

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021



ཁྲིམས་འོག་དབྱེར་མེད་དང་མཉམ་ཁ།  
*Equal Justice Under Law*



འབྲུག་གི་དང་ཁྲིམས་ལྷན་ཁྲེ།  
**Judiciary of Bhutan**

**Compiled By:**

1. Langa Tenzin
2. Dem Zam

**Design and Layout:**

Langa Tenzin

**Publisher:**

Supreme Court of Bhutan

Lhadrong, Hejo

Thimphu: Bhutan

**Website:** <https://www.judiciary.gov.bt>

© Supreme Court of Bhutan



# Equal Justice Under Law

## Vision

The Judiciary will strive to create a free, fair, just, and harmonious society through effective resolution of disputes and expeditious dispensation of justice.

## Mission

The Judiciary will safeguard, uphold, and administer justice fairly and independently without fear, favour, or undue delay in accordance with the rule of law to inspire trust and confidence and to enhance access to justice.



*The year it was...*



**Annual Report**  
**Judiciary of Bhutan**  
**2021**





༄ ས་གསུམ་འགྲན་ལྷ་བྲལ་བའི་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྩེ། །བདག་སོགས་རྣམས་ལ་ཕན་བདེའི་མཆོག་སྦྱིན་མཁན། །

རིས་མེད་ཆོས་ཀྱི་གྲུ་བར་འབེབས་པ་པོ། །མཁན་ཆེན་འཇིགས་མེད་ཆོས་གྲགས་ཞབས་བརྟན་གསོལ། །

ཁྱེ་ལོ་༢༥ འཁོར་བའི་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་ཅིས་སྤང་ལ་ རྒྱལ་ཡོངས་ཁྲིམས་དོན་གཙུག་མེའི་སྐབས་འཛིན་ མི་དབང་རྒྱལ་པོའི་སྲས་མོ་  
ཨ་ཞེ་བསོད་ནམས་བདེ་ཆེན་དབང་ལྷུག་མཆོག་གིས་དབུ་གཙོས་པའི་བླ་མ་ཁྲིམས་ལྷན་མེའི་ ཁྲིམས་སྦྱི་རྣམ་གཉིས་དང་ མངོན་མཐོ་  
དང་ཆེ་མཐོའི་བླ་མ་དཔོན་ལྷན་རྒྱས་དང་ ཁྲིམས་འདུན་ཁག་གི་བླ་མ་དཔོན་དང་ ལས་བྱེད་པ་ཡོངས་ཀྱིས་ སྐབས་རྗེ་མཆོག་ལུ་  
གུས་པས་སྦྱོན་འདེབས་ཞུ་བ།





Her Royal Higness Ashi Sonam Dechan Wangchuck with participants of the 23<sup>rd</sup> National Judicial Conference at Paro.







## Table of Contents

From the Chief Justice of Bhutan .....	i
Introduction .....	1
1. Judicial Year in Figures .....	4
2. Case Statistics .....	6
3. Types of Case Disposal .....	20
4. Report on Court-Annexed Mediation .....	22
5. Key Events of the Judiciary .....	28
6. Major Achievements of the Judiciary .....	41



འབྲུག་གི་ཁྲིམས་སྒྲིལ་འཛིན་པ།  
མངོན་མཐོ་ཁྲིམས་གྲི་འདུན་པ།



Chief Justice of Bhutan

Supreme Court

### From the Chief Justice of Bhutan

The Judiciary's sacred constitutional mandate to administer justice fairly and independently has assumed greater importance in the democratic Bhutan, where people view laws, plans and policies through the lens of their constitutional and legal rights. As an independent institution, the Judiciary's role is crucial in balancing the rights and duties of people as enshrined under the Constitution and other laws.

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to pose serious challenges in socio-economic spheres of people's life across the globe in its endless mutation and variants. As one of the major institutions responsible for service delivery, the Judiciary cannot yield under the pressure of unforeseen challenges. Failure on the part of the Judiciary would cause untold harassment of litigants and their posterity. Keeping this in view, it is very important that the Judiciary deliver judicial services of highest standard guided by the principles of professionalism and accountability.

The Annual Report 2021 is a snippet of the calendar year. It presents the case statistics and notary services rendered by the courts along with other information on important events that took place. It must be highlighted that it also presents a preview of the reforms and initiatives undertaken during the year to make the Judiciary responsive and conducive to the changing needs of Bhutan's democratic society. It took so much dedication from all judicial personnel behind the numbers and statistics that we get to see in this Annual Report. I would like to applaud all for your contribution, and remind that it is important to build on the experiences and skills acquired over the past one year and make optimum use of them for even greater and better output, both in terms of quality and quantity, in the coming years.

Furthermore, I would like to urge everyone to keep your minds open to the new possibilities and opportunities to enhance the efficiency of justice delivery to make the Judiciary of Bhutan stronger and vibrant. It will require the collective strength and sincere cooperation of all employees since justice is a sacred goal that demands our sincere attention and utmost dedication.

I would like to wish all readers a Happy New Year 2022.

(Chogyal Dago Rigdzin)

CHIEF JUSTICE OF BHUTAN  
SUPREME COURT  
ROYAL COURT OF JUSTICE  
THIMPHU: BHUTAN



## Introduction

In its aim to fulfill its constitutional mandate of administering justice fairly and independently, the Judiciary strives to learn from the experiences of the past and introduce necessary changes to make justice delivery as efficient as possible. It is a continuous process and reforms must continue with changing times.

Due to diversifying economic activities and commercial transactions, courts continue to experience increasing caseload every year. Although the Covid-19 pandemic has affected all aspects of life everywhere, Bhutan, under the compassionate and insightful leadership of His Majesty the King and the Royal Government of Bhutan, has been able to function close to normal in contrast to the dire situation elsewhere. Nevertheless, the pandemic has made us explore new ways to do things efficiently.

Courts resorted to virtual hearings, whenever necessary, in order to mitigate the challenges brought about by the pandemic that restricted the travels of litigants particularly from high-risk areas. To make the court proceedings more accessible to the public, the Judiciary built on the benefits reaped from the virtual hearing and developed the e-Litigation Platform, which not only enables remote hearing but also online filing of documents, e-payment of court fees and award of judgments online. Similarly, some old institutional practices have been done away with mainly to enhance access to justice.

Employees need trainings and other means of continuing education to upgrade their knowledge and skills, thereby equipping themselves with the necessary tools to tackle challenges to ensure efficient service delivery. Bhutan National Legal Institute, the training branch of the Judiciary, continues to conduct relevant trainings on different areas and themes to enhance the knowledge and skills of the Judges and other judicial personnel.

The Annual Report 2021 is presented in two Parts: Part I contains the case statistics of all courts, and Part II contains the recruitments, appointments, and other events including the trainings and workshops attended by the judicial personnel. It also highlights some of the major initiatives of the judiciary during the calendar year.



# 2021 in Review...

## I. In Figures and Statistics

## 1. Judicial Year in Figures

### 1.1 The Total Figures:

<b>20651</b>	<b>7805</b>	<b>8394</b>	<b>1806</b>
Miscellaneous Hearings	Cases Registered	Cases Decided	Cases Pending

### 1.2 Dungkhag Courts:

<b>3676</b>	<b>1182</b>	<b>1262</b>	<b>308</b>
Miscellaneous Hearings	Cases Registered	Cases Decided	Cases Pending

### 1.3 Dzongkhag Courts:

<b>14737</b>	<b>4974</b>	<b>5387</b>	<b>1100</b>
Miscellaneous Hearings	Cases Registered	Cases Decided	Cases Pending

### 1.4 High Court:

<b>1419</b>	<b>1109</b>	<b>1453</b>	<b>95</b>
Miscellaneous Hearings	Cases Registered	Cases Decided	Cases Pending

### 1.5 Supreme Court:

<b>819</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>303</b>
Miscellaneous Hearings	Cases Registered	Cases Decided	Cases Pending

### 1.6 Total Cases Decided Through Court-Annexed Mediation:

<b>2</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>156</b>
High Court	Dzongkhag Courts	Dungkhag Courts

## 1.7 Other Important Figures

### (i) Budget:

<b>Nu. 96.040M</b>	<b>Nu.293.762M</b>
Capital	Current

### (ii) Revenue Generated by Court:

**Nu. 30,812,757**

### (iii) Notary Services:

<b>5680</b>	<b>1778</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3374</b>
Marriage Certificates	Attestation of Documents	Organ Transplant	Affidavits

### (iv) Civil Service Award Recipients:

<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>33</b>
Life Time Service	30 Years of Service	20 Years of Service	10 Years of Service



## 2. Case Statistics

### 2.1 Case Statistics of Dungkhag Courts:

Sl. No.	Court		Miscellaneous Hearing	Opening Balance		Registered	Total	Decided	Pending	Pending Beyond 12 Months
1	Dorokha		63	27		63	90	85	5	0
2	Gelephu		1597	127		405	532	424	108	0
3	Jomotsangkha		14	6		14	20	18	2	1
4	Lhamoyzingkha		33	2		33	35	29	6	0
5	Lingzhi		5	2		5	7	3	4	0
6	Nganglam		73	15		73	88	81	7	0
7	Panbang		19	8		19	27	25	2	0
8	Phuentsholing	Bench I	1442	40		153	192	96	96	17
		Bench II		71		152	224	164	60	14
9	Tashichhoeling		58	49		58	107	101	6	0
10	Sombeykha		28	0		28	28	28	0	0
11	Sakteng		28	6		28	34	34	0	0
12	Samdrupcholing		221	21		56	77	75	2	0
13	Thrimshing		17	1		17	18	17	1	0
14	Wamrong		57	12		57	69	60	9	1
15	Weringla		21	1		21	22	22	0	0
Total			3676	388		1182	1570	1262	308	33

**2.2 Case Statistics of Dzongkhag Courts:**

Sl. No.	Court		Miscellaneous Hearing	Opening Balance		Registered	Total	Decided	Pending	Pending Beyond 12 Months
1	Bumthang		538	59		146	205	148	57	8
2	Chukha		653	110		128	238	203	35	2
3	Dagana		96	17		96	113	104	9	0
4	Gasa		29	7		29	36	36	0	0
5	Haa		616	7		162	169	158	11	0
6	Lhuentse		395	9		61	70	60	10	1
7	Mongar		569	40		312	352	309	43	0
8	Paro	Bench I	432	134		167	301	244	57	0
		Bench II		261		265	526	400	126	3
9	Punakha		1362	96		432	528	461	68	1
10	Pemagatshel		304	41		61	102	52	50	21
11	Samdrupjongkhar		411	15		74	89	81	8	0
12	Samtse		698	23		209	232	187	44	2
13	Sarpang		562	15		132	147	123	24	0
14	Thimphu	Criminal Bench I	4981	65		146	211	165	46	3
		Family and Child Bench		98		411	509	446	63	1
		Commercial Bench		100		442	542	481	61	0
		Criminal Bench II		63		151	214	165	49	8
		Civil Bench		148		495	643	425	218	6

15	Trashigang		713	24		177	201	193	8	1
16	Trashi Yangtse		398	8		88	96	83	13	0
17	Trongsa		590	41		138	179	166	13	1
18	Tsirang		711	24		204	228	210	18	3
19	Wangdue Phodrang	Bench I	382	52		184	236	197	39	0
		Bench II		22		198	220	209	11	0
20	Zhemgang		297	34		66	100	81	19	3
<b>Total</b>			<b>14737</b>	<b>1513</b>		<b>4974</b>	<b>6487</b>	<b>5387</b>	<b>1100</b>	<b>64</b>

### 2.3 Case Report - An Overview

The Opening Balance (cases carried forward from 2020) of 2021 was 2746, and 7805 new cases were registered, including appeals to the Supreme Court and the High Court of Bhutan during the calendar year. In total, 1182 new cases were registered in the fifteen Dungkhag courts. Gelephu Dungkhag court saw the highest number of total cases registered at 405. Phuentsholing Dungkhag Court used to have the highest case registrations in the past years. The drop in total number of cases registered in Phuentsholing Dungkhag Court from 378 in 2020 to 305 in 2021 can be attributed to the restriction of movement in the town owing to the frequent and lengthy lock-downs imposed due to the pandemic. Likewise, 4974 new cases were registered in the twenty Dzongkhag Courts. Thimphu Dzongkhag Court, which has 5 specialized Benches had the highest number of total cases registered in 2021 at 1645.

8394 cases were decided in total in 2021 by all courts combined. Gelephu Dungkhag Court decided 424 cases in total - highest among the Dungkhag Courts. Among the Dzongkhag Courts, Thimphu Dzongkhag Court decided the highest number of cases at 1682. Thimphu, as the capital city of Bhutan and a commercial hub with an ever increasing population, continues to experience a rising number of legal disputes every year.

As the year drew to a close, a total of 1806 cases were pending in the courts of which 100 cases have been pending beyond 12 months, which is an all-time low. The High Court of Bhutan has no pending cases beyond 12 months in 2021. By the end of the year, all cases pending before the erstwhile Larger Bench of the High Court were decided by the Special Bench constituted to dispose the same.

The year saw 96 appeals of judgments of Dungkhag Courts to the Dzongkhag Courts, 549 appeals of judgments of Dzongkhag Courts to the High Court and 266 appeals of judgments of the High Court Benches and the erstwhile Larger Bench to the Supreme Court.

Bhutan National Legal Institute (BNLI) have been instrumental in the establishment of Court-Annexed Mediation Units in the courts to promote and encourage settlement of disputes through the age-old dispute resolution method of mediation. Litigants continue to resort to mediation to resolve civil cases. A total of 994 civil cases were settled through mediation in 2021.

The Supreme Court saw a sharp increase in appeals from the High Court owing mainly to the dissolution of the Larger Bench in May 2021. There were a total of 76 appeals to the Supreme Court from the Larger Bench, High Court in 2020. In stark contrast to the above, the Supreme Court saw a total of 537 appeals from the High Court Benches and the erstwhile Larger Bench, which was the appellate Bench for the High Court Benches until its dissolution. Due to the increased caseload, the Supreme Court has 303 cases pending in total from 2021 as compared to just 57 in 2020. On the other hand, there are only 95 cases pending from 2021 as compared to 868 cases pending from 2020.

**2.4 Case Statistics of High Court:**

Sl. No.	Court	Bench	Miscellaneous Hearing	Opening Balance	Registered		Total	Decided	Pending	Appeal to Larger Bench	Appeal to Supreme Court	Pending Beyond 12 Months
1	High Court	Bench I	1419	159	190		349	322	27	59	92	0
		Bench II		117	210		327	289	38	40	97	0
		Bench III		163	211		374	344	30	45	82	0
		Larger Bench		351	498		849	498	0	-	266	0
Total				790	1109		1189	1453	95	144	537	0

**2.5 Case Statistics of Supreme Court:**

Sl. No.	Court	Bench	Miscellaneous Hearing	Opening Balance	Registered		Total	Decided	Pending	Pending Beyond 12 Months
1	Supreme Court	Langchen	819	18	132		150	74	76	1
		Tachog		10	137		147	63	84	0
		Maja		10	136		146	64	82	2
		Khading		17	135		152	91	61	0
Total				55	540		595	292	303	3

**2.6 Appeals from Dungkhag Courts to Dzongkhag Courts:**

Sl. No.	Court		Decided	Appeals
1	Dorokha		85	6
2	Gelephu		424	51
3	Jomotsangkha		18	0
4	Lhamoyzingkha		29	0
5	Lingzhi		3	0
6	Nganglam		81	4
7	Panbang		25	0
8	Phuentsholing	Bench I	96	6
		Bench II	164	13
9	Sakteng		34	2
10	Samdrupcholing		75	3
11	Sombeykha		28	1
12	Tashichhoeling		101	5
13	Thrimshing		17	2
14	Wamrong		60	3
15	Weringla		22	0
Total			1262	96

**2.7 Appeals From Dzongkhag Courts to High Court:**

Sl. No.	Court		Decided	Appeals
1	Bumthang		148	4
2	Chukha		203	24
3	Dagana		104	8
4	Gasa		36	1
5	Haa		158	10
6	Lhuentse		60	3
7	Mongar		309	10
8	Paro	Bench I	244	17
		Bench II	400	85
9	Pemagatshel		52	0
10	Punakha		461	32
11	Samdrupjongkhar		81	5
12	Samtse		187	15
13	Sarpang		123	23
14	Thimphu	Criminal Bench I	165	26
		Family and Child Bench	446	12
		Commercial Bench	481	97
		Criminal Bench II	165	21
		Civil Bench	425	92
15	Trashigang		193	12
16	Trashy Yangtse		83	3
17	Trongsa		166	10
18	Tsirang		210	5
19	Wangdue Phodrang	Bench I	197	13
		Bench II	209	11
20	Zhemgang		81	10
Total			5387	549

**2.8 Appeals from Benches to Erstwhile Larger Bench of High Court:**

Sl. No.	Court	Bench	Appeals to Larger Bench
1	High Court	Bench I	59
		Bench II	40
		Bench III	45
Total			144

**2.9 Appeals from High Court to Supreme Court:**

Sl. No.	Court	Bench	Appeals to Supreme Court
1	High Court	Bench I	92
		Bench II	97
		Bench III	82
Total			271

**2.10 Appeals from Erstwhile Larger Bench to Supreme Court:**

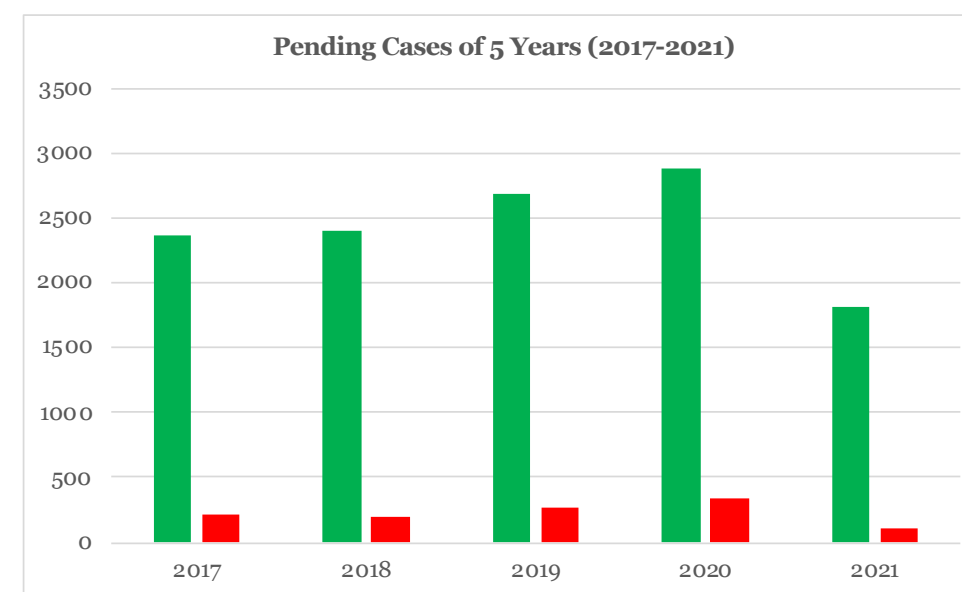
Sl. No.	Court	Bench	Appeal to Supreme Court
1	High Court	Larger Bench	266

**2.11 Overall Case Statistics**

Miscellaneous Hearing	Opening Balance	Registered	Decided	Pending		Appeals to Dzongkhag Courts	Appeals to High Court	Appeals to Erstwhile Larger Bench	Appeals to Supreme Court	Pending Beyond 12 Months
20651	2746	7805	8394	1806		96	549	144	266	100

**2.12 Pending Case Statistics of Past 5 Years**

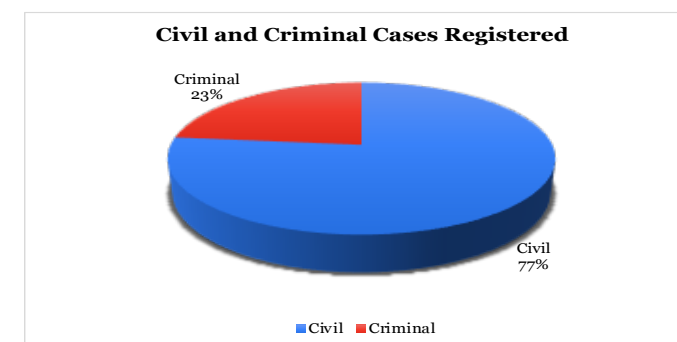
Year	Cases Pending	Cases Pending Beyond 12 Months
2017	2361	216
2018	2400	202
2019	2692	259
2020	2873	342
2021	1806	100



**2.13 Types of Civil and Criminal Cases Registered (Dungkhag and Dzongkhag Courts)**

Civil Cases		
Sl. No.	Types of Civil Cases	No. of Cases Registered
1	Family and Child-Related Disputes	116
2	Land Disputes	463
3	Monetary Disputes	1355
4	Contractual Disputes	778
5	Inheritance Disputes	39
6	Disputes Related to Environment	11
7	Matrimonial Disputes	1756
8	Mortgage Disputes	30
9	Miscellaneous Disputes	125
10	Disputes Related to Tax	5
11	Failure to Pay	25
12	Administrative Disputes	6
13	Defamation Suit	9
<b>Total</b>		<b>4718</b>
Criminal Cases		
Sl. No.	Types of Criminal Cases	No. of Cases Registered
1	Homicide	13
2	Assault, Battery and Related Offences	375
3	Burglary, Trespass and Related Offences	65
4	Sexual Offences	114
5	Larceny, Robbery, Armed Robbery and Related Offences	147
6	Forgery and Related Offences	56
7	Defamation and Related Offences	45
8	Offences Against the Public Welfare	32
9	Offences Related to Public and Civic Duties	70
10	Offences Related to Public Order and Tranquility	208
11	Offences Related to Firearms and Weapons	3
12	Embezzlement and Bribery	25
13	Harassment	30
14	Malicious Mischief	15
15	Attempt, Aiding and Abetting, Solicitation and Criminal Conspiracy	6
16	Domestic Violence	35

17	Prostitution and Related Offences	3
18	Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Substance Abuse	67
19	Treason, Terrorism and Related Offences	1
20	Vehicle Accident	34
21	Trespass	1
22	Damages and Compensation	39
23	Emotional Abuse	4
24	Firearms and Weapons	4
25	Tobacco Products	24
26	Offences Against Cultural and National Heritage	7
27	Escape from Lawful Custody	3
28	Abuse of Function	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>1438</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>6156</b>

**2.14 Brief Analysis of Types of Cases Registered:**

6156 cases were registered in the Dungkhag and Dzongkhag courts in 2021. Civil cases amount to about 77% (4718) of the total cases registered in the calendar year as compared to about 23% (1438) of the total cases registered being criminal cases.

In what is a departure from the general trend in the past years, matrimonial cases top the chart of civil cases registered at 1,756, and is closely followed by monetary cases that include institutional loans at 1355.

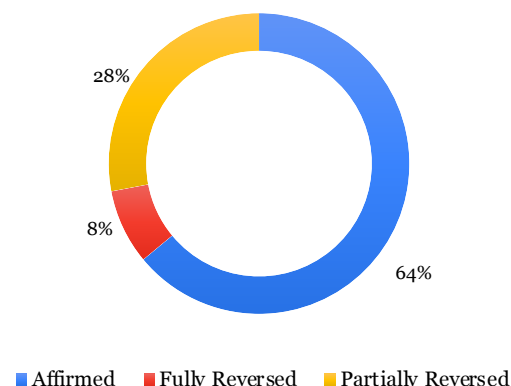
On the other hand, assault, battery and related offences top the criminal case chart with 375 followed by offences related to public order and tranquility. The main reason why the offences related to public order and tranquility is at an all-time high (marginally higher than 2020) is owing to the cases where people breached health protocols and other restrictions imposed to mitigate the risks posed by unregulated travels and social interactions. Another noteworthy highlight is that the offences related to firearms and weapons stands at meager 3, which further establishes the fact that Bhutan is a peaceful country with negligible incidents and offences involving firearms and weapons.

### 3. Types of Case Disposal

#### 3.1 High Court

Sl. No.	Court	Bench	Affirmed	Fully Reversed	Partially Reversed
1	High Court	Bench I	216	21	85
		Bench II	194	22	73
		Bench III	201	34	109
		<b>Total</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>267</b>

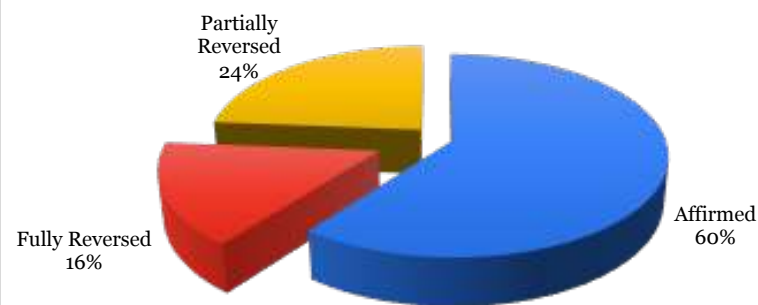
Types of Case Disposal of High Court



#### 3.2 Erstwhile Larger Bench

Sl. No.	Court	Bench	Affirmed	Fully Reversed	Partially Reversed
1	High Court	Larger Bench	300	80	118

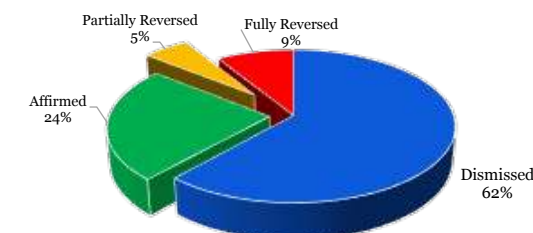
Type of Case Disposal of Larger Bench



#### 3.3 Supreme Court

Sl. No.	Bench	Dismissed	Affirmed	Partially Reversed	Fully Reversed
1	Khading	56	22	5	8
2	Maja	53	6	3	2
3	Tachog	53	3	4	3
4	Langchen	61	5	7	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>223</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>14</b>

Types of Case Disposal of Supreme Court



#### 3.4 Brief Analysis of Types of Case Disposal:

Statistics on the types of judgments rendered by the appellate courts, especially the Supreme Court and High Court of Bhutan, is an important part of the annual case statistics of the Judiciary. It shows the nature of review decisions rendered by the appellate courts on the cases decided by subordinate courts, and appealed by one or more parties to the appellate courts. The unsubstantiated belief that is common in the public sphere is that courts of different hierarchies render varying judgments and thus, the widespread notion of lack of uniform laws in the country. The primary aim of appeal system is to enable the appellate courts to correct the errors that the subordinate courts may have made in their judgments.

Despite the considerable appeals that the Supreme Court and High Court received in 2021, the Supreme Court fully reversed only 9% of the judgments awarded by the High Court and the erstwhile Larger Bench of the High Court, whereas the percentage of dismissal stands at 62%, and it affirmed 24% percent of the appeals. The dismissed appeals too, in essence, upholds the judgments of the High Court and thus, the total figure of dismissal of appeals and affirmation of judgments stands at an impressive 86% of the total appeals. Besides, the Supreme Court partially reversed 5% of the High Court judgments.

Similarly, the High Court has affirmed 60% of the Dzongkhag Court judgments from the total number of 549 appeals it registered in 2021. Further, 24% of the total appeals resulted in partial reversal of judgments, and 16% of appeals resulted in full reversal of the Dzongkhag Court judgments. Likewise, the erstwhile Larger Bench affirmed 64% of the appeals, fully reversed 8% of the appealed judgments and partially reversed 28% of the appealed judgments of the three Benches of the High Court.



## 4. Report on Court-Annexed Mediation

### 4.1 Dungkhag Courts

Sl. No.	Court	No. of Cases Mediated
1	Dorokha	8
2	Gelephu	53
3	Jomotsangkha	3
4	Lhamoyzingkha	7
5	Lingzhi	0
6	Nganglam	18
7	Panbang	7
8	Phuntsholing	16
9	Sakteng	1
10	Samdrupcholing	5
11	Sombaykha	0
12	Tashichhoeling	6
13	Thrimshing	2
14	Wamrong	26
15	Weringla	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>156</b>

### 4.2 Dzongkhag Courts

Sl. No.	Court	No. of Cases Mediated
1	Bumthang	28
2	Chhukha	33
3	Dagana	32
4	Gasa	11
5	Haa	33
6	Lhuentse	15
7	Mongar	132
8	Paro	139

9	Pemagatshel	6
10	Punakha	25
11	Samdrup Jongkhar	18
12	Samtse	47
13	Sarpang	6
14	Thimphu	69
15	Trashigang	75
16	Trashi Yangtse	18
17	Trongsa	36
18	Tsirang	53
19	Wangdue Phodrang	53
20	Zhemgang	7
<b>Total</b>		<b>836</b>

### 4.3 High Court

Sl. No.	Court	Bench	No. of Cases Mediated
1	High Court	Bench I	0
		Bench II	1
		Bench III	1
Total			2

## 4.4 Statistics of Marriage Certificates and other Notary Services -2021

Sl. No.	Court	Marriage Certificates (MC)	Name Change	Affirmation of MC	Lost Documents	Marital Status	Child Travel Documents		Attestation of Documents	Child Adoption	Organ Transplant	Closing and Transfer of Shares and Accounts	Attestation of Agreements, Wills and Contracts and Testaments	Affidavit	Money Lending
1	Dorokha	81	4	81	0	1	0		0	0	0	0	0	57	0
2	Gelephu	398	1	5	0	2	0		10	0	0	10	0	147	0
3	Jomotsangkha	24	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	42	0
4	Lhamoyzingkha	19	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	6	0	48	0
5	Lingzhi	11	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	32	0
6	Nganglam	39	2	1	0	0	0		1	0	0	11	0	42	0
7	Panbang	45	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	1	0	82	0
8	Phuntsholing	275	0	9	0	1	0		4	0	0	9	0	62	0
9	Sakteng	15	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	31	0
10	Samdrupcholing	43	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	3	0	77	0
11	Sombaykha	14	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	1	0	23	0
12	Tashichhoeling	105	0	0	1	0	0		0	0	0	6	0	117	0
13	Thrimshing	24	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	37	0
14	Wamrong	47	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	1	0	42	0
15	Werringla	13	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	Bumthang	94	0	4	0	1	0		4	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	Chhukha	114	2	5	0	0	0		0	2	0	12	0	171	0
18	Dagana	186	15	2	1	0	0		1	0	0	9	0	222	0
19	Gasa	130	1	0	0	0	0		0	1	0	0	0	55	0
20	Haa	139	0	5	0	2	1		2	0	0	11	0	85	0
21	Lhuentse	89	0	0	0	0	0		2	0	0	5	0	136	0
22	Mongar	155	0	16	0	1	1		23	3	0	18	0	280	0
23	Paro	353	0	5	0	2	0		1	0	0	11	0	183	0
24	Pemagatshel	26	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	5	0	99	0
25	Punakha	238	0	10	0	2	0		1	2	0	25	0	203	0
26	Samdrup Jongkhar	111	0	5	0	2	0		1	0	0	12	0	85	0
27	Samtse	205	0	5	2	0	0		3	0	0	4	0	125	0
28	Sarpang	144	0	3	0	0	0		1	0	0	1	0	88	0
29	Public Notary, Thimphu	1421	6	553	1	1	14		1714	9	13	66	1	166	1
30	Trashigang	119	0	0	0	1	0		3	0	0	15	0	148	0
31	Trashigang Yangtse	87	0	0	1	0	0		1	0	0	15	0	119	0
32	Trongsa	151	0	0	1	0	0		1	0	0	14	0	89	0
33	Tsirang	172	0	5	0	2	0		1	2	0	10	1	211	0
34	Wangdue Phodrang	529	0	0	0	1	0		4	0	0	35	0	270	0
35	Zhemgang	64	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	2	0	70	0
Total		5680	31	714	7	19	16		1778	19	13	318	2	3644	1

#### 4.5 Revenue Generated by Courts

Sl. No.	Court	Revenue (Nu.)
1	Dorokha	139,625
2	Gelephu	1,609,020
3	Jomotsangkha	25,725
4	Lhamoyzingkha	404,800
5	Nganglam	94,400
6	Panbang	65,850
7	Phuentsholing	1,841,240
8	Sakteng	12,850
9	Samdrupcholing	234,545
10	Thimshing	275,700
11	Wamrong	16,600
12	Weringla	52,250
13	Bumthang	508,975
14	Chukha	1,841,240
15	Dagana	63,325
16	Gasa	56,250
17	Haa	290,952
18	Lhuentse	199,425
19	Mongar	788,900
20	Paro	1,453,375
21	Pemagatshel	100,525
22	Punakha	1,343,215
23	Samdrup Jongkhar	387,400
24	Samtse	731,850
25	Sarpang	429,475
26	Thimphu	11,148,296
27	Trashigang	432,800
28	Trashy Yangtse	3,22,950
29	Trongsa	1,410,821
30	Tsirang	307,023
31	Wangdue Phodrang	2,392,565
32	Zhemgang	458,940
33	High Court	9,86,375
34	Supreme Court	2,38,050
<b>Total</b>		<b>30,812,757</b>

# 2021 in Review...

## II. Recruitments, Trainings & Other Events



## 5. Key Events of the Judiciary

### 5.1 Recruitments and Appointments

#### (i) Recruitment of Court Registrars and Bench Clerks



Four toppers of the Post Graduate Diploma in National Law (PGDNL) from the Royal Institute of Management (RIM) joined the Judiciary as Court Registrars with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021.

Sherab Zangmo and Jimba Dolma Gyeltshen are working at the Thimphu Dzongkhag Court. Dechen Wangmo is serving at the Gelephu Dungkhag Court and Kezang Wangmo is currently working at the Phuentsholing Dungkhag Court.



Besides, eight new Bench Clerks were recruited in 2021. Rinchen Dema, Kezang Choden, Namgay Wangchuk, Rinchen Lhamo, Pema Lhaden, Nidup, Dawa Zangmo and Phub Dorji were placed in various Dzongkhag and Dungkhag Courts, which they will be joining on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022.

#### (ii) Appointment of Drangpon Rabjams

The Hon. Chief Justice of Bhutan appointed four Drangpon Rabjams on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Drangpon Rabjam Garab Yeshe, who was working as a Senior Court Registrar in the Supreme Court was placed at Jomotsangkha Dungkhag Court. Drangpon Rabjam Tshoejab Mephram Denlen, who was working as the Personal Secretary to the Hon. Chief Justice of Bhutan was placed at the Office of Gyalpoi Zimpon on deputation. Drangpon Rabjam Pema Yechang, who was working as a Senior Court Registrar in the Supreme Court was placed in the Registry of the Supreme Court. Drangpon Rabjam Tshering Pelden, who was also working as a Senior Court Registrar at the Supreme Court was placed at the Public Notary Office in Thimphu Dzongkhag Court.



### 5.2 Other Events

#### (i) Awareness Training on Trafficking in Persons



Judges and Court Registrars attended Awareness Training on Trafficking in Persons. The training was conducted by the Bhutan National Legal Institute (BNLI) in collaboration with the Department of Law and Order and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. It was conducted in two phases. Phase I was conducted from 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at Zhingkhag Resort in Punakha. Phase II was conducted from 7-8<sup>th</sup> April at Kaila Guest House in Bumthang.

#### (ii) Trainings on e-Litigation



The core team on e-Litigation provided trainings to Judges, Court Registrars and Bench Clerks of all courts except Thrimshing Dungkhag Court in 2021. The first phase of the training on the pilot e-litigation platform was provided to the Bumthang and Trashigang Dzongkhag Courts, and Sakteng Dungkhag Court from 9-18<sup>th</sup> March 2021. The trainers trained the above court officials in person. Local government leaders also took part in the training mainly for the purpose of sensitizing

their respective localities about the new platform, which would help the far-flung communities save time and resources spent on settlement of their legal disputes in court.

However, constrained by health protocols relating to the Covid-19 pandemic, the training team had to resort to virtual training of the remaining courts. Even though the virtual training on e-litigation was not as effective as training in person especially since it is a process that requires hands-on practice, the health protocols relating to the pandemic caused undue delay of the training. Therefore, in order to enable the courts to use the e-Litigation Platform at the earliest, the trainings were conducted virtually.



### (iii) Visit to JSW Law School Project, Pangbisa, Paro



The Hon. Chief Justice of Bhutan chaired the 12<sup>th</sup> Governing Council Meeting of the Jigme Singye Wangchuck School of Law at its to-be-new campus Pangbisa in Paro on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021. The Chief Justice of Bhutan is the Chairperson of the Governing Council of the Law School.

On the sidelines of the meeting, the Hon. Chief Justice visited the ongoing constructions at the JSW Law School Project at Pangbisa. Founded in 2015, it is the first and only Law School of Bhutan, and is set to produce the first batch of law graduates by summer of 2022.

### (iv) Launch of E-Litigation Platform



The Judiciary, in partnership with the UNDP, Bhutan launched the Electronic Litigation (E-Litigation) Platform on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021. Hon. Dasho Tashi Chhozom, Justice of the Supreme Court graced the launch of the Platform as the Chief Guest. E-Litigation Platform was developed as an innovative and transformational initiative to mitigate disruption in the delivery of justice in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic.

The Judiciary and the UNDP partnered on the e-Litigation initiative as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic in pursuit of the Preparedness and Response Plan of the Judiciary to prevent the spread of Covid-19. It is integrated with the existing Case Management System (CMS) of the Judiciary and enables virtual hearing of cases without the litigants having to travel to courts by facilitating electronic registration of cases, electronic filing of documents, electronic payments, remote hearings and electronic service of process.

### (v) Ground-breaking Ceremony for Construction of Sakteng Dungkhag Court



The ground-breaking ceremony for the construction of Sakteng Dungkhag Court was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2021. It was presided by the Lam of Sakteng Shedra and the Registrar General of the Supreme Court. The construction of a court building with adequate infrastructures is one of the basic blocks of enhancing access to justice. The construction of the Sakteng Dungkhag Court is funded by the Royal Government of Bhutan.

### (vi) Commemoration of Silver Jubilee of His Holiness the Je Khenpo



The Judiciary and Bhutan National Legal Institute commemorated the Silver Jubilee of His Holiness Trulku Jigme Chhoeda as the 70<sup>th</sup> Je Khenpo of Bhutan on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Led by Her Royal Highness Ashi Sonam Dechan Wangchuck, the Chief Justice of Bhutan, Justices and Registrars General of the Supreme

Court and High Court, Judges of the Thimphu Dzongkhag Court and the Director General of Bhutan National Legal Institute offered butter lamps and performed special prayers for the long life and good health of His Holiness .



Following the special prayers, the event was marked by plantation of saplings (Tsheshing) by Her Royal Highness and the Chief Justice of Bhutan.



### (vii) Inauguration of Kana Water Project in Dagana

The Hon. Chief Justice of Bhutan graced the inauguration of Kana Water Project in Dagana on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2021. It was the 7<sup>th</sup> De-suung National Service Water Project - a partnership between De-suung, Armed Forces, and the Royal Government of Bhutan.

The main work force for the project were 83 De-suups, who were supported by personnel from the Armed Forces, and engineers and experts from the MoWHS. The water supply has helped over 86 households, who had shortage of drinking water before the project was commissioned.



### (viii) Visit by Hon. Chief Justice to the Royal Institute of Management



The Hon. Chief Justice of Bhutan visited the Royal Institute of Management (RIM) as part of the Constitutional Law course that Hon. Lyonpo taught to the Post Graduate Diploma in National Law (PGDNL) students during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Term on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021. There were 30 total post-graduate trainees in the PGDNL course.

Upon completion of the Constitutional Law course, the 2021 cohort of PGDNL students visited the Supreme Court and observed the hearing procedures related to cases reviewed by Supreme Court on appeal from the High Court on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021. The study visit was a part of the course to familiarize them with the court infrastructures and procedures.

### (ix) Training on Advanced Dzongkha Grammar for Bench Clerks



Bench Clerks participated in the Advanced Dzongkha Grammar Training from 9-14<sup>th</sup> August 2021 at the Language and Culture Institute, Thimphu. The training was jointly conducted by the Bhutan National Legal Institute (BNLI) and the Supreme Court. Trainings on Dzongkha grammar are vital for Bench Clerks particularly because Dzongkha is the court language and a sound grammar knowledge is the starting point for well-drafted documents including judgments. Moreover, Dzongkha is the national language of Bhutan and a sound knowledge of it is indispensable for its correct usage and promotion.

### (x) Training on Pedagogical Skills and Methodologies



Justices, Judges and Court Registrars took part in the Training on Pedagogical Skills and Methodologies from 16-18<sup>th</sup> August 2021 at the Royal Institute of Management (RIM), Simtokha. The training was conducted by the Bhutan National Legal Institute (BNLI) in

collaboration with the RIM with resource persons from the RIM.

The participants were acquainted with various methods of instructions such as teacher-centric or student-centric learning, research-based learning, group simulation, role-plays and assessments and designing of the course. It was primarily aimed at equipping the participants with knowledge, skills and attitude to manage judicial trainings and courses for Post Graduate Diploma in National Law (PGDNL) at RIM since some of the Justices and Judges are serving as Adjunct Faculty for the course.



### (xi) Training on Child Psychology



The Judges attended the Training on Child Psychology at the Conference Hall of the Supreme Court. The Bhutan National Legal Institute (BNLI) conducted the training in collaboration with the Supreme Court with technical assistance from the Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan

(KGUMSB). It was conducted in two phases.

Phase I was conducted for the Judges of the Eastern and Southern courts of Bhutan on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2021. Phase II was conducted for the Judges of the other courts on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021.



### (xii) 23<sup>rd</sup> National Judicial Conference at Paro



The 23<sup>rd</sup> National Judicial Conference was held at Tashi Namgay Resort from 28<sup>th</sup> September-1<sup>st</sup> October 2021. Dranpons and Drangpon Rabjams took part in the Conference. It was jointly organized by the Supreme Court of Bhutan and the Bhutan National Legal Institute. The four-day Conference deliberated on various legal, administrative and other judicial service issues faced by the courts.

The last National Judicial Conference was held in 2017 and could not be convened until this year. The Conference helped resolve some pressing issues faced by the courts to ensure a uniform practice, and also deliberated on means to resolve other issues that impede access to justice for

the litigants. The Conference also deliberated on the need for the Judiciary to keep abreast of and equip itself with the necessary knowledge and human resource to tap the unlimited possibilities of information technology in the arena of service delivery.



### (xiii) Opening Ceremony of 47<sup>th</sup> Batch of De-suung Training Programme



*Photo Courtesy: De-suung Facebook Page*

The Hon. Chief Justice of Bhutan graced the opening ceremony of the 47<sup>th</sup> Batch of Accelerated De-suung Training Programme at Royal Body Guard headquarters, Dechenchholing on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021 coinciding with the Birth Anniversary of His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo. The 3-week training ended on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

Of the total 1360 trainees in the 47<sup>th</sup> batch, the Dechenchholing training centre trained 190 trainees (150 males and 40 females), who were unemployed during that time with a minimum educational qualification of class X. They were trained for immediate deployment to the various locations to form the main workforce for the national water service programmes, the South and North border duties and De-suung Skilling Programmes.

### 5.3 Transfers, Civil Service Awards and Superannuations

#### (i) Transfer of Dzongkhag and Dungkhag Drangpons

Sl. No.	Name	Designation	Transferred From	Transferred To	Date of Transfer
1	Gyelpo	Drangpon Rabjam	Nganglam Dungkhag Court	Pemagatshel Dzongkhag Court	01.11.2021
2	Chimi Dorji Shartsho	Drangpon Rabjam	Punakha Dzongkhag Court	Lingzhi Dungkhag Court	01.11.2021
3	Dungay Tshering	Drangpon Rabjam	Sakteng Dungkhag Court	Nganglam Dungkhag Court	01.11.2021

#### (ii) Transfer of Other Judicial Personnel

Sl. No.	Name	Designation	Transferred From	Transferred To	Date of Transfer
1	Norbu Wangdi	Bench Clerk	Supreme Court	High Court	04.01.2021
2	Jigme Gyaltshen	Court Registrar	Thimphu Dzongkhag Court	High Court	11.02.2021
3	Nima Wangdi	Personal Assistant	Sakteng Dungkhag Court	Gelephu Dungkhag Court	15.02.2021
4	Dechen Tshomo Dorji	Court Registrar	Thimphu Dzongkhag Court	High Court	17.02.2021
5	Jampel Dorji	Bench Clerk	Phuentsholing Dungkhag Court	Lhamoyzinkha Dungkhag Court	19.02.2021
6	Tshering Tobgay	Bench Clerk	Phuentsholing Dungkhag Court	Supreme Court	19.02.2021
7	Tashi Wangmo	Bench Clerk	Panbang Dungkhag Court	Paro Dzongkhag Court	19.02.2021
8	Sonam Pelden	Bench Clerk	High Court	Paro Dzongkhag Court	19.02.2021
9	Tara Maya Tamang	Bench Clerk	Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag Court	Samtse Dzongkhag Court	19.02.2021
10	Karma Tshering	Bench Clerk	Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag Court	Wamrong Dungkhag Court	19.02.2021
11	Tshewang Dorji	Bench Clerk	Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag Court	Lhamoyzinkha Dungkhag Court	19.02.2021
12	Tshewang Chopel	Bench Clerk	Wangdue Phodrang Dzongkhag Court	Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag Court	19.02.2021

13	Kinley Dema	Bench Clerk	Taschicholing Dungkhag Court	Phuentsholing Dungkhag Court	19.02.2021
14	Karma Wangmo	Bench Clerk	Samtse Dzongkhag Court	Phuentsholing Dungkhag Court	19.02.2021
15	Kencho Lhamo	Bench Clerk	Jomotsangkha Dungkhag Court	Mongar Dzongkhag Court	01.03.2021
16	Pema Wangmo	Bench Clerk	Sakteng Dungkhag Court	Phuntsholing Dungkhag Court	01.03.2021
17	Dawa Gyeltshen	Court Registrar	Supreme Court	High Court	01.03.2021
18	Duptho Wangmo	Bench Clerk	Weringla Dungkhag Court	Trashigang Dzongkhag Court	15.03.2021
19	Singye Zangmo	Bench Clerk	Thimphu Dzongkhag Court	Trashy Yangtse Dzongkhag Court	29.03.2021
20	Karma Tshering	Sr. Court Registrar	Wangdi District Court	Supreme Court	07.06.2021
21	Tashi Gyeltshen	Bench Clerk	Lhamoyzinkha Dungkhag Court	Thimphu Dzongkhag Court	01.07.2021
22	Pema Wangchuk	Bench Clerk	Thimphu District Court	Haa Dzongkhag Court	01.07.2021
23	Dorji Sangay	Bench Clerk	Lhamoyzinkha Dungkhag Court	Samdrupcholing Dungkhag Court	01.07.2021
24	Kinley Tsheltrim	Bench Clerk	Chukha District Court	Phuntsholing Dungkhag Court	01.07.2021
25	Ugyen	Personal Assistant	Pemagatshel Dzongkhag Court	Chukha Dzongkhag Court	01.07.2021
26	Kinley Yangden	Personal Assistant	Lhamoyzinkha Dungkhag Court	High Court	01.07.2021
27	Sonam Thinley	Sr. Planning Officer	Trashy Yangtse Dzongkhag	Supreme Court	01.07.2021
28	Pema Gyeden	Bench Clerk	High Court	Supreme Court	13.08.2021
29	Sonam Penjor	Bench Clerk	Phuntsholing Dungkhag Court	Supreme Court	13.08.2021
30	Norbu Dorji Tamang	Personal Assistant	Weringla Dungkhag Court	Supreme Court	01.09.2021
31	Sangay Dendup	Driver	Supreme Court	High Court	01.09.2021
32	Nima Dorji	Personal Assistant	High Court	Lingzhi Dungkhag Court	12.11.2021
33	Kelzang Thinley	Messenger	Thimphu Dzongkhag Court	Lingzhi Dungkhag Court	12.11.2021



**(iii) List of Civil Service Award Recipients****(a) Life Time**

Sl. No.	Name	Designation	Court	Total Years of Service
1	Dorji Bidha	Sr. Personal Asst. III	Supreme Court	39
2	Zakorla	Driver	Phuntsholing Dungkhag Court	20
3	Gyempo Tshering	Sr. Bench Clerk III	Supreme Court	39
4	Balang Dema	Sr. Bench Clerk III	Haa Dzongkhag Court	35
5	Gyempo Tshering	Bench Clerk I	Paro Dzongkhag Court	33
6	Tashi Phuntsho	Bench Clerk I	Dorokha Drungkhag Court	31
7	Sherab Tenzin	Bench Clerk I	Supreme Court	30

**(b) 30 Years and Above**

Sl. No.	Name	Designation	Court	Total Years of Service
1	Phuntsho Wangdi	Drangpon Rabjam	Supreme Court	30
2	Tshewang Zangmo	Bench Clerk I	Thimphu Dzongkhag Court	30
3	Sherab Tenzin	Bench Clerk I	Supreme Court	30
4	Pema Gyeden	Bench Clerk I	Supreme Court	30

**(c) 20 Years and Above**

Sl. No.	Name	Designation	Court	Total Years of Service
1	Phurpa Gyeltshen	Driver	Bumthang Dzongkhag Court	20
2	Phuntsho	Driver I	Gelephu Drungkhag Court	20
3	Karma Tshering	Driver	High Court	20
4	Pema Choden	Accounts Asst. IV	Paro Dzongkhag Court	20
5	Karma Jamtsho	Driver	Paro Dzongkhag Court	20
6	Zakorla	Driver	Phuntsholing Dungkhag Court	20
7	Kunzang Norbu	Driver	Samtse Dzongkhag Court	20
8	Rinzin	Driver I	Sarpang Dzongkhag Court	20

9	Tshering Penjor	Personal Asst.	Sombaykha Dungkhag Court	20
10	Pema Yangdon	Dy. Chief Finance Officer	Supreme Court	20
11	Dil Ram Biswa	Driver	Wangdue Phodrang Dzongkhag Court	20

**(d) 10 Years and Above**

Sl. No.	Name	Designation	Court	Total Years of Service
1	Dechen Wangmo	Lhuntse Drangpon	Supreme Court	10
2	Prem Bahadur Powrel	Driver III	Dagana Dzongkhag Court	10
3	Namgay Lham	Sr. Dispatcher	Haa Dzongkhag Court	10
4	Jigme	ESP	Haa Dzongkhag Court	10
5	Yangchen Zam	Sr. Bench Clerk III	High Court	10
6	Tenzin Chedup	Sr. Bench Clerk III	Jomotsangkha Drungkhag Court	10
7	Lungten Dozang	Messenger	Nganglam Drungkhag Court	10
8	Chali Maya Ghallay	Cleaner (Wet/Dry)	Paro Dzongkhag Court	10
9	Rinchen Lhamo	Sr. Bench Clerk III	Paro Dzongkhag Court	10
10	Sonam Peldon	Sr. Bench Clerk III	Paro Dzongkhag Court	10
11	Cheten Zangmo	Gardener	Phuntsholing Dungkhag Court	10
12	Kinzang Dorji	Sr. Bench Clerk III	Phuntsholing Dungkhag Court	10
13	Moni Kumar Adhikari	Sr. Bench Clerk III	Phuntsholing Dungkhag Court	10
14	Hodo	ESP	Punakha Dzongkhag Court	10
15	Dema Tshomo	Accounts Asst. III	Supreme Court	10
16	Karma Jigme	Messenger	Supreme Court	10
17	Ugyen Wangdi	Sr. Bench Clerk III	Supreme Court	10
18	Lhaba Phuntsho	Sr. Bench Clerk III	Supreme Court	10
19	Jigme Norbu	Driver II	Supreme Court	10
20	Kelzang Dorji	Driver I	Supreme Court	10
21	Deki	Attendant	Supreme Court	10

22	Yezer Dema	Executive Engineer	Supreme Court	10
23	Tshering Wangda	Bench Clerk I	Thimphu Dzongkhag Court	10
24	Tshering Yangmo	Sr. Bench Clerk III	Thimphu Dzongkhag Court	10
25	Sherab Wangmo	Sr. Bench Clerk III	Thimphu Dzongkhag Court	10
26	Sonam Dema	Sr. Bench Clerk III	Thimphu Dzongkhag Court	10
27	Pema Wangmo	Sr. Bench Clerk III	Thimphu Dzongkhag Court	10
28	Singey Zangmo	Sr. Bench Clerk III	Trashigang Dzongkhag Court	10
29	Tshering Dendup	Sr. Bench Clerk III	Trashigang Dzongkhag Court	10
30	Wangchuk Tshering	Sr. Bench Clerk III	Tsirang Dzongkhag Court	10
31	Sanu Maya Tamang	ESP	Wangdue Phodrang Dzongkhag Court	10
32	Jigme	Driver III	Zhemgang Dzongkhag Court	10

#### (iv) List of Superannuated Judicial Personnel

Sl. No.	Name	Position Title	Court	Date of Superannuation
1	Dorji Bidha	Sr. Personal Ass. III	Supreme Court	06.04.2021
2	Sherab Tenzin	Sr. Bench Clerk	Supreme Court	13.12.2021

## 6. Major Achievements of the Judiciary

### 6.1 Dissolution of the Erstwhile Larger Bench

The Supreme Court issued a circular on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 to do away with the Larger Bench of High Court, which was the appellate court for judgments of different Benches of the High Court. The practice was similar to the Full Bench, which was an appellate Bench for the judgments of the High Court Benches before the Supreme Court of Bhutan was established. However, the practice led to some delay in rendering timely decisions.

To minimise the inconvenience caused by this appeal procedure to the litigants, the Circular instituted a Special Bench comprising Dasho Duba Dukpa, Chief Justice of the High Court, Dasho Dr. Jangchuk Norbu and Dasho Bir Bahadur, Justices of the High Court to expedite the disposal of the pending cases. Following the Circular, appeals from High Court Benches started to be filed directly in the Supreme Court, thereby minimising the time and resource spent by litigants on appeal procedure.

The Special Bench of the High Court successfully disposed off all cases by the end of the year.

### 6.2 Launch of E-Litigation Platform

The e-Litigation Platform was launched on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021. It is aimed at harnessing the benefits of technology and making optimum use of the possibilities offered by information technology in the arena of administration of justice through adjudication based on virtual hearing, electronic filing of documents and online payment of court fees as some major processes that can be transacted online without the litigants having to present themselves in person before the courts. The e-Litigation Platform will, over time, prove to be beneficial for Bhutan given its topography marked by high peaks and deep valleys, which are prominent physical hurdles for the litigants to access the judicial services.

Since its launch, 108 users have registered, and 19 cases have been registered on the Platform as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

### 6.3 Decentralization of Notary Services

In line with the primary goal to enhance access to justice, the Supreme Court issued a Circular on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021 to decentralize notary services by making them available in all the Dzongkhag and Dungkhag Courts. Until then, notary services were offered in the Public Notary Office in Thimphu, and a regional office was established in the Mongar Dzongkhag Court in 2019.

However, people from far-flung places faced difficulties in availing notary services from the above two offices. In order to minimize the inconvenience faced by the people with regard to notary services, all courts now offer notary services.

Notary services have become increasingly important and highly sought-after in recent years especially with increasing number of people travelling abroad to both work and study, for which attestation of documents by a recognized notary office is a requirement.

## 6.4 Waste Management Facilities

During an audience in October 2020, His Majesty the King commanded the officials from various institutions and NGOs present there to take responsibility of managing wastes within the premises of respective offices firstly, and to carry forward the initiative on a larger scale. The Supreme Court Complex at Lhadrong, Hejo comprising three offices - Supreme Court, High Court and the Bhutan National Legal Institute has constructed a Waste Collection Facility with financial and technical support from the National Environment Commission (NEC). The Facility has three compartments for storing dry, wet and hazardous wastes. It has helped ensure proper segregation and disposal of all kinds of wastes generated in the campus.

In line with the primary aim of proper waste management, the team under the guidance of Justice Kinley Dorji of the High Court carried out several initiatives in the Supreme Court complex. Firstly, in order to ensure proper segregation of wastes produced by the three offices, the Supreme Court purchased 26 numbers of 180 litre bin and 60 numbers of 15 litre bin. The 180 litre waste bins have been placed at the entry of all offices with proper labelling for waste disposal (biodegradable and non-biodegradable). Likewise, the 15 litre waste bins have been placed in all toilets with a plastic inside for ease in waste collection. Secondly, to maintain clean toilets, adequate rolls of toilet papers have been purchased and are supplied in all toilets of the Supreme Court Complex.

Two rounds of awareness programmes on waste management were conducted for all employees. On 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021, a team from the NEC and Thimphu Thromde presented the overall national status of waste management implementation in the country. The Planning Officer of the Judiciary, Mr. Tempa Gyeltshen (also member of the national Technical Working Group) presented the SoP of the Judiciary on waste management. On 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021, Justice Kinley Dorji and the Registrars General of the Supreme Court and the High Court briefed the attendees on the need to change attitude and behaviour to effectively manage wastes in the campus.

## 6.5 Facilitation of Office Space for Dzongkhag Election Offices

Coinciding with the 10<sup>th</sup> Royal Wedding Anniversary, the Judiciary facilitated office space for Dzongkhag Election Offices in all those courts with adequate space. The main aim of this collaborative arrangement is to save the Nation's limited resources by making the optimal and efficient use of the available resources without incurring extra costs. It was inspired by His Majesty the King's timeless wisdom and tireless endeavours towards strengthening Bhutan's sovereignty, unity, harmony and solidarity.

A convenient working place is indispensable for institutions to deliver services effectively. As the bedrock of a vibrant and successful democracy, the Election Commission of Bhutan plays a sacred and vital role under the Constitution. And as a small country, Bhutan cannot afford to have disconnected institutions working separately. The Judiciary hopes that this collaborative arrangement will go a long way in the Election Commission of Bhutan espousing and practising accountability and professionalism in carrying its constitutional mandate.

## 6.6 Justice Garden

During an audience to the Justices of the Supreme Court and High Court at Tashichho Dzong on 28<sup>th</sup> 2020, His Majesty the King commanded that *"A serene physical ambience in the abode of justice will reduce stress, emanate peace, enhance security and confidence in the judicial system."*

Cleanliness and environmental conservation are national priorities that are receiving ever greater importance worldwide due to challenges posed by climate change and environmental degradation. The Supreme Court Complex comprising the Supreme Court, High Court and Bhutan National Legal Institute is a huge campus measuring almost 3 acres. Without proper beautification and constant maintenance, the area could easily look untidy and out of order. Moreover, it is an area visited by hundreds of aggrieved litigants involved in legal disputes. As the face of the Judiciary, the campus of the Supreme Court of Bhutan is the starting point for any major initiative that can be replicated in other courts of the country.

Inspired by the Royal Command, the Supreme Court of Bhutan embarked on the development of the Justice Garden Project in the Supreme Court Complex. The works relating to the project were carried out under the relentless and tireless guidance of Justice Bir Bahadur of the High Court, who is a known self-taught botanical expert and enthusiast with the equally supportive employees. The major works for the development of Justice Garden Project comprised excavation and levelling of the existing surface, segregating and dumping debris, and procuring and compacting soil for the lawn. To ensure proper nourishment of the lawn grass, an irrigation system to water the grass was also established. The Project planted an impressive 48 species of ornamental plants and flowers. To ensure a sustainable supply of saplings for the campus, a green house was also established.

The Justice Garden Project was finally completed at the end of June 2021 after several months of rigorous works. Thanks to the Project, the employees and litigants visiting the Supreme Court Complex are now able to enjoy a clean, serene and peaceful view - a solace to the minds as opposed to the usual arguments and disagreements that take place in the courtrooms. Moreover, the Project also serves a larger purpose as it maintains a green space amidst the rapidly urbanizing Thimphu city.

## 6.7 Crèche in Supreme Court Complex

The Supreme Court of Bhutan opened a crèche for the three offices - Supreme Court, High Court and the Bhutan National Legal Institute (BNLI). It was established with the support of UNDP and National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC). Office-going parents experience great inconvenience since they have to divide time and attention between home and office when they have no one at home to take care of their children.

In order to ensure that the children receive adequate and appropriate care and attention, and also to ensure that the employees devote maximum time to their office, the crèche was opened on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 with 17 children of ages ranging from 6 months to 5 years. The crèche renders day care services to the children of employees of the above offices. There are currently two care-givers who take care of the children.

## **Judiciary of Bhutan**

**Website:** <https://www.judiciary.gov.bt>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/judiciarybhutan>