

A business entrepreneur among NC aspirants from Dagana

Staff Reporter
from Thimphu

A business graduate and business entrepreneur, Dawa Rigyel, is one among the many aspiring candidates from Dagana who has declared to contest in the upcoming National Council (NC) elections this year.

Dawa Rigyel, who has a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from College of Arts and Science, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu, is confident that he can best represent Dagana Dzongkhag.

"This is going by the good will and wishes from the people of Dagana, unconditional support from my family and friends, and ultimately belief in myself. At this moment, the time has

eventually culminated in my aspiration to run for the NC 2018 elections," he said.

After graduation in 2015, Dawa Rigyel returned to his hometown in Dagana, which he describes as a way to give back to his place and people.

Coming back to his village in Khagochen under Kana Gewog in Dagana, he started working with Ready Construction, a private construction company based in Dagana, from 2016 to 2017. He then took full charge from planning and management to the execution of construction projects.

"Manning and travelling to construction projects at different locations of Dagana, I had the fortune of working closely with people and



have the understanding of places at length, their distances and difficulties, conditions and constraints and opportunities and prospects," he said.

"Over and above, during my school vacations and life after graduation in the village, I also extended my helping hand as a responsible son to my parents in farming. I have

been a farmer and I know what it takes to become a one. My touch with rural lives and livelihood is still fresh and the hardships and experiences I have endured and enjoyed as a farmer is vibrant and rich even today," he added.

Dawa Rigyel also applauded the former policy makers for all their achievements and successes and for the changes that he had observed travelling across Dagana.

"Much has been done and many more has to be continued and reviewed still. It is here I have made up my mind to declare my candidature as a NC candidate and offer people of Dagana the choice they will never regret," he added.

Having born, raised and worked with the

people in the field, Dawa Rigyel said he had the privilege of meeting, knowing and working with the people of Dagana. "I have been there during their challenges and circumstances. This is my strength," he said.

If elected, Dawa Rigyel said he would committedly work to fulfill the wishes and aspirations of His Majesty the King and that he would work in close association and collaboration with the 17 NC aspirants from Dagana Dzongkhag towards renewing, reviewing and aligning the hopes of people of Dagana.

"I would listen and consult with everyone always, especially when we disagree. Your voices will be the choice I shall carry forward to the upper house," he added.

'Mom at School' comes to rescue of needy students

Krishna Ghaley
from Phuentsholing

An initiative taken by a teacher of Phuentsholing Lower Secondary School, called 'Mom at School', is increasingly gaining popularity in the border town of Phuentsholing.

Wangmo, a teacher, initially started this charity for financially deprived students. It all began in 2015 when Wangmo and 30 other teachers, out of compassion, started the initiative with Nu 14,700 from other donors and supporters. Within the first year of operation, 20 needy children received support from this initiative.

Inspired by His Majesty's speech at the National Convocation of B. Ed graduates in 2015 in Paro, Wangmo said the initiative was a sort of contribution to the nation from her side.

'Mom at School' now fully supports three students in Chhukha, who come from poor



families who cannot afford education for their children.

The donors comprising both national and international individuals donate both in cash and kind which Wangmo gives to the recipients. The number of donors have increased from 44 in 2015 to 65 in 2016 and they have received donations from more than 80 individuals last year.

'Mom at School', meanwhile, saw a six-fold rise in the amount of

fund they had raised in 2016. They collected Nu 0.12mn in 2016, including Nu 85,000 contributed by international sponsors. A part of the fund was also donated to Sonamgang Middle Secondary School (Nu 64,000).

Both in cash and kinds, 'Mom at School' could garner more than Nu 390,000 in 2017. They also received donations; mostly school uniforms, stationery and utensils worth more than Nu 50,000. After having spent around Nu 0.25mn, a cash balance of Nu 68,700 of 'Mom at School' will be used this year.

Last year alone, 'Mom at School' spent Nu 173,000 for the needy students.

Wangmo said they would like to thank all the donors for their valuable support.

"It has really helped the needy students," she added, assuring that all the funds received from the donors are spent on the

students. As of December 31, 2017, 'Mom at School' had a little over Nu 103,000 of free funds available.

Meanwhile, the initiative is spreading to other schools and Dzongkhags as well.

More than five schools across the country including one central school have applied for support from 'Mom at School'.

Wangmo said, "We have to scan the situation and we are committed to support the genuine ones. Otherwise, there is chance of funds being misused." But the initiative has committed around Nu 1mn to fund the needy students of other schools.

The principal of Sonamgang Middle Secondary School, Dorji Tshering, said the initiative has benefitted the needy students and that there are plans to strengthen support to other schools if donors increase.

He said the beneficiary students are now doing

well academically. "The initiative has really helped the students perform well," he said. Also, the school is looking to start other programs to raise funds to extend support to more such students.

"If the donors increase, we will extend support to more needy students," he added. The initiative has also spread to Dungkar in Lhuntse after 'Mom at School' provided seed money to get this initiative started by the principal of a local primary school.

In an attempt to match local donations with the same amount of external funds, 'Mom at School' is now also expanding its base from mainly local benefactors and sponsors to even beyond the Bhutanese borders by an international crowd funding effort under the banner "Young Brains in Want of Means".

It has also started its web page, www.momatschool.org, where viewers can view and donate if they are willing to.