the key implementation challenges of the CCP in the Gewog. The Gewog had carried out several community projects over the past three years (2018-2020). The study was carried out within three months. The target population size was 41, determined from the seven dispersed project sites. Only

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people who were mainly involved in the implementation of the community projects in the last three years were considered. By following the cluster random sampling process, the sample size(30) was selected as the respondents for the study. Data were collected from them through a survey and face-to-face interview with the key informants. The hypotheses were tested with a chi-square test based on data obtained from the respondents and processed with Microsoft Excel. The results were presented in tabular and graphical form with interpretations for better understanding. The study found that Gewog officials and community groups faced challenges such as project delays, lack of coordination, poor monitoring and supervision, cost overruns. In addition, the study also found out that the Gewog office has ensured community participation through CCP despite the challenges. Strict performance monitoring (tracking progress), capacity building and problem-solving through field visits to identify obstacles are the possible recommendations proposed in the study. The study also recommends that the relevant agencies review the CCP as appropriate and make it feasible and enforceable.

**Keywords:** *Dzongkhag(district); Gewog (block); Chiwog (village); Gup (head of the block); community contracting protocol; Gewog development grant.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Under Article 22, Section 1 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008 empowers the Local Governments of Bhutan to facilitate the direct participation of the people in the development and management of their own social, economic and environment [1]. The local governments in Bhutan include 205 gewog(block) and chiwogs(villages) apart from the four major towns. In line with this, Bhutan implemented the community contracting protocol in 2011. It has been gaining popularities in recent years as the local governments across 205 Gewogs in Bhutan started implementing its protocols

A community contract is an agreement between a community and a contracting authority, whereby the community (or a section of the community) is responsible for the implementation of the works and therefore functions as a contractor [2].

Community contracting refers to a procurement tool that empowers communities through an executive role in the identification, planning and implementation of development initiatives. In a community contract, there is an agreement between a procurement agency (funding agency) and community contractors represented by a committee in which they undertake the projects mutually and implement its protocols until the completion of the projects [3].

Though Bhutan decentralizes the central contracting works to a local government, its practical implementation and issues have been discussed at various levels of the governments in

the country since 2011. Moreover, it has become a controversial topic of discussion among politicians, media and government officials due to the poor quality of works in the community. On the other hand, there are some community and officials who claimed that the CCP has brought a radical change in the procurement modalities and development. The study explores how the Gewog under Samdrup Jongkhar District implemented the CCP with community engagement programmes and discusses the key issues of the Gewog 2018-2020. The study was conducted by adopting the qualitative research approach. Both primary and secondary data collection methods were employed to collect the data. The cluster random sampling method was adopted to collect the sample size from the population for the accurate data collection process. The study focuses on Dewathang gewog's impacts of the implementation of CCP in their villages because comparatively, this gewog executed more community contracts between 2018-2020 under Samdrup Jongkhar District. Through this study, the impacts of CCP in the gewog have been studied and the recommendations provided accordingly. The gewog has five chiwogs as of December 2020 [4] and executed the community projects in all five chiwogs.

The Government of Bhutan launched community Contracting Protocols in 2011 to decentralize the central contracting works to a local government with a budget threshold value limit to Nu. 1.5 million. And the Ministry of Home and Culture Affairs has been entrusted with the responsibilities to look after the rules. The Gup represents the head of the community is

responsible to execute the contracting protocol in their respective villages.

The protocol presents many advantages in terms of job creation and income generation as well as partnership development with community participation. Most of the prior studies show that community contracting is an important instrument for rural up-grading participatory proposes and focuses on various community contracting aspects to develop the interest of workers. This paper mainly draws on the issues faced during the community contracting in rural settlement up-grading in Dewathang.

This study focuses on the problems encountered after the implementation of the (CCP) in Dewathang Gewog. It has been seen as one of the major issues within Bhutan as the community faces difficulties in completing the project at a given time which is delay and to maintain qualitative of the works.

### 1.1 Problem Statement

Bhutan has been implementing the CCP across the 205 Gewogs since 2011. The opportunity given through the community has also empowered some villagers to become more skilful and experienced [5]. The communities across Bhutan have benefited through community contracting economically, socially and culturally [6].

Despite the facts, there were also common loopholes reported after implementing the CCP related to construction quality, poor monitoring and lacked skilled workers in several villages across the country [7]. The time and cost overruns in all construction related works irrespective of the project size in Bhutan was another challenge that burdens the country's exchequer [8,9]. Similarly, the Dewathang Gewog is one of the topmost CCP implementers in the country experienced both failures and success since the implementation of CCP in 2011. If these claims are not validated, the people may carry incomplete assumptions of the CCP in the country. Therefore, there is a need to validate the challenges caused by the CCP in the gewog through statistical testing and conclusion since there was no prior study conducted in Bhutan on community contract and proven through statistical tools. This study has explored the key challenges and their impacts on community development after implementing community contracting protocol in the Gewog.

### 1.2 Objectives

The main objectives of the study are;

- Identify the key challenges faced by officials of Dewathang Gewog and community groups while implementing the CCP.
- Analyze if there is any significant change in community development in Dewathang Gewog since the implementation of CCP.
- Analyze the extent to which Dewathang Gewog has ensured the participation of target beneficiaries in the implementation of CCP.
- Identify, compare and document prominent challenges from the past community contracting practices and explore the community group modalities for community developmental initiatives in Dewathang Gewog

### 1.3 Research Hypotheses

- The challenges of CCP implementation does not affect the Gewog's developmental initiatives in seven villages
- There is no significant change in community development since the implementation of CCP
- Dewathang Gewog Office does not ensure participants of the targeted population in the implementation of CCP

### 1.4 Scope

The study emphases identifying the lessons of CCP implementation practices including its key issues in the gewog. The survey questionnaire was distributed randomly among 30 respondents who had a maximum experience of carrying out the CCP in different chiwogs(villages) of the Gewog. They were selected based on the cluster random selection process. The study covered only the five chiwogs of Dewathang gewog which were selected from the seven different locations based on community projects executed between 2018-2020. It took around three months to conclude the study successfully.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In many nations, the community contracting protocols is gaining more prevalent as a result of the decentralization policy in the procurement processes of the government. The protocol

ensures the immense psychological effect of the communities in terms of development and empowers people to use the resources to assume responsibility for their development. It becomes an influence of attitudinal growth for the community and brings the different community together to learn from each other as well as strengthens the cross-community dialogue. The major impacts include an increase in community assets and incomes, capacity building, good governance and transparency, empowerment, and conflict resolution [3].

On contrary, some failure stories have been also reported in many nations due to poor monitoring and supervision in the procuring agencies. The discussions on the impacts of the CCP has been escalating in Bhutan among the government officials and media since 2011. Despite the CCP promotes community viability, employment opportunities and delegation of power, still, the cost overrun, inferior quality of works, lack of site supervision and incompetent procurement personnel at gewog levels are provoked as the key issues at the gewog level [10]. However, no concrete studies have been conducted by the Government policymakers and procurement professionals in Bhutan other than reports presented in various forums.

Kikwasi [11] pointed out that contract delays and poor quality of works are the top most effects of community contract due to the deprivation of technical experts in Cambodia. This finding is much connected to the study and supports the shortcomings of community contracts in Bhutan.

Wangdi [12] supported the findings that the inferior quality of a contract is the key challenge of a community contract. He mentioned the quality of the contracts deteriorate when the villagers with limited knowledge in contract management and technical skills execute the important projects of the community. The findings are strongly correlated with the data analysis and findings of the survey, but not statistically proven.

Palden [13] simulated that one of the most significant challenges faced by the community contract was the delay in the completion of the project and cost overrun which directly impact the delay in service delivery to the citizens. He reflected that out of 1091 completed community projects, 257 works were delayed and 485 works were into cost overrun. Even though the community contracts can benefit the community but need quality management. BBS [14]

supplemented earlier reports highlighting the flaws in awarding of community contract works worth over Nu.2M to commercial contractors by local government officials. This may be interpreted as the sheer weakness of community contracting protocols. Unfortunately, none of these claims has been proven through hypothesis testing and formal research procedures.

Sambasivan & Soon [15] stated that the most significant causes for the delays in the community contracting projects are all due to improper planning, poor site management, the inadequate experience of the contractor, lack of communication between parties and mistakes during the construction stage. Moreover, the small contractors alleged that local leaders were involved in collusion to award works to their relatives, friends and neighbours and also pointed that the smallest class contractors would be left with no work [12]. This indicates that the community may be ineffective in managing the contracts.

On contrary, Wangchuk [16] mentioned that community contracting is an effective means of mobilizing community labour and ensuring that workers are completed on time. The cost of community contracting often being significantly lower than for commercial contracts and a high proportion of community contract costs are used to pay local labour and for local material, so the community benefits directly from additional income. Further, Swiderska [17] reasoned that community contracting helps to establish internal community rules for the equitable sharing of benefits and sustainable management of government resources. Wangdi [12] supported that community contracting has helped the community people stop leaving their villages when they get earning opportunities at their villages.

The grassroots government is made accountable because the community people have a better judgement of whether it is worth the cost and whether it is done to satisfactory standards [18]. Community development should empower people through capacity building, decision making in the planning, implementation and evaluation of community projects and initiative to promote self-reliance [19]. Through these reviews, it is concluded that the community contracting protocols has both constructive and destructive impacts on the communities. Therefore, the Government of Bhutan and local

leaders may manoeuvre a joint initiative and strategy to make the community contracting protocols more practical, viable and sustainable to fulfil the values of GNH.

The lack of understating of contract, the lack of mutual understanding between the partners, wrong assessment of contract capacities, a sudden change in leadership and power politics, sanctions in case of non-fulfilment of contracts, and effective negotiation are the major difficulties and problems encountered by the local functionaries while implementing the community contracting protocols [2].

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the study was obtained from the Dewathang Gewog(block) under Samdrup Jongkhar District. The targeted population size was 41 people, who had spent maximum time with the community contracts and experienced the taste of CCP either as a supervisor or labour or community contractors. Because the community project sites and their populations being dispersed across different locations, the study adopted a cluster random sampling method. The population size was divided into five groups out of seven project locations in five chiwogs/villages depending upon the number of community projects being carried out by communities between 2018-2020. Five respondents each were selected from three different locations, six respondents from two locations while three respondents each from another location.

The total sample employed in the study was 30 (male = 18, female = 12) because the 30 sample size was calculated based on the 8% margin of error(confidence interval) and the confidence level as 90% for this targeted population. Considering this situation, the idle sample size was found out to be 30 samples for this study. The sample size was calculated as per the sample size calculator (Qualtrics, 2020).

#### 3.2 Instruments

As a part of the primary data collection method, a survey questionnaire was used to collect the data from 30 respondents who were randomly selected from five different locations. The respondents were asked to choose various statements on CCP challenges confronted by

them in their workplace. The questions were designed based on the Likert Scale options; Agree, Neutral, and Disagree. Moreover, an unstructured interview (face-to-face interview) was also conducted with the key informants who know much about the community contract protocols and their challenges to further validate the survey results. The gewog officials helped in the distribution of the questionnaire in five different places.

Similarly, the secondary data on community contracts performance records were retrieved from the Gewog office, especially the statistics on community contracts and budget approval records for the financial year three years 2018-2020 as the details are explained in the data collection process.

#### 3.3 Data Collection

Formal approval from the gewog office was obtained before data collection. The data was collected from two different sources: primary and secondary approaches. Primary data was collected from respondents like the Gup, project focus people, civil engineers, community contractors and labours based on Likert scale questionnaires. An appropriate direction was given in the questionnaire to ensure the accuracy of the data collection. All questions were asked about the implementation problems of CCP and alternative strategies for addressing the challenges. Specifically, the main components of the questionnaire are the statement of the quality of the work of the community, poor coordination among members, project delays, cost overruns and some of the strategies to mitigate project risks. These components have been studied due to common problems of the CCP related to these components as reported by the media and local officials.

Secondary data on past community projects was collected directly from Samdrup Jongkhar District and Dewathang Administrative Office for cross-project comparative analysis between 2018-2020. The existing information on the number of completed projects, total budget, project executed location and number of beneficiaries are the key components of this approach. These data were required to substantiate the findings of the survey as well as study the impacts of the whole community projects. Also, these previous project reports contain important data in this study to link relevant issues and the implementation practices of the CCP.

### 3.4 Data Analysis Tools

Besides a survey, the data were collected from the previous records on community projects from the Gewog Office. The responses are analyzed using a readily available tool i.e., the spreadsheet and online statistical calculator from [20]. A non-parametric test (chi-square test) was performed to see the significance of the null hypothesis. In addition, a simple statical descriptive analysis was employed to find out the frequency and average of the respondents against the statements related to the challenges of CCP obtained through a survey. As a part of the qualitative approach, the face-to-face survey was utilized to learn the understanding of respondents' behaviour, opinions and perspectives and to explore the responses to gather more and deeper information regarding the issues of community contracting.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the analysis of data obtained through a survey. A total of 30 respondents was covered in the survey. The statistical analysis of the responses is also captured in this section. The results are demonstrated with the help of figures for better understanding.

### 4.1 Respondent's Profile

The table shows the position level of the respondents of Dewathang gewog. Out of 30 respondents, 3 are project supervisor, 2 are engineer, 2 are community contractors and 23 are labours. The response rate is higher for the

labour with 77% as compared to other respondents. Similarly, the additional interview was conducted with the key informants like project supervisors and site engineers to validate the responses were true.

### 4.2 Hypothesis Testing with Chi-Square

The Chi-Square test is calculated based on two independent variables; agree and disagree responses by 30 respondents against the given statements. In order to perform the test logically, the neutral responses are excluded and the scores of strongly agree and agree are totaled while strongly disagree and disagree are totaled as well.

#### 4.2.1 Hypothesis 1 is tested based on question No.9:

The challenges of CCP implementation impede the Gewog's developmental initiatives in seven villages.

The above chi-square test showed that the significant level is below the cut-off value between agreeing and disagree,  $X^2 (1, N = 25) = 5.88, p = .0.02$ . Therefore, the researcher failed to accept the null hypotheses since the p-value is less than the significance level. It depicts that the challenges of CCP implementation impede the gewog's developmental initiatives in seven villages.

#### 4.2.2 Hypothesis 2 is tested based on question No.8

There is a significant change in community development since the implementation of CCP.

Table 1. Respondent's profile

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Project Supervisor	3	10%
Site Engineer	2	7%
Community Contractor	2	7%
Labourer	23	77%
Total	30	100%

Table 2. Hypothesis Test 1

$X^2$ Observed	$X^2$ Expected	Chi-Square	P-Value
Agree	21	13	0.02
Disagree	4	12	
Total Response	25	5.88	

alpha:0.05, df:1, Right Tail

**Table 3. Hypothesis Test 2**

<b>X<sup>2</sup> Observed</b>		<b>X<sup>2</sup> Expected</b>	<b>Chi-Square Value</b>	<b>P-Value</b>
Agree	18	11	4.95	0.03
Disagree	4	11		
Total	22			

alpha:0.05, df:1, Right Tail

**Table 4. Hypothesis Test 3**

<b>X<sup>2</sup> Observed</b>		<b>X<sup>2</sup> Expected</b>	<b>Chi-Square Value</b>	<b>P-Value</b>
Agree	23	15	4.89	0.03
Disagree	6	14		
Total Response	29			

alpha:0.05, df:1, Right Tail

The above chi-square test showed that the significant level is below the cut-off value between agreeing and disagree,  $X^2 (1, N = 22) = 4.95$ ,  $p = .0259$ . Therefore, the researcher failed to accept the null hypotheses and accept the alternative hypothesis where there is a significant change in community development after the implementation of CCP.

#### **4.2.3 Hypothesis 3 is tested based on question no 11**

Dewathang Gewog Office ensures community participants in the implementation of CCP.

Hypothesis 3 is tested based on question no 11: Dewathang Gewog Office ensures community participants in the implementation of CCP.

The above chi-square test showed that the significant level is below the cut-off value between agreeing and disagree,  $X^2 (1, N = 30) = 4.89$ ,  $p = .03$ . Therefore, the researcher failed to accept the null hypotheses and accept the alternative hypothesis where there is a significant change in community development after the implementation of CCP.

#### **4.3 Descriptive Analysis**

Descriptive analysis for the other statements on different parameters of challenges of the CCP performed after combining the scores of agreeing and disagree together as below.

The table represents the respondent's frequencies on the Likert Scale questionnaire. The response rate is high for the delay of the contracts, lack of coordination and lack of modern construction equipment as compared to other responses. Out of 30 respondents, 21(70%) of the participants expressed that there is a delay in community contracts due to ineffectiveness in coordination and lack of modern construction equipment. Around 17% of respondents have responded otherwise while 13% of them remained neutral. This finding somehow confirms that implementation of CCP delays the community contracts and may have implication for the community's development. The past three years comparison (2018-2020) made on community contract issues in Dewathang found that out of 10 executed projects 6 projects were delayed. Therefore, this aligns with the issue faced in community contracting in Dewathang Gewog.

**Table 5. Frequencies for statements**

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Agree (%)</b>	<b>Neutral (%)</b>	<b>Disagree (%)</b>
Delay of project delays due to CCP implementation	70	13	17
CCP ensures proper planning and scheduling	30	30	40
Proper supervision and site management	40	7	53
Lack of communication and coordination	70	13	17
Increase in the threshold value in the contracts	67	20	13
Availability of utilities on site	40	16	44
Lack of modern construction devices and equipment	70	3	27
There are shortages of skilled labour	84	4	13

The response rate for the statement on 'proper planning and scheduling' is 70% agreed as compared to 13% of respondents who expressed otherwise while 17% of respondents remained neutral on it. The improper planning and scheduling would lead to delay and cost overrun as well as lead to poor performance management [11]. Similarly, the Royal Annual Audit highlighted that almost Nu.31.85 M was spent on infrastructures that were incomplete due to a lack of proper planning [21]. Perhaps, this shows that the delay and cost overrun is owing to improper planning and scheduling. Therefore, improper planning and scheduling have caused project delay and cost overrun in Dewathang.

Another statement on supervision and site management was asked to all the respondents.

Among 30 respondents, 12 (40%) of respondents expressed that there is proper supervision and site management whereas 16 (53%) of respondents feel that most contracts lacked proper supervision and site management while only 2 (7%) of them are not sure about it. Sambasivan & Soon [15] pointed out that the lack of supervision and site management is also contributed to delay and cost overrun of the projects in community contracting. Also, it has been reported in the Kuensel [22] that poor site management, documentation, work plans, financial mismanagement attribute to time overrun in the community projects.

From this finding, it may be concluded that there is a shortcoming in supervision and site management at Dewathang Gewog. The next statement was on lack of communication and coordination among the committee while executing the projects. 70% of respondents agreed that there is a lack of communication and coordination as compared to 17% of respondents who expressed otherwise. Based on this finding, the conclusion may be drawn that Dewathang Gewog lacks communication and coordination among the parties involved in the community projects which is also contributing to the delay of the project.

Similarly, the next statement was asked about the need for an increase in the threshold value of the community contracts. The response rate is 67% which is higher as compared to disagree response rate of 13% while 20% of the respondents are not sure about the statement. Therefore, the respondents feel that the

enhancement of the threshold value is needed to maintain the quality of the contracts.

Also, the response rate for the availability of utilities on the site is 40% (Agree), 44% (Disagree) and 17% (Neutral) respectively. Perhaps, this finding indicates that the unavailability of utilities on site is one of the shortcomings in Dewathang Gewog. While interviewing the relevant officials, it was also found out that the project has been delayed and quality affected because of this shortcoming.

In contradictory to other response rates, in terms of deployment of the modern construction equipment, the respondents (70%) agreed that such an arrangement was made when executing the projects.

Finally, the response rate is 84% for the shortage of labour. It may be interpreted that the community contracts in various villages under Dewathang gewog has been impeded due to an acute shortage of skilled workers and affected the quality of work and its progress. Moreover, this finding was supplemented by Wangdi (2015), who also highlighted that the quality of contracted work is affected when the works are offered to villagers with poor or no technical skills. This finding is further supported by the interviewed responses from the relevant Gewog officials. It may be concluded that Dewathang Gewog's community contracts are massively affected due to skilled workforces' shortage.

#### **4.4 Community Projects and Related Issues between 2018-2020**

The comparative analysis of community projects and their related issues between the year 2018-2020 were made based on the obtained data from the gewog offices.

The above figure shows the three years executed project and its issues; delay, cost overrun, and quality under Dewathang Gewog. For instance, in 2018, only two community projects were executed and it was found out that both projects have issues with quality, delay and cost overrun. Similarly, six projects were carried out in 2019. 4 projects were an issue with quality, delay and cost overrun. In 2020, two projects were delayed and cost overrun. Perhaps, in general, the above comparative analysis depicts that the majority of the issues were related to delay and lack of quality under Dewathang Gewog.





Fig. 1. Community projects and no of issues

Therefore, from the results of analysis and findings, one may conclude that the community contracting approach and its implementation practices in Dewathang gewog are not very inspiring and impressive because of the issues related to delay, quality, and cost overrun.

#### 4.5 Community Projects Undertaken in Dewathang Gewog between 2018-2020

The following table shows the number of community projects undertaken under Dewathang Gewog over the last three years (2018-2020). It also provides an approved budget and the types of construction projects in various villages.

The information in Table 6 shows that the number of community projects carried out in seven villages through the CCP, which shows that the CCP was adopted for those projects with different budget expenditures. It also depicts that as compared to other projects, the budget on road construction for agricultural purpose is worth spending. The collective works accomplished by the group in their community would be perhaps the prominent examples in the Gewog. It also shows that community groups have contributed to the development of their community.

#### 4.6 Analysis of Qualitative Data and Findings

In this section, the additional findings of the study are regarding the results of the interview conducted with local government officials (Gup, Agriculture Extension Officer, Gewog

Administrative Officer & Site Engineer who are the project monitoring committee). A personal interview was conducted to supplement and support the earlier findings and results. A few questions related to the community contracting approach's implementation issues were asked to them. Most shared about the challenges connected to a project delay, skilled labour, insufficient technical personnel, cost overrun and quality of the works. These factors encumbered the progress of the works in the Gewog. One of the respondents says, "initially the CCP has been always problematic for me because of lack of awareness and training sessions from the government. However, after attending several training sessions conducted by the relevant agencies, now, I am confident to apply some of the critical clauses". Similar, another respondent says that to have a smooth implementation of CCP, first I should learn and understand each clause to explain to the people.

One of the respondents pointed out that after the implementation of CCP, the main complaint raised by the community is all related to inferior workmanship and delays. In addition, the shortage of skilled workforces has also become a challenge for some of the villages as per the findings.

Another respondent opinioned one of the main reasons that cause substandard work and project delay is due to insufficiently use of modern equipment and mechanized approaches implemented at the project's sites. Not getting the raw materials in time at project sites is also cited as one of the reasons for delaying the community projects according to this respondent.

**Table 6. Number of community projects undertaken under Dewathang Gewog**

Year	Name of the Projects	Location /Village	Approved Budget (Million)
2018	Construction of wall at Donphu Meeting Hall	Domphu	0.14
	Construction of retention wall at Kopor	Kopor	0.08
2019	Construction of courtyard (Doshel)	Marthang	0.57
	Maintenance of Rekhay primary school	Rekhay	0.7
	Construction of temple courtyard	Marthang	0.6
	Maintenance of RWSS	Reshor	0.6
	Construction of store cum gewog kitchen	Chenari	0.19
	Construction of wall and clearing and filling of the farm road at Ashikhar	Ashikhar	0.1
2020	Construction of farm road	Reshor	1.4
	Construction of farm road at Pam	Domphu	0.13

Upon asking questions on community contracting approach's modalities and procedures, the participants shared the following modalities and procedures:

- Gewog officials first need to identify the community project based on the need basis and prepare detailed planning and feasibility of the project is carried out including the designing, budget estimation, identification of social-environmental and land acquisition issues and determination on whether the project meets the community contracting criteria.
- Gewog Administration office identifies the community contractor based on willingness to perform the task
- Detail cost estimation is carried out with the help of the project engineer such as all cost for materials requirement, labour and transportation cost. The maintenance plan is also carried out after the cost estimation between gewog administration and community contractors [23].
- After the cost estimation and project, plan is ready, the contract documents are prepared by the gewog administration. Subsequently, the negotiation and signing of the contract are done between the gewog administration and community representing contractor ensuring contracts to be completed in time in presence of competent witnesses.
- Lastly, the community contractor is responsible for the implementation of projects provided he/she should carry out the task based upon the contract terms and conditions. The work is implemented after 10 days from the issue of the work order letter. The project engineer and gewog officials monitor the work-time to time until the completion of the work. Moreover, the respondents shared that the proper recording of the projects is kept for auditing purposes.

Also, the respondents in the interview opined the other issues such as lack of project planning and scheduling, skilled labour, site supervision and coordination among the workers are considered as important factors impeding the implementation of the community contracting approach in the Gewog.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusion

To conclude the study, despite the community contracting promotes harmony, community roles in development, and work culture through equal opportunities among the members in the community, it has been pointed out that implementation issues are owing to adherence with the contract terms and conditions. As a consequence, it leads to project delay, substandard quality of work are major concerns in Dewathang Gewog. The statistical significance level was also proved for the Gewog office ensuring community participation through CCP, the impact on the community developed since the inception of CCP and challenges encountered by CCP. In addition, the comparative analysis of the issues of the community projects for the past three financial years was also made and presented with the help of records obtained from the Gewog Office. The analysis was performed to substantiate that the implementation difficulties and challenges existed in the past years. Similarly, the lack of coordination among the parties, poor project scheduling, monitoring and shortage of labours were other components of the findings reflected in the study. Therefore, feasible recommendations to address these issues amicably were also provided in the study. Of all one of the suggested recommendations is the development of an alternative plan for the community projects in the respective chiwogs by the gewog officials and the community groups which might help to achieve the project goals and avoid the implementation shortcomings of the Community Contracting Protocols.

### 5.2 Recommendations

One of the findings says that there is a lack of skilled labour which impedes the projects to complete on time. For that, the Gewog may have to reassure more people to be on board for the community development works and programs through a skill enhancement training program. Such initiatives would boost the skills and create awareness of the projects and protocols.

Another finding is related to poor planning and project scheduling hindering the quality of work and its delay. Therefore, the gewog administration in consultation with the district

office may have to restructure their plans with alternative options and fix the accountability and transparency for all the projects they execute. This may help to achieve the outcomes of the projects as the systematic CCP implementation is pivotal at the formulation stage.

Also, one of the findings shows that there is poor communication and coordination among the parties. Therefore, the researcher recommends developing comprehensive information resources with the Gewog, such as databases, software, and computer-based tools for tracking the progress, generating the report and disseminating timely information to the different stakeholders. These would minimize the confusion, corruption, procrastination and mismanagement of the projects and resources. It is highly necessary for the success of any policy at the local government level.

In addition, the adoption of timely consultative meetings and a participatory approach with the community is another viable suggestion which that gewog offices might implement to improve the working environments between the gewog officials and the community groups.

One key pertinent finding is about the deprivation of the modern construction equipment and machinery at different sites hampering the quality of works besides the project delays. The district office and gewog office may coordinate with the central government to deploy enough machinery and equipment at the sites to ensure speedy delivery of the project. The construction workmanship may be improved through a strict performance monitoring system like undertaking field visits to identify the obstacles by Gewog officials as this is the part of managing and regulating process to track the progress and ensure quality.

Finally, the gewog office may have to initiate the discussion with the respective agency to review the CCP to make it feasible and implementable.

### 5.3 Limitations

The scope of the study is limited to, the challenges of community contract protocols about construction work (community projects) being carried out in the identified villages, so the selected respondents may not have tried the questionnaire seriously as expected. Discussion and interpretation of the data could be biased because of that incidence. Access to review of

the existing literature on the subject, particularly in the context of Bhutan, is limited as I have not found the relevant articles and previous research. This may also seem like research shortcomings of my study. The study limits the use of statistical tools to analyze data that may have skewed the results and conclusions, as the use of the online chi-square calculator and spreadsheet has its limitations. COVID-19 pandemic, it was difficult for me to get formal approval from the relevant authorities to collect data as it took me longer.

### CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

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### COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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