

Youth have their say on youth issues- Kuensel

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Education, unemployment and mental health are the main issues confronting youth today
Symposium: Diversifying the current education system by inculcating life based skills and making it market-based, according to some participants of the Youth Symposium organised by the Bhutan Centre for media and Democracy (BCMD), could help address the unemployment issue in the country.

The two-day symposium that ended yesterday focused on issues concerning youth and unemployment, education and mental health where participants suggested the school curriculum should be more learning oriented than examination oriented. Besides, they said more skill based institutions and value oriented education system could further help address the unemployment issue.

Participants comprising college and high school students mainly attributed the rise in unemployment to mismatch of qualification and jobs available in the market. Mismatch of interest and courses students chose in tertiary education, were also cited to worsen the unemployment issue.

A graduate of Sherubtse College in Kanglung, Tsheltrim Dorji said he opted for BA English and Environmental Studies but realised he was more interested in programming and graphic design. "I want to pursue a career in programming and graphic design," he said.

Similarly, a teacher trainee of Samtse College of Education said although he is a teacher by profession, nothing will stop him from becoming an entrepreneur. Lilly Yangchen, a student of Prem Tinsulanonda International School, Thailand said when deciding career options, it was important to opt for what they loved doing. "At the end of the day, it's us who would face the consequences," Lilly said.

BCMD's assistant program officer, Phuntsho Namgay said education, unemployment and mental health were issues pertinent to youth today.

"As the present and the future of the nation, we want the youth to have their say on these issues," he said. "The symposium also provides them a space to exchange ideas and learn."

During the second day of the seminar, participants discussed issues related to mental health. A counselor from RENEW said youth were more vulnerable to mental health issues because of various issues that affect them in the present scenario.

"People with stronger lifestyle skills adapt with the issues but those who don't, diverge into unhealthy practices," she said.

To address concerns pertaining mental health, the participants said more awareness programs should be carried out. Others include, implementation of favourable laws and policies.

"Situations contribute to mental stress and the stress youth undergo if unchecked, leads to mental issues," Deki Zangmo, a student from Royal Thimphu College, said. A total of 40 youth from various schools and colleges across the country took part in the youth symposium.

By Younten Tshedup