Media and Public Culture: Media Whitewashing

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Abstract

Today in Bhutan we can no longer see children and young ones gathered around their family elders listening to stories and fables, or many elders on their favourite pastimes like Khuru, Dego, Sogsum and Jidhum, which were prominent about one and a half decades ago. Rather we see, most of the time, families gathered around a TV show with a conflict over channels, women fighting for Indian serials and children for the cartoon network. The catchy chat topics of those characters in TV serials are ruling their conversations in most of the places…and many Bhutanese folk dress up like some American Yanks…singing like western pop singers. Is it a gift of media? Or is it a threat brought in by it? Whatsoever, this change in the social behaviour of transplanting a new culture is attributed to media. If the country and the people in Bhutan are concerned by this changing scenario and if it is not taken care of at such a pace, Bhutan will not take long to join the rest of the world in a homogenous cultural society.

Our forefathers' legacy inherited by our nation from centuries now needs to be underpinned by using the positive aspects of the media. This paper 'Media Whitewashing', at first takes an in depth view of the experiences of media within the country in the context of cultural trends and assesses the development of the Bhutanese media today and its messages. Then analyzing the impacts on our society, it attempts to shed light on these symbols to assess the relationship between the media culture and Bhutanese culture—and tries to elucidate on the suggested remedies so as to turn the strength of media to our benefit.

Introduction of Media in Bhutan

The history of media does not lie heavy on our country. It is a

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recent development. For centuries people in Bhutan relied on the tradition of oral transmission of information, which is still strong in rural areas. The written form of correspondence was also said to have been dwelling for long. However, then the literacy rate in the country was insignificant and the impact of written form of media was said to be not so effective. With the socio-economic development and the geo-political changing scenario, the government has given an utmost priority to the media and its development. With the introduction of some legislation in support of the media, the technological advancement and the socio-economic development have altogether pulled in the media with new roles and responsibilities for the society.

Further, the policy emphasis on private sector development paved the way for the development of enterprises and business firms. This caused enormous pressure on the media to perform its function through the activities of advertisement, notification, entertainment, etc. Thus, in recent years, the media has gained impetus in the Kingdom. The giant leap in its revolution commenced with the introduction of the national newspaper *Kuensel* and broadcasting station BBS in the 1980's. This was further revolutionized with the introduction of ICT where the electronic media was introduced, as well as with the introduction of television in the year 1999. Today, we see the following, which are some of the most important and prominent forms of media in the country:

Print Media

With the literacy rate of about 54 percent, nowadays, Bhutanese could gain access to all forms of print media. The print media has been limited to three newspapers and a few journals, magazines, and publications published by different organizations. However, the people in Bhutan have access to various forms of print media including international magazines and newspapers of all sorts through bookstores and shops. Though Thimphu and some border towns receive the lion's share of information, the rural areas are also given access to newspapers distributed through public agents on

public transport systems and, in the more remote places, carried by messengers and travellers.

Radio

Of all the media forms, radio has been considered the most effective in the country. It is also one of the oldest forms of media in the country, one which has been well developed to suffice the nation at large. It has the capacity to reach the remotest part of the country, and most of the people in the remote part of the country, constituting 70 percent of the total population heavily depend on the radio. The radio uses four languages: English; *Dzongkha,* the national language; *Sharchop,* the language prominent in the eastern part of the country; and *Lhotsham,* the language mostly spoken in the southern part of the country. This has paved the way for increased accessibility to radio messages targeting a majority of the population. Started as an amateur weekly broadcasting programme in 1973 by the National Youth Association of Bhutan, it now broadcasts 98 hours a week under the BBSC.

Television

Television first appeared in Bhutan in June, 1999 and is still in its infancy. Though broadcast in just two languages, i.e. Dzongkha and English, the messages through this media form are still not far flung. TV reaches the urban towns of the Dzongkhags and is alive for just four hours a day. Although the national television broadcast is limited to a short span of time, the viewers of television have wide access to various sources of information. They have an average of about 30 different channels, which can stay alive throughout the day.

Internet

Bhutan was virtually linked to the international global village with the introduction of the Internet in 1999. Access to the Internet is limited to only a handful of people in the country. The busiest Bhutanese website, Kuenselonline.com, sees an average of 40,000 to 60,000 hits a day, which is just 10 percent of the total population. However, access is seen to be

picking up with the building of ICT infrastructure and the government giving priority to the ICT development in the country.

Movies

Movies emerged in the country much before television and the internet. They have gained popularity where the Bhutanese had fairly good access to Indian and some English movies. The national movie industry has also developed quite recently. This has helped most of the Bhutanese youth to gain employment. This industry did shoot up in a decade. Now the capital's cinema hall has new movies coming up every month. Opportunities for the Bhutanese to gain access to different movies and shows through the sale of VCD, DVD, etc., are increasing tremendously.

Music

Traditionally, music has been a key entertainment for Bhutanese people. Music as a part of mass media was developed with the introduction of radio. Today, the Bhutanese have varieties of music ranging from modern Bhutanese songs to a variety of songs in foreign languages through radio, TV, Internet, computers, tape recorder, CDs, DVDs, MP3, etc. This form of media has a wide impact for the society in these days. Therefore, realizing the importance of music as a significant form of mass media, the social sectors have used it for conveying important and educational messages like health care, education, and environmental preservation to the public. Music still remains a basic source of entertainment in our country.

Others

Connectivity possibilities like the telephone were a significant happening. This has touched almost all parts of the country, though its numbers are fewer in the remote areas. The recent development in the mobile network has given a giant leap in communication and its usage has surpassed the telephone users. The infrastructure development of B-mobile is

increasingly extending to many other parts of the country. The facility of the mobile at the moment is limited to only verbal conversation and short messages. However, its advancement in the near future with access to internet will give a more vital role in the use of mobiles as a prominent means of media. Fax is yet another important type of media which is often used for official and important purposes. But the accessibility to this type of media is limited to mostly urban offices. Besides being very expensive and there being a lack of awareness, the fax is not so popular in rural areas.

Generally, much importance was given to the development of media and communications, to respond to the demands of fast changing social, political, and economic development of the country. The Government, realizing the fact that the information and communication in the country will need to be emphasized, established the Ministry of Information and Communications in June, 2003. This Ministry is mandated to steer the development of the information and communication sector including the traditional and new media.

Thus, in just a few decades, with the advent of modern media forms in the country, reflections on the nature of communication and information sharing in our country (going from house to house, and crossing mountains in order to send one single message) have become a myth. In view of that, the country has changed itself into a vastly different reality. Satellites, Internet, television, faxes, and telephones have catapulted the Kingdom into the global village. One lone person from any part of our land can now share and communicate his way of life with thousands of people, anywhere and everywhere in the world. It has also played a role in bringing to Bhutan the knowledge of global community. At the dawn of modernization, media has emerged as the most powerful force driving the entire societal transformation.

Benefits of Media

Today, as Bhutan enters the age of communications, its priorities are geared to meet the needs and demands of the

times. The kingdom has seen a dramatic increase in the literacy rate of the population as a result of the special attention given by the royal government to the education sector. As technological advancement brings the international community closer together, it has also established the infrastructure to modernize and strengthen communication and information links with the rest of the world. It is the policy of the royal government, therefore, to facilitate and encourage the professional growth of the Bhutanese media which must play an important role in all areas of development. Such a role is especially relevant to the national policy of decentralization which aims to involve all sections of the society in the socio-economic and political development of the kingdom.

- His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, October 1992

By and large media in Bhutan is said to have made a remarkable impact in the socio-economic development of the country. Today, as the country transforms itself from an agrarian society to a knowledge-based society, media is said to be a crucial element for development. So, many of the people in the country have developed an unlimited appetite for the media, whose information has changed their life and behaviour. The government and many people have given due importance in the development and usage of media. However, media in the country, being in the nascent stage of development and despite it ability to communicate educative, provocative and instant urgent messages, has yet to develop its effectiveness.

It has been supposed that media is not an active agent of change in isolation but has a complex set of other factors mingled with it. However, from the perspective of its influences, it has been understood that media is a powerful factor for change, be it for better or worse.

Media has become an indispensable source of information and an inescapable part of modern culture. The public at large depends on different forms of media for diverse needs of information for research, education, news, and so on. Apart from that, media today has become an important site for entertainment, too, through music, motion pictures,

and many sorts of programmes and news. With the revolution in media and tremendous development in the media facilities like television and, we have gained access to a voluminous amount of information. The internet crowded media forms and environment, mostly through entertainment, become the main guide for everyone to learn anything and everything. The internet offers a plethora of opportunities for different groups of people and serves diverse interests and needs of the society, collectively identifying opportunities for fostering stronger knowledge networks.

Media forms, though devoted to entertainment, have fostered the values and ideals of modernized society thereby attracting the attention of masses. The following areas have been identified in which media forms a consistent, potentially crucial and interrelated need in the country.

Governance

Effective governance in the modern era is almost next to impossible without media. Media has become a vital tool of the government and public for economic, political, social, and educational information; it has become a tool to influence people in general, in shaping various governmental policies, and in addressing issues of all kinds. The government can reach out to the public with information on policy changes and reforms through the media. The use of Information and Communication Technology has become a top priority in the field of governance, which helps them attain the mission of efficiency, transparency, and effectiveness. The concept of e-governance is a widely accepted and credited form of governance all across the globe. The use of internet services by the government ministries and agencies to launch websites made a giant leap in information dissemination all across society.

The media offers a platform for the effective governance through:

— Producing responsive communications activism and advocacy programmes of various government policies and strategies;

— Providing better access and sharing of data—especially on social and economic development trends and status with better mechanisms for finding and utilizing relevant research, survey, and studies for the formulation of better government policies and better decisions;

— Stronger and more diverse research in the communications arena, leading to better institutionalization in communications and in academia;

— Greater attention in the international venues of communications policy and reform, including, especially, better integration of networks into comparative and global settings;

— Societies at large rely on various media modalities (TV, Cable networks, radio, newspaper) by every government for official warnings of natural disasters. The media helps in obtaining information/news of the threats of natural disasters. Despite the precipitous nature of disasters (like tornadoes, earthquakes, floods, hurricanes) the media can provide information and forewarn the society well in advance of the mass emergency. Furthermore, in this era its added advantage gives a way for the government, especially the leaders, to convey messages to millions of people within a matter of few seconds;

— It is a fast and cost effective mode of communication.

As a result of this, very soon as Bhutan embarks on the process of democratization, the electoral processes could be transmitted through various media forms, thus maintaining the transparency of the system. In Bhutan's context, media forms have been successfully used to educate the public on the good governance policies and concepts such as decentralization, Gross National Happiness, and Community Development, etc.

Business

With its ability to create powerful touchstones, the media enables industries to promote and market their goods and services. It helps firms to inform millions in a short span of time and eventually send detailed information to all parts of the world. Travel agencies selling their business through advertisement and various media forms and the business executives and managers using e-conference/ video conferences—are some of the significant examples of the benefit of media in the business world.

Media is the sole stage for the firms and other organizations for advertisement. With the help of media, organizations are able to market their products and improve business. Today some parts of the world experience a marketing revolution where the electronic facilities are optimally utilized. The consumer can look for the goods they need, select and purchase from their own residential area, and in a little while they find their purchased goods arrive home, e.g. e-bay and e-shopping, etc. Vacancies and opportunities in the employment sector are advertised to reach the eyes of most of the job seekers and facilitate their application for jobs in a very effective way.

Private sectors and business firms in the country depend intensively on the media. Without the use of media, most of the private firms, especially the travel agents, amounting to almost 200, will be lamed and numbed. The public at large and the business firms in particular aspire for advanced media utility where even electronic transaction is possible. But due to the level of technological advancement the sector is not able to reach the level of utilizing the strengths to the optimum. Media in our country is yet to arrive at the level of e-bay and e-shopping.

Education

The dramatic development of the overall educational scenario and aspect in the country has seen a provocative priority in the field of information. As a result, the media organization and the information sector have a much bigger role to play in society. The pressure for the development of media in general

is inevitable. The report on a survey conducted by the Ministry of Information and Communications states that 2000 RTM held in Thimphu, had the government declaring its recognition of "media as a tool for Bhutan to leapfrog into the 21st century and to help form a society enriched by information, knowledge and skills".

Decades ago, when newspapers and some newsletters were prominent forms of media, and when the literacy rate at large was poor, the media effect was confined to only a handful of people. Most of the people who were unable to read and write had no access to media forms. But media today, which has both the characteristics of motion pictures and written phrases, has extended its arms to the masses. The films and documentary shows which appear through television and also local cassette stores have introduced most of the classic stories and novels to many people. These movies help develop critical thinking for our people. The cultural and music programming part has its own share of task of opening up our society to the world of music and art.

Media has been a vital tool and source of information for education. Parents can use TV as a catalyst to get kids reading—following up on TV programs by getting books on the same subjects or reading authors whose work was adapted for the programs. Some of the good programmes on television, Internet, and motion pictures can teach people important values and life lessons. Media programmes at times explore pressing and burning issues for people to discuss and educate themselves. Certain educational programming helps people in developing socialization and learning skills. At times, cultural, ethnic, and geographical diversities are also learnt through news, current events, and certain specialized historical programmes. Consequently, many Bhutanese have learnt facts about countries outside from media sources.

These days, due to the convergence of media on a wide array of events, our children are said to have learnt healthy ways of attaining the objectives of education. They have picked up a lot in the field of sports and games by having access to the performance of professionals outside the boundary of our society. The educationists have the facility to

continuously update and they can help attain better results of their output with the help of media.

Media covers interviewing people from all walks of life, working to create programmes with a powerful social message, which shapes itself as a powerful tool and platform for service to the society. Through programmes covering a wide range of geographical areas, cultures, ethnicities, and races, people all around can elevate their dialogue and create a forum of institutional culture for civic discourse. Media also enables, in different ways, the diverse groups of people in our country and outside to share their culture and traditions. At the same time they will be able to promote their own culture and values with side-by-side learning about other cultures and traditions.

There are broad processes of advancement in the field of media and its benefits in academics, governance, research, education, and personal communications. In this process, the media organizations have won the faith of a number of other institutional actors motivated by similar organizations across the spectrum of producers and users.

Striving for openness and flexibility in education, the government's attention to community outreach, with both traditional methods and ICT-bases courses, was specified as one way of reaching students who are unable to join courses in the regular classes. Continuing education in the Kingdom is envisaged as becoming increasingly popular. Technology is also increasingly being used in traditional classroom teaching, leading to the emergence of combined methods, where traditional lecturing and seminars are combined with web-based study materials, using email for communication, etc., in some of the tertiary education institutions in the country.

Economy

The country's emerging need of media and facilities paved a way for the development of ICT, which will be featured in all aspects of plans in all sectors. The growing demand for the use of ICT was also evident in the other corporate and private sectors. Since the media in general, and ICT in particular, has

been emphasized widely by the Royal Government as a critical tool towards enhancing good governance, the development of IT and its related infrastructure and facilities will likely gear up in the coming years. This will generate employment and boost income in the country. Further, the use of such tools and facilities will have an overall socio-economic impact by improving the way of living and also the equity development in all parts for the betterment of the destitute populace in rural areas.

The increasing number of advertising agents and broadcast and print media agents lead to creating employment opportunities for many in the country. This is particularly important in a situation when the issues of unemployment threaten the country's social and economic scenario. However, since there is potential for the development of advertising agencies and also media organizations' advancement, it is necessary to stimulate development so that it helps the media organizations employ many youth who are otherwise unemployed.

Social Life

Social life for most of the people in Bhutan is typically characterized by involvement in certain gatherings, either out for a picnic or some games, and perhaps occasional get-together like an annual ritual of the family. Due to the lack of family entertainment facilities the media has said to have brought in a positive element that family members who on different occasions go out for entertainments now stay home and have more time to socialize, especially by watching TV. This direct impact of media has improved family relations. Further, this impact on the social life by hooking on to home entertainment was viewed positively by some because of the fact that those family members are most of the time kept occupied at home and so it helps reduce alcoholism and other vices like gambling.

Very importantly, in a society where the culture is dominated by conservatives, the media has broadened the mindset of the people and created a more open society. This phenomenon has been more vivid in the urban areas where

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the media in different forms has broadened the minds and attitudes of the society. Now people do not feel different and awkward to have the company of the opposite sex. Moreover, the people in general and the youth in particular are taught on the values of social ties and behaviours that lead to the healthy social lives and companionship. With advanced ICT facilities Bhutan can also join the rest of the community and communicate with the small but growing e-community. Bhutanese can now socialize through the Internet to promote friendship and networking.

The media also contributes to social cohesion. Especially when it comes to the interaction of people of different sections of society, language as a barrier seems to be diminishing. Furthermore, as the other languages, with strong support of machines, are threatening our own national language, the media can be used to promote our national language, too. The enhancement of our language with electronic facilities will give a strong base for us to withstand the competition and to strengthen our national language within ourselves.

To sum up, the Bhutanese society is by and large developing with the advent of different media forms. It has in many ways helped the nation to develop an ideal culture and lifestyle among Bhutanese society. The development of print media has enhanced reading and writing habits for the people in Bhutan. Furthermore, the development of ICT has helped gain a good culture of our governance towards attaining the values of transparency, accountability, and efficiency.

The Negative Effects of Media

It has been evident that the media effects are considerable with unsurprisingly immediate impacts and influences over the viewers that changes them from their age-old beliefs to a common inducement. The viewers develop and adopt behaviour by mimicking the flickering movements on the screens. These actions are influential in the deterioration of their philosophy to a newly induced behavioural change. Consequently, the effects of globalization has brought the whole society together with their intention of changing the lifestyle as per the needs of their organizational firms and

businesses by creating certain images and behaviours that ultimately subvert the sweet and ideal utopian living style, which most of the people around the world lived in their distinct ways.

The potent effect of media has led people to believe in the media messages, lessening the power of comprehension of the viewers to the real intentions of producers. So far, the media has been embracing commercial advertisements due to high pecuniary benefits as compared to knowledge-sharing and information dissemination programmes. As a result, most of the people have entered a cultural environment that is designed to the specifications of a marketing strategy. This scenario has started taking its toll. The media's race to embrace this newly developing culture has weakened its resolve to pursue truth and relevance.

Media in every form everywhere, share a common feature that is particularly observed regarding the messages conveyed, which is in fact stereotyped. The most common characteristics that the media stereotypes promote through movies, TV, and advertisements, etc., are fairly common and its weakness has come to threaten the public good more than secrecy. It has induced various behavioural traits in different groups. Since popular forms of media in Bhutan are generally dominated by international programmes, ads, and events, the Bhutanese audience is learning more about other countries and foreign cultures than Bhutan. This simple presentation of weakness of the Bhutanese media, gives ample opportunity for the consumers to rely heavily on the other media messages. Thus, as in the following instances, our society gets entrapped and inclined towards a culture which is non-Bhutanese, thereby eroding our own culture and tradition.

Lifestyle

People have changed their basic habits with the media messages in most of the places where media services have advanced. In the past, the social ties were enormous, with the families gathered around and the elderly telling stories and other oral transmissions of traditional values and morals. This does not exist in places where the modern media has

reached. Basically, the new emerging family relations are that the family members are all gathered around a television set and they experience conflicts and turmoil amongst themselves because of diverse interests and pBibliography for information.

Very commonly, society's emerging concern is that the media, especially TV and internet, are taking away the attention of the people most of the time and that the responsibility for the family at home is most often forgotten. People go to sleep later at night and adjust their housework, even office work, to TV, eating into their leisure time is yet another development. Because of this newly evolving habit, it has been seen that the people usually have less time for work. This trend has given less time for people to participate in outdoor activities such as games and sports. Another habit of most of the younger people in the offices, is the culture of Internet chatting. This activity deprives them of their useful work in the offices and wastes their time and resources.

Most of the parents are concerned by the excessive appetite of their children for media messages. They have found that children are watching television late into the night and that they lose focus on their school objective and activities. They are now getting obsessed with TV characters and picking up language, behaviours, and habits that are undesirable.

The media messages in the country, through our national and local media forms, do not adequately meet the demands of the society, because the society at large depends on the messages and programmes from afar. The basic characteristics of the media messages and information is based on the urbanized lifestyles and culture, like the Indian serials and also all other movies. Since there is very little depiction of the rural and remote areas, there is an implication that the Bhutanese perception of lives could be influenced more with urban lifestyles.

Language

Media consumers have gained access to various languages and dialects, and they get to be multilingual. However, due to

limitations of the media languages especially in the movies and internet, the media is known to have changed the nature of languages. TV and movies have English that has undesirable use of words and language. Email and SMS have abbreviated the spoken language since messages have to be kept short and that distorts language. Further, the Bhutanese language, not being supported by the media as anticipated, was found losing its priority within our society. Since whatever they do, whether it is to search for information, to communicate, or to chat with friends, relatives or loved ones far away, they need to do it in English. Therefore, without the knowledge of English, they feel handicapped. It was found that the English language was to be given priority, and Dzongkha was seen to be just a preferred language. Due to this factor, many of the younger educated people lose their interest in the Dzongkha language.

Physical Image

Bhutanese traditionally consider someone beautiful based on the nature of the complexion and the shape of the face that is similar to the full moon. However, today emerging from the areas that are prone to media influences, it is usual that the Bhutanese girls and some boys come with all sorts of cosmetic touch-ups on their faces and hair as well. They have thrown away the concept of Bhutanese traditional beauty of a full bloom moon. The natural colour (black) of the hair was not acceptable for some youths so they intend to make it yellow, grey, brown, etc. This was considered to be unethical and not acceptable in our traditional beliefs. The number of powdered faces is increasing tremendously. This colour, as a symbolic stereotype of media, drives girls to use lots of foundation creams and make their lips red and cheeks red. The coloring of their face and hair has become very common, which no longer makes them look like Bhutanese. The make-up and other painting habits have become acceptable by many of our youths to appear colourful.

A stereotypical media image of uniformly beautiful and obsessively thin females with Barbie doll proportions with harmful dieting habits has become common among women

and girls in Bhutan. The world of advertising does not recognize the different beauty ideals that we celebrate within our own culture. The ads normally glamorize skinny models and do not accept the bigger body types. The underlying message for girls in most of these ads is to be unnaturally thin to be accepted and feel normal. Therefore, Bhutanese girls are becoming increasingly preoccupied with their body images and weight. This preoccupation in many cases leads to lowered self-esteem, mental health issues, and eating disorders.

It is even observed that people who regularly read magazines tend to diet and base their body image on photos and messages they find in the ads of these magazines. In fact, many youth revere the images in magazines. Generally the average height and weight for a female model is 5'10" and 50 kgs and the height and weight for the average woman in Bhutan is around 5'2" with 55 kgs. Targeting on the ideal of thinness as beauty, girls diet quite a lot and in case they have binged, they purge in order to meet their perceived ideals.

They believe that the loss of some kilograms in their body will make them have everything–the perfect shape, great sex, and a rewarding career. On the other hand, research indicates that exposure to images of thin, young, air-brushed female bodies is linked to depression, loss of self-esteem, and the development of unhealthy eating habits in women and girls. The false belief that smoking reduces weight and maintains body figure has driven many teenage girls to smoke. However, the culture of Bhutanese society normally does not accept smoking habits in girls. These activities of women and girls in general are to get to the image of Barbie-doll proportions. But the research has found that a body built that way would suffer from chronic diarrhea and eventually die from malnutrition. Still a number of real life women and girls who seek a similarly underweight body is epidemic, and they can suffer equally devastating health consequences. Anorexia and bulimia as a culture is stepping in among the younger female generation as a result of diet consciousness.

The case, as aforesaid, of maintaining the thinness does not dwell in girls only. Similar efforts are also being made by

some men/boys in order to keep themselves slim and colourful. The similar sights of colourful hair fixed with jelly stuffs and powdered faces like girls are becoming common with the male youths, too. Going little beyond, some men are observed undergoing excessive exercises and fitness activities in order to attain thinness for some and masculine structure for others. Salons in the towns enjoy an increase in male customers for make-up and facial purposes; this is real though amazing.

Leisure and Celebrations

It is in fact surprising that most of the conversation topics among Bhutanese folks in the towns and other semi-urban areas are all influenced and dominated by Indian serials and episodes. The scenario is very likely to extend further as modern facilities and infrastructure extend their arms to other remote parts of the country. If it continues the cultural erosion seems inevitable.

Typically the Bhutanese way of celebrating is very simple with traditional songs and dances. However, there is a catch when people in the urban areas start their celebration with an opening of 'champagne'. The custom is borrowed from the foreign society through commercial advertisements. The celebrations—like birthday parties, dance parties, and all sorts of entertainment have become embedded into our culture among some of the elites of our society. Since the elites are exemplars, it has become very hard for the common people to abstain from following such a group of the society, and it is even harder for them to realize it as a threat to our own culture.

Food and Eating Habits

Whatever form of media (ads, movies, music videos), messages deny certain values of culture and tradition of our people, especially in food habits. This will further deteriorate health due to the influence of the unhealthy food choice advertised. Where will we find today, the beautiful cohesion of the family members sitting on the floor and eating together?

In fact we see many families owning a dining table, and each one eating at different times. The family feast, which is part of a vibrant culture of Bhutanese society, is vanishing.

Another but very important aspect in society today is the kind of food preferred. Many of the literate families prefer different types of food that were never known to our ancestors. The buttered toast breakfast with jam and cheese, the chicken tandoori, etc., were never part of Bhutanese cuisine. We can see that with the influence of media, people are now buying and experimenting with new food from supermarkets. Many also watch the cooking shows on TV programmed by other countries like India, Korea, China, etc, learning new ideas and new recipes, making our people more familiar with outside culture, creating a new culture in food preparation in Bhutan. It is therefore, not surprising to find some Bhutanese without an idea of how to cook some typical dishes like *Kangchu, Jasha maroo* and *Nosha maroo,* etc., but would not lack information for making French fries, noodles, and cakes at home.

Costume

A stereotypical media image of scantily dressed female objects of male desire is now trying to make our culture, to a large extent, experiment with eroticizing behaviour. Since the media places a high value on female sexuality, our young girls are picking up on that message. Teenage girls feel the need to be sexually attractive in order to be loved and accepted. As a result, girls become sexually active at a very young age as they struggle to increase their self-esteem and self-worth. This notion drives girls to desire diminutive attire like short shirts and also transparent clothes to expose their bodies rather than wearing *kira.*

The younger generations mostly now look for branded shoes and track suits and go for walks or jogs. They shy away from helping in domestic chores at home, which is actually a part of the lives of children in the Bhutanese cultural setting. More observations can be made on dress; the youth make lots of exceptions to the national dress to go public places. They opt for attire which is not known in the country, like short

skinny shirts and mini skirts or jean pants. They are so overwhelmed by such dresses that even harsh weather conditions are no barrier for them to wear those clothes.

The costume taste is not different with the boys. They prefer discarding the *gho* and formal shoes. Instead they would prefer to wear jean pants with differently designed shirts and coats. Heavy stuffy rags tied around the wrist and head and long, fancy shirts with jean pants hanging down the buttock and the tips resting on dingo boots were never part of the Bhutanese costume, but are gaining momentum among our youth.

Culture and Social Values

Today, media culture has lifted many of the veils of secrecy between children and adults, men and women. The result is a series of drastic changes, including the blurring of age, gender, and other social distinctions. It has also been found that people are affected by the pervasiveness of media. Due to the influence of media on children, the ability of parents to develop responsible attitudes and behaviour in their children has dwindled. Fighting and other violence used as a way to 'handle' conflict—the glamorous way of most prime characters depicted in movies, defeating enemies with vigor, violence and pride—has brought many a youth to the stage of gang fights and other unpleasant activities. This, in fact, erodes civility in the society by demeaning and displacing positive social values.

The strong religious influence in our society with beautiful values of having great faith in God, and all the time remembering God is one significant and sacred practice of the Bhutanese. But, intensive media messages, especially the ads, dilute this very belief and people lose faith in religion. Therefore, saying grace before mealtime and prayers before bedtime is diminishing, despite efforts made by the educational institutions. Initially, the culture practiced the tradition of offering to God before eating and drinking. This scenario of saying grace and act of offering has diminished itself quite surprisingly.

Undesirable acts like cigarette smoking and alcohol

consumption shown in ads as cool and attractive, but not unhealthy and deadly, and promoted by prime casts, has contributed to the smoking habits of many young ones in the society. Since film stars are more popular than national leaders in the society at large, the audiences, especially the youth tend to believe in the behaviour of those stars, which most of the time is vile and undesirable.

The glamorous show and the style of Western merriment of getting into all sorts of nightlife activities on TV and in movies drives many Bhutanese (even married couples who have children) to attend parties and nightlife activities that are part of Western culture and practices.

In most of the media in Western countries' entertainment shows and news media, one will notice that members of ethnic and visible minorities are inadequately represented and that portrayals of minorities are often stereotypical and demeaning. If the media's take on minorities is interpreted at face value, the kids are growing up with a skewed vision of what it means to be part of a first people society. If they get the impression from the news, they will likely take minorities as a negative force, inferior, and so on. As a consequence of this, the public at large, comparing themselves with those figures in the media and with media's advertising intent, does not see people like themselves, in most of the cases—such as with race, ethnicity, or physical ability, for example—diminishing their self worth.

The media shows male characters mainly in the workplace, and only rarely at home. More than a third of the boys had never seen a man on TV doing domestic chores. Most mainstream press coverage continues to rely on men as experts in the fields of business, politics, and economics. Women in the news are more likely to be featured in stories about accidents, natural disasters, or domestic violence than in stories about their professional abilities or expertise. This makes women in general appear morally weak and inefficient or incapable of coming out as somebody in society. This is directly influenced by the underlying media messages for guys to be slobs and all the girls to be sexy. Well, who has ever seen a culture in such bad shape? Bernstein said that

the media's race to embrace this 'idiot culture' has weakened its resolve to pursue truth and relevance. It's a weakness, he said, that has come to threaten the public good more than secrecy.

Mindset

Information received by viewers, whether through TV, radio, internet, CDs, or motion pictures, is compared to the invisible shaft of Cupid that inserts fallacy and fancy into the minds of the observers and finally changes one's overall beliefs and perceptions of life. This happens mostly with the youth and adolescents even though the parents prefer to hide them from all sorts of undesired behaviours.

The advent of media, especially television and the internet, has changed the mindset of the people. The media has is own set of cultural values through the advertisements, adopted by the society at large. These strong influences from the media make the viewers accept the culture it sets. Today, many younger Bhutanese have a desire to act Westernized and go out and flirt. The mindset here, to act differently, is being modern and open. Thus, they try to switch to the culture brought in through media, and ignore our Bhutanese culture. Many youths in urban areas feel ashamed if they have not gone to parties and are not speaking English because this act of avoiding such behaviour would make them appear conservative, old fashioned, orthodox-type people. A majority of society, especially young ones, are supposedly of the opinion that television and other forms of media reflect the real world.

Due to the lack of appropriate culture set in with the government's policy, where the ICT facilities was set, but its own objective of using ICT in governance like e-governance, e-services, e-learning, and e-bay systems are still not popular in the society because the people did not care much for the macro level use of the ICT facilities. Ultimately the general notion among the young ones in the offices is that the internet facilities are provided for email, entertainment, and chat. Although the internet is acknowledged as a good tool for research, but possibly due to limitations in access, many do

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not use the internet as an information site. Therefore, internet is used mainly for email, followed by news and chat.

Moreover, promiscuous scenes on different forms of media, like television, magazines, posters, newspapers, and internet have influenced the mindset of the urban population. With repeated views and sights of such scenes, the viewers in general tend to believe that hugging, kissing, and holding hands is a more modern way of social behaviour in the sense of showing interaction. Furthermore, as per the portrayal of the image of women in media ads, the people in the urban areas view women as passive objects without an opinion, or as objects of love. This is against the reality in the Bhutanese cultural setting where the role of a Bhutanese woman is to be a good wife, a capable manager of the household, and a loving mother, sister, or friend.

Recommendations

There is no doubt indeed, that the media has lifted our society by enormous positive steps. However, with every gift, there is a potential downside. The small, fragile and heterogeneous society with a varied culture is not strong enough to sustain itself–especially when the floods of modernization and Westernization seep through, attempting to forge our culture. Elders are worried about the power of mainstream media messages on the young and the different forms of media with reflective impact on social and cultural norms and on beliefs and lifestyles. As we stand at a crossroads between all sorts of media lines and forms, between societal response and political settings, between our own culture and emerging culture brought in through media, it is necessary that we adequately study the newer forms of media to use them productively with minimum negative effects on our society. Airwaves are a public utility, and those who control their access and distribution must do so in ways that represent the best interests of all Bhutanese society.

Media cuts across all sectors as an indispensable factor for development. As the country develops with the objective of creating a knowledge-based society, the accessibility to information becomes critical. This access will not be possible

without the media. Therefore, the development of media needs to be pursued, but these developmental activities should be sensitive to our unique national goals and values.

We need to comprehend the emerging complexity of media and to select intelligent pathways to filter and shape its messages in a holistic perception through a unity of good vision, strategy, and action. Focusing on what media does to people, we should strive to think of what people do with media—only then will we be able to shape media to our benefit. In this context, we must find ways to build a robust knowledge infrastructure for public interest media. We must find ways that enhance researchers and producers in finding and mobilizing relevant research and data that are desired by the society. We must find ways that can facilitate the strategies, and support the articulation of broader conceptual frameworks and linkages between issues to support the need of the public at large. The following are some of the recommended areas to look into for media reform:

Accessibility and Equity

As aforementioned, the effect of media on the development of our country is great. Yet looking at the current scenario we find that the media impact was restricted to only a chunk of population living in the urban areas. Though efforts have been made for the development of infrastructure and facilities, it is obvious that the media has not met its equity in terms of accessibility to all portions of society. The radio has touched the lives of nearly every Bhutanese citizen but other forms were restricted to only a few parts of the country. Television and international publications like magazines and newspapers have not penetrated beyond urban society, while the national newspaper and other print media have been restricted to the literate population in the urban and semi-urban areas. The internet facilities have touched only the IT literate people and are very limited for students and others who do not have offices. Further, the media, be it print or television programmes, is basically seen to be a replica of mass media outside the country. This has limited its credibility in the country among the educated and thinkers in

the country.

Besides, the content has been found inadequate with limited coverage especially when it comes to educational programmes. The media representation has been focused more on the urban towns with special attention being placed in the capital where the central office has been located. The rural populace is not equally represented. The evolution of private newspapers, especially Bhutan Observer, seems to have made an attempt to address the coverage of rural places. However, since the accessibility of the newspaper is limited to literate groups which is much less in the rural areas, it is the other forms of media that need to extend to rural areas both in terms of content coverage and accessibility of information.

Therefore, to further nurture our beautiful culture and to develop a culture that best befits our society, we still need to boost our media and reach to all parts of the country. The effect of media in our country can be imagined if the media infrastructure and facilities have extended to all parts of the country.

One of the most important media forms is the movies. However the accessibility to movies is very limited. It was found that Bhutanese movies and films are very expensive, and that an average-sized family would have to pay at least half a thousand ngultrum to watch a Bhutanese movie show. Though it was said that Bhutanese films have high representations of our culture, language, and tradition, the impact is found to be minimal. The government, besides its efforts on enhancement of more Bhutanese films, should also, side by side, enhance accessibility to all the people through reduced entertainment taxes as well.

Media is anticipated to form the vital tool towards promotion of our traditional and modern culture in the country. Therefore, besides entertainment, the media is supposed to cater to the information needs of the country. In this respect, it is critical for the media to maintain a balance between public services and commercial interests. However, maintaining the balance between the two is a challenge for any media organization, in terms of their sustainability. Also, today, in the world of globalization, many media organizations

tend to pursue the current trend of providing their services as per the market forces, which is alarming to our society. Thus, it is of utmost importance to provide financial support in the development of infrastructure. Further, the funding support can be extended to the areas and parts where media information is vital but does not reach. In the decentralized environment, people in the rural areas are in need of information and education that will provide them with a proper guide to government policy etc, assisting in decision-making processes. For this processes funding supports needs to be extended to the remote parts where the areas get access to all information through subsidized rates.

Therefore, in order to meet the government objective for the media to play the role of the 'fourth estate' that is required in a healthy democratic system—regarded as a means of fulfilling the 'entitlements' of all citizens to information, culture and entertainment—the government must ensure the extension of infrastructure and facilities to all parts of the country like power, telecommunications facilities, electronic media, and ICT services, which are very powerful tools of media and yet do not cover many parts of the country.

Research

Research on media reform needs to be carried out extensively. Part of this process involves inviting researchers and reform actors to reflect on the conservationism of knowledge production and the use in this area—identifying not only specific research needs, but also the patterns that lead to persistent development and study in the field. Thus, there is a concern about the Bhutanese media's content, both in terms of quality and quantity as per the demands of Bhutanese consumers, which needs more research to be of greater variety, higher quality, and, inevitably, more entertaining.

By nearly all accounts, the communications reform field routinely fails in these critical functions. Attention to research is fragmented within the academy and data issues are uneven in all media types. Networks for sharing knowledge, defining research needs, and building linkages between issues are

mostly *ad hoc*. Academic works on research that is directly relevant to the development of media system that enhances our own culture and preservation of national tradition should be encouraged. Media organizations in Bhutan should have the time, training, or incentives necessary to become rigorous consumers and producers of research. Television watching doesn't necessarily have to be passive; with some research input it can prompt questions, kindle curiosity, or teach activities to pursue when the set is off.

The Royal Government has made a modest beginning by establishing the Information and Media Authority—to take up activities of research, planning, and support for the growth of the media. It initiates research and the drafting of policy, regulation, and legislation for the ministry.

Censoring Media

> I would like to remind our youth that the television and the Internet provide a whole range of possibilities which can be both beneficial as well as negative for the individual and the society. I trust that you will exercise your good sense and judgement in using the Internet and television.
>
> - King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, June 2, 1999

The media development in the country was timely, and many new forms of media have been introduced in recent years. Yet, with lack of experience and its impact in the beginning, media growth has been noticeably somewhat discordant. The most effective and accessible form of media, like the television and the internet, were introduced lately with numerous choices of information. The lack of media literacy and education together with the unlimited information of media sites and messages through all print, internet and television, seems to have created some confusion within the mindset of people in the Kingdom. The situation will be further aggravated by the unlimited access to the most vulnerable populace in the urban areas of the country.

The Royal Government, realizing the fact, has established the *National Information Technology Authority* for overall ICT policy and plans in the country and the *Bhutan Communications Authority* as the regulatory authority for all

the ICT and media sectors. Further, for the effective censorship of the media, the government has formed *The Film and TV Review Board,* which will review and censor all Bhutanese films on the impact on national policy, politics, and culture of the country before they are screened for the public. However, due to the emergence of numerous forms of media and unregulated number of cable operators, there is a need to take additional work to enhance the media censor that will prohibit the view of certain harmful programmes from the different groups of the society.

Media has become very effective in communicating to the masses. In a matter of seconds, most children can mimic a movie or TV character, sing an advertising jingle (soap), or give other examples. Many choose to tune out with a hungry appetite for media information and messages. Those who continue to consume media images are strongly influenced by the culture it depicts and its messages. Media in different forms has been very important and has more to teach to the masses than any other medium could. Media messages can so readily harm the culture indeed, for which it needs to be controlled and subject to censoring on issues of media reform.

With the explosion in satellite and digital specialty channels, we now have access to a plethora of both good quality and inappropriate content. In the crowded media environment, the key for the society is to search out high quality messages for their society and culture. A lack of role models should spark discussion about how media portrays different types of people and programmes.

What ever form they take (ads, movies, computer games, music videos), messages can be good or bad for a child. Just as one abstains from certain foods in the diet that may be unhealthy, one should also limit the child's media diet of messages. They should be restricted from the messages like use of cigarettes and alcohol, and fatty foods and thin bodies (where the media heavily promote unhealthy foods while at the same time telling people they need to loose weight and be thin). From media violence children learn to behave aggressively toward others, and incite less caring and

affectionate attitude toward others.

Since it is evident that the media, especially referring to television, influences viewers' perception of the values and behaviour, the government should liaise with television station operators, cable television system operators, and video programmers to enable and facilitate them taking into consideration that television broadcast and cable programming has established a uniquely pervasive presence in the lives of Bhutanese. There is a compelling governmental interest in empowering media censors and parents to limit the negative influences of video programming that is harmful to viewers.

The government might need to update and provide all concerned authorities and people on the timely information about the nature of upcoming video programming and with the technological tools that allow them easily to block violent, sexual, or other programming that they believe harmful in order to achieve the interest of the society. With respect to the censoring of media messages, the government can seek consultation of the television industry and formulate stringent rules requiring distributors of such technology to permit parents to block the display of video programming that they have determined is inappropriate for their family members.

The government at large and the family at home in particular can initiate media messages censoring with the help of developing program classification system and use it in conjunction with V-chip technology.

V-chip Technology

'V-chip' is simple equipment used in the TV sets for censoring and blocking certain programmes that are not desired by the viewers. This is usually practiced by the parents to block certain programmes that are harmful to their children. This is also practised through rating the shows, which is established by the broadcasting industry. These ratings are encoded into the programs, and the V-chip technology reads the encoded information and blocks shows accordingly. Using the remote control, parents can program the V-chip to block certain

shows based on their ratings (*Federal Communications Bureau*).

Media Rating Systems

It is also critical to set a common rating system of media messages based on the consensus of the media that will allow parents to block a broad range of programs on a multi-channel system effectively and easily. Technology that allows parents to block programming based on common ratings should be introduced. Towards this end, the government must frame rules on the requirement of apparatus, especially television sets equipped with the blocking technology. The alternative blocking technology that enables parents to block programming based on identifying programs without ratings must also be explored in order to enhance effectiveness of the media censoring. However, the establishment of such rules of media rating to screen out sexual, violent, or other indecent material should be informed to the parents before it is displayed to children, and provide voluntarily to broadcast signals that contain ratings of such programming. Towards this end, the broadcasting industry should establish a voluntary ratings system for TV programs and provide a reliable ratings system with the guidelines for the TV viewers. This system can be initiated by the Bhutan Information and Communication Media Authority (BICMA).

It is practically significant that the act and regulation and other guide books of the government and telecommunication authorities should enact regulations on media stressing the procedures for the establishment of a television rating code, as well as procedures for newly manufactured television sets to include a mechanism to block programs.

Ratings could be developed with the help of Motion Picture Association of Bhutan, Association of Cable Operators, and the mass media organizations like BBS, *Kuensel*, BMS, etc., based on research and general feed back from the society on the issue of its impact on society. The ratings can be done either directly with the channel or with the programme with the help of coding. The following box

provides an ideal example of rating system adopted in America:

The Ratings System in America

In 1996 Congress asked the broadcasting industry to establish a voluntary ratings system for TV programs. The industry did so by creating the ratings system known as "TV Parental Guidelines."

This system was established by the National Association of Broadcasters, the National Cable Television Association, and the Motion Picture Association of America.

Ratings appear in the corner of your television screen during the first 15 seconds of each television program. The ratings are also included in many magazines that give TV ratings and in the television listings of many newspapers. Ratings are given to all television programming except news, sports, and unedited movies on premium cable channels. There are six possible ratings that a program can receive:

TV-Y, (All Children) found only in children's shows, means that the show is appropriate for all children;

TV-7, (Directed to Older Children) found only in children's shows, means that the show is most appropriate for children age 7 and up;

TV-G (General Audience) means that the show is suitable for all ages but is not necessarily a children's show;

TV-PG (Parental Guidance Suggested) means that parental guidance is suggested and that the show may be unsuitable for younger children (this rating may also include a **V** for violence, **S** for sexual situations, **L** for language, or **D** for suggestive dialog);

TV-14 (Parents Strongly Cautioned) means that the show may be unsuitable for children under 14 (V, S, L, or D may accompany a rating of TV-14); and

TV-MA (Mature Audience Only) means that the show is for mature audiences only and may be unsuitable for children under 17 (V, S, L, or D may accompany a rating of TV-MA).

Source: Federal Communications Commission, US

Policy Support

Since the most at stake is our own culture, stringent regulations are required to comprehend the dimensions of the use of media and their implications for public policy and culture. The press and broadcasting freedom and opportunity to many offered under the protection of many of the Government legal protections and rights poses a dicey game of creating chaos and lots of institutional malfunctioning in the society.

In order to direct the media to our social development in the aspects of culture and tradition, it is important to further enhance the government's policy, support, and initiation. Towards this end, following measures can be taken in light of the development of media in Bhutan:

The Government must render support and encourage the development and convergence of information and communication technologies on the creation and use of literary and artistic works, as well as enhance individuals to cultivate an informed appreciation of the rich national heritage as well as the civilizations and cultures of the wider world.

The Government must provide incentives and grants to Bhutanese multi-media organizations and local film industries to encourage them to nurture Bhutanese lifestyles, culture, stories, and folktales.

Bhutan, while joining any free trade organizations should be clear on the interpretation of international rules and TOR in order to provide adequate solutions for safeguarding our national culture and associated heritage.

Bhutan should participate in as many international organizations that help and guide the country to protect its culture and restrict other countries to expand their film and literary creators into our society in order to safeguard our culture and traditions.

Enhance and support Bhutanese cultural institutions with good legislation, regulations, program support, etc., towards conservation and promotion of diverse cultural works, stories and symbols in the media world.

Media and Public Culture

Form a public policy frame work to address media use and other public airwaves in the best interest of our own society and culture.

A special focus on the reorientation of the kind of media used and people to watch will be to forge partnerships with universities, research institutions, and other civil society organizations. This partnership programme will help develop a new approach towards building media organizations to help acquire a stronger base and at the same time encourage greater international cooperation towards fulfilling the objective of guiding proper use of media.

Subsidies on infrastructure—including power, telecommunications facilities, and electronic media and ICT services, which are in fact expensive to the public at the moment—needs to be provided to reach the rural areas and to all income groups.

Legislation and existing regulations, like Bhutan Telecommunications Act, Copyrights Act, ICT Act, etc., will need to be implemented in view of monitoring and guiding the development of media in the country that will protect the media in its professionalism. This is expected to fulfill the national objective of developing of a free and responsible press in a competitive environment in an era of rapid political change, with the introduction of the constitution in the kingdom.

Provide the financial support for the sustenance of media organizations which have been pursuing minimal pBibliography on commercialism and stressing educational and information-based organizations.

Media Organization Reforms

Media organizations in many cases create programs seeing people/society at large as consumers to be sold to. On the contrary their mission should be reformed focusing the people at large as students to be educated, as citizens responsible for the preservation and enhancement of our Bhutanese traditions and culture. The vision of such an organization must be to serve the society through the provision of broadly educating and advocating programmes on our significant

culture and traditions, as well as education as a whole realizing its forte and maximizing the benefits of being part of the consortium of the Bhutanese society. In other words, media organizations must be geared to fulfil their role to inform, educate, and entertain people in Bhutan.

The government should enable media organizations to gain ample experience and confidence to take on the task of enhancing our own culture. Media can augment potentials of the present unique culture of the Bhutanese society to preserve and to flourish. Therefore, the Government must take a deterrent action on the media organizations which are likely to affect the culture. Towards this end, exercises must be carried out to locate, access, analyze, organize, evaluate, and apply information about selected media lines like TV and internet that attract the attention of the majority of people.

It has been customary with many nations that the focus of media has not been properly utilized. The world so far in some cases experienced many of the leaders and political parties utilizing the media for propaganda with many intentions. Such a culture must be changed. In this regard, the government must ensure that all forms of media organizations and other agencies of media (television broadcasters, television programming producers, cable operators, appropriate public interest groups, and other interested individuals from the private sector) are fairly balanced in terms of political affiliation, the points of view represented, and the functions to be performed by those organizations with equal provision of information provided fairly to the people in general. The government also must facilitate and carry out a timely assessment of the media to ensure that people will not use media towards their individual benefit, and provide enough freedom.

Furthermore, diversity guidelines for broadcasters must be set up which ensures balanced coverage on cultural diversity, refraining from stereotypical portrayals. This will ensure that the television and all the media programmes reflect and sustain the country's cultural diversity.

The establishment of such guidelines is expected to:

— Ensure balanced coverage of issues;
— Refrain from broadcasting programmes that may incite hatred or contempt of others, based on ethnic or national heritage, colour, or religion;
— Be sensitive to the use of stereotypical portrayals;
— Uphold its own tradition in promoting our national interest and cultural values like ensuring the sanctity of the King;
— As far as possible, maintain the balance of social, cultural, political and economic interest of the country.

In the years to come, with the constitution of the Kingdom enacted and implemented, it is significant for the continuous development of the media organizations to develop professionally and in size in order to function independently and responsibly, upholding national interests and to enhance development of the nation and also to keep up with technological trends and developments in the international media.

Media Education

In light of the plethora of potential harmful effects of violent media exposure, the efforts to censor the entertainment industry need the support of media literacy programs to combat the problem. Media literacy is a perspective designed to give audiences greater control over media messages by teaching them to place media messages within an appropriate context (Potter, 1998). Media literacy should reach out to parents, educators, and policymakers to counter the negative influence of advertisements on the lives of the people and children. Media education must be provided to parents to help them filter media messages, set limits, and be actively involved in media consumption time helping the capricious viewers comprehend the media messages.

The following are some of the suggestions in which media education can be enhanced.

Students must be educated both in the schools and at home about the techniques used in advertising, such as air brushing and other touching up, and point them out to the kids. The young girls need to be well aware that the models and TV stars have professionals such as makeup artists, hairstylists, clothing consultants, and lighting experts to help make them look good. And that the much of what is shared on the media is far too exaggerated to be reality.

The education by the family elders is critical for a lead role, and from an early age, help younger ones develop self-esteem and encourage them to have a strong sense of self-worth by accepting and loving them for who and what they are. Help them to draw their self-esteem from internal factors "such as the type of person they are, their strengths, intelligence, and abilities", rather than from external factors such as physical appearance.

The role of family is very important in fighting the negative influences of the media. Children must have loved ones and good role models around them so they do not feel the need to rely so heavily on the media for ideas about how to be accepted, loved, and respected. The elders in the family should bear the sole responsibility.

Teach the young girls to accept and treasure their body. They have to accept their body type, just as they have accepted their height and eye color. Explain them that the body type seen in ads is common in less than 10 percent of the population.

Finally, but very importantly, it is necessary to minimize the exposure to advertisements and various harmful media messages. The amount of television and the frequency that they watch needs to be reduced, especially in the early years. They need to be encouraged to read various informative and educative books, but not on the magazines and other advertising pamphlets.

Conclusion

Our country Bhutan is unique among nations in the world, aesthetically bountiful, geographically stunning and rich in cultural settings. Albeit it's relatively small size, the country,

owing to its geographical location and its vast terrain of mountain ranges, is marked with numerous patches of settlements each bearing its own set of dialects, traditions, and culture, magnificently embedded. This unique tradition and the cultural aspects with undisrupted flora and fauna attribute to Bhutan's splendor and fascination to the outside world, making it one of the world's most highly favoured destinations. The rich tradition and culture for untold hundreds of years, has been practised passing through generations via the tradition of oral transmission. However, with the dawn of modernization and advent of a system known as globalization, concerns started brewing with many causes and many reasons. The emergence of different forms of media such as television, radio, video games, and newspapers in the Kingdom changed the behaviour and attitude of many people. The entertainment and the shows on the screen undermine the controls of one and many by the flickering images on the screens and the evocative papers teaching certain information that ruins behaviour and deters the moral values and certain meaningful traditions once long followed by our ancestors.

The seminal policy document of our Kingdom (Bhutan 2020' A Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness) defines culture as "the living manifestation of civilization". There is a need to nurture its values, its survival, and its ability to flourish on a par with the development processes of the nation. Therefore, we must shape our media to make it our own showcase of attractive demonstration of mobile educative and sensitizing shows, with attractive photographs in the newspaper and aired to lure our society in appreciating our own culture and practicing it in every walk of life. This will help retain the values and practices of our heritage and culture in the minds of all Bhutanese, thereby making the nation an oasis of unique cultural setting and traditions amidst countries loomed large by the effects of Westernization through all sorts of media.

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