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# Gross National Happiness and it's Third Pillar: A Policy Analysis of The Bhutanese Broadcast Syatem

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GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS AND ITS THIRD PILLAR: A POLICY  
ANALYSIS OF THE BHUTANESE BROADCAST SYSTEM

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By

Deki Palden Thinlay

2011

GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS AND ITS THIRD PILLAR: A POLICY  
ANALYSIS OF THE BHUTANESE BROADCAST SYSTEM

by

DEKI PALDEN THINLAY

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## **ACRONYMS**

BBS:	Bhutan Broadcasting Service
BICMA:	Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority
BICM ACT:	Bhutan Information, Communications and Media Act
CBS:	Center for Bhutan Studies
CSO:	Cable Service Operator
DOIM:	Depart of Information and Media
FYP:	Royal Government of Bhutan, Gross National Happiness Commission Five-Year Plan
GM:	General Manager
GNH:	Gross National Happiness
GNP:	Gross National Product
GNHC:	Gross National Happiness Commission
ICT:	Information, Communication Technology
MOIC:	Ministry of Information and Communication
RGOB:	Royal Government of Bhutan

## **ABSTRACT**

Bhutan occupies a special position in the international arena with its unique “guiding philosophy for development process called the Gross National Happiness and its objectives holds priority over economic growth. A rapidly changing local media and the foreign channels expanding foreign way of thinking introduce foreign values and cultures. This changing scenario builds up challenges for the government’s vision of GNH and the pillar of cultural preservation to prevail. This research analyzes the government’s policies available on the broadcast media through document analysis, discussions with people related to the law and policies, and analysis of selected TV and radio program contents. This study reveals that there is a need for proper implementation and operationalization of the general GNH policy into the broadcast media. This research therefore reveals the importance for an immediate formation and implementation of a media policy in Bhutan. This study also touches upon the need for a national integration of all the dynamic cultures prevalent in the country in order for a national culture too succeed. The study provides insights for Bhutanese media policymakers, and those who question mainstream, consumption-based development approaches and strive for creative, sustainable alternatives.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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 judgment in using the Internet and television.

H.M. Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the 4<sup>th</sup> King of Bhutan, 2 June 1999

Considering the fact that there has been no research done on the media systems in Bhutan, this thesis seeks to look at the current broadcast situation in Bhutan and see whether the Bhutanese media policy falls under any of the current world media model classifications or whether it has its own unique model. Bhutan is known for having GNH as its unique development model which is supposed to guide all policies in Bhutan. Since the focus of my thesis is on the broadcast media (to simplify the argument presented in this thesis, broadcast media shall mean radio, and television), this thesis will therefore study, if GNH is actually used as a guiding principle and implemented in the Broadcast law making process of the Country or whether it is a theory that is not implemented or applicable in reality. One of the main foci of this thesis is on the culture preservation, the third pillar of GNH. First this paper seeks to look at the importance it is given in the broadcast media policy making and find out if the broadcast media program contents are consistent and are reflective of the pillar of cultural preservation. Talking about cultural preservation which is a key factor of the GNH policy, this thesis will seek to understand the definition of Bhutanese culture in Bhutan and in forming a definition, whether cultural rights of the minorities are included.

With television being a very persuasive medium in terms of bringing global culture into a society, this thesis will also explore the broadcast media policies available for both local and international channels and see if the government is taking any measures in balancing the content flow from outside in order to preserve the unique culture of Bhutan.

This thesis in the process of answering the quest mentioned above, will also attempt to answer the questions pertaining to issues such as challenges in having a unique media model, types of program content, cultural invasion, homogenization of a Bhutanese culture, and need for a media model.

## **Section 1. Background**

Bhutan, a small country in the Himalayas with a population of 646,851 people (National Statistical Bureau, 2006) and sandwiched between two giant nations of China and India, opened its doors to the “outside world only in the late 1960’s” (Dorji, 1991). The way to modernization of this small Kingdom was first paved by the Third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck in the late 1950’s and soon after, the weight of development was carried on by his son, the Fourth King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck.

Television was introduced in the country alongside the Internet, in the year 1999 by the fourth King on his silver jubilee coronation. With the two very important communication medium being adopted, although the state of isolation was detached during the 60’s, it was that year that Bhutan practically left its cocoon of isolation to open itself to the outside world. “The introduction of the internet and television has been the most significant in term of adaptation of the traditional society to the modern world. However, a society with a strong oral tradition like Bhutan is very vulnerable to the negative influences of the media, as shown by the debate which has appeared in the country about the risks of external influences diluting the Kingdom's cultural

heritage and religious values” (Mathou, 2000). At that time, the “Bhutanese population was suddenly overrun by about 45 international channels” (Wangmo & Cokley, 2009). After the introduction of Television and the Internet, the media industry in this Buddhist country has undergone within itself, considerable change not only in terms of development but also in its expansion and competition. “The country is also witnessing the cultural impacts of a slow but irreversible transition due to its opening up to globalization” (Rinzin, Vermeulen & Glasbergen, 2006). According to Pek (2003), within just about two years of its introduction of Cable television in Bhutan, an estimated 33 licensed cable operators and subscribers increased to 12,000 (142 percent) in 18 districts <sup>1</sup> and the impact of the introduction of cable television was felt on the culture (pg.20). According to the latest media impact study (2008), the number of cable operators has increased to 52 and the number of cable subscribers has increased to 30,000. The latest number of cable operators as per BICMA database, is now sixty one in the country. With this kind of impact, Bhutan having only the government initiated television station, Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS) as a competition to the various international channels is quite a task. Although the country has only one TV broadcaster which serves as both TV and radio broadcaster, the country as of 2011, has now eight private newspapers alongside the state owned newspaper “*Kuensel*”<sup>2</sup> and six private radio stations. In order to keep a watch on the new evolving media environment, a regulatory body for ICT and media was set up in 2006 called the Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority (BICMA) which is guided by the Bhutan Information, Communication and Media Act (Act), implemented in the National Assembly in the same year. Bhutan occupies a special position in the international arena with its unique “guiding philosophy for development process” (Thinley, 2005) known as the Gross National Happiness (GNH), “a

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<sup>1</sup> Bhutan has 20 districts

<sup>2</sup> All italic words will be translated in the glossary at the end of the paper

concept coined by the Fourth King, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck in the late 1980's which is contrasted with Gross National Product (GNP)" (Hargens, 2002) and its objectives holds priority over economic growth. "GNH has become a standard upon which to develop government's policies in Bhutan, and is based on the four pillars of sustainable development, preservation and promotion of cultural values, conservation of natural environment and establishment of good governance." According to Faris (2004), the concept of GNH is a uniquely indigenous expression of aspirations for government and development activity in Bhutan (pg. 140). Although, "gaining international recognition for its uniquely coined development philosophy, the Kingdom of Bhutan now faces the challenge of living up to its ambitions of sustainable economic development whilst keeping its cultural identity strong." (Chua, 2008)

After the voluntary-abdication of the Fourth King, the country in 2008 saw its first democratic elections and of course the adoption of the new Constitution, which clearly states the freedom of expression and the freedom of media and as Wangchuk (2006) stated "in the new political environment mass media will play a vital role in sustaining the democracy. In fact the success of the new path, so laboriously and single-handedly forged by His Majesty, will in large part depend on how the media is managed and practiced in the country." However, the government may be facing its greatest challenge yet. With cable TV being introduced, the Country is facing changes in the society especially among the younger generations. "Increasing economic liberalisation and social modernisation have brought an influx of differing cultures and norms, and have caused new conflicts of interest within Bhutanese society"(Chua, 2008).

## **Section 2. Outline of thesis**

The first Chapter after the introduction is the literature review where I explore the most important theoretical positions regarding media and broadcast models around the world. I also

explore the distinct development model of Bhutan, the Gross National Happiness, its meaning, importance of the concept to the country and its relevance to the media system in Bhutan which will be discussed in detail in the finding and analysis of this thesis. I also touch upon the concerns currently faced by Bhutan such as the impact of western culture or the popular culture on the population linking it to the government's philosophy of GNH particularly with the pillar of cultural preservation.

The second chapter on the research method I chose for this study. I look at policy analysis as my umbrella method using discussion interviews and discourse analysis as part of the policy analysis to get in depth information on my thesis topic.

The third chapter of my thesis is on the findings which is classified into three main areas, based on their origin; data emerging from official government documents such as policies, rules and regulations, and studies and reports available with regard to the broadcast media, its content and GNH; answers from the interview discussions with the people related to the media/broadcast policy making and broadcast media; and selected program content of the TV and Radio stations in Bhutan. The results are divided into three sections.

The fourth chapter of my research is the analysis of the all the information I accrued from the government documents and interviews. My research data suggest four main areas of reflection: the first regards the effectiveness of the GNH approach and its implementation within the media policies and practices; the second is based on the recognition of Bhutanese content as an important part of media development process; the third is the role of TV and radio in enhancing the distinct Bhutanese identity through promotion of culture; and lastly the invasion of



foreign culture in Bhutan. These sections are further divided into subsections for more clarification.

The final chapter of my thesis is the conclusion, where I have given a summary of my findings and analysis and some recommendations for future research.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Scholars say that the media systems around the world vary from one another according to the economy, polity, religion and culture of different societies. According to an article by McKenzie (2005), he says that across the world, media organizations are regulated because of universal perceptions that media content and media operations can significantly impact economies, social policies, political debate and, above all, the lives of people (pg. 158). But people who travel to different countries often notice how different the media content can be from one country to the next. For example, in some countries there seems to be a fair share of violent content across television programs, while in other nations, such content is lacking. The same contrasting statements can be made about political, advertising, educational and sexual content. Often, such differences in media content are the result of legally binding regulations applied by governments or government agencies in an attempt to achieve societal goals that are consistent with prevailing philosophies for the given domestic media system. Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm (1956) also said that “the press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates. Especially it reflects the system of social control where by the relations of individual and institutions are adjusted. We believe that the understanding of these aspects of the society is basic to any systematic understanding of the press” (1-2). In order to examine or analyze the different media systems, many scholars brought into light different theories and according to Yin (2008), the seminal work of the four theories of the press (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956) established the dominant paradigm in analyzing global media systems and, in particular, in assessing levels of the press freedom in countries and regions throughout the world.

Siebert, Paterson, and Schramm go one to say:

To see the difference between press systems in full perspective, then, one must look at the social systems in which the press functions, to see the social systems in their true relationship to the press, one has to look at certain basic beliefs and assumptions which the society holds: the nature of the man, the nature of society and the state, the relation of the man to the state, and the nature of knowledge and truth. (2)

Dominant as the four theories have been, there is no lack of criticism of them (Gunatante, 2005; Nerone, 1995; Winfeild B. H.; Mizuno, T., & Beaudion, C. E., 2000; Yin, 2003). Hallin and Mancini (2004) also drifted from the four theories by stating “but the focus on “philosophies” of the press- or as one might also call them “ideologies” of the press- points to what we see as a key failing of the Four Theories of the Press. Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm did not, in fact, empirically analyze the relation between media systems and social systems; they looked neither at the actual functioning of the media systems nor at that of the social systems in which they operated, but only at the “rationales or theories” by which those systems legitimated themselves.” (pg. 9)

Moving away from the four theories of the press and taking a slightly different approach in their work on comparing media systems, Hallin and Mancini (2004) introduced the three models of media systems; Liberal Model, Democratic Corporatist Model and Polarized Pluralist Model, with a four principle dimensions: the structure of the media market, including, particularly, the degree of development of mass circulation press; the degree and form of political parallelism; the development of journalistic professionalism; and the degree and form of

state intervention in the media system (pg. 296). Yin (2008), found that other theories on the press systems followed such as development journalism in developing countries, revolutionary media, and democratic-participant media (pg. 6). More and more researchers from the East and West have come to re-examine the four theories of the press as a dominant paradigm in studying world press (Gunatante, 2000, 2005; 2004 Merrill; Nerone, 1995; Winfeild et al., 2000; Yin, 2003). According to Benson (2009), Hallin and Mancini's *Comparing Media Systems* presented a landmark synthesis of this emerging research field, replacing the American-centric normative approach of *Four Theories* with an original framework for open-ended empirical research (pg. 615). He goes on to say that in a very short period of time, *Comparing Media Systems* has become an essential point of reference for comparative news media research, but as Hallin and Mancini themselves concede, it is far from the last word. Their classification of national media systems into broader regional political/journalistic "models" – a North Atlantic "liberal" model, a Northern European "democratic corporatist" model, and a southern European "polarized pluralist" model – is admittedly not fully able to capture the diversity of media within and across each model. Likewise, their identification of our key factors shaping news production, while immensely useful, needs to be interrogated in relation to other theoretical traditions, such as the sociology of news, new institutionalism, and field theory. Finally, important questions scarcely explored by Hallin and Mancini, are now arguably the most crucial: first, the extent to which even an "expanded" understanding of western media (beyond the American paradigm) is adequate to fully account for the wide variety of media found in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe (pg.651).

According to Katz and Wedell (1977), the models adopted in the Western Countries were, of course, themselves designed in response to the particular circumstances obtaining at a

particular point in each country's history. In the main their structures and characteristics reflect the preoccupations and objectives of the societies within which they were set at time of their creation (pg. 65). Western theories have dominated in journalism education and research and arguably do a good job of describing media systems in the West; however it is hard to fit Asian media systems into the existing theories (Yin, 2008). Winfield et al. (2000) found that Western scholarship on press systems tended to disregard the cultures, philosophies, and traditions that distinguish Asian mass media (pg.324). Yin (2003) found major difficulties or misfits in trying to pigeonhole Asian media systems according to the four press theories, which were developed by Western media scholars and were based on Western philosophies and analysis of the Western history, politics, and culture (pg. 8).

Yin goes on to say:

The Asian civilization is as different from the Western civilization as any two civilizations can be. Moreover, Asia is a politically and culturally diverse continent, where reforming and developing communist countries are right next door to some of the most successful capitalist countries in the world. And no one or two religions dominate the continent. It is hard to lump sum Asia together in any kind of description, and it is even harder to pigeonhole the vastly diverse Asian media systems into the four press categories developed by the Western media scholars, who failed to include media experiences from the east in building their theories. (pg. 6)

Yin (2008) in order to attempt at exploring a more balanced model in studying press systems around the world, proposed a two- dimensional Freedom-Responsibility coordinate

system to provide a more balanced press model in explaining press systems around the world, measuring not only the degree of press freedom but also the level of press responsibility. The validity of the new model will be determined by how many press systems in the world it can satisfactorily describe and explain (pg. 53). Yin (2008), states that the major challenge in the application of this model would be the measurement of press responsibility in press system. So far no effort is ever made in that regard; given the expected controversies it bound to draw (pg. 55).

With lot of changes happening in the media systems around the world at that time, closer to home, changes were seen in the Asian developing countries as well. “The world in the 1970’s witnessed an important stage in the transfer of electronic media of radio and television from the industrial countries of Europe and North America to the developing countries of the Third World” (Katz & Wedell, 1977).

In their study on broadcasting media in the third world, Katz and Wedell found that:

“Most of the developing countries introduced radio systems at varying levels of quality which covers their territories and all of all of them have introduced television, albeit in many cases on little more than a symbolic scale. Yet in spite of their affirmative actions in adopting broadcast media, the developing nations have invested little effort in the formation of explicit policies for relating the media to development goals” ( pg.3)

Unlike other developing countries, Bhutan, due to its late entry to the global village by allowing television in the 90’s, is in a privileged stage where it can learn from other countries

mistakes and adopt from them successful measures of development which suits the Bhutanese context.

According to Hargens (2002), in most cases development and its measurement has been reduced to economic (quantifiable) dimensions, as defined by the Western world. Thus, what is called for is an approach to development that also honors interior (qualitative) dimensions in the service of ecological sustainability, cultural preservation, and spiritual development. This is an integral approach that does not force multiculturalism, liberal pluralism, conservative approaches, or even holistic notions on any culture but rather allows each culture to cultivate its own unique interior dimensions such as values, mutual understanding, phenomenological experiences, intentionality, integrity, trustworthiness, and justness. (pg.27)

Hargens (2002) goes on to say that Bhutan's approach to development is distinct in that it does not just add qualitative variables to the list of quantitative ones but explicitly makes interiors (e.g., happiness) the starting point for assessment and it takes "The Middle Path"<sup>3</sup> to achieve this. Supporting Hargens (2002), Rinzin, C., Vermeulen, W. J. V. & Glasbergen, P. (2006) also found that Bhutan's development strategy is guided by the philosophy of 'gross national happiness' and that the development philosophy therefore states that the country should pursue a balanced or 'middle way' development strategy which is based on the belief that moderate consumption leads to the realization of true well-being or quality of life (pg. 55). Mathou, (2000) states that "achieving a "balance between spiritual and material aspects of life, between *Peljor Gongphel* (economic development) and *Gakid* (happiness and peace)" is both a

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<sup>3</sup> Is the Buddhist believe of "balance between spiritual and material aspects of life (economic development and happiness and peace)

cultural imperative and a political objective.” According to the Tenth Five Year Plan (TFYP)<sup>4</sup> 2008-2013, of the Gross National Happiness Commission of Bhutan (2009), the development process in Bhutan has been visualized and framed in a broad and utilitarian context that seeks to address a more meaningful purpose for development than just the mere fulfillment of material satisfaction. Accordingly, Bhutan’s all-encompassing and penultimate goal of development is the maximization and realization of Gross National Happiness (GNH). This has served and continues to remain as the principal guiding philosophy for the country’s long term development vision and rationale (p.16). Reflecting the importance of the concept, the promotion of enabling conditions for GNH has also been enshrined as an important principle of state policy under Article 9 of the Constitution<sup>5</sup> (p.17). When considering GNH in broad terms, it is clear that the priority of happiness is linked to a balanced conception of material and non-material maturity - one uniquely Bhutanese and explicitly Buddhist in form. In this sense happiness becomes inseparably involved with a whole constellation of other accomplishments (McDonald, 2004). GNH is a noble concept uniquely Bhutanese but according to Ura (2006) within Bhutan, GNH has been variously perceived: as statist narrative of policy evolution that provides a narrative frame; as a legitimization of policy bundle at any given moment to suggest that the current policies subsumes GNH without any need to explain what it is independently of policies at a given time; as a normatively defined goal for the country towards which its sub-units should navigate and gravitate; as a self-representation or identity of the state in comparison to the ‘imagined or real outsider-audience’ when its bureaucratic class who explicates it confronts them, really or imaginarily; as a search for extension and application of Buddhist ontology to development practice and to contemporary governance.

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<sup>4</sup> The Five Year Plans of Bhutan are a series of national economic development plans created by the government of Bhutan since 1961

<sup>5</sup> The Constitution of Bhutan was adopted in July 2008



In Bhutan, “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 (Rinchen, 2006). 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 (pg.214).

With the importance of giving priority to the media development, one of the concerns currently faced by Bhutan is to fight the impact of western culture or the popular culture on the population. According to Reinfield (2003), Bhutan also had to combat the various threats that modernization possess to its medieval culture. Both government sources and social scientists have noted the impact of modernization, especially on Bhutanese youth. Brunet, S., Bauer, J., Lacy, D T., & Tshering, K (2001), states that Bhutan’s greater challenge is to manage the impact of the West on its cultural heritage. “Rapid social change is gathering momentum evidenced by a developing ‘youth culture’ in major towns such as Thimphu. Bhutan faces a seemingly insurmountable barrier, similar in size to the Himalayas, if it is to achieve its goal of ‘gross national happiness’ through ‘middle path’ development. The Bhutanese are faced with the challenge of retaining traditional values despite the dominant western hegemony of a globalised/ing market place that focuses on the individual rather than on the community, an increasingly ‘virtual’ space where consumerism is god” (pg. 258). As per McDonald (2004), the recent arrival of commercial television in Bhutan represents more than the introduction of a

merely benign technology. “Global television brings with it a deeper process, one that systematically cultivates social isolation and the dissolution of all contrary cultural priorities.” (pg. 69) Reinfield, (2003) adds that “in response to these threats, the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) has designed and implemented several policies that aim to standardize and preserve its unique culture” (pg. 8).

One section of this paper focus on the third pillar of GNH, the promotion and preservation of culture in order to see how much attention it is given by the government in the media law making of the country and also see how much of it is reflected in the content and programming of the TV and radio stations in Bhutan. Culture has different definitions. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) stated the essence of the cultural process [is] the imposition of a conventional form upon the flux of experience. Culture “denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life” (Greetz, 1966). Greetz further elaborates that culture “is frequently understood in terms of its coherence, as a system of shared meanings” (1973). According to Martin & Nakayama (2001) it is “learned patterns of perception, values, and behaviors, shared by a group of people, that is also dynamic and heterogeneous”. Culture according to the United Nations Educational and Cultural Organization is “the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes....modes of life, the fundamental rights of human being, value systems, traditions and believes” (2002). According to Reinfield (2003), the shape of Bhutanese culture took form under heavy Buddhist influence. Supporting his argument Mathou (2000), added that “as the last Mahayana kingdom, Bhutan has inherited a philosophy of life which is deep rooted

in its religious traditions and institutions. Basic values like compassion, respect for life and nature, social harmony, compromise, and prevalence of individual development over material achievements have had direct impact on policy making” (pg.230).

Among anthropologists, culture as a concept is contested and that means the content of what is viewed as a particular culture will vary over time and place (Ura, 2006). “By mid-century, Kroeber and Kluckhohn had found 164 definitions in their famous review of what anthropologists meant by culture” (1952: 149). Wright (1998) said that ‘culture’ is a dynamic concept, always negotiable, and in process of endorsement, contestations and transformation. In a process of claiming power and authority, all are trying to assert different definitions which will have different material outcomes” (pg. 8-10). According to Ura (2006), this new concept of culture rejects any culture as being unchanging, authoritative, and bounded. “It does not accept, contrary to the old concept of culture, that there are timeless consensus meanings in a society. Rather, the new concept of culture suggests that meaning is produced by opposing discourses mounted by different groups. It leaves open the idea that the shifts in the meaning of key terms occur. Of course, everything is a matter of definition and who and how something is defined is itself a historically contingent matter in social science. Defining culture is often an act of politics and politics is about shaping meaning in a society” (pg.42)

According to Dorji (2006), in Bhutan public culture is often understood as national culture and has, for more than three centuries, been synonymous with national identity. “Public culture is changing every day and change is giving birth to a new cultural identity. Our culture, our identity now includes discotheques, nightclubs, pool rooms, these are the process of urbanization but through all this, we must watch the change in values more than the external changes” (pg. 503). The key importance of culture, as perceived by Chopel (2010) includes, instilling “values

for the full development of human being, to meet spiritual and emotional needs, to temper the pace of modernization and the negative impacts of globalization, to safeguard and strengthen the country's sovereignty and security, to develop resilience, and to promote diversity for meaningful contribution.”

Maintaining the distinct Bhutanese identity has been the utmost priority since the country opened its world to the outside world. According to Mathou (2000), Bhutan is located between two giant neighbours that could threaten its independence at any moment, the concept of survival has become the geopolitical prolongation of its sense of insecurity. For that reason, cultural identification and the need to preserve what can be described as the "Bhutanese exception", both in cultural and political terms, is perceived by the regime as essential to the viability of the current system, and to the independence of the kingdom (pg.230). As Mathou indicated, “Bhutan 2020: A Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness”, a document produced by the estranged Planning Commission of Bhutan in 1999 states that “we must continue to enrich and reinforce our culture and values since this is one of the main ways of protecting our future and our sovereignty.” The document further states that “Culture is a living system. It must be adapted, and we must ensure that it retains its vitality in our lives. We must not allow it to be displaced and overwhelmed by globalization” (pg. 8)

Because the literature review primarily deals with media systems and GNH policies, the following chapter explains the methods used to answer the research questions regarding the media/broadcast policies and the implementation of the philosophy of GNH in the media system of Bhutan.

## **METHOD OF STUDY**

According to Majchrzak (1984), policy research is defined as the process of conducting research on, or analysis of, a fundamental social problem in order to provide policymakers with pragmatic, action-oriented recommendations for alleviating the problem but he also goes on to say that “it has only been within the last decade or so that policy research has been identified and discussed as an approach for providing policymakers with relevant information” (pg. 15)

Nagel (1984), said that public policy analysis can be defined as ‘evaluation of alternative governmental policies or decisions in order to arrive at the best (or a good) policy or decision in light of give goals, constraints, and conditions.’”

As per Bardach (2000), Policy Analysis is a social and political activity and that policy analysis goes beyond personal decision-making. “First, the subject matter concerns the lives and well-being of large numbers of fellow citizens. Second, The process and results of policy analysis usually involve other professionals and interested parties: it is often done in terms or office wide settings; the immediate consumer is a “client” of some sort like hierarchical superior; and the ultimate audience will include diverse subgroups of politically attuned supporters and opponents of your work.” (pg. 8)

Furthermore, Kennett (2008) in defining the public policy in a global age states that public policy is located within an increasing complex, multiple and over-lapping network of interactions which are embedded in a transnational and subnational polity and economy. This collection is concerned with exploring the nature of the policy arena in the context of globalization and the reconstitution of the state.

She goes on to say that:

“Many of the key cornerstones of public policy analysis have become problematic as processes of globalization have disrupted the traditional analytical conceptual frameworks through which policymaking and implementation have been understood. The reorientation of the role of the state, the increasing variety of terrains and actors involved in making of public policy, and the transition from government to governance are all aspects of changing environment, the implications of which need to be captured within contemporary analysis” (pg. 3)

The research method I am using for this paper is a policy analysis, which is being used as the umbrella method for the research using which I have analyzed the existing media policy documents. Since there has been no such studies done so far on this subject, to make myself more familiar with this topic, I made appointments with selected eminent key personals such as policy makers, researchers and broadcasters to discuss and obtain clarification on the current rules and regulations in the Bhutanese Broadcast system. This semi-structured interview has been strategically designed to accrue and clarify key regulations present in the current broadcast media system in Bhutan. This formal discussion is used as a part of the policy analysis to find necessary data for my research.

I began my work by doing a study of the Media policies in Bhutan particularly examining the rules and regulations and other documentation available on or related to broadcast media in Bhutan, to see if it is in line with GNH, the guiding principle of development in Bhutan. For this study I also used a discourse analysis as a method to analyze selected program content in the Country's broadcast media such as TV and Radio to get an overview of how well the national

culture is promoted and see whether the contents provided is enough to balance the inflow of foreign contents into Bhutan and the governments take on it. According to Paltridge (2006), discourse analysis focuses on knowledge about language beyond the word, clause, phrases and sentence that is needed for successful communication. It looks at patterns of language across texts and considers the relationship between language and the social and the cultural context in which it is used. He goes on to say that, “discourse analysis also considers the ways that the use of language presents different views of the world and different understanding. It examines how the use of language is influenced by relationship between participants as well as the effects the use of language has upon social identities and relations. It also considers how the views of world, and identities, are constructed through the use of discourse” (p.2).

In doing so, I collected TV programs from the Bhutan Broadcasting service shown within a time frame of one week. Radio programs from the BBS radio was also be collected in a span of 1 weeks’ time and apart from the National TV and Radio (BBS), I also analyzed the selected program contents from two private radio stations, Kuzoo FM and Radio Valley which are now gaining popularity among the people especially the youth and also expanding in terms of their reach. The same time frame of one week was be used for the collection of data from the two radio stations. For this study, I conduct semi-structured discussion type interview with eminent people related to the media structure in Bhutan such as policy makers, regulators and the media stakeholders. The set of topics that were used in the interview discussions are on Culture, Media Policies, Media Regulations, GNH and Broadcast media.

From all the data I accumulated from the documents available on broadcast systems in Bhutan and from the interviews and selected program contents of the broadcast media, I choose particular excerpts which helped me gather information in answering the research questions I

proposed in my introduction such as the degree of operationalization of the GNH policy in the broadcast policies, whether the broadcast programs were consistent with the GNH principles and to see if there was a certain balance between the foreign program content and the local content.



## **FINDINGS**

The findings relevant to my study, can be classified into three main areas, based on their origin; data emerging from official government documents such as policies, rules and regulations, and studies and reports available with regard to the broadcast media, its content and GNH; answers from the interview discussions with the people related to the media/broadcast policy making and broadcast media; and selected program content of the TV and Radio stations in Bhutan. The results are divided into two sections. The first is on the findings from the policy documents and interview discussions. This is further divided into different sub sections which will help answer my research questions. The second section is on the findings on the content of the Broadcast media and interview discussions which are also followed by sub sections.

### **Section 1: From Policy documents and Interviews**

#### **1.1 “Gross National Happiness” in the policy documents.**

The seed of the unique course of development, the Gross National Happiness has been sowed more than 30 years ago by His Majesty, the Fourth King of Bhutan and it still thrives as an important guiding principle of policy making in the country. The most significant of all policy documents in the country is the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan and one of the important principle of the State policy according to the Constitution is that ‘The State shall strive to promote those conditions that will enable the pursuit of Gross National Happiness’ (Article 9, Pg.18 ). Furthermore, the Constitution also has individual sections on culture, environment, spiritual heritage and other GNH related elements which clearly positions the significance of Gross National Happiness in the country’s development process and in its people’s lives.

In respecting the aspiration of the Constitution for the state to pursue the noble

development objective of GNH, the Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC), under the Royal Government of Bhutan, which came into being in 2008, is to ensure that GNH is embedded firmly into policies and that proper coordination is undertaken to ensure proper implementation of plans and programs. All policies of the Royal Government irrespective of where they originate must be endorsed by the GNHC. One of GNHC's main functions is to direct and coordinate the formulation of all policies, plans and programs in the country and to ensure that GNH is mainstreamed into the planning, policy making and implementation process by evaluating their relevance to the GNH framework. So, as per the GNHC, policies in Bhutan, irrespective of their origin but with the exception of a Royal Command or national exigencies, shall be approved and adopted in line with the system called the "Protocol for Policy Formulation"<sup>6</sup> and what this screening does is based on the twenty six GNH related variables like equity, justice, stress, culture, physical exercise, economic security, material wellbeing, engagement in productive activities, decision making opportunities, corruption, etc., so a host of variables that is drawn from the seventy two indicators of the GNH index<sup>7</sup>. According to Dasho<sup>8</sup> Karma Tshetem, Secretary, GNHC, "it looks at whether the policy is going to have a negative impact on the variable or have an impact which is not known or have an impact which we will know is neutral and has positive impact. The threshold the policies must pass is to be either neutral or has a positive impact and if it's negative, it's not acceptable." So basically they evaluate all the policies through the twenty six variables and at the end of it they come up with a score and this is done both in the GNHC secretariat using this same tool and it is also done in the ministry originating. So this is the concrete way in which the Royal Government of Bhutan

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<sup>6</sup> This screening tool can be found in the GNHC website, [www.gnhc.gov.bt](http://www.gnhc.gov.bt)

<sup>7</sup> The Gross National Happiness Index is a single number index developed from 33 indicators categorized under nine domains. The GNH Index is constructed based upon a robust multidimensional methodology known as the Alkire-Foster method

<sup>8</sup> Title of senior official who have been conferred the red scarf by the King

ensures that its policies are developed with the development philosophy of GNH. As per the system, one of the requirements a government agency must submit is the identification of opportunities and alternatives to integrate GNH principles and crosscutting issues such as environment, poverty, climate change, gender, etc. within the policy.

Among all the principle governmental institutions and ministerial organizations, GNH has always been in their overall mission. Likewise, the vision on the ICT development, of the Ministry of Information and Communication, (MoIC or Ministry), the lead governmental agency in Bhutan in respect to the formulation and implementation of ICT and Media policy objectives and in facilitating the execution of development programs is to “Create an ICT-enabled knowledge-based society as a foundation for Gross National Happiness” and its vision on information and Media is “building a vibrant and informed society to create a shared national consciousness” and its strategic focus is to have “a professional media through infrastructure, legislation, content and education. The Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority (BICMA), the regulatory body of ICT and Media in the country has a similar vision and it specifies “to provide free and fair use of information, communications and media for all Bhutanese citizens, towards enhancing the achievement of Gross National Happiness”.

The MoIC website has a short policy on information and media and it states that Information and media play a central role in development in a knowledge based society. Because of its diverse and pervasive impact, information and media are integral to socio-cultural change, shaping and transforming values, lifestyles, national economies as well as socio-political systems. In Bhutan's rapidly changing socio-economic, cultural and political scenario, information and media are already vital forces that touch all national priorities. Information and media are recognized as the most appropriate tools to overcome the challenges posed by a

rugged geography, to reach scattered communities in all corners of the country, and to help the nation deal with a globalized world in a new century. The policy goes on to say that, the Royal Government of Bhutan recognizes the positive role that information and media can play in promoting good governance through efficiency, accountability and transparency towards attainment of the overall goals of Gross National Happiness.

The Royal Government is committed to the following tenets:

- Upholding the universal rights of citizens to information, freedom of opinion and expression, and independence of the media which has the mandate "to connect, inform, educate and entertain".
- Ensuring the freedom of the media to facilitate increasing participation of the public and private sector in the field of information and media.
- Establishing a vibrant, responsive and responsible media in the kingdom that will respect and uphold national interests and make a positive and meaningful contribution to nation building.
- Encouraging and supporting an increased level of information sharing within the Government, between the Government and the people and among the people themselves.
- Creating a well-informed society by providing timely, accurate and comprehensive information and data on all issues affecting people's lives.

With all the above being mentioned, Bhutan currently does not have a proper Media Policy in place nor does it have a broadcast policy. According to the Secretary of MoIC, Dasho Kinley Dorji, the Ministry is still looking at the best possible way to produce a Media policy which will be in harmony with the country's GNH development approach but "the thinking" is already there. The government has already had several conferences and seminars on topics related to

GNH in the policy making and one such conference was held recently on the topic “the Role of Bhutanese Media in a GNH society” which was held in Paro, Thimphu, Bhutan, 2011<sup>9</sup>. According to the Director, DoIM “we have made certain efforts to try and introduce this concept of a media which is conscious of the GNH values and one of the effort that we have made is also through the proposed draft advertising policy.” As stated by the Director of DoIM, one among the mixed of criteria for award of government advertisements and withholding of government advertisements would be if certain media would repeatedly make mistakes or factual errors which are antithetical to GNH or irresponsible reporting. Therefore, that would be one of the conditions on which such advertising opportunities could be withheld. In line with this the Secretary of MoIC stated that the media is not in line with the concept of GNH and that it is driven more or less by globalization, coping what everyone else is doing which is not GNH. Therefore the Ministry is emphasizing a GNH policy because they don’t want Bhutanese media to be driven by that.

As mentioned earlier, Bhutan at the moment also does not have a broadcast policy. It is there in the government’s plan to develop a broadcast policy which they think will be ready by the mid-end of 2012. The Ministry stated that, in the absence of a broadcast policy, it has been in dialogue with BICMA trying to get to a consensus and agree that in the absence of a broadcast policy, such problem could be addressed by BICMA ensuring more quality control on their licensing terms and conditions. Till they have a comprehensive broadcast or media policy, it feels that the only tool at its disposal is for BICMA to take more stringent mechanism through licensing and regulatory mechanisms.

It is found that the main thrust of the country’s media policy is the development of a responsible press. The Ministry emphasizes that good journalism or quality journalism is pretty

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<sup>9</sup> The report of this conference is still in a draft format and has not been published

much GNH because the real good quality journalism teaches ethics, quote of conduct, good quality reporting, accurate reporting. Although many of the countries and media industries have these understanding and have these quotes, the government feels that what is happening now is that they are mostly completely overwhelmed by entertainment and materialism; they are driven by advertising. Therefore, the government or the Ministry feels that GNH should be teaching the people and the media not to copy the advertisement driven media outside. That's why they want to bring in advertising policy as a guideline to this. Although they do not have these in the policy yet they are already drafting the advertising policy and the overall media policy along these lines. They have a short vision which is available online which states "Towards a shared consciousness". The government accepts that Bhutan is a GNH society and therefore, for them the real question is what is the responsibility of the media in the society? As per my findings from the interviews, the whole essence of the policy which will be soon drafted by the MOIC is not to say that media has to write about GNH but accepting the society as GNH and knowing the values of the society such as keeping the balance between spirituality, culture, economic development, environment, the four pillars, nine domain<sup>10</sup>, etc., and keeping in mind that these are the indicator or the priorities that the Bhutanese society has decided on as a GNH society, it is important that the media reflect these values. This is what the government is saying because media as a whole has such an influence and that these media must be aware that they have this impact and are changing society; therefore, they have to have the right values themselves. It is strongly felt that the overall goal or overall vision of the Bhutanese media must be to create,

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<sup>10</sup> The GNH measure has been designed to include nine core domains that are regarded as components of happiness in Bhutan and is constructed of indicators which are robust and informative with respect to each of the domains. The nine domains were selected on normative as well as statistical grounds, and are equally weighted, because each domain is considered to be relatively equal in terms of its intrinsic importance as a component of gross national happiness. Within each domain, two to four indicators were selected that seemed likely to remain informative across time, had high response rates, and were relatively uncorrelated. The 9 domains are listed in Appendix B

what the government call as the “shared consciousness” in society. Shared consciousness means shared values, that people in the north, south, east, west, centers, everywhere in the country must have those values or understand the same values and this is possible through the media and that’s the only way the entire population will develop the shared consciousness. The thinking is that the media must first understand those values, so that people will understand them.

The Secretary, Dasho Kinley Dorji further elaborated that when the government talks about the media conveying GNH and being a GNH media, it is very difficult to in a way define what they should be doing but it is easier in fact to be defining what they should not be doing. The Media should not be looking or treating citizens as consumers. GNH warns us against GDP. So the government is saying that the media must make some commitment to society because GNH requires that every citizen makes good decisions. According to Director of DoIM, Kinley T. Wangchuk, currently there is no category in any of the media documents which states that media has to follow the GNH goals. The strategy that they have developed to intervene on the promotion or development has always been to ensure that they are mindful of the sensitivities of the local population and citizens and in that they hope they can indirectly contribute to conforming to the GNH values and principles. In broader sense, as long as the media keeps in mind what they are doing is for, or should be for the public interest, then generally the four pillars of GNH would be taken into account. The media according to the MoIC has to be ethical and responsible in what they do and if they do it in the interest of the public then indirectly they are already performing to the GNH requirements.

Currently BICMA, as the regulatory body just focuses on the BICM ACT (the Act) in its day to day functions. According to the Director of BICMA, Sonam Phuntsho, “for us we are just a technical regulator. Our bible is the Act. We have to go by certain technical specifications that

are provided in certain legal framework. Translating the Act and linking it to certain concepts can be done by the policy makers and people who are empowered to make certain policy statements” BICMA feels that when they do an assessment of proposals, they look at it purely from the mandate given in the Act, one is providing the right information to the people, secondly the accessibility to those information through whatever medium and third aspect is to look at programs that promotes the harmony, national security and other things and also ensure that some of the programming are contributing to the education of the general public and of course to entertain people. That is something they look into and if these are fulfilled then there is GNH. From their side, they look at the different things coming together which contributes to the overall development of the citizenship, that’s what they like to focus on and by doing that they think GNH will be attained automatically. As per Wangay Dorji, Head of Telecom department, BICMA, as the regulator, what is more important is to make the ICT and Media services accessible by all Bhutanese people and that way they contribute towards promoting GNH. He said, “When people have accessibility to information, media, entertainment then we attain GNH.”

The BBS which is the National TV and Radio broadcaster claims itself to be a trusted public service broadcaster of international standing reflecting the Bhutanese experience and its overall mission is to achieve “Excellence in broadcasting inspired by the values of Gross National Happiness, promoting the well-being, equanimity and sense of community among the people of the Kingdom of Bhutan” (BBS Annual report, 2009)

Besides the BBS, Kuzoo Fm and Radio valley, the two private radio stations used for this study also has their mission statement which has flavors of the GNH principles. Kuzoo Fm, which is totally structured around the youth, is seeking to advocate positive social changes by



enabling youth to believe in themselves on creating and promoting positive social change and also to instill in them the values, perception, and skill to thrive and succeed in a global environment and yet maintain strong ties to their families, communities and country. Radio Valley on the other side, an entirely entertainment based radio station believes in educating, informing and empowering through entertainment.

## 1.2 The media model in Bhutan.

Bhutan is a GNH country or it claims to be a GNH society therefore, GNH is important as a guideline, as a goal, as an inspiration and as everything for Bhutan. The country's overall policy is to adapt best practices and to avoid the pitfalls that many other countries might have got into. According to the findings, Bhutan is not interested in adopting any of world media models and do not identify with them but what the government feels they should be doing is to be aware of what is happening around, to know what the trends are and to see what kind of policies are there in the global media in order to recognize the good and the bad of a media practice. Although, Bhutan is aware that this is the time where it has the opportunity to shape the Bhutanese model that is unique to conditions and that suits their purpose, the government at this point is still trying to define a suitable media model. The reason for this as stated by DOIM is, due to lack of consensus between the Ministry and the media sector and anything which it tends to do unilaterally is not well received by the media. According to the Secretary, MoIC, "One of the problems our media has had is that our media people have been too skeptical of GNH because they misunderstood the whole concept of GNH. They thought that media has to report or write about GNH or the four pillars of GNH or the nine domains and they were skeptical of that

but what the Ministry is trying to clarify or the policy which we will be drafting will state that, the whole essence of the policy is not to say that media has to write about GNH, it is about them understanding GNH and their role in a GNH society. So it is important that the media (forget the term GNH if they want to) but to reflect these values.”

The Ministry has already started the dialogue with the Media and one such kind of discussion was held recently at a conference at Paro, Bhutan which was titled “The role of Media in the GNH society” (I was also an observant at this conference) where one of the Ministry’s intentions was to develop a model and to see how receptive the media would be on the proposal of a GNH model. Although the discussion are still ongoing and a model is yet to be adopted, the Ministry beliefs that even if it was to come up with an agreed model, it has to be a balance between what is perceived to be pro-government, pro-regime oriented control against one where there is just no control at all, therefore there has to be a balance between those two supposedly extreme propositions. As per the finding from the discussion with the Secretary of MoIC, the bottom line is that Bhutan is trying to be different from the rest of the world as a society, trying to have these higher goals, Bhutanese media must be also different, in the sense, Bhutanese media must be relevant to Bhutanese society. He stated that “if we want to develop a society that is not materialistic, media must be conscious of that and therefore not promote consumerism and not promote sensationalism and the global media is being largely entertainment especially broadcast which is becoming largely an entertainment industry rather than an information and education industry and that’s why the Bhutanese media has to try to be different.” It is been stated that Bhutan is a small country that dares to be different with an overall development policy which is contrast to other development policies, so Bhutan is already different in that sense, therefore the media also must fit into this society.

There is also this whole thinking policy on the concept of public service broadcasting (PSB) which is gaining popularity among the decision makers because PSB they think is not very commercial, not sensational and not just entertainment. It is good journalism as it keeps in mind serving the people. Therefore, the government also feels that it is a good model to start with and of course GNH might add some additional areas or issues or values that the media needs to be conscious of. Although the Constitution provides the freedom of expression to the citizens, and the freedom of media, what the Ministry feels they need to do is to help interpret freedom. As interpreted by the government, freedom does not mean that anyone can lie, defame or do anything as they like, freedom has to come with responsibility. So that's why even though the high law gives the freedom, the Ministry is planning on making sure that all the rules are in place to protect the freedom and to add responsibility to the freedom. Along these lines, the Ministry is also trying to create the environment for professional media, therefore they are funding a journalism course in Sherubtse college<sup>11</sup> at Kanglung, Tarshigang which will be soon functional and they will also promote practical institutions so that the private sectors can also help train journalists and they are also bring trainers into Bhutan to train Bhutanese journalists alongside holding conferences to help journalist to think and understand what is GNH and what should their role be and make every journalist feel a sense of responsibility. It is with that intention that the Ministry is trying to develop professionalism through specialized training courses to the media professionals and with that objective they have also conducted quite a series of courses. But at the end of it, the Ministry, even if it is not able to strike a definite model, what it is aiming for is to develop a responsible media and the attitude or the measure that DOIM or the Ministry has taken on the whole is that as long as they can promote professionalism, that itself would translate into a more responsible media.

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<sup>11</sup> First degree college in Bhutan

### 1.3 Importance of preservation of culture and its reflection in the law.

According to Mathou (2000), contrary to most developing countries, Bhutan entered the 20th century without a complex of inferiority and subservience vis-à-vis foreigners. From its point of view, national independence has had three major correlations: the autonomy of the local polity, a strong sense of national pride, and a culture of isolationism. (pg. 230)

Ever since cable television and internet was introduced in the Country during the silver jubilee year of the coronation of the Fourth King of Bhutan, the country has been on its guard against the possible invasion of globalization and global culture. That is why the Bhutan 2020 document, which was produced in 1999 (same year as the Silver Jubilee Coronation) by the then Policy Commission of Bhutan<sup>12</sup>, which is now known as GNHC stated that:

“Our independence, sovereignty and security will continue to be dependent upon the assertion of our distinctive Bhutanese identity. This has provided the key to our survival as a nation state in the past and it will continue to be so in the future. This requires us to continue to articulate an unambiguous cultural imperative in all that we do and to actively promote an awareness and appreciation of the continued relevance of our cultural heritage. It also requires us to continue to stress the importance of *Dzongkha* as a national and unifying language. We must also recognize the importance of efforts that seek to maintain the relevance of our system of beliefs and values in a world of change, increased aspirations and rising expectations.” (pg)

The document also states that “Culture is a living system. It must be adapted, and we must

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<sup>12</sup> In October 2007, the Sustainable Development Secretariat under the Ministry of Finance was merged with the Planning Commission. On January 24 2008, in line with the Executive Order PM/01/08/895 Planning Commission was renamed as the Gross National Happiness Commission

ensure that it retains its vitality in our lives. We must not allow it to be displaced and overwhelmed by globalization.” (pg. 8)

Sure enough this important aspect of identity is now embedded in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan. Article 4 (pg. 10) of the Constitution of Bhutan states that:

1. The State shall endeavor to preserve, protect and promote the cultural heritage of the country, including monuments, places and objects of artistic or historic interest, *Dzongs*, *Lhakhangs*, *Goendeys*, *Ten-sum*, *Nyes*, language, literature, music, visual arts and religion to enrich society and the cultural life of the citizens.
2. The State shall recognize culture as an evolving dynamic force and shall endeavor to strengthen and facilitate the continued evolution of traditional values and institutions that are sustainable as a progressive society.
3. The State shall conserve and encourage research on local arts, custom, knowledge and culture.
4. Parliament may enact such legislation as may be necessary to advance the cause of the cultural enrichment of Bhutanese society.

Furthermore, Article 8 of the Constitution which is about the fundamental duties of the citizens of the Country, states that every citizen’s duty shall be to “to preserve, protect and respect the environment, culture and heritage of the nation” (pg. 16)

With this important sections given in the Supreme law of the country on the protection and preservations of Bhutanese Culture, the MoIC as the lead agency for ICT and Media development in the country and in order to make planned efforts in promoting a healthy media and ensuring its role in the appropriate socio-cultural and political development in Bhutan, the MOIC’s functions, as per the Act relating to information dissemination and media content

development are to promote and develop information and media services in order to make people understand the importance of information and its usage; to develop national information strategies and standards for appropriate contents in information and media and; monitor trends in ICT and media.

As said earlier the Act is the sole document by which BICMA functions. Therefore the Act states that, without prejudice to the generality of the forgoing provisions, with respect to the contents of ICT services or media, BICMA's functions are to ensure that ICT and media facilities and services are owned and controlled to a maximum possible extent by Bhutanese citizens; impose necessary restrictions on cross-media ownership with a view to preventing anticompetitive practices and monopolies; develop codes of practice relating to the conduct of journalist, standard of programs and advertisements and ensure that ICT services and media services adhere to such codes; encourage, and keep under review, measures aimed at maximizing the independence of editors and other journalists from proprietorial and other interference; ensure that the content of films intended for public exhibition, whether produced within Bhutan or outside, are not antithetical to the social, cultural and other values of the people of Bhutan; and protect the general public and more specifically vulnerable sections of the population such as children and young persons from undesirable influences such as the effects of excessive or gratuitous violence, obscenity, drug-taking and gambling as they appear in films.

Knowing the position of culture in the lives of the Bhutanese people and the country, one of the strategies of the Royal Government of Bhutan has been to promote and facilitate the development of cultural industries. The 10<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan (FYP) 2008-2013, states that:

The country's rich and living cultural heritage is not only a potent source of and relevance for Bhutanese national identity and social interaction, but also holds

considerable potential for generating economic and social benefits such as employment creation and poverty reduction through the promotion of cultural industries. The latter are industries centered around the creation and production of goods and services that are cultural in nature and broadly encompass a wide range of activities connected to heritage, literature, performing arts, media and the audiovisual sectors. As these cultural industries are essentially based on harnessing the innovative and creative aspects of human capital, they are also popularly referred to as “creative industries.” For reasons relating to resource constraints and the considerable fragmentation of this diverse sector, apart from activities that support cultural enterprises based on handicrafts and textiles, the strengthening of cultural industries will be largely addressed through and integrated within the Tenth Plan programs intended for the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage. (pg. 33-34)

It has been cleared out that GNH does not limit the freedom of media or vice-versa. The freedom of media has been guaranteed in the Constitution and the Constitution is also based on GNH which includes preservation of culture. The government claims that although freedom is part of the Constitution and GNH, freedom can never be absolute. Therefore, it is their duty to interpret freedom. Freedom according to them comes with responsibility. According to the Director of DoIM, GNH does not limit freedom of media or vice-versa because GNH as one of the pillars of GNH is good governance and media is indispensable to good governance. “I think Media in fact promotes good governance through ensuring transparency, through promoting accountability and I think this can only be achieved through a responsible and public service oriented media” he stated.

The Secretary of GNHC also states that he does not see any conflict between the two and that they can exist harmoniously together but he also feels that if the two are judged on their own, from values perspective, freedom should be upheld the highest. “There is obviously no question of that being subjugated to any other, So from a values perspective, as a society, we should strive to be a free and open society and the intend of our constitution is very much to do that. GNH is the idea that Bhutan’s development should meet Bhutanese aspirations, and all we are trying to say is Bhutanese aspirations in terms of what we want from our development is a little different from maybe other countries want. That’s all we are trying to say but nowhere does it mean that this would come at the expense of freedom” he stated.

#### 1.4 Importance of developing local content.

The Bhutanese media has developed significantly since the establishment of the Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS) and the Kuensel Corporation in the 1980s. After the introduction of television and Internet services in 1999, today media has begun to develop in various forms of print, broadcast and multimedia. Although various forms of media has been developing in the country, in terms of Broadcast, Bhutan has now 7 radio station as compared to one in 1999 but has only one TV station to compete with the 50 plus foreign channels in the country, provided by licensed cable operator. In view of the important role played by the media sector, the Government created the Department of Information and Media (DoIM) under the Ministry of Information and Communication to coordinate and steer the development of media in the country. According to the 10<sup>th</sup> FYP, with the increasing role and impact of media in the development of society, the Ministry of Information and Communications will bolster the media sector by establishing standards and regulatory frameworks in place for media productions thorough coordination and consultation with the stakeholders. Additionally, it will also promote



and create awareness on information and media for the general public and students. Foreign media content will be carefully regulated to prevent undesirable effects on Bhutanese society and social values and culture and to this end the development of local information and media content given due importance. Private media enterprises will also be encouraged and promoted, by helping them to develop their human resources to facilitate employment and income generation opportunities (pg. 218). According to the Secretary of MoIC, the government has no control over international media or global media. “As a small vulnerable society, we have no control over the global media and we cannot block global media. So the only answer to globalization is “Glocalization”, meaning having your own media content, balancing, not being completely overwhelmed and driven by foreign media.” As per the Secretary of the Center for Bhutan Studies (CBSC), an expert and a researcher on GNH, Dasho Karma Ura indicated that although the Ministry of communication has attempted to define a concept of what should media do in this country he feels that out of 50 channels or so, if the government can influence only our media, then basically Bhutan is open to outside influence.

According to the findings, currently there are no standard of programs available for the broadcasters. Although, the standard of programs are not in place and in words of the officials I spoke to, “needs to be worked on”, BICMA has just recently endorsed a Rule on Content which basically would work towards guiding or regulating the need for locally based content of local interest. The Rules on Content as per the Director of BICMA is a general rule which can be applied to any media content be it film, broadcast media or print. The Rules on Content’s overall objective is to ensure high standards of content production in Bhutan’s media through self-regulation in accordance with the sensitivities and expectations of Bhutanese viewers, listeners, readers, media users and internationally recognized good practice governing media content; to

ensure that standards are set to protect the national sanctity and values of *Tsa-Wa-Sum* while enabling the media to be creative and to express a full range of views necessary to raise the level of discourse in a democracy and; to Serve as a guide towards upholding the standards expected of Bhutanese media in a practical and feasible manner and, at the same time, foster, promote and encourage the development of media in Bhutan.

As per the principles of the Rules on Content it is required that, the media contents should be prepared with a sense of responsibility to citizens and society; content providers should protect people's privacy, uphold social values and acknowledge the need for transparency and accountability; content providers should uphold national harmony, and Bhutan's priorities such as a balanced development and the development philosophy of Gross National Happiness and; media contents should empower Bhutanese citizens to achieve well-being and quality of life and not become a passive audience for consumerism. Section 2.5 of the Rules on Content is on Language approved by the Authority to be used in the all media sectors. It states that Dzongkha and English shall be used as the medium of communications. Any other local dialects shall only be permitted after seeking prior approval from the Authority (pg. 7). Language is given one of the paramount importance because the government believes that language is the most significant aspects of one's culture. Therefore the use of the national language, Dzongkha is very important for the country and the government encourages and prefers the speaking of Dzongkha in any medium.

BBS Radio had started way back in the 1960's and it expanded with TV station during the late 90's, so BBS has been there in fact before many of the government agencies including BICMA and DoIM, therefore, BBS does not have a broadcast license issued by the Authority. They have their own code of ethics which is fairly of international standard but according to

BICMA once it has the broadcasting policy in place, even BBS will have to conform to the new regulations. For the new private radio stations, BICMA has come up with the FM radio broadcasting license terms and condition which is mainly issued for entertainment based radio station. One of the sections of the FM Radio license terms and condition is on the general program standards and requirements. The lists of requirements with regard to the programs are that; the licensee shall ensure that programs meet generally accepted social standards and respect to family life and values of the culture and tradition of Bhutan; shall broadcast only those programs including series which are not inter alia against the socio-cultural and tradition of Bhutan; shall ensure due accuracy, fairness and impartiality in all programming, including news; the language of the programs shall be in Dzongkha and English. However the Licensee shall give more importance to the National Language (pg. 8)

The Terms and condition of the license also has a description of the FM Broadcasting service to be provided by the Licensee and they are; Music broadcasting service in both English and Dzongkha; Announcement of events; Advertisements and; News and current affairs programs provided the licensee fulfills some conditions. (pg. 20) The MOIC states that if they are to license the second TV station, the overall requirement they would need from the applicants is to ensure that they would ensure the editorial independence of their agency or entity and secondly to ensure that there will be no foreign or outside participant in the composition of the board or in terms of investments and the other one will be the professional and technical capability of the promoting team. The content which the applicant is interested in disseminating is also looked at because content is a very important element and the government is very much aware of its importance firstly because of the tremendous amount of foreign content which is available and the only way to counter that is to promote local content. As far as BICMA is

concerned, who is the actual licensor; the overall criteria to obtain a TV license are firstly to consider the financial aspect followed by technical aspect. The third aspect is the professionalism concept such as the structure of the organization (individual owned or a joint venture). This is considered important because the government wants the broadcast media to be independent of any interference. The Act also requires the media to function in a very independent way, so to look at whether the person or the group who is applying has any affiliation with the political parties is crucial. As per a new proposal made by BICMA on the criteria for obtaining a TV license, the overall evaluation will be done under five categories. First is the financial aspect, then technical, then comes programming, professionalism, the fifth one is what they call the impact assessment report in which the applicants have to submit an essay kind of report where they will mention the benefits they are willing to provide to the people of Bhutan and what sort of programming they are aiming at and what will be their contribution towards promoting GNH which of course includes culture. So these are some of the topics that BICMA has identified that needs to be included in the impact assessment report and based on that they will do the evaluation.

The Broadcasting code of conduct which is absent at the moment, as per the Annual report of BICMA 2009-2010 will be developed as one of the activities to pursue its vision of providing “free and fair use of information, communications and media for all Bhutanese citizens, towards enhancing the achievement of Gross National Happiness”. Currently, there are five applicants for TV license which BICMA and the Ministry is in the process of reviewing.

Due to its late opening to the outside world, many of the government organizations are in their early stages. The Department of Media in the MoIC was just created in 2003 and BICMA started as the regulator Authority only in 2006. Therefore, the government besides the absence of

rules on standard of programs for the Media or any other rules related to broadcast media, the government also lacks a law on the foreign content available on the cable channels. On the foreign content, BICMA has not added anything after the new cable operators were licensed. In fact they are following the same content. The number of content may have gone up and down but as per BICMA there has not been a major new inserts to the content. From this year BICMA will have the cable TV licensing rules in place which requires cable operators (who come for renewal of license) to give a list of channels they want to show on their cable and BICMA will discuss with them if there are certain objections that the Authority have received from the public on some of their contents. According to BICMA, given the kind of content available on the foreign channels, it is very important to have standards or regulation even on the foreign channels but again the issue they are concerned with is whether they are in a position to bring up such regulations and implement it because Bhutan by virtue is a small market and the cost of will be high. As far as censoring or redubbing foreign content goes, BICMA is not in a position to do so unless the government directs them to do so with whatever recourse is given. Although the directives can be given by the government, the Ministry thinks that stopping and blocking unwanted channels these days with the current technology is impossible and it is also in many ways a wrong approach to kind of to stop or censor. According to Dasho Kinley Dorji, “Now the obvious channels with really undesirable content, we don’t allow or at least we have laws against them although we can not necessarily stop them. Take pornography for example, it’s illegal but it is all over the internet. So technically it is impossible to stop them but at least we have laws against them but what we can do or supposed to do is to educate the viewers.” In order to combat this, the Ministry tries and support local content to balance international content. They believe that although Bhutan has 50 plus foreign channels if they can give the villagers good local

content, they prefer that. That's why the Ministry is promoting and helping BBS reach remote areas. As per BICMA, Bhutan is right now battling the foreign invasion and that is the reason why they are looking at opening up more Bhutanese TV stations. With more local stations, BICMA thinks that gradually the local content will improve and people will change their taste of programs. The Ministry also feels that media literacy is very important to combat the foreign contents. Dasho Kinley Dorji goes on to say that "although we cannot stop all the foreign channels coming in, we have to warn our people what it means watching those ads, those entertainments etc., the impact they can have on children's values, on children's academic results."

The importance of local content was already felt by the government and therefore, to create a well informed and media literate society towards building a knowledge based society, it has been indicated in the 10<sup>th</sup> FYP document that the projects and activities of for DoIM should be to increase awareness and access to information and media, develop and promote, and; increase private media industry increased and improve quality.

The following is the description of some of the already budgeted projects and activities indicated for the MoIC in the 10<sup>th</sup> FYP, 2009:

1. Information and media literacy

- 1.1 Nation-wide information & media literacy awareness

- 1.2 Information and media education in schools

- 1.3 Development of an appropriate media model in Bhutan

2. Development and promotion of local content

- 2.1 Review of national policy and strategy on local content

- 2.2 Development and promotion of local content

### 3. Promotion of public access to information and media

#### 3.1 Support establishment of 3 pilot community FM radio stations

### 4. Promotion of an independent media industry

#### 4.1 Support public and private media enterprise, including enhancing professionalism of media personal

The Ministry has already started work on the media literacy. They started programming in the schools. They have CSO's (Cable Service operators) doing programming among the youth and they have also been training all the teachers on media literacy so that they are able to warn children. In the Ministry's words, although they have a long way to go, media literacy is already implemented in the schools as they have already trained the students to an extent through teachers and clubs at schools. One of Government's policies is to train media people and to expand media literacy among the audience at the same time. The government has also provided a lot of training to the young media in Bhutan on various topics from content development to development of professionalism.

It is also to be noted that initially in 1999 when the cable TV was introduced; the government felt that there was a need to balance the content coming from outside. Therefore the cable operators were asked to come up with a local channel of their own but the noble objective of the government was never translated positively. The cable operators were not in the position to come up with their own content or buy good local content. To obey the condition of the government the CSOs showcased in their channel, recorded school concerts in which they showed students dancing on the latest Bollywood number or English songs which was of not much value to the people. In that way the whole purpose was defeated. Currently the trend is still ongoing and with the small Bhutanese movie industry growing, it has now become a platform to

advertise the latest Bhutanese movie. These local cables are also used for other advertisements and it has in a way becoming a booming business to the cable operators. BICMA nor the Ministry has any rule on these local channels at the moment. According to BICMA, One way of promoting local content through the cable system is by changing the whole process of the cable system. Right now the cable system is based on analog system therefore the CSOs does not have much control over the content. “So what we are trying to do is to see if it is possible to convert that into digital format, a conditional access system whereby they can have their content in the server and people can choose what content to buy. That way the cable operators will be in a position to customize the product for the end users and then there will be lot of potential in a way where Bhutanese content can be promoted. There will also be lot of opportunities for the content provider to come up with lot of local content to sell to the cable operators on a cost sharing basis so that their products can also be sold through the cable network system. So if we can do that they will also be in a position to support and promote local content but if we still stick with the analog system, it will be difficult”, said Wangay Dorji. BICMA has allowed the CSOs to carry on with this trend because there is no medium for Bhutanese content to be showcased especially the films. “We were requested by the film industry that the only network they can advertise their films is the cable channels because they cannot afford BBS airspace plus they restrict themselves from having too much commercial activities. So based on their request, we have still kept the local channels” stated Wangay Dorji. Although the local channels right now is not promoting Bhutanese content and they also do not have broadcasting license but as per BICMA once the private TV stations are licensed and if the trend in the local channels remains the same, there is high probability that they will be lifted.



### 1.5 Broadcast content: International content versus local content.

According to Rinchen (2006), the history of media does not lie heavy on our country. It is a recent development. For centuries people in Bhutan relied on the tradition of oral transmission of information, which is still strong in rural areas (pg. 209) Ever since the inception of cable television in 1999, Bhutan has been bombarded with numerous international channels, dominated mostly by Indian channels. As per the MIS 2008, media has helped accelerate a new culture by introducing ideas of modern and generally urban world. With fifty plus foreign channels, BBS TV has been serving the community as the only local content provider. The BBS TV uses both English and Dzongkha as the medium of language but when it comes to content it is only local. There are also seven radio stations including BBS radio which apart from music, provide mostly local content and they also use both English and Dzongkha as the main language of information except for BBS radio which uses additional two dialects, *Sharchop* and *Lhotsampa*. The MIS study 2008, found that Bhutan is adopting a new culture, deeply influenced by the entertainment media. With so much foreign intrusion on Bhutan and its culture it has become very important to find out the current situation of local broadcast media against the international content and its effect on the population of Bhutan.

#### A. *Television.*

As per the Media Impact Study (MIS) conducted in 2008 by the Ministry of Information and Communication, access to TV has improved tremendously and has now penetrated rural areas as well. It has been found that after BBS TV launched the satellite TV in February 2006 it has enabled its broadcasts to reach 44 towns out of 61 towns in Bhutan, and also beyond the national boundaries. “BBS TV is now watched by the Bhutanese diaspora in Delhi and Bangkok

and is also watched in other areas in India including Dharamsala and Arunachal Pradesh and this is a major advancement from 2003 when BBS TV broadcasts were sent by VHS tapes even to areas outside Thimphu, Paro and Phuentsholing, and replayed by local cable operators” ( pg. 13)

The MIS study also found that in 2008, with support from the Japanese government, the Government installed 172 TV sets in *gups*’ offices in all the *geogs* without cable TV services. The first 70 sets were installed just before the elections in February 2008, and the remaining were installed by November 2008. This meant that TV signals penetrated even the remote areas. Going by the results of the MIS study, it has been found that BBS TV is the most watched TV station in Bhutan with urban residents (82.9%) having greater access to BBS TV than rural residents (24.4 %). Access to cable TV providing 31 international channels is lower (30% of respondents) than BBS TV (54% of respondents). Going by the study, residents in rural areas without cable TV services have in recent years installed Direct-to-Home TV (DTH) through service providers in India although the service was not approved by the Government. These services provide up to more than 190 channels, largely Indian channels. BBS TV programs, which are what the majority of people want, are not available on DTH services. The Director of DoIM stated that according to the impact assessment that the Department commissioned, almost 90% -95% of the viewer said that if given a choice, they would still prefer BBS TV. “It’s quite encouraging to know that if given a choice, the choice of the people is resoundingly of our local production” he said.

The Government feels that it is important to support local content or Bhutanese content to balance international content. The Secretary of MoIC clearly stated in the discussion I had with him that even though Bhutan might have 45 plus foreign channels but giving the villagers good local content is more preferable. “They are our citizens and the programs are in our own

language which they understand. That's why we are promoting BBS and we are helping BBS reach remote areas. At the same time what is important is media literacy. We can't stop all the foreign channels coming in but we have to warn our people what it means watching these channels especially the advertisements and entertainments, and the negative impact they can have" he stated. The Ministry for this reason has been doing quite a lot on educating the masses especially the vulnerable section of the population like the youth. As mentioned earlier, programs on media literacy have already been started in schools and the government has been training teachers on media literacy so that they are able to warn children. The government is also using the media especially BBS to educate the uneducated section of the people. The Ministry was also quick to state that the influence of the western media is very less in the rural areas due to the unavailability of TV sets and clearly therefore foreign contents are also limited. Although the government policy is to train media people and to expand media literacy among the audience they still feel that they have a long way to go.

One of the strategies of the government to increase local content has been to ensure that BBS increases their air time in order to accommodate more Bhutanese content. The other way of countering foreign content as per BICMA is to have more local stations in order for people to have more options of Bhutanese content. As per BICMA, although the recent survey conducted by MoIC evidently indicates that Bhutanese people likes Bhutanese content more than the international content, since BBS has a restricted air time they have no options but to watch other foreign channels. According to Wangay Dorji, "even now if you take an example of the singing competition program (*Druk Gi Sungke*) which is shown on BBS, people leave their work to watch it. That shows that Bhutanese people have an affiliation towards our own content and one way of countering the foreign content would be promoting our own local content". The

government is already thinking of licensing local broadcasters so that the people have a platform to showcase the own content. Currently since Bhutan has only BBS TV, it is difficult for people to use BBS platform to showcase their product because firstly being a monopoly, it is expensive and secondly they have their own policy where they are allowed to entertain limited commercial activities. Therefore as per BICMA, licensing private stations will also provide more platforms for contents which are desirable by the Bhutanese people and in competing among themselves; they will not only provide local content but also improve on them.

Although it has been stated time and again that it will be impossible to stop foreign content flowing into Bhutan, BICMA gives a light of hope stating that although they don't have any rules or regulations available on the foreign content at the moment, they feel that once they have their own local TV stations then it can think of a best way to regulate. They even mentioned that they have thought of a mechanism to download all foreign channel signals inside Bhutan and then retransmit so that all these commercial activities which is not required for Bhutanese audience can be filtered out and can be replaced by those content which is required but the only thing and the most important constraint they are facing on implementing this facility is the huge cost which they are not in a position to meet. "Gradually I am sure in future we might adopt such technology" stated Wangay Dorji.

BBS is the only TV station in Bhutan at the moment and it is fully funded by the Government and therefore, as per the government, BBS content is also fully Bhutanese. Even in the future, through the policies, the government plans to discourage wrong kind of content like some of the meaningless entertainment in the private stations.

As of 2008, it has also been found that in terms of its popularity, BBS Television was the most popular medium with 39.5 % followed by radio which is 37.3 % and then the international

TV which got 9.32 % showing that the local media was more popular than the international channels (pg. 35). In terms of its credibility the survey also stated that the Bhutanese viewers had more trust in BBS TV than the international TV.

#### B. *Radio.*

Radio is continuing to reach the majority of the population in Bhutan. Going by the MIS 2008, BBS FM radio reaches 20 districts and an estimated 80% of the country. BBS also broadcast SW, reaching many other areas where FM does not reach. Radio continues to reach a majority of people. Bhutanese people have also developed a taste for FM radio that provides not just clear signals but a whole new genre of entertainment programs. The study showed that BBS continues to be the most listened to station followed by Kuzoo FM although it is very difficult to determine the position in 2010. Since the MIS 2008, there are three new private stations now competing with the four already established radio stations although they are largely confined to the capital, Thimphu. As per the finding of the MIS 2008, Kuzoo FM, a station targeting youth, is gaining popularity outside the capital and is now accessible to listeners in all districts and public service radio broadcasting is now being overshadowed by entertainment, and all the new stations play a large volume of western music and modern *rigsar* songs that are popular among both urban and rural listeners and they still continue to do so.

One important finding in terms of radio is that ever since the introduction of the private radio stations breaking the monopoly of BBS, very few Bhutanese listen to international radio. The MIS 2008 showed that compared with MIS 2003 when about 33.73% of listeners did tune into international radio, in 2008 even with 38 % of the people having access to international radio, most do not tune in. This shows that fewer people in Bhutan listen to international radio today. With impact much lesser than television and nil in popularity, international radio content

does not in any way threaten the Country and probably because of that it is not even an issue in the country let alone has laws against it.

It has been found through the MIS 2008, Bhutanese have become regular consumers of media and in terms of content preference such as news, entertainment, information and education, entertainment has quickly become the primary reason for media use among the people. The survey also found that in terms of statistics 45.8% of households prefer TV as a source of news and 44.8% of households watch it for entertainment.

According to the government, BBS TV is trying to be serious TV, but BBS TV is not as professional as it can be because of the lack of professionals but it is a serious station and not a sensationalist station. Although it is also under pressure, it does some things that are not GNH but over all they are trying to be a GNH guided TV station. “They even had a conference on public service broadcasting to understand the concepts of PSB. So BBS is trying to be a GNH station and the government is funding GNH because of that. To do that and if it is driven by advertisements, then it becomes sensational and entertainment”, stated the Secretary, MoIC.

## **Section 2: Findings from the program content of the broadcast media.**

### **2.1 Broadcast stations: inception and current schedule.**

Radio Broadcasting was first started by a group of young volunteers, known as the National Youth Association of Bhutan (NYAB) in November 1973. For 6 years the station was operational only on Sundays with 30 minutes of news and music which was the only time the NYAB club office was transformed to a radio studio but in 1979, the Royal Government recognizing the importance of the radio for development communication, incorporated the

station under the Ministry of Communications.

In 1986 with the commissioning of a 10 KW short-wave transmitter and a small broadcast studio, Radio NYAB was renamed as Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS). Daily broadcasting was introduced with three hours of programming. In June 2000, BBS introduced FM radio service for western Bhutan with the inauguration of the main FM station at Dobchula and one relay station at Takti in the south. The FM service was extended to central Bhutan in January 2001 and the rest of the country in 2005. In August 2007, a 100 KW short-wave transmitter with digital radio mondiale (DRM) capability was also commissioned which now allows the Bhutanese population to listen to very high quality reception through short wave radio. As per the annual report of BBS, 2009, BBS radio after turning 36 years of since its inception became 24 hours daily. Today, BBS radio<sup>13</sup> broadcasts for 24 hours daily in 4 languages (*Dzongkha*, *Sharchop*, *Lhotsampa* and English) and reaches all 20 districts and an estimated 80% of the Country. From the 24 hours, BBS goes live only for 16 hours and the rest is rebroadcasted. Dzongkha is given 8 hours out of the 16 hours and is given more emphasis especially during the peak hours or the prime time. BBS also have the obligations to go into other regional languages such as *Sharchop* which is given three hours' time space of the sixteen hours, English is also three hours and *Lhotsampa* is given two hours. According to Kesang, General Manager (GM), BBS Radio, "As for scheduling right now Dzongkha is taking the center stage and we gave all the prime time space to Dzongkha because the maximum listenership is in Dzongkha. As for English we really can't target the audience because of the one channel problem, so we have to spread different languages over one channel. *Lhotsampa*, we have audience but it's a small number" One of the main reasons why BBS do most of their programming in Dzongkha is because the audience for radio is basically the rural population which consists of 70% of the

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<sup>13</sup> The program schedule of all the TV and radio stations will be found in Appendix G, H, I, J, K

population majority of which understands Dzongkha although *Sharchop* too is understood widely and is also becoming an important language. English is also a very important for the listeners but because of the current scheduling BBS is not able to get much audience. “The reason is because since we cannot put same languages at the same time, the timing for English is from morning 11 am which is totally of the track if we talk in terms of audience because English is listened to mostly by the civil servants and students who at that time will be at work and school. In the afternoon at 2 pm when we play English, again there are no people to listen to. The third scheduling comes by 9 pm where people are either glued to TV or sleeping” stated Kesang. As far as the mandates of BBS radio go, it is to inform, entertain and educate the people and they target toward rural audience who doesn’t read or write and who doesn’t have access to TV and other forms of media. As per the MIS 2008, BBS Radio is the most used media with 60.3% in the country.

Kuzoo FM is an autonomous radio station which was established in September 2006 and in 2007 bifurcated into two stations, Dzongkha and English with two different frequencies, 104 MHz for Dzongkha and 105 MHz for English. Kuzoo is popularly known as ‘the voice of the youth’, where young people express their views and opinions and shares their experiences. Kuzoo FM aspires to instill in our youth the 'can do' spirit to see problems and challenges as opportunities. ‘Kuzoo FM’ aspires to be the engine of change by engaging with the youth and promote community spirit that advocates positive changes in our society. Being a station which runs 24/7 in both the languages, Kuzoo can be now heard in 20 *dzongkhags* and has a listenership of 1, 50,000 people daily (Kuzoo estimation) and is the second biggest radio station in Bhutan after BBS radio but also very popular among the rural and youth populace. According to the MIS 2008 report, Kuzoo radio proved to be the third most media to be used by the people



with 41.6% after BBS radio and TV and it is also gaining popularity around the country.

Radio valley is one of the first private FM radio station in Bhutan and is basically an entertainment channel like the rest of the 4 other radio stations launched on the 12th of April 2007 and it is only broadcasted in Thimphu in both English and Dzongkha. As per the MIS 2008, Radio valley's total use by audience is 2.1% as compared to 41.6% Kuzoo FM and 60.3% BBS radio.

BBS TV started with a daily one hour broadcast in Dzongkha and English in Thimphu only after its launch on 2 June 1999. Live TV service was made available for Phuentsholing and Paro in 2004 and 2005 respectively. As per BBS, described as the most important event in the history of electronic media in Bhutan, nationwide television service on satellite was launched in February 2006. With the nationwide expansion on satellite, BBS TV is now not only available in Bhutan but also in the other region. The signal can be received in almost 40 other Asian countries – from Turkey in the West to Indonesia in South East Asia.

According to the home page of BBS website<sup>14</sup>, BBS TV broadcasts for five hours daily from 6 to 11pm, with 30 minutes of news and announcements at each hour in Dzongkha (6 to 8 pm and 9 to 10 pm), and English (8 to 9 pm and from 10 to 11 pm). Various programs and documentaries in both languages are telecast during the five hours of TV broadcast every evening. The same is rebroadcast the next morning from 6 to 11 am. Three additional hours of entertainment programs and live music request shows are broadcast on weekend afternoons from 3 to 6 pm.

## 2.2 Content quality, A GNH inspired?

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<sup>14</sup> [www.bbs.com.bt](http://www.bbs.com.bt)

According to the MIS 2008, figures suggest that media, by and large, provide coverage on issues that viewers, readers and listeners consider important. 41.3% of the sample said important issues are covered frequently and 53.1% say that important issues are covered by media only sometimes. This conclusion is supported by the low percentage of people (2.4%) who say that media never covers issues of importance to them. As per the study's result, Bhutanese people spend a fair amount of time being exposed to one or more media. The two most popular radio stations are BBS radio and Kuzoo FM while the other radio stations reflect low usage because their broadcasts are confined to the capital, Thimphu. It was also found that media adequately represented people's views although it was also found that in general the media tend to favor urban stories.

#### A. *BBS TV.*

In my discussion with the Tashi Dorji, General Manager of BBS TV, according to the audience survey more than 55% of the population consists of the youth, so youth has become the main target for BBS and for that BBS TV have children units both in *Dzongkha* and English, they also have youth units in Dzongkha and English and also for parenting. Parenting basically targets children below the age of 6 years, it basically tips on how to bring up a child. All these take up six program slots. As per Tashi Dorji, "for the children and youth programming, it is more of a magazine format because we know that attention span is much shorter for them. We have this children program called "my world" which comes on Sundays and for the youth we have the "*nazhoen* express" For the youth programs BBS TV also have a program called the tutorials which is basically free tuition on air especially for children who are weak in some subjects like math, science and English. These are very short segments on different issues linked by an anchor. Then they have the slot for culture and lifestyle in English, where they look at the

history and the changing trends, followed by economic and environment program looking at developmental activities. BBS TV also showcases any agriculture related programming in that slot. BBS TV also carries a documentary section which is more cultural, where they do profiles of the *geogs*, monuments like temples and dzongs, etc and these are all the serious programs BBS feels they are carrying. In the entertainment front, the 9.30 slot which is dedicated to the Bhutanese serials but it is claimed that these are not just for entertainment. These are serials which have a social or serious theme in it. “We try to educate people on domestic violence, drug abuse, alcoholism, etc. through the format of entertainment” said Tashi Dorji. One that is totally entertainment based is the Sunday movies, where they buy films from the local producers and broadcast it. They also have a call in show called “*Trowa*”, which is more entertainment based. This is where people call in and interact with the anchor and make request for songs followed by *Trowa* live discussions show which is either stereo based or its out on location looking at the latest movie trends, the new releases etc. Also one aspect of entertainment BBS TV looks at is sports. One of the shows which is at the moment very popular all over the country is the reality singing show called “*Druk Gi Sungkye*” which is based on the American idol theme. “We felt that rather than getting weaned on outside productions, we can actually do something similar adapting to our own environment and one of the mandates of as a public service broadcaster is also to help stimulate and support assistance to the production houses in the market and this show is very popular,” stated Tashi Dorji.

According to the Secretary, MoIC, BBS TV is trying to be serious TV, but BBS TV is not as professional as it can be because of the lack of professionals but it is a serious station and not a sensationalist station. Although it is also under pressure, the government feels that it does some things that are not GNH but over all they are trying to be a GNH media. “They even had a

conference on public service broadcasting to understand the concepts of PSB. So BBS is trying to be a GNH station and the government is funding GNH because of that” stated the Secretary.

The Secretary of CBS stated that as one of the board members earlier in 2005, he tried to help change the broadcasting format into GNH format. Although Dasho Karma Ura feels that in theory BBS is still running according to that format but in terms of its content, it lacks substance. “The level is same. They talk about the community, agriculture, good governance but the content is not praise worthy like for example, when they say good governance, it is not only about covering elections. They should be dealing about corruption, freedom index, trust index, etc (which are all themes under good governance). There is nothing about right to information, freedom, discrimination, issue of gender etc. Serious discussions should be there but there is hardly anything which goes according to the themes under GNH” stated Dasho Ura. As far as the Director of DoIM is concerned, Bhutanese media generally shares the same concerns and believes as the government but once in a while there are instances where they tend to give way to sensationalism and he feels that these are counters which are faced by any media that is developing.

#### *B. Radio stations.*

BBS radio is broadcasted in four languages, English, Dzongkha, Sharchop and Lhotsampa. In terms of BBS radio, their program schedule is 60% of entertainment and 40% serious programming. But BBS radio now claims that over the years it has become almost 50/50. There programs consist of serious based issues such as current affairs, issue based programming, panel discussions, culture or political and legal related programs, good governance which is corruption, and educational programs like health, agriculture etc. and anything related to GNH. The GM of BBS radio was quick to state that “when we talk about GNH we don’t necessarily say that this is

a GNH program but the content always has a GNH component in it be it culture, religion, our traditional etiquettes, healthy living etc.” Entertainment genre is basically music, talk shows with singers and actors; call in shows and dramas which are also educational and cultural.

Kuzoo Fm, the English station starts from 6.30 am and ends at 10 pm followed by rebroadcast or a number of songs played till the next morning and that way it claims to be 24/7. They have different kind of topics for the shows which are given two hours each but in all those shows they play western music from the latest hip hops songs to the olden jazz songs. So basically by default everything is entertainment in a way although with the criteria from BICMA they put in a lot of details on the lyrics of the song which has to be clean from foul languages. In some of the music slots, they also give opportunities for listeners to call in to request songs, give them a space to dedicate messages to their loved ones and also give them a platform to show their singing talents and give them prizes. According to the GM, English Department at Kuzoo Fm, as a voice for the youth, as serious programs they have talk shows for youth called the voices of the youth, where they give opportunities for the youth to volunteer and experience as RJs, they have talk shows on various topics related to youth such as drugs, alcohol, dating and fun topic where they get people to call in to participate in these discussions; and they also have discussion with government heads on different issues and also bringing in doctors in the studio to explain to listeners on health related issues etc. They also have a quiz section on topics like literature, art, games, and current affairs for the young listeners.

Kuzoo FM Dzongkha department is no different from the English department; they start the broadcast from 6.30 am till 10 pm followed by rebroadcast and songs. The content is the same as the English department where they play requested songs, give an opportunity for the listeners to participate in fun programs and serious discussions.

Although these are the programs they concentrate on, currently most of these programs are missing on the menu due to the shortage of employees. They fail to find people who are will to stay in the job permanently and they have to work mostly with volunteers. Kuzoo FM claims to be different from the rest of the private radio stations because they are not commercially inclined but of course when it comes to the case of survival, they need to do a little bit of marketing. In terms of marketing, Kuzoo FM plays announcements and advertisements from government and different commercial houses. Though there is a charge for the advertisements, Kuzoo states that for some they don't charge especially for organizations they have partnership for different reasons.

Radio valley on the other hand is a completely commercial based station where from morning 7 am till 1 am next morning, they play mostly contemporary and different genre of English and Dzongkha song but also play other international songs like Indian and Korean. According to Radio valley the current program schedule is designed as per the listening habits of the residents of Thimphu. Radio Valley also has talk shows, call in request shows, trivia shows, cultural shows but most of its shows are entertainment oriented. "95% of our time slot is given for entertainment and the rest for other programs such as announcements, ads and others and although we do have programs through which we address serious issues and matters but we try not to make people feel like school students by airing very serious educative programs" stated Kinley Wangchuk, Managing Director, Radio Valley. The station claims that they provide as much as 50% of the music slot to Dzongkha and regional songs.

They have slots where they talk about various artist and also give opportunities to the local Bhutanese bands to perform and interact with the audience. Although the station is limited only to the capital, Thimphu, its popularity is growing in terms of its listeners especially the youth.

As per Dasho Karma Ura, all radio stations are devoted to local content except for some which plays western songs quite a lot. Although he listens to the radio only in the car when he is travelling, from the little he has listened he is not pleased with the number of western songs they play. “I hear mostly western music, requests, radio jockeys copying the western style of announcement including in Dzongkha. They have perverted the Dzongkha to fit the western jokey style” he stated. Although he showed his concern the Secretary also had good things to say about some of the shows. “I thought the request shows they have is very interesting. The unpredictable audience participations in songs from all around the country are quite interesting. They can conjure up a village girl wanting to participate on a wider platform and this is her only chance. This is a very innovative step of the radio stations but other programs are not so praiseworthy from my side” he added.

The author of the MIS 2008, Siok Sian Pek, a media researcher and consultant, stated that even though she doesn’t listen to the radio stations as much says that although she cannot pass judgments on their programs, her cursory impression is that the radio stations are very entertainment oriented, very much music but at the same time some of them provide very useful forums where they give people opportunity to call in and the right to ask questions and discuss issues. She also stated that some radio stations try very hard to engage a group of people such as Kuzoo Fm who is trying hard to build a sense of Bhutanese identity.

### 2.3 Culture protected or preserved by the broadcast media and its significance.

According to Dasho Karma Ura, the backbone of Bhutanese culture are two types, one is that which is based or deeply influenced by Mahayana Buddhism, the other is slightly indigenous

which may not be recognizable outside Bhutan but has evolved within the country. The universal Mahayana Buddhism is also a culture which is shared in the entire Himalayan region. The specification of culture may be different for each individual and people will have different meanings. As per Dasho Ura, broadly the traditional culture of Bhutan as opposed to modern culture of Bhutan is mostly influenced by Mahayana Buddhism and it is also deeply influenced by indigenous forces and that local is not national, in the sense that each place in the country has their own indigenous culture in the way they do things like food, festivals, dialects etc. “This is what I mean by local culture whereas the general Mahayana influence is sort of coming down from the central monastic body” he stated. The GNHC, as the guardian of policy making in the country do not have a specific definition of Bhutanese culture. Bhutanese culture according to it is everything people see in Bhutan and to describe culture one needs to bring in every aspect of things Bhutanese do in their daily lives. “Firstly there are the physical facets of Bhutanese culture which include Bhutanese architecture, clothes, instruments people use (example, Swords and the scarf’s officials wear as some symbol of service), to all the artifacts and more important the underline values of compassion, respect, generosity, politeness, that we try to teach in schools. So culture is something which cannot be narrowly defined” stated the Secretary, GNHC. Dasho Karma Tshetem also thinks that language is the most important aspect of our culture. “In fact many say that one’s own language is the language of culture. It is like the language of English in Bhutan is more the language of business. When we talk in English among the Bhutanese, then a lot of our culture disappears. For instance when we talk Dzongkha, we will never be able to be as direct as we talk in English. That’s because our culture has this subtleness, we avoid confrontation, so our language itself ensures some values are imparted in the way that it forces us to interact. Language is an extremely important part of what we call culture” he



added.

According to Bray (1993) the Bhutanese government is acutely conscious that economic development is bringing about social changes which challenge the country's traditional culture - or cultures. It has responded by taking steps to instill a unified sense of national identity. "In particular, it is promoting the use of Dzongkha, the western Bhutanese language which traditionally is spoken in eight out of the country's 20 districts and derives ultimately from Tibetan." He goes on to say that alongside its propagation of Dzongkha, the government has also promoted the *Driglam Namzha*, which is translated as 'traditional values and etiquette'. The aspect of *Driglam Namzha* which has received most attention has been the dress code. All Bhutanese citizens are expected to wear national dress on official occasions and when visiting *dzongs* - the fortress/monasteries which serve as government offices in much of Bhutan. For men, traditional dress consists of the *gho*, while women are expected to wear the *kira*. Both are robe-like garments associated with the Buddhist north of the country" (pg. 215)

BBS TV as the national broadcaster tries to incorporate the elements of GNH into their programming and culture is one part of it. It has separate time slots for culture and lifestyle in English, where it looks at the history and the changing trends of the country, it has documentary section mostly both in Dzongkha and English which as they claim is more cultural based as they do profiles on the *geogs*, monuments like *lhagkhangs*, *dzongs* and *tshechus*. As stated earlier in their entertainment section they have Bhutanese serials, live call in shows called *Trowa* where they play only Dzongkha songs, they have the movie time in which only Bhutanese movies are played and they have the reality singing show which are all mostly meant for entertainment but as far as BBS is concerned it also helps in promoting the national language, Dzongkha.

The BBS radio too covers on the cultural aspect of GNH. BBS radio claims to be different

from the rest of the FM radio stations because they give news and programs rather than just music which are educational and creates awareness. Apart from giving importance to the Dzongkha section which they believe is because the audience for radio is basically the rural population which consists of 70% of the population, they also have programs in the other three languages, English, Lhotsampa and Sharchop. Some of their programs consist of content which according to them always has a GNH component in it be it culture, religion, traditional etiquettes or healthy living. BBS radio feel that they are doing their part of promoting the Bhutanese culture by playing *namthars*, Bhutanese songs including songs in Lhotsampa and Sharchop although they accept that Dzongkha songs dominates the other songs.

Kuzoo Fm has two radio frequencies which air in English and Dzongkha and therefore provides options for people to choose from the two stations. One thing that the English station claims is that although there might be at times some mistakes done by the host, they try to strictly follow the request from BICMA on not using “*Dzonglish*” a term created by BICMA for the use of mixed English and Dzongkha language. That way they feel that they can influence the youth in the right direction of speaking English fluently or even Dzongkha for that matter. As far as their schedule goes they also have a program called the wisdom bites which is on Buddhism which is aired for few minutes and they have a program called “know your culture” which is not really aired these days due to lack of production team.

The programs in the Dzongkha are very much thriving at the moment as compared to the English. Although much of the station as a whole is an entertainment based station, as per them they try to help promote the culture as well through songs and also programs. Kuzoo FM Dzongkha has a request show where they entertain only hand written request in Dzongkha and the intention as they claim is to keep alive the tradition of Dzongkha writing in this day and age

when writing letters is diminishing. They also play all types of Bhutanese songs and have section from *Zhungdra* and *Boedra* to latest *Rigser* songs. They also have music section dedicated to patriotic and religious songs which they claim is part of promoting the culture. As per the GM of Dzongkha department, Mr. Phub Gyaltshen, sometimes they air packaged programs on different topic which consist of GNH elements, such as environment, health, culture and also on other varieties of human interest topics. On Thursdays they have a particular show called “*Lamsoel*”, which is based on the traditional way of living. Similar to this program, on Saturdays they have a program called “*lozey rigtsel*” which is a traditional way of light debate where opponents recite poems and old sayings to one another. According to them this is done with a purpose to keep the tradition alive in this modern world. This program is done mostly by accumulating all old poems and stories from the elders around the country. They also have a program on different sacred religious and holy places around the country. The Kuzoo Fm Dzongkha also has a special program called “*Dangphu Dingphu*” where the Host narrates old and traditional popular stories to kinder garden students, which are also broadcasted, live on air.

As far as radio valley station like the rest of the other private station, it is completely a commercial based station which broadcast both English and Dzongkha. The only contribution it may be giving is the promotion of Dzongkha speaking through their Dzongkha RJ’s and from the Dzongkha songs they play.

When we talk about television in Bhutan, BBS is the only Local TV station at the moment and it is fully funding by the government and therefore the government accepts BBS to be fully Bhutanese and have full Bhutanese content. As per the Secretary of MoIC, “Bhutanese content means Bhutanese culture. All the religious festivals, cultural institutions and cultural activities are promoted and given coverage by BBS. That’s the only way we can promote our culture and

help people understand.” The Director of DoIM also had a similar opinion and thought that in terms of BBS, almost 80-90% is local content which is Bhutanese and “I think BBS that way is playing a very effective role in sustaining this appreciation for our local culture” he added. In my discussions with Pek, she stated that in her view 98-99% of BBS content is Bhutanese. “They promote traditional Bhutanese culture quite well. They try and attempt to include *tshechus*, *dzongs*, etc. and also showcase a lot of evolving culture. BBS is the only channel we have and we think about it as the only window to Bhutan and Bhutanese culture.” According to the MIS 2008 35% of the survey respondents were of the view that traditional Bhutanese culture was visible on TV. This as the MIS stated, is may be due to the popularity of the Bhutanese TV over international channels.

The regulatory body for ICT and Media, BICMA considers that BBS TV and Radio has so far lived up to their expectations and is doing a good job as far as promoting culture is concerned because they see that most of programs are targeted towards promoting the culture, history, values and also the development concepts. As per the Secretary of GNHC anything that promotes Bhutanese culture and traditions and anything that strengthens the four pillars of GNH is considered as being consistence with strengthening GNH. “If we look at what our local TV and the small but growing movie industry has done and not withstanding some debate on qualitative aspects, we will have to appreciate that they have actually done quite a bit to promote our own language, our own traditions, our culture” he said. As per the MIS 2008, BBS radio has the widest influence on people’s language with a 33.8% followed by BBS TV (29.5%)

As far as Dasho Karma Ura is concerned, he feels critical about the whole thing. He feels that although there is no doubt that the motive and the attempt put by BBS is to produce Bhutanese culture, according to him the outcome is something different because the outcome

depends on the quality, the outcome depends on right topics one choose. It's not only enough to have motivations. But as compared to the local channels provided by the cable operators which are 24 hours dance and songs and where there is no new attempt to follow some serious action, he noted that in BBS these things are not seen. "They have discussions, there is attempt to pick up Bhutanese issues" he said. He continues to say that "although BBS have programs on some aspects of culture like *tshechus*, *dzongs* etc., it is not enough. They are not adventurous enough to bring these stories from all round the country. They do it on the main *dzongs* and sites or rituals. The problem with main *dzongs* is that they replicate each other. The variation is lacking so the compensation would be to go and truly encourage indigenous ones which have not been explored. Those things need to be picked up and given a chance to be observed by all the Bhutanese. This will show some creativity. If you just stick to the popular ones, of course they are national institutions but from the viewer's point of view the programs can be monotonous. They might now watch it every time. Variety of entertainment has to be there" he stated. In terms of the radio stations, the Secretary of GNHC senses that they are all entertainment oriented but he also strongly feels that their entertainment programs have a wide reach through which they are promoting the Bhutanese songs, language and there is also this retelling of old stories in some of them which is thought to be a good initiative.

In the views of the Secretary of CBS's, the radio isn't doing much on the cultural front. He feel that although the radio stations play *zhungdra* and *boedra* which are traditional songs of Bhutan, he is concerned about the *rigser* songs played by the radio stations which are all taken from latest Bhutanese movies. He feels that the new songs should capture the Bhutanese imagination by depicting the serious issues in this country rather than being completely borrowed from the Bollywood movies with the exact tunes and lyrics. "For examples, like a Bob

Dylan song, it has some distinctiveness in it, it evokes something about the American lives, landscape etc. Where is anything like that in our new songs? They are not able to relate anything to resonate Bhutanese issues just now. The songs have cheap idealization of females which is typically Bollywood film approach, which is mainly on the physical image of the female. This not at all reflective of things here and it is just artificial creation. It is artificial because it has no experiential content because it is just being copied. If you are just copying something into Dzongkha that is what we call total depreciation” he stated.

The Secretary of GNHC has a different view point all together. He feels that what shows clearly is that there is demand for our own culture and tradition and all these TV and radio stations are simply trying to meet that demand and he think it is a good indicator but for the qualitative aspects, I feels they should always try to improve and that they are trying to do it continuously. “If you remember 10-15 year ago, the streets will be blaring with Bollywood music and our movie theaters will be only running that and all of us would be watching those movies. Today that have been completely wiped out and it has always been Bhutanese movies and music and people may say that they are poor copies of others but the fact is that it is produced by Bhutanese, made with Bhutanese ingenuity, innovation and I must say they are doing well providing good entertainment, promoting our language, so I see those as good developments. And from our side we must continue to promote our arts and crafts, performing arts, as well as all the fine art etc. as they are very important for our culture. Our culture cannot be only religious oriented, there is this whole other facet and our TV is doing an important job” he said.

The MIS 2008 states that as compared to MIS 2003 when global channels ranked at the top, and where there were fewer radio stations and newspapers, today’s media scene is one that

reflects a strong preference for the local and in that sense Bhutanese culture is being reinforced with more Bhutanese media and content and the new media approaches have also spawned new cultures. (pg. 51)

The main support of the government for the TV and radio program content is mainly through trainings and awards and other indirect supports like advertisements. Training has been given quite a priority by the government because right now some of the challenges the government feels in improving and developing cultural programs is the lack of media professionals, therefore one of the trainings the Ministry conducted were for radio presenters and producers on how they should go into production of programs as well as teaching them some basic interview techniques. The Ministry claims that although BBS is fully funded by the government it has given direct financial assistance to BBS for the production and airing of cultural documentaries. Apart from BBS which is fully funded supported by the government, the other radio stations get support from the government in terms of human development such as trainings and further studies. They also get to go for workshops specifically for program production. The Ministry has also promoted radio drama in terms of production and airing through financial assistance and it also assisted some of them in procuring some basic equipment to help radio develop such local content and air their programs. The Dzongkha Development Commission (DDC), under the Ministry of Education also supports the radio stations in terms of programs and Dzongkha terminology contest and Kuzoo FM is one of them. “We are already in some kind of a partnership with them in terms of some shows where they fund and we get certain programs done for them. Through radios we share what are the right words to be used in Dzongkha basically to improve the language” said Kencho Tshering, GM English, Kuzoo Fm. He also added that these kinds of help from the government really help them to learn and

understand more on what they need to be doing as a broadcaster”.

According to the Director, DoIM, the government needs to do more especially with reference to the radio stations because as of now they don't even have a sort of broad guideline which actually ensures that they follow a focused direction on the programs and presentation requirements, so this is one area we need to focus on and develop certain standards and requirements to ensure that their content is also more suitable for local audience and the public interest at large.

The local channels provided by the cable operators is also part of the broadcast media in Bhutan as alongside BBS this is the only window to the visual Bhutanese content. But unfortunately at the moment they are not doing much in fulfilling the role envisioned by the government in terms of its content. As we have learnt, they are just basically there to fulfill the government's request for a local channel. These channels can neither be called a serious broadcaster or a commercial broadcaster because they don't have a broadcast license or any kind of guidelines for operation. As the MIs 2008 stated “In the absence of content, “student dances” fill the cable airwaves and music TV clips are repeatedly played to fill long moments between program” (pg. 55) According to Pek, the local channels don't take the governments vision for having more local content seriously. “For them it is just a channel that's available and they just fill it up with something. I don't think they plan it properly, I don't think they consider what they put on and they just put anything. They are more like a community station sort of outlook but without any guideline or rules and certainly I don't think they even think about GNH. As long as they get something to fill it up they will put it down and that's also an opportunity to get advertising to offset the cost of running it. There is no good balance in that content and it is nonstop” she stated. The MIS study which was done by Pek (2008) on behalf of the DoIM did



not include these channels as she did not consider it as a broadcaster.

According to the Director of DoIM, the local channel is not fulfilling the role envisioned by the government or BICMA because they are tending to engage in more of a broadcast service provider which they are not and without a broadcasting license, even the airing of programs and advertisements are not in keeping with the license conditions. He stated that the local channels need to come up with more creative and innovative ways of using the opportunity given to them by the government because as of now, they only have repetitive airing of school concerts which are not creatively done and which are not much of value to ensuring appreciation of our culture and traditions. He also feels that one of the reason for the poor content may be because of the lack of interest on the part of the cable operators themselves to come up with more innovative means of using their air time and he strongly feels that there is a need for the government to directly intervene to ensure that they are more creatively using their air space. “It has to be two way process. Both the cable operators and the government have to be involved in the process to improve their local content” he added.

As stated earlier, in the absence of private TV stations, the local channels were allowed only to be used as a platform to showcase Bhutanese content and as per BICMA this will be lifted once the new TV broadcasters are licensed. BICMA also feels that the local channels right now are doing very less in fact none in promoting Bhutanese culture. They have only allowed it to run in order to help the movie industry get a platform to showcase their movie advertisements.

## **AN ANALYSIS**

My research data suggest four main areas of reflection: the first regards the effectiveness of the GNH approach and its implementation within the media policies and practices; the second is based on the recognition of Bhutanese content as an important part of media development process; the third is the role of TV and radio in enhancing the distinct Bhutanese identity through promotion of culture; and lastly the invasion of foreign culture in Bhutan

### **Section 1: Effectiveness of the GNH approach and its implementation within the media policies and practices**

#### **1.1 GNH implementation in Media policies and the conception of “Shared Consciousness”.**

As the finding suggest GNH is a concept which has already been integrated into the development process of Bhutan and as it emerges from the review of the 10<sup>th</sup> five year plan, the law and policy documents available on the broadcast media, it is evident that GNH is also looked upon for guidance for broadcast development in the country. The government emphasizing on a responsible media in Bhutan has commonalities with other press outside the country and can easily fall under the proposed system of Yin (2008), “the two dimensional Freedom-Responsibility coordinate system”; but it stating “shared consciousness” among the media and the people suggests its uniqueness which in a way enhances the distinctiveness of the Bhutanese society and its goal towards achieving happiness and striving a balance in the development rather than following the materialistic norms of the world. Good quality journalism resulting from good ethics, quote of conduct, good quality reporting and accurate reporting; and being conscious about one’s own values are all consistent with GNH. As my findings suggest, media literacy is

given high priority by the government and “building a vibrant and informed society to create a shared national consciousness” is the focus of the Ministry of Information and Communication. This is very much in line with the foundations of GNH because knowledge based society as reflected by Ezechieli, (2003) “makes better choices, take responsibility in the democratic process, thus achieving happiness and prosperity and supporting peace. An informed and educated society “is the real foundation of GNH approach, from which all the other goal depends” Ezechieli, (2003). GNH is visible to some extent in the present Bhutanese media system. In fact media policy documents appear to be committed to attaining the overall goals of GNH. However the findings from the interviews indicate that the government even though putting efforts and having consultations with the media has not been successful in establishing a GNH based media model at the moment. As the Director of the DoIM said, “there is a certain amount of misgiving as well as reluctance from the media on any intentions either perceived or not to try and even discuss with the government agency trying to promote sort of a model. Therefore we are still trying to look for a suitable model”. This reveals that there is some sort of misunderstanding between the government and the media in general in terms of understanding GNH and the role it should play in the media or the overall development of the country. The data from the interview also reveals some level of inconsistency between the official guidelines, decision makers perspective and media people regarding the importance of and implementing the GNH approach. The official documents clearly states the implementation of GNH in every policy making, the decision makers thoughts on it is that it cannot be forced upon directly but should be subtly understood through shared consciousness and the media people besides BBS which is financed by the government, as reveled in the interviews has either no idea or are skeptic of this GNH notion. As reveled in one of the interviews “the media thinks that when we

talk about a GNH media, it means the media has to report or write about GNH”. Far more efforts would be needed to bring about a mutual resolution and the intention of the government must be clear because without much understanding, as Bhabha (1990) stated “despite the considerable advance this represents, there is a tendency to read the Nation rather restrictively; either, as the ideological apparatus of state power, somewhat redefined by a hasty, functionalist reading of Foucault or Bakhtin; or, in a more utopian inversion, as the incipient or emergent expression of the 'national-popular' sentiment preserved in a radical memory (pg. 3).

Bhutan is a small country that is already different to the rest of the world bringing in GNH as an overall measure of development as opposed to GDP. As stated by the Secretary of MoIC, “the media must fit into this society and Bhutanese media must be relevant to Bhutanese society.” The government plans to disseminate the concept of ‘shared consciousness’ through the media” and as Bhabha describes it “these approaches are valuable in drawing our attention to those easily obscured, but highly significant, recesses of the national culture from which alternative constituencies of peoples and oppositional analytic capacities may emerge - youth, the everyday, nostalgia, new 'ethnicities', new social movements, 'the politics of difference' (pg. 3). The idea of Bhutan using the media to create a shared consciousness within the country on the Buddhist or GNH values is similar to that of the age of nationalism in Europe which coincided with the close of an era of successful national liberation movements in the Americas. As secularism was crucial for the Europeans at that point of time to create the national consciousness, it is the Vajrayana/Mahayana Buddhism belief which is important to Bhutan to create such consciousness. As stated by Anderson (1991) on the age of nationalism in Europe, these "new nationalisms" were different in two respects: 1.) national print languages were of central ideological and political importance, and 2.) the nation became something capable of

being consciously aspired to from early on due to the "models" set forth by the Creole pioneers. “Vernacular print capitalism is important to class formation, particularly the rise of the bourgeoisie” (pg. 4) Here Anderson discusses the importance of the print in Europe which helped spread the national consciousness and creating the nation to consciously believe in the ideologies of secularism. This is not very different from what radio and film did in creating a sense of national consciousness in México and other Latin American countries after their independence which was missing in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century according to Jesús Martín-Barbero. In a previous modernizing phase between 1930-50, he observes, the media 'were decisive for the formation and diffusion of national identity and feeling' (1993/4: 44) “We became aware of the memories and images that blend together the indigenous Indian roots with a *campesino* culture, the rural with the urban, the folkloric with the popular culture, and the popular with the new mass culture” Barbero (1993). In case of Bhutan, where religion and GNH values are central, the idea of using the media deliberately to spread the notion of ‘shared consciousness’ can be effective.

Hoellerer (2010) stated that the Journal of Bhutan Studies as well as publications available through the Gross National Happiness Commission suggests various means to operationalize GNH and measure its success and failure through a quantitative means of measurement and while he agreed that these means to measure GNH are important, they could be also enhanced by qualitative and ethnographic data. With more scholars discovering various means of measurement, it shows that operationalization of GNH can be done in various ways but the success of the operationalization is to be questioned.

The feasibility of applying the of a unique GNH media model in Bhutan is high and it is safe to say that Bhutan is marching towards having a unique media model based on GNH.

However, the GNH policy is stated at a very general level that has not been translated into specific media policies due to the lack of operationalization and although many of the official media documents reveals its importance, it has not been strongly implemented in reality. Apart from the two surveys done on the media impact on Bhutan, which were basically focused on the influence of media on the population, the government has not been able to measure the effectiveness of GNH in the media policy and practice.

It has been stated by the Secretary of MoIC that “if we want to develop a society that is not materialistic, media must be conscious of that and therefore not promote consumerism and not promote sensationalism and the global media is being largely entertainment especially broadcast which is becoming largely an entertainment industry rather than an information and education industry and that is why the Bhutanese media has to try to be different.” To make the Bhutanese media different, the government has already started dialogue with the media to incorporate a GNH based media model in Bhutan but what is lacking in the conferences held by the government is the participation of the private radio stations and the cable operators who like most of the international media are largely entertainment and commercial based. Therefore, the government’s exclusion of the private broadcasters can obstruct its goals in educating the media and the people at large on “shared consciousness” or having a unique media model. On one hand the country has adopted the path to modernization by introducing television in the late nineties but on the other hand it is still looking at how to adapt the new tools to suit the local needs and objective. As this study reveals, a lot of work remains to be done for the process to be completed.

## 1.2 GNH implementation in the broadcast practices.

Findings from the interviews shows that Bhutan right now has a young media industry and young media professionals in majority who are new, not trained, not matured and is not much aware of GNH in depth nor has much understanding of the larger goals, therefore not much of GNH is reflected in their program contents. Although broadcasters like the BBS as guided by the government try to bring about some GNH essence in their programming, in the words of one of the interviewee “lot of people are doing just as a job.” One person also stated that “like some radio stations, for example during the last elections, all they do is read rules. They read it badly and it is obvious that for them it is just fulfilling a requirement because they are paid to do that so they just do it and it doesn’t matter if the listeners understands, whether you speak clearly or too fast or whether the rules are meant to be read or whether you can rewrite it or whether they can give people opportunity to call them and ask about the rules” The MIS 2008 also showed that many people think that there is a need for a more balanced media coverage. This surely creates an understanding that the private broadcasters do not realize the importance of their duty towards the larger society.

The finding showed that the private broadcasters are driven more or less by globalization and follows international trends but this is customary because they are after all business entities that will always give utmost priority to profit making for its survival and would give less attention to the goodness of the larger society. Although the government has a rule on content which states that “content providers should uphold national harmony, and Bhutan’s priorities such as a balanced development and the development philosophy of Gross National Happiness and; media contents should empower Bhutanese citizens to achieve well-being and quality of life and not become a passive audience for consumerism”, without any specific terms reflecting the importance of GNH in their license terms and conditions, a private entity would not succumb to

any social obligations. The license of the private broadcasters itself specifies commercial broadcasting and leaves not much room for the application of serious programming or reflecting GNH values. Therefore, applying the rule on content on these private broadcasters causes a contradiction to their role as a commercial broadcaster. Understanding the role the commercial based broadcasters can play in impacting the audience visually or by sound is very crucial for the government. Therefore, there seems to be this lack of understanding of the concept itself by the government as well as the media people in general. It also seems it is not being understood that GNH is not an option anymore. It is enshrined in the Constitution of Bhutan and is clearly stated that GNH should drive policy and it is the duty of every citizen to uphold the principles of GNH. Therefore, implementation of GNH shouldn't be a debate in the first place. As previously stated, it was found that there is this lack of an operational definition of GNH. This lack of operationalization could be solved by viewing as being in a continuous process of definition and specification. Ura (2006) states "GNH is in a conceptually formative stage, and is open to different conceptualizations and interpretations, and even contestations"

BBS broadcasters whether radio or TV, as the findings states run on its own in house terms and conditions at the moment but being the national broadcaster and being financed by the government, the contents are very much geared towards applying GNH elements such as broadcasting or giving coverage to religious festivals, cultural institutions, environment, government proceedings etc. and although most of the interviewees feel that they are trying to be a GNH based broadcaster, I agree with some of the other interviewees who think that although in theory the format is according to GNH, in terms of content it is not sufficiently variegated. The BBS for example, have programs on good governance but like Dasho Karma Ura stated it reports more on elections, government conferences and meeting which tends to be quite monotonous and



it lacks discussion of topic like corruption, freedom index, trust index, etc. which are all themes under good governance. As one of the interviewees stated the quantity of the media is not much of importance, what a matter is the quality of the content which lacks in our media. “The lack of a real media policy is reflected in the fact that the policy has been materially instrumental in allowing foreign media in and has not been thoughtful on the question of the shape and content of Bhutan’s culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

## **Section 2: Recognition of Bhutanese content as an important part of media development process**

From most of the discussions I had with the government officials and also from the findings from the policy documents, it was very clear that leaving aside regulating foreign content which can prove to be an expensive affair both for the government and the people in general, the best possible way to counter numerous broadcast contents coming into Bhutan through cable TV is to increase the local content. Most of the officials I spoke to unanimously stated that people in Bhutan if given a chance would rather prefer or choose to watch or hear something Bhutanese than some foreign oriented broadcasting. It is agreeable because for example ever since the BBS TV introduced the singing talent show, most of the people in Bhutan including farmers are glued to the TV during the air time and even the radio has proved to be an entertainment spot but the question here is how well are these show improving the lives of the people in general. The country, in a short span of time, has increased the number of radio broadcasters to seven as compared to three stations in 2007 and the government is already looking at licensing local TV stations which they think can bring about more local content. The Rules on Content very clearly specifies that the Media contents should empower Bhutanese citizens to achieve well-being and quality of life and not become a passive audience for

consumerism (2.2. (b) pg. 5) but as per some of interviewees, this does not apply much in the content production of the local broadcast stations especially TV. Like one of them said “the singing competition program on the BBS TV for example is a dulling of the Bhutanese mind. The people are now drawn toward non issues. What does it matter who is the best singer in this country, it doesn’t improve the lives of the people.” Borrowing a concept from outside and making it relevant to Bhutan is a creation by itself but if going by GNH, these kind of programs although might have some influence in improving the understanding of some cultural aspect of Bhutan such as the language and music but like the interviewee said it does not do much in improving one’s life. In fact this kind of shows also brings in advertisements which transports consumerism into people’s lives and that is totally against GNH. Inviting more private TV stations in the market no doubt will provide competition to the monopoly of BBS and may help in increasing the local content but one must be cautious of the number of broadcasters it can support in a small country like Bhutan to make it viable. This is something to think about and although the government’s intentions of increasing the local content is very crucial in its own sense to combat inflow of foreign contents, the government also should have a hand in increasing the quality of the program rather than increasing the quantity or the time of Bhutanese media.

Besides BBS which is totally funded by the government for its operation, from the discussions I had with the private media personals, it reveals that the government in their own ways try to help out in program content development by offering support in terms of trainings and finance, like some of the broadcast media personals I had discussions said “we get support from the government (MOIC) in terms of human development such as training and further studies. We also get to go for workshops specifically for program production. This kind of help from the government really helps us to learn and understand more on what we need to be doing

as a broadcaster” but as good as it sounds, the question here is what does it mean by good content? Is it just a clean content without any menaces which can educate and inform the people or does it teach the Media to create good content emphasizing the GNH values? How does this help increase the quality of the programs incorporating GNH? Bhutan being a different country with a unique measurement of development, the government’s focus on only “good content” is not enough. As unique as it aspires to be in terms of the overall development principles and also as revealed from the findings to have a different media model which is possible in the country, good content reflecting the developing philosophy has to be thought of to have a media system which is not just looking for quality programming but which will be relevant to the aspirations of the Country but what can be found is that the trainings which are given to the media people are mostly held outside the country where they are taught the essence of production by foreign professionals with international understanding of content production. The country lacks in having institutions which teach new and young journalist the essence of GNH and how it can be implied in their daily work. The government organizes workshops and trainings for the media but there seems to be no coordination and there is no systematic inductions of journalist into GNH view which looking at the objectives of the country, ideally should be there. Bhutan wanting to have more local TV stations is not a solution by itself and there is a need for the government to understand it.

The impacts of television do not stop at mere distraction from active cultural participation for while distracted, attention is shifted to forging a wholly new set of cultural associations. The public mindshare that television programmers capture is not an end in itself but rather a means by which broadcast organizations earn their commercial revenues. The majority of these revenues come from selling

audience attention to businesses in order that they can attempt to mold and shape new desires in the viewer.

- McDonald (2004 pg.75)

As mentioned earlier the government being open to having private TV stations in the country can prove to be a plus point in balancing the inflow of foreign content but if they are to go about the same way with TV licensing as that of the Radio, which are licensed mostly for commercial broadcasting and which do not have much role to play rather than entertain, then the whole notion of a GNH society can go in vain. Like McDonald stated above, the majority of the broadcasters earns their commercial revenues by shaping new desires in the viewers which enhances materialism and this is totally opposed to the principles of GNH.

From the interviews I had with the decision makers, it is found that that there is no mention of a requirement of good content which is in line with the principles of GNH in the present overall government assessment for licensing new TV stations in Bhutan and the government gives more priority to financial, technical and professional ability of a licensee. Although there is a new proposal on the criteria for attaining a TV license which includes the impact assessment where the licensee has to state the benefits it can give its viewers and its aim on the contribution towards promoting GNH, it is not enough to seek a broadcast media which will be different from the rest of the world media. A country which seeks to have a media system which is different and guided by the principles of GNH, the government needs to understand that the content a particular licensee is going to provide needs to be given utmost priority and the commercial revenue one seeks to pursue is also to be examined. It is not known what kind of a license the government is planning on granting to the new upcoming TV station but it is a well-known fact that the majority of private media if not guided can mold and shape new desires in

the viewer after all their revenues come from selling audience attention. Therefore, there is a need for the government to understand these risks and work on policies with much thinking.

### **Section 3: The role of Broadcast media in enhancing the distinct Bhutanese identity through promotion of culture**

#### **3.1 The nature of Bhutanese culture and its position today.**

Today, it is the culture and tradition bequeathed to us by our ancestors that can protect us from some of the negative and indiscriminate forces of modernization and enable us to retain our identity and dignity in a world in which ‘culture’ is increasingly defined as a global commodity (RGOB1999:65).

The cultural heritage of the country, as per the Constitution includes monuments, places and objects of artistic or historic interest like *Dzongs*, *Lhakhangs*, *Goendeys*, *Ten-sum*, *Nyes*, language, literature, music, visual arts and religion. According to Bhutan 2020 document (1999), culture is composed of tangible and intangible aspects that are founded on a complex set of values, norms and traditions. “It finds tangible expression in our architecture and historical artifacts and in our rich tradition of folklore, myths, legends, customs, crafts, rituals, symbols, traditional sports, astrology, poetry, drama, song and dance. No less important, as a system of values and norms, it is reflected in our way of thinking, in our attitudes to the world and to life, how we perceive ourselves and others, and how we make moral and ethical choices and distinguish between what is wrong and right.” (pg. 34)

The government feels that the preservation of culture is the pillar that really differentiates Bhutan's approach to development from other countries development process because other things like conservation of environment, good governance and sustainable development are all being practiced around the world but as the findings suggest, in the country's overall achievements, it is the culture part which Bhutan is successfully maintaining whereas most of other countries has sort of not been able to deal with. Like the Secretary of GNHC affirmed, Bhutan is now showing way to other countries who in their blind pursuit of development discounted the importance of culture for their identity which is so critical for their happiness and wellbeing. "When they now look at us, they see in Bhutan what they could have been and what they have lost because they have achieved tremendous economic benefits, something which Bhutan cannot achieve for many years but look at the cost. I think they see the wisdom in what we are trying to do even though they realize that we have other challenges like our economic development is not keeping up with the type of aspirations we have".

As per the interview with the GNHC Secretary, at the moment most of the urgent needs the government is looking at for cultural preservation is to renovate *dzongs*, lot of the softer components are talking with education in educating about GNH, like imparting values (not by telling students to respect but telling teachers to enact that value in order for them to understand and learn) and also supporting the *dratsang lhentshog* which is very much part of Bhutanese culture because of the influence of Buddhism in the daily lives of the people. Looking at the activities the government is working on in terms of cultural preservation and finding the exclusion of media as an important entity to focus on in terms of preservation and promotion of culture reveals that realization of the negative and positive impact media can have on the country has not really caught on with the government as of yet. This probably can be because currently,

unlike some countries the Bhutanese culture is flourishing and prominent sectors in the country like tourism, is thriving entirely on culture; and the government feels that it has not become really a challenge for them to promote and protect the culture because it is felt that the wider Bhutanese committee have this understanding that their culture, traditions and values cannot be separated from the Bhutan they want to develop.

In Bhutan as Wangchuck (2006) stated “A significant deviation from the Western norm is a strong sense of national loyalty, the traditional *zhungdang- mitse-damtsi* (government – people relation) and this is mainly because Bhutan has been blessed with a leadership whose concern for the welfare of the people has never been in doubt.” (pg. 284) The government also states that the sense of national identity is very strong in Bhutan and like one of the official said “people have been realizing more and more the value of culture because it gives a sense of pride and strong sense of identity which is extremely important but also because it makes Bhutan, what Bhutan is, unique and different from others and this difference has a positive impact on everything we do” In a survey done by Rinzin et al (2007) it was found that a vast majority (99%) of the Bhutanese people consider culture to be ‘very important’ and fully support its preservation. The reasons given were generally linked to national identity (90%), security (52%), income generation through tourism activities (15%) and conservation of a way of life (14%) (pg.60). Looking at the public opinion on cultural preservation, Rinzin et al (2007) also found that there is a common understanding amongst Bhutanese people that culture is very important, as it serves to identify Bhutan as a nation state (pg. 60). May be due to this kind of faith and security they have on the “Bhutanese culture” or may be due to its late exposure to the media world which hasn’t given much time for them to understand media in general, the government although has expressed many a times about the impact of media on one’s culture, at the moment seems to have not really

understood or choose to undermine the seriousness of the media and that it can be used as an important instrument for the promotion of one's own culture and that it should be given more attention than it is given. Therefore, it is to be questioned "whether Bhutan has the will to seriously engage with the realities of television and prevent it from undoing the fabric of Bhutanese life" (McDonald, pg.86)

Culture being a definite part of one's identity which Bhutan is keen in securing as an important part of GNH, The government sees the importance to promote and protect an imagined homogenous traditional culture of Bhutan as a central part of GNH but the problem arises from the lack of an operational definition of Bhutanese culture in any government document and from my interviews with the prominent law makers. Like one of my interviewee said, "We don't have a definition of our culture as such. Our culture is everything we see in Bhutan and so culture is something that cannot be narrowly defined" The specification of Bhutanese culture varies from person to person. Like the CBSC Secretary said the traditional culture of Bhutan as opposed to modern culture of Bhutan is broadly influenced by Mahayana Buddhism and it is also deeply influenced by indigenous forces and that local is not national in the sense that each places in the country has their own indigenous culture in the way they do things like food, festivals dialects etc. and the general Mahayana influence is something which sort of comes down from the central monastic body.

Bhutan shares a common worldview and sense of purpose. Cultural differences within the nation are considerable, with each ethnic group making its own distinctive contribution to our living past. There are differences in folklore, myths, legends, dance, poetry and crafts that together add richness to the nation's cultural tapestry. If the process of inventorization is to be complete, it must penetrate into the most



inaccessible valleys of our mountain Kingdom”

-Bhutan 2020 Vision document, Royal Government of Bhutan (pg. 35)

There diversity of cultures is evident in Bhutan. According to Salvada (1993), the country although small in number, has four broad but not necessarily exclusive groups: the *Ngalop*, people of Tibetan origin who migrated to Bhutan as early as the ninth century and are concentrated in western and northern districts; the *Sharchop*, an Indo-Mongoloid people who are thought to have migrated from Assam or possibly Burma during the past millennium, comprise most of the population of eastern Bhutan; several aboriginal people or indigenous tribal people living in scattered villages throughout Bhutan; and Nepalese/Lhotsampa, the remaining 28 percent of the population who dwell in the southern parts of Bhutan who came into Bhutan during the 19th and 20th centuries, to work as farmers. (pg. 273)

According to the background note on Bhutan by U.S Department of State (2010) Bhutan's early history is steeped in mythology and remains obscure. It may have been inhabited as early as 2000 B.C., but not much was known until the introduction of Tibetan Buddhism in the 9th century A.D. when turmoil in Tibet forced many monks to flee to Bhutan. In the 12th century A.D., the Drukpa Kagyupa school was established by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal<sup>15</sup> and remains the dominant form of Buddhism in Bhutan today.

But Savada (1993) also found that before the introduction of Buddhism, animistic worship, generally categorized as Bon in the Himalayas, was prevalent in Bhutan. “Bon influenced popular Buddhism, infusing it with an appreciation for omens and demons felt to influence daily life profoundly. Bon established a canon of teachings and continued to be practiced in modern Bhutan” (pg. 284). Since this finding, there has been no new research done

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<sup>15</sup> The Drukpa monk of the Drukpa Kagyu school who unified Bhutan in the mid-17th century under the hegemony of his school and gave the country its administrative system.

on the practice of Bon in Bhutan today, so it is not known if this religion is still prevalent today. In other Himalayan countries and places like Tibet, Bon has been incorporated in many Buddhist practices and artifacts. Apart from Buddhism, the state religion of Bhutan, Savada (1993) found that the minority religion of Bhutan is Hinduism, whose adherents-- those of Nepalese origin-- officially constitute 28 percent of the population (pg. 284). He goes on to say that despite Buddhism's status as the state religion, Hindus had de facto freedom of religion. "The Druk Gyalpo decreed major Hindu festivals as national holidays, and the royal family participated in them." It was found that an even smaller religious minority--about 5 percent of the population in 1989--practiced Islam (pg. 284) but again this data is not the latest therefore, it is not known if the percentage has increased or decreased today. According to the Khan (2011) estimates of Christian population in Bhutan vary from 6000 to 12,225 out of which 1000 are Catholics. Therefore, although the Northern Bhutanese culture associated with the Drukpa tradition prevails, the kingdom is multi-ethnic, multi-religion, and multi-lingual (Mathou, 2000, pg.245).

According Article 2 of the Fribourg Declaration (2007)<sup>16</sup>

- a. The term "culture" covers those values, beliefs, convictions, languages, knowledge and the arts, traditions, institutions and ways of life through which a person or a group expresses their humanity and the meanings that they give to their existence and to their development;
- b. The expression "cultural identity" is understood as the sum of all cultural references through which a person, alone or in community with others, defines or constitutes oneself, communicates and wishes to be recognised in one's dignity;

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<sup>16</sup> The launch of the Declaration was held on 7-8 May 2007 in the University of Fribourg and the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. The proposed project is sponsored by about fifty eminent figures in the field of human rights, as well as the platform of NGOs.

c. “Cultural community” connotes a group of persons who share references that constitute a common cultural identity that they intend to preserve and develop.

It is to note what Mathou (2000) stated about the national unity in Bhutan. “Building unity out of diversity has been one of the main threads of Bhutan's political history. Since its emergence as a single political entity, during the 17th century, the country had to face various periods of external aggression and internal strife. The creation of a nation state has been dependent upon the definition of a Bhutanese identity which is closely related with the dominant *Drukpa* culture” (pg. 229). The unification of Bhutan under one culture, one identity is part due to its particular geopolitical situation between two countries, China and India that will soon be the global powers by the mid of the century. In line with this, Mathou (2000) stated that “because Bhutan is located between two giant neighbours that could threaten its independence at any moment, the concept of survival has become the geopolitical prolongation of its sense of insecurity. For that reason, cultural identification and the need to preserve what can be described as the “Bhutanese exception”, both in cultural and political terms, is perceived by the regime as essential to the viability of the current system, and to the independence of the kingdom” (pg. 230). Therefore “maintaining the sovereignty of the kingdom through economic self-reliance” has become a national objective (pg. 232)

With this being said, the government policies and discourses reflecting and focusing more on the promoting of the use of Dzongkha, the western Bhutanese language which traditionally is spoken in eight out of the country's 20 districts, the promotion of *Driglam Namzha*, which is translated as 'traditional values and etiquette' which has received most attention because of the dress code and so on are all indicators to instill a unified sense of national identity and that the government is trying to construct a homogeneous singular culture in Bhutan.

Bhutan with its four major ethnic groups, 19 languages/dialects and various indigenous rituals, religion, festivals etc., is nothing but a multi cultured society.

Therefore, in its path to creating a unified national identity and promoting the idea of national culture, what are being really left aside in the discourse are the local and indigenous cultures of Bhutan. Like Homi Bhabha describes, when one tries to build an idea of a nation, one is eliminating all the cultural diversity before the idea of a national culture.

The address to nation as narration stresses the insistence of political power and cultural authority in what Derrida describes as the 'irreducible excess of the syntactic over the semantic'. What emerges as an effect of such 'incomplete signification' is a turning of boundaries and limits into the in-between spaces through which the meanings of cultural and political authority are negotiated.

Homi Bhabha, 1990, pg. 4

Mexico as Jesus Martin Barbero describe took more than 100 years to think in terms of a national culture/unity. "The conception of television is an instrumental one. It is seen as a collective educator that needs to raise 'people's consciousness' regarding the problems we face as a society' - this in turn is to lead to a 'comprehensive culture for national survival', as against elitist conceptions of culture (1993: 82). And this sense of national unity was constructed outside the state in the private sectors although it had to come at the expense of adopting other cultures. "Latin American countries wanted to be nations in order to at last define their identities, but the achievement of that identities into the modernizing discourse of hegemonic countries, for only in terms of that discourse could the efforts and achievements of nationhood be evaluated and validated" (1993: 154) This narrative of Latin American nationalism displays similar situation with Bhutan but the difference is that ever since the unification of the country in 1616 by

Zhabdrung Nawang Namgyay, Bhutan always had a sense of nationalism and the sense of national unity was constructed by the state policy.

As stated by Mothou (2000) in such a country, modernization, which is inseparable from the nation-building process, needs national integration (pg. 245) and in order to achieve that goal, which has been described by the Druk Gyalpo under the concept of "one people, one nation", unification of political decision is needed in order to create conditions for "modernising the minds of the people" and to lead them "into a post-ethnic consciousness".<sup>17</sup> (pg. 65) Enhancing the emphasis on traditional values in the education system and fostering the ancient dialogue between Buddhism and Hinduism will certainly contribute to the dynamisation of "cultural identity" which otherwise might be perceived as a purely rhetoric and restrictive concept (pg. 251)

At the same time, the notion of culture is being constructed differently by different people. The government might say its architecture, *driclam namzha*, *zorigchusum*, values, language, dress etc., but for the vulnerable sections of the population like youth, the culture of Bhutan now might include nightlife and hip-hop music. Therefore, this lack of operationalization of culture may prove to be problematic in achieving the goals of securing one's culture and identity. Like Bhabha (1990) stated, "Nationalism has to be understood, by aligning it not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which - as well as against which - it came into being" (pg. 2)

The media is a powerful instrument which can make or break one's way of thinking. In a GNH society like Bhutan, as the findings reveal the government agrees that although the Bhutanese culture ( as constructed by the state) is flourishing, there is lot of foreign influences,

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<sup>17</sup> Joseph C. Mathew, *Ethnic Conflict in Bhutan*, New Delhi: Nirala Pub.,1999, p.22. (quoted in Mathou 2000)

but government takes this as the tradeoffs of developments which they have to deal with on a continues basis and if they keep the right policies in place which the government thinks they have done through the GNH philosophy for which culture is one of the pillar, there is nothing to be overly concerned off. The next question that comes to my mind is how the Bhutanese culture is being constructed by the broadcast media.

### 3.2 Bhutanese culture as constructed in the broadcast media.

BBS TV broadcasts for five hours daily from 6 to 11 pm and it includes news and announcements and various programs and documentaries both in Dzongkha and English. Keeping in line with the government's vision of keeping the cultural heritage alive, we have seen that the BBS TV cultural slots are mostly filled with documentary type of programming where they do profiles of the *geogs*, monuments like temples and *dzongs*; *Tsechus* and *Nyes*. The programs are in both English and Dzongkha, targeting towards people recognizing or learning the Bhutanese history, the Mahayana Buddhism, traditional ways of living, language etc. As per the Bhutan 2020 document (1999), Many of the most important historical, religious and architectural sites in the nation are inaccessible and those who wish to visit them are often confronted with long and sometimes grueling journeys (pg. 37) Visually taking viewers to the religious sights, be it a monument, sacred sites or festivals, Buddhist monks explaining the religious significance or the story behind their evolution, BBS not only helped create awareness but also made these places of worship accessible to the people. Apart from these profile documentaries, BBS also showcase some programs on *Lozay*, to upgrade people's knowledge on the traditional form of debate and poetry which also helps people improve on the national

language. BBS TV has programs on traditional folktales like *Meme Haylay Haylay*<sup>18</sup> a very popular traditional story known to many Bhutanese and bringing them visually alive not just the story but also the back drop of a typical Bhutanese environment, conversation, language, music, gestures and clothing and that is why as the MIS 2008 stated most of the survey respondents were of the view that traditional Bhutanese culture is visible on BBS TV and this has largely attributed to the popularity of Bhutanese TV as compared with international channels. A nation's rich cultural traditions cannot be completed without including the existence of the diversity of its people and their ethnic culture. Therefore, what is lacking with the BBS TV programs like some of the interviewees said is the inclusion of diversity. "They are not adventurous enough to bring these stories from all round the country. They do it on the main *dzongs* and sites or rituals. The variation is lacking so the compensation would be to go and truly encourage indigenous ones which have not been explored"

Apart from these programs, BBS TV has entertainment programs which are transforming the traditional Bhutanese culture. The call in show called "*Trowa*" is where people call in and interact with the anchor and make request for songs mostly from the new movies which are then played in an MTV format. It is remarkable to see that in recent years, Bhutanese films have replaced Bollywood and Hollywood films in the cinemas. The movies are the current number one source music production in Bhutan and it is evident that the *Rigsar* music is becoming increasingly popular, overshadowing *zhungdra* and *boedra*. Although the songs played from the

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<sup>18</sup> is a Bhutanese folktale that poignantly, yet delightfully, portrays that happiness and prosperity are not necessarily one and the same. The story titled "Meme Haylay Haylay and His Turquoise" is about an old man who begins the day finding a priceless turquoise and exchanges the jewel with a horse, the horse for an ox, and the ox for a sheep, the sheep for goat, the goat for a rooster, and in the end the rooster for a song. The words of Buddhist master Shantideva summarize this story well: "The goal of every act is happiness itself, though, even with great wealth, it's rarely found". (cited from A. S. Evans (2006), (p. 137))

movies are sung in Dzongkha, the tune of the songs, the lyrics and the dance movements reminds one of an infant Bollywood. The clothes people wear in the movies especially that of actors have become popular among the people. Not just dancing around the trees and wearing skimpy clothes in a disco scene (which has never been a part of Bhutan earlier) but a new way of wearing the national dress, *Kira* or the new style a body hugging *tego* (jacket like, normally worn loose), hairstyles, and make up has been introduced which are changing cultural trends in Bhutan.

One of the BBS broadcasted show which is at the moment very popular all over the country is the reality singing show called “*Druk Gi Sungkye*” which is based on the American idol theme. Although the intention of BBS TV as stated by the TV GM is to do something similar to outside production “adapting to our own environment and because one of the mandates of as a public service broadcaster is also to help stimulate and support assistance to the production houses in the market and this show is very popular”, this does not go well for a public service broadcaster supposedly guided by the GNH philosophy to support a show which is not just a copy of a Indian or Western TV show format but a show which is commercial based and involves advertisements and like the MIS 2008 found, a show “that play on basic emotions” and this is in total contrast to the values of GNH. “This calls for creative and participatory media rather than media that just reproduces foreign programs and transmits foreign ideas.” (pg. 78)

BBS radio unlike the other private stations is more programs oriented although 60% of time slot is given to entertainment and 40% to serious programming. Cultural slot includes programs similar to that of the TV, which includes profiles on religious monuments, *namthars*, stories and jokes, folksongs like *zhungdra* and *boedra*. The English, Lhotsampa and Sharchop besides Dzongkha are the main languages used for the broadcast and their slots are dominated by songs and contain if none, very few cultural programs. The Dzongkha section is given priority



over all the three and it constitutes all the above mentioned programs. One interesting program is that of the stories and jokes where people are given an opportunity to call on air and narrate old stories and jokes which is refreshing because Bhutan is a country, where oral tradition were passed from generation to generation but today these artistic skills remained threatened because of the advent of technology.

Apart from Kuzoo Fm English station which at the moment plays only music due to the lack of production team, the Dzongkha stations covers on some aspect of culture in their programming like “*Lamsoel*”, which is based on the traditional way of living. Similar to this program, on they have a program called “*lozey rigtsel*” which is a traditional way of light debate where opponents recite poems and old sayings to one another. According to them this is done with a purpose to keep the tradition alive in this modern world. This program is done mostly by accumulating all old poems and stories from the elders around the country. They also have a program on different sacred religious and holy places around the country like the BBS. They even have a special program called “*Dangphu Dingphu*” where the Host narrates old and traditional popular stories to kinder garden students. Kuzoo Fm tries to be different by engaging groups of people from all parts of the country and trying to build a sense of community among the listeners. Like one of the interviewees also stated “the unpredictable audience participations in songs from all around the country is quite interesting.” They give a platform for people from all corners of the country to participate not only in their shows but also give them opportunity to gather together during lunch parties organized by Kuzoo, where the people meet and interact with one another. “We like to call it the Kuzoo family” stated both the English and the Dzongkha Coordinators of Kuzoo Fm. “The Kuzoo radio family is now well entrenched and people who connect via radio feel a strong sense of community” stated the MIS 2008.

Language is given a paramount importance by the government because it believes that language is the most significant aspects of one's culture. Therefore the use of the national language, Dzongkha as per the government is very important for the country and it encourages and prefers the speaking of Dzongkha in any medium. The TV and the radio stations along with the movie industry have proved to be good medium in enhancing the Dzongkha language. New words invented by the Dzongkha Development Commission for certain aspects of technology, like telephone, vehicle, computer among others (it was nonexistent earlier) which has now become part of the Bhutanese daily lives has been inculcated in the daily use of conversation in Dzongkha by these mediums. As per Chopel (2010) the first linguistic survey of Bhutan (2004)<sup>19</sup> identified nineteen different languages spoken in Bhutan and the survey. Later Chopel (2010) conducted a new survey<sup>20</sup> to look at the diversity of languages in Bhutan and his data revealed that more respondents speak Sharchop followed by Dzongkha (pg. 2) Chopel (2010) in his survey showed that 37.3% of the population spoke Sharchop as their mother tongue, Dzongkha was spoken by 24.6%, Khenkha was spoken by 9.6%, Lhotshamkha by 8.6 %, Cho-ca-nga-ca-kha (Kurichu valley) 7.7 %, Bumtapkha 4.2%, Dzalakha 2.5 % Kurtop 1.9%, Lhokpu 1.4%, Monpakha 1.0 % Nyenkha (Henkha or Mangdebikha) 0.7 %, Dakpakha 0.2 %, B'okha (Tibetan) 0.2%, Chalikhka 0.1 %, and Adabashi was spoken as their mother tongue by 0.1%. Out of the nineteen languages, keeping aside English, the TV broadcasts only in Dzongkha, the BBS radio broadcast in three languages and the private stations broadcasts in only one. During the MIS 2008 survey, several people in places like Zhemgang and Bumthang (central part of Bhutan) and

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<sup>19</sup> Driem, George Van (2004). "Bhutan's Endangered Languages Documentation Programme under the Dzongkha Development Authority

<sup>20</sup> Since the new survey did not ask the language questions in each and every village in Bhutan, not all the languages could be covered but he claims that the languages that are shown in the table are representative of the country as a whole since the data covers all the twenty dzongkhags in Bhutan.

the East called for more languages to be used in the media. It also quoted some people saying “we should have language diversity and be proud of it” (pg. 53). This survey demonstrates that there are many ethnic groups, indigenous cultures and languages existing in Bhutan apart from the dominant culture and people. This indicates that the variation of languages, cultures and people in the broadcast media is missing and for the true culture to be visible or heard, it needs to include the diversity of language and the ethnic and indigenous people in the country.

Today it is evident that the media is shaping Bhutanese culture. Apart from reinforcing the national culture as constructed by the state, is also constructing a new culture in Bhutan. Today with the FM stations gaining popularity among the people, *Dzonglish* (the use of English and Dzongkha mixed) as the MIS 2008 stated “is beginning to get people’s attention and many feel it is contrary to the Government’s policy to promote *Dzongkha*” (pg. 52) This survey also stated that the use of *Dzonglish* (Dzongkha and English mixed) on radio and in music is an indication of the mash-up culture of the 21st century.

The Radio has not only influenced a new pattern of speech but “have brought about a whole new style of entertainment including the emergence of the Radio Jockey with a fast talking style aping western VJs which has both attracted and repelled listeners but is popular among students and youth” (MIS 2008, pg. 54) The Radio is connecting people from across the country with the call in service they provide and this has made the society more “informal and casual, open and approachable” (54).

The FM Radio is popularizing *rigsar* and Western music like rap and hip-hop. As found during the MIS 2008 study, a significant development since 2003 is that Hindi music has been replaced by *rigsar* in the public sphere including music played in taxis and buses. Comparing to

a time when the streets were blared with Bollywood music, it is a good transformation to see that it has now been replaced by Dzongkha music but however the popularity of the *Rigsar* music is overshadowing the classical *zhungdra* and *boedra*.

TV is accelerating the adoption of new ideas and is extending into rural areas. In a society not used to open dissent or critique, the new reality singing show on BBS have created a new culture of open critique. “it is quite a shock to see the judges openly review and even ‘insult’ the contestant’s singing skills, and for the hosts to play to the contestants’ and viewers’ emotions by dramatizing the announcements of results” (pg. 54). Programs like movies and MTV’s shown on BBS TV, the local channel broadcasted by the cable operators, in the absence of content, airing repeatedly dances from school concerts and music TV clips from films have all contributed in the building a new culture by showcasing dance movements which are not typical Bhutanese but a blended choreography of western and Bollywood dances. The tunes of the music have had a tremendous change comparing to the olden songs. Although the national dresses are being worn in most of these programs, we can still see tinges of modern creation in the way it is now worn and the styling which goes with it. TV has also contributed in a creating a new lifestyle. Like the MIS 2008 stated, “A decade after the formal introduction of TV in the country, Bhutanese people have adjusted their lifestyles around the TV. Where available, TV is the predominant media for both news and announcements. The most visible trend in the last five years is the demand for entertainment, and TV, provides that. People are “hungry for entertainment” particularly in the districts” (pg. 58). This construction of a new culture in Bhutan reminds me of what Eric Hobsbawm said about the invented traditions.

Hobsbawm (1993) stated that:

“The term ‘invented tradition’ is used in a broad, but not imprecise sense. It includes both ‘traditions’ actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and data able period-a matter of few years perhaps-and establishing themselves with rapidity”  
(pg. 1)

Tradition as Hobsbbawm states can change or be invented and even the old traditions are invented or reconstructed. The broadcast media constructing a new culture in Bhutan which is now slowly adding or changing the formally constructed national culture of Bhutan is a great example of an invented tradition. A simple example would be the way the national dress for the women, have been worn in the last 10 years. The style of wearing the *kira* and the *tego* has changed so many times in the last 10 years and although the essence remains the same, different ways of wearing it has been invented which is now accepted as ways of wearing the outfit.

#### **Section 4: The invasion of foreign culture in the last Shangri-La**

The recent arrival of commercial television in Bhutan represents more than the introduction of a merely benign technology. Global television brings with it a deeper process, one that systematically cultivates social isolation and the dissolution of all contrary cultural priorities

Dr. Ross McDonald (pg. 69 2004)

After the introduction of cable TV in 1999, it is an accepted fact that TV has affected the lives of the Bhutanese people and it is also evident that it has impacted the Bhutanese lifestyles and societies; and as stated by the MIS 2008 “perhaps challenging the tenets of GNH”. Bhutan today with 50 plus foreign channel has access to ever kind of content it possible want and there is

no restrictions to it by the government. There has been a tremendous change in the lifestyles of the people after the introduction of TV twelve years ago. In the villages for instant, we can see a lot of changes. The old mud stove has been mostly replaced by modern stoves, gas and electric cookers. Mobiles phones are now used as a necessity even among the villagers. In the urban Bhutanese houses, families who used to gather around the floor to have their meal have been replaced by the western style of sitting around the dining table. The urban people are now becoming more “brand” conscious and people have started recognizing and buying the different cosmetic or clothing brands advertised on television. Young people are the target of media companies and advertisers in most countries. According to Mathou (2000) both government sources and social scientists have noted the impacts of modernization, especially on Bhutanese youth. Drug use and crime are on the rise, familial cohesion is declining, and the pursuit of material prosperity is increasing. It has already been establish by the MIS 2008 that Bhutanese youth are adopting an urban, fashionable lifestyle especially inspired by the Korean culture. Youth sport ‘Korean hairstyles’ inspired by Korean serials, movies and TV. The influence does not just stop here, young viewers are now exposed to violence in the video and TV that they forms gangs and groups and as the MIS 2008 stated that the youth groups that hang out in the capital, for example, are aping a new youth culture that they see in the media. “This is significant in a society that has been largely gentle and has generally deferred to authority” (pg. 59)

As stated by Rinchen (2006), 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 programs from afar. Bhutanese TV at the moment lack good content and is insignificant in terms of content as compared to the 50 plus channels coming into Bhutan. Keeping aside the local channels which cannot be considered a broadcaster, the BBS TV

has very minimal if none programming for children and youth. Therefore Bhutanese children, the most vulnerable section of the population are more dependent on global TV. Like McDonald stated “reflected in the light of televisions excitements, traditional ways can come to seem comparatively dull and constraining. For Bhutan, where the transmission of cultural understanding entails cultivating a slow and subtle appreciation of life, there is a distinct risk that all things traditional will be deemed boring, out of date and irrelevant by a new generation drawn into the contrary attractions of speed, change and easy sensation.” Rinchen (2006) also stated that since popular forms of media in Bhutan are generally dominated by international programs, 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 (pg. 221). With the effect of foreign television on the children and youth of Bhutan, the vision envisioned by the government in the document Bhutan 2020 to have the country’s rich traditions, values, ideals and beliefs ideally live on in the minds of Bhutanese youths - referred to appropriately in the vision as cultural custodians - and become a positive force and source of inspiration for them can seem to backfire. Therefore, a lot of innovation and care need to be taken by the government and the broadcast media in terms of its program content.

It is apparent that there are some channels which provide good educational information to the viewer especially the news channels although it is becoming quite evident that some of these channels are becoming more commercially inclined. The country had 50 plus foreign channels which are neither educational nor helpful towards enhancing the government’s policy of GNH.

In fact they are in no way relatable to a society such as that of Bhutan and are entirely contrast to the principles of GNH. The government at the moment does not have a complete agreement on how to run BBS let alone have rules on the other cables channels coming into Bhutan. Without laws against the channels pouring into Bhutan, no matter what the government does to preserve its culture, outside influence are evident. The government has started to come up with regulation for the local media but as one of the interviewee stated, “out of 50 channels or so, if the government can influence only our media, then basically Bhutan is open to outside influence.” Although some changes are good changes, the negative impact of the TV is something which a country has to be concerned about and the effects of commercial television should not be underestimated. In the words of McDonald (2004) “If Bhutan is to judiciously negotiate a happy balance of tradition and modernity, policy makers must become much more aware of the dramatic cultural impacts this medium seeks” (pg. 69).

Although having said that, we must understand that culture is not something static or monolithic. It is always in the process of becoming and there are many contradictions as part of this cultural formation. Comparing to 10 years ago, Bhutan has changed tremendously in terms of people’s lifestyles, language like Rinchen (2006) puts it “Media consumers have gained access to various languages and dialects, and they get to be multilingual”, food and eating habits, physical image, costumes etc. Borrowing the words from Schlesinger and Morris (1997), this perspective recognizes that 'hybridization' in some sense exists. According to Martin-Barbero, 'the culture industry, by producing new hybrids resulting from the erasing of boundaries between high culture and popular culture, traditional and modern, and domestic and foreign is reorganizing collective identities and forms of symbolic differentiation' (1993a: 26).



Reshaping of cultural identity by processes of communication is increasingly discussed around the world. For example as Schlesinger and Morris (1997) puts it, one aspect of the resistance of Latin American politicians and intellectuals to dependency and cultural imperialism was the advocacy of national communication policies designed to counter U.S. cultural dominance. “National communication policy arguments, which were particularly prominent in the 1970s, have been based on two key assumptions: first, that rational policy-making in the cultural domain is possible; and second, that domestic or regional cultural production will have an integrating effect on the societies that consume it” (pg. 5-17) In the case of Bhutan it has been the national policy of preservation of culture and we have seen various attempts to apply this policy. Schlesinger and Morris further elaborates that although exponents of this perspective may still be found, these arguments have become less fashionable - and less persuasive - as the role of the national state and its capacity to exercise power in the context of a global economy, transnational trading blocs, and political alliance structures has been reappraised. “Analyses of communication policy in Latin America, as in Europe, have been increasingly influenced by the transformative context of *transnationalisation* or globalization” (5-17). It is not to be forgotten that Broadcast media is a carrier of globalization and Jesus Martin Barbero says that 'the culture industry, by producing new hybrids resulting from the erasing of boundaries between high culture and popular culture, traditional and modern, and domestic and foreign is reorganizing collective identities and forms of symbolic differentiation' (1993a: 26). As Ezechieli (2003) states, “the future for Bhutan is probably even more demanding than the past. Changes in the next generations will likely be far greater than those in the previous. The goal to build a future of peace, prosperity, and happiness and reach a sustainable balance between society, nature, and economy, while preserving the traditional culture and values and celebrating diversity is challenging” (pg. 96)

Although today the government thinks that the sense of identity and the sense of culture are very strong in Bhutan, what it must understand is that culture evolves and therefore it must make accommodation for it. The more restrictive one might act, sometimes it might back fire. It cannot be denied that the world is a melting pot and Bhutan being a small country amongst giant is no exception to it. The minute it opens, it also needs to evolve and to change and sometimes change is not always bad. Like one the interviewee said “understanding and appreciating our culture doesn’t mean that we should be mired in the past” Adherents of an interventionist approach must, it seems, attempt to negotiate with new realities and see what then remains of a rationalistic approach to policy analysis.

According to Schlesinger and Morris (1997) “*transnationalisation*” is seen as dislocating rather than as homogenizing cultures, and in this context it is hard to see how an overarching collective identity can be imposed at the national level by means of public policy measures undertaken by the state. The Bhutanese state must also therefore understand that hybridity is relocated in the realm of necessity rather than that of freedom and as Barbero (1993) stated '[u]nderstanding the process of mass communication implies recognizing the rearticulations of symbolic boundaries and how these new boundaries confirm the value and power of collective identities' (pg. 26)

## CONCLUSION

One of the objectives for this thesis was to analyze the current media policies in Bhutan especially in relation to television and radio and see whether the Bhutanese Media Model falls under any of the media models or not. As Wangchuk (2006) stated, Media, does not have a universal standard that can be applied in every country. It varies from country to country and from region to region. “On one hand there is the need for the media to reflect the Bhutanese culture and society. On the other, the influence of the media in a “new” Bhutan is so great that one cannot overlook the need to understand the media itself (pg. 294). It has been found that the Country at present do not have any media model or a media policy in place and this study exemplifies that Bhutan is a country which already showed its difference in adopting an overall development policy of GNH as opposed to GDP, the international development policy and with the highest law of the country validating it, a unique media model based on the principles of GNH is found to be applicable but the boldness of the step is yet to be seen in this effect although the government is already in talks with the media people on adopting a GNH based media model. What is required here is that in a democracy it is indeed challenging to impose certain thoughts but the majority is not necessarily always right. Of course there is a need for the policy makers themselves to understand the core of GNH before developing such a policy and it has to make the media understand too and “eventually there is the need to develop a strong sense of local identity of the media to suit local needs” (Wangchuk, 2006). There can be many consultations but if a decision is good and is for the betterment of a larger society, one must have the moral courage to push and implement such policy and not wait till it is late. This is not an

option anymore as it is already enshrined in the constitution of Bhutan, so that should drive the policy.

Chua (2008) states, “using the pursuit of Gross National Happiness as the guiding principle of Bhutan’s development, the government has dedicated itself to protecting the cultural and spiritual aspects of the country’s well-being” (pg. 30) but what has been found is that the government in its path to creating a unified national identity and promoting the idea of national culture or nationalism, is eliminating the local and indigenous cultures of Bhutan in its discourse before the idea of a national culture/identity. Therefore, it is not very consoling to the cultural right as perceived by the Cultural right of the Fribourg Declaration of 2007. “Because solidarity has always been strong in local communities, social categorization as applied in the West, was not relevant to describe the traditional rural Bhutanese society” (Mothou, 2000) but the government needs to understand that that the situation in Bhutan is changing with modernization.

Modernization, which is inseparable from the nation-building process, needs not just one culture but the national integration of all the dynamic cultures prevalent in the country “otherwise it might be perceived as a purely rhetoric and restrictive concept” (Mothou, 2000) Therefore it has to understand that with its four major ethnic groups, 16 languages/dialects and various indigenous rituals, religion, festivals etc., Bhutan is nothing but a multi cultured society and as rightly put by Wangchuk (2006) there is the need to develop a Bhutanese media model-- considering the nation’s history, culture, ethnic composition, level of human development, and the role the Bhutanese media has played thus far” (pg. 249) He even goes on to say that “under such a scenario, decision makers, media executives, and professionals should have a better understanding of national policies and local priorities” (pg. 249). “Apart from decisive institutional reforms which have already been engaged, the implication of the whole society is

needed. Because promoting is better than preserving, Bhutan will probably have to reassess the way "national culture" is perceived by young generation and non-Buddhist communities" (Mathou, 2000) Therefore, the sooner the government develops a media model the better it will be for the changing nation. It is to be noted that as Bhutan faces the geopolitical pressures from China and India, it becomes a challenge for Bhutan to balance the national unity and the sovereignty of the Country with the cultural rights of the minority. The other objective of this paper was to find out if the program content of the TV and radio in Bhutan was in line with the national philosophy of GNH especially the cultural preservation. As Pek (2008) points out, there has been dramatic change in the five years since MIS 2003 when there was one newspaper, one radio station, and one television station. "There will be even more dramatic change in the next five years. The numbers of newspapers, radio stations, and television channels may multiply" (pg.88) The government must realize that its perception of having more local TV or radio stations to combat foreign inflow of program contents is far from what is accepted in a GNH society. GNH policy doesn't mean that more is best. What it must realize is that the local broadcasters both national and private can be an effective tool in enhancing the Bhutanese way of life and if let loose it also has the tendency to become a medium like the rest of the media outside which is totally driven by commercialism. Therefore, there is a need for the government to understand these risks and work on policies with much thinking. It is also found that the program content of the broadcast media is not very much in line with the government's concept of GNH. Although some of the broadcast media, in some way are successfully reflecting the constructed national culture in its programming, what it lacks is the projection of diversity in terms of its programming such as the inclusion of ethnic groups, local and indigenous cultures, languages, rituals, festivals etc. This variation is lacking in the TV and Radio programming, so

like Dasho Karma Ura said “the compensation would be to go and truly encourage indigenous ones which have not been explored in order for the media to show some creativity instead of being monotonous.”

The study also found that while the “Bhutanese media were a source of education and information in the past, they are now critical players in the political process of an emerging democracy and in bringing about a new culture” (MIS, 2008). Like Pek (2008) stated “The media are not just watchdogs of society, they are changing society itself. Media are constructing new realities and values, and new culture.” The TV and radio are in the words of Hobsbawm (1993) inventing new traditions showcasing new and modern ways of living, dressing, conversations etc. and as seen are also constructing some practices discursively as old traditions. The government must give serious thought to the quality of the broadcast program content and it must give more assistance and support without bias to both the national and private stations in producing and enhancing good Bhutanese content. As Pek (2008) stated “when we accept this growing responsibility of the media we must accept that there is much to be done to develop the Bhutanese media in terms of professionalism and capacity”

One of the main purposes of this paper was to find out the measures taken by the government in balancing the content flow from outside and the preservation of homogenized national culture of Bhutan. This study found that ever since television was introduced in Bhutan in June 1999, there were many dramatic changes in the country:

“Advertising, movies, soap operas, national and international news, soccer, quiz shows, the Wrestling Channel, Music Television (MTV) have flooded the lives of the Bhutanese”

(Rapten, 2001)

It has also been found that the mass media particularly the cable television is “increasingly becoming powerful instruments for the penetration of global culture and the values of a global market into Bhutan which presents one of the greatest challenges to Bhutan as it transitions from a traditional society into the age of information and technology” (Rapten, 2001). While the government’s aim to develop this medium is to “reap the benefits of mass media, its excessive influence threatens to undermine indigenous culture and value-system of our country” (pg. 173), this contradicts one of the pillars of GNH that is to promote and preserve the cultural values of the country. “The contradictions and ironies that exist within the GNH concept is probably the most challenging of issues facing the government of Bhutan.” (Chua, 2008) The country’s adoption of 50 plus foreign channels adds pressure on the government. On the other hand, this direction is not entirely aligned with GNH principles because these channels bring with it “attention grabbing power to shape attitudes detrimental to Buddhist accomplishment” (McDonald, 2004). One of the areas where the Royal Government of Bhutan has been successful in maintaining a middle path strategy is with the tourism policy. Because of the adverse impacts it had on the culture and environment of neighboring countries like Nepal, the government adopted a policy of "Low Volume and High Value"<sup>21</sup> tourism, on the principle of sustainability, meaning that tourism must be environmentally and ecologically friendly, socially and culturally acceptable and economically viable. With an example like this Chua (2008) stated that “Bhutan has shown smart investment strategies, particularly in the area of direct foreign investment and private sector development, such that it has been able to sustain a steady rate of economic development without compromising too much on its cultural and environmental principles” (pg.

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<sup>21</sup> As cited in <http://advbhutan.com>

30) but in the case of broadcasting it is yet to come up with remedies. The mass media already plays a primary role in the development of the country but, as this research underlines, the new challenges will require the rapid strategy and implementation of ground-breaking policies. It also requires operationalizing GNH into specific media policies and serious implementation. Most of all, the direction of the policies should probably represent an even more radical departure from current media policies and approaches. For this reason, further research is necessary in order to discover, and follow, those new directions.

Like McDonald (2004) stated, GNH is a dream that can only thrive to the extent that the Buddhist culture that informs it continues itself to thrive but as Neil Postman puts it:

When a population becomes distracted by trivia, when cultural life is redefined as a perpetual round of entertainments, when serious public conversation becomes a form of baby-talk, when, in short, people become an audience, then a nation finds itself at risk; culture-death is a real possibility. (1985: p.155).

Postman's quote echoes what Salvador Novo (footnote) warned in 1950 about the Mexican Television after the country adopted a commercial model of the American television industry instead of the public television system of the United Kingdom. "Later Novo<sup>22</sup> would characterize Mexican radio as "spiritual tequila" and television as the "monstrous daughter of the hidden intercourse between radio and cinema" (Barrera, 2004). Without proper strategies to combat commercial television, "ancient beliefs and behaviors, as well as the GNH approach may be undermined by the spread of a more self-centered and materialistic mentality (Schwarz,

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<sup>22</sup> Salvador Novo was the chair of the Television Committee of the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (National Fine Arts Institute) which was formed in 1950, which filed a report criticizing the commercial model of the American television industry, favoring instead the public television system of the United Kingdom. The Television Committee had been formed at the request of President Aleman.



1990). Pek and Dorji (2005) stated that Gross National Happiness, the inspiration for change in Bhutan, requires that the Kingdom draws on the global experience to adopt what is good and relevant” but like in the rest of the world, with commercial television freely flowing into Bhutan, globalization and global market concepts are now rapidly penetrating the lives of the Bhutanese people. Therefore as McDonald (2006) states “the Bhutanese government like those in all nations will need to institute and apply a rigorous code to govern media content and use.” The Bhutanese government realizes that in order to have modernization and cultural preservation to prevail, one must need to institute a middle path strategy to bring about the balance. But as McDonald (2006) states, to balance the old and the new in constructive ways is the challenge set before government in Bhutan.

“It involves a walk along a razors edge of fine balance. The market and the media will inevitably continue to enter Bhutan and to fertilize its existing culture. In finding the middle way though, certain clarity is required within which considerate and balanced decisions can be made. Commercial media pulls consciousness so radically and effectively into itself that it leads us far from a middle way and beyond the balancing pull of Buddhist aspiration.”

McDonald, (2006) pg. 205

McDonald (2004) goes on to say that if Bhutan is to forge a truly unique middle way between modernity and tradition, it must more consciously articulate the principles inherent in its national policy of facilitating Gross National Happiness (pg.84). Although the government is on its way to develop a media model in Bhutan, the fact that in the dominance of modernization today, Bhutan still does not have a media model, shows the country vulnerability towards the

forces of cultural invasion. Therefore, the government needs to indulge in research, bring about measures and implement those measures as soon as possible. The broadcast media especially cable television also provides a useful and urgent case study in how a philosophy grounded in GNH might be operationalized

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Wangchuk, K. Managing Director, Radio Valley, August 6, 2011



## GLOSSARY

<i>Ashi:</i>	Queen
<i>Boedra:</i>	Bhutanese Traditional Songs (Tunes Derived From Tibet)
<i>Choe:</i>	You
<i>Dangphu Dingphu:</i>	Similar to “Long ago” or “once upon a time” and used while telling a story.
<i>Dasho:</i>	Literally “the best”/ title of senior officials who have been conferred the red scarf by the King.
<i>Dawa:</i>	Moon
<i>Dhu Ngyel:</i>	Sufferings
<i>Driglam Namzha:</i>	Traditional etiquette
<i>Dratshang Lhentshog:</i>	Council of ecclesiastic affairs
<i>Drukpa:</i>	Followers of the religious school of the Drukpa Kagyu Sect of Buddhism/ People of Bhutan
<i>Druk Gyalpo:</i>	The King of Bhutan
<i>Druk Gi Sungke:</i>	Voice of Bhutan
<i>Drukyul:</i>	Literally "Land of the Dragon", name of Bhutan in Bhutanese
<i>Dungtsho:</i>	Doctor
<i>Dzong:</i>	Fort/monastery
<i>Dzongkha:</i>	The national language of Bhutan
<i>Dzongkhag:</i>	District (There are 20 districts in Bhutan)
<i>Gakid:</i>	Literally "happiness and peace"
<i>Gaki Pelzom:</i>	Gross National Happiness
<i>Gelyong Keyeg:</i>	National Language

<i>Geog:</i>	Administrative unit under a district. Block
<i>Gho:</i>	A robe like dress worn as the national dress by Men in Bhutan
<i>Goendeys:</i>	A monastic community
<i>Gomkora:</i>	Holy Shrine in Trashigang, East of Bhutan
<i>Gup:</i>	Elected leader of a block
<i>Hingi:</i>	Heart
<i>Jalam:</i>	Sometimes/ Once in a While
<i>Jangchub Shing:</i>	Banyan Tree
<i>Kagy:</i>	One of the four main sects of Mahayana Buddhism.
<i>Kira:</i>	The national Dress for women in Bhutan
<i>Kuensel:</i>	Literally ‘ <i>Kuen</i> ’ means All, ‘ <i>Sel</i> ’ means Clear. The Name of the first Newspaper of Bhutan
<i>Kuzoo:</i>	Literally, honorific form for “body”
<i>Lamsoel:</i>	Bhutanese Culture and Tradition
<i>Lhakhangs:</i>	Temple
<i>Lhotshampa:</i>	Bhutanese of Nepali origin/the language they speak
<i>Lozey rigtsel):</i>	Ballad/Poetic sayings (expertise)
<i>Meme:</i>	Grandfather/elderly man
<i>Metho:</i>	Flower
<i>Namthars:</i>	Autobiography of great religious (Buddhist) personalities
<i>Nazhoen:</i>	Youth
<i>Ngalop:</i>	People of Western Part of Bhutan
<i>Nima:</i>	Day
<i>Nyes:</i>	Sacred Buddhist pilgrimage site.

<i>Peljor Gongphel:</i>	Economic development
<i>Rigsar:</i>	Contemporary Bhutanese Songs derived from international music.
<i>Sangtaam:</i>	Secret story/words
<i>Sem:</i>	Mind/Thoughts
<i>Sharchop:</i>	People living in the east of Bhutan/ the language spoken by them
<i>Sungchop Magmi:</i>	Security Forces
<i>Ten-sum:</i>	Three types of sacred treasures comprising of body (images), Speech (scriptures) and Mind (stupas).
<i>Thimphu:</i>	The capital city of Bhutan situated in the Western part of Bhutan
<i>Thrimzhung Layrim:</i>	Judicial programme
<i>Trowa:</i>	Entertainment
<i>Tsa-Wa-Sum:</i>	The King, Country and People
<i>Tshechus:</i>	Religious festivals in Bhutan (usually with Mask Dances)
<i>Vajrayana:</i>	Tantric Buddhism
<i>Zhitsa:</i>	Basic Roots
<i>Zhungdra:</i>	Bhutanese classical/traditional Songs.

## Appendix A

### **Interview with Kinley Dorji, Secretary, Ministry of Information and Communication:**

1. What is the current media model used or referred in Bhutan and which countries were the most influential while developing one?
2. What are the challenges faced by the government in producing its own model?
3. GNH is said to be referred as the guiding principle of development in the country, how does the government conceptualize GNH in broadcast media services? Examples?
4. What have been the challenges faced?
5. What measures has the Ministry take so far to ensure that the Bhutanese culture be promoted in the local TV and Radio programming?
6. What are the current challenges faced?
7. What kind of support does the government provide to the local broadcasters (Private as well as public service broadcasters) in order to enhance Bhutanese content?
8. Bhutan is bombarded with 45 plus foreign channels which bring in global culture and values into the country and Bhutan have only one local TV channel to compete with the huge inflow of foreign channels. What are the measures taken by the Ministry in order to stop excessive inflow of outside programs/content and what are the challenges faced in implementing those measures?
9. According to you, currently what percent of the content on BBS TV is Bhutanese? And how much of it promotes our culture?
10. With broadcast media especially TV being powerful medium in enhancing globalization, to what extend is the cultural preservation reflected in the broadcast policy of Bhutan?

11. What are the strategies currently used by the Ministry in integrating GNH in the media policy making and media program development of the broadcast media?
12. What are the challenges faced by the ministry in making the private radio broadcasters adhere to enhancing Bhutanese content or promoting Bhutanese content?
13. So far, how has the Ministry measured the effectiveness of the implementation of GNH in broadcast media policy and broadcast media program?
14. What has been or are the techniques used to measure the effectiveness of implementing GNH in the Broadcast policy or the broadcast media programs?

**Answers:**

In Terms of Media systems and media models around the world, We don't want to adopt any of these systems but we have to be aware of what is happening around, what are the trends, what are the policies in the global media to recognize what is good and what is not so good. This is not just media but the Bhutan's over all policy to adapt best practices and to avoid the pitfalls that many other media might be getting into. So that is the approach. Bhutan is a GNH country or we claim to be a GNH society. GNH is important as a guideline, as a goal, as an inspiration, as everything. Now having excepted that, we have to define what GNH is. One of the problems our media has had, our media people has been too skeptical of GNH because they misunderstood the whole concept of GNH. Our media people thought that media has to report or write about GNH or the four pillars of GNH or the nine domains and they were skeptical of that but what we are saying now or the policy which we will be drafting , the whole essence of the policy is not to say that media has to write about GNH. We accept that Bhutan is a GNH society and there for the real question is, what is the responsibility of the media in the society? Forget the word GNH, accept the society as GNH. You know the values of the society, keeping the balance between spirituality, culture, economic development, environment, the four pillars, 9 domain, everything. These are the indicator or the priorities that the Bhutanese society has decided on as a GNH society. So what is the role of the media in these? So it is important that the media (forget the term GNH if they want to) but to reflect these values. In short, this is what we are saying because

media has such an influence; we have to talk about all media. Policy for broadcast cannot be different from print or from other media. It actually includes even films, music, publications, everything. All these media must be aware that we have the impact on society and that they are changing society, therefore they have to have the right values themselves. Media must understand those values, so that people will understand them because what we are saying is the overall goal or overall vision of the Bhutanese media must be to create, what we call this “shared consciousness” in society. Shared consciousness means shared values, that people in the north, south, east, west, centers, everywhere in the country must have those values or understand the same values and how do they do that? Through the media because media builds values because we have people watching the same TV programs, reading the same newspapers etc. So they develop this and that’s the only way the entire population develops the shared consciousness through the media. Therefore it is important for the media to be conscious about GNH, not to say write about GNH but to understand those values, the important values. For example, people misunderstood when we say shared values, they understand it as “oh that mean everyone must speak the same language” but it’s not. Shared values mean that Bhutan has four languages and 19 dialects. But everybody has that understanding. So this then becomes the responsibility of the media. So this is the policy in short. Then how do we apply directly to the media. This is where we are working on where we have to be more specific. GNH is an antidote to GNP; in fact it’s a pun on GNP. GNH says don’t go for consumerism. GDP stands for materialism, which is consumerism. This is very important message for the media because the global media round the world today is becoming very consumerist, especially advertising, it’s all promoting consumerism and in our context, in GNH context, promoting consumerism is promoting greed. So you don’t do that. So this is what GNH does or should be doing to the media, reminding media of its values. This is one direct example. Importance of culture is pretty straight forward. The bottom line is the thinking should be that because Bhutan is trying to be different from the rest of the world as a society, trying to have these higher goals, Bhutanese media must be also different. In the sense, Bhutanese media must be relevant to Bhutanese society. If we want to develop a society that is not materialistic, media must be conscious of that and therefore not promote consumerism and not promote sensationalism and the global media is being largely entertainment especially broadcast which is becoming largely an entertainment industry rather

than an information and education industry and that's why the Bhutanese media has to try to be different.

When you say Bhutanese broadcast media has to try to be different, is it going to be there in the policy?

Yes, it's a little bit complex in the sense that the big question is if you really look at good journalism around the world, quality journalism, that's pretty much GNH because the real good quality journalism teaches ethics, quote of conduct, good quality reporting, accurate reporting, that's all very much GNH. While many of the countries and media industries have these understanding and have these quotes but what is happening is its completely gone because its completely overwhelmed by entertainment and materialism and also overwhelmed by even proprietors because that's what owners want to do. Owners are the corporations. They are driven by advertising. So these are what GNH should be teaching us not to do. That's why we want to bring in advertising policy as a guideline to this. We don't have these in the policy yet. We are drafting the advertising policy and the overall media policy along these lines. We have a short vision which is online but generally we are drafting the policies but we have this thinking already. We are planning to have the policies ready by the end of this year.

Are you saying that Bhutanese model will be different from the rest of the world and be unique?

Yes...we must make it different. Bhutan is a small country that dares to be different in an overall development policy. We are saying that the rest of the world measuring development through GDP, using GDP as a measure, we are using GNH. We are already different in that sense, so the media must fit into this society. Bhutanese media must be relevant to Bhutanese society. So what we are seeing now is a young media industry, meaning young media professionals who are new, not trained, not matured and who have not thought it out and one of the things that require one to do is think and understand. Lot of people are doing just as a job but journalism should not be just a job. Because of its importance, Journalism should be a responsibility. Now we talk about broadcast, there is this whole thinking policy and concept of public service broadcasting. PSB is close to GNH, PSB is not very commercial, not sensational, not just entertainment. It is good journalism. It keeps in mind serving the people. So that is a good model to start with and of

course GNH might add some additional areas or issues or values, that the media needs to be conscious of.

Our media is not in line with the concept of GNH. Our media is driven more or less by globalization. Our media is coping what everyone else is doing and that's not GNH and in fact that's why we are emphasizing GNH policy because our media must not be driven by that. International media or global media, we have no control over. As a small vulnerable society, we have no control over the global media. So what should the answer be? We cannot block global media. So the only answer to globalization is "Glocalization", meaning having your own media content, balancing, not being completely overwhelmed and driven by foreign media. So this is important but this is also not easy especially in broadcast media and all because they are expensive.

BBS TV is trying to be serious TV, but BBS TV is not as professional as it can be because of the lack of professionals but it is a serious station and not a sensationalist station. Although it's also under pressure, it does some things that are not GNH but over all they are trying to be. They even had a conference on public service broadcasting to understand the concepts of PSB. So BBS is trying to be a GNH station and the government is funding GNH because of that. To do that and if it is driven by advertisements, then it becomes sensational and entertainment.

It is the responsibility of the government and the responsibility of the ministry to implement. It is the responsibility of the Ministry to develop the media, develop professionalism in the media and not control. So invest heavily into infrastructure first of all like satellite infrastructure, optic fiber etc., that is needed for the media. The policies, regulations and laws are being developed by the government including the constitution. So we are creating the environment for professional media. When we say regulation, it doesn't mean to control. Our law provides freedom of expression. So that's what is needed as a regulatory environment. The freedom, right to information...so these are all being drafted by the government and enacting all these. Then comes education, which is critical. We are starting the journalism course in Kanglung, promoting practical institutions and all these so that the private sectors can also help train journalists. We are funding a lot of these. We bring trainers into Bhutan to train Bhutanese journalists. And we have been holding conferences to help journalist to think and understand what is GNH and what should our role be and make every journalist feel a sense of responsibility.



GNH itself is the middle path. Once the constitution gives the freedom of expression to the citizens, we don't need to do more. What we need to do is to help interpret freedom. Freedom does not mean we can do anything we want. Freedom has to come with responsibility. Do you have the freedom to lie, to defame somebody, no, so that's why even though the high law gives the freedom, we have to make sure that all the rules are in place to protect the freedom and to assign that responsibility to the freedom. Otherwise there will be chaos. And the constitution is based on GNH. When we talk about the media conveying GNH and being a GNH media, it's very difficult to in a way define what they should be doing but it's easier in fact to be defining what they should not be doing. They should not be looking or treating citizens as consumers. GNH warns you against GDP. So we are saying that the media must make some commitment to society because GNH requires that every citizen makes good decisions. And who or what makes good decisions...is the media through the right information and education.

Stopping and blocking these days with the current technology is impossible and it is also in many ways a wrong approach to kind of to stop or censor. Now the obvious channels with really undesirable content, we don't allow or at least we have laws against them although we can not necessarily stop them. eg. like pornography. It's illegal but it is all over the internet. So technically it's impossible to stop them but at least we have laws against them. But what we can do or supposed to do is education. Two things we do is one, we try and support local content, Bhutanese content to balance international content. Like we might have 45 plus foreign channels but give the villagers good local content, they prefer that. They are our citizens and the programs are in our own language which they understand. That's why we are promoting BBS. We are helping BBS reach remote areas. At the same time what is important is media literacy. We can't stop all the foreign channels coming in but we have to warn our people what it means watching those ads, those entertainments etc., the impact they can have on children's values, on children's academic results.

We have been doing quite a lot on education. We already started programming in the schools. We have CSO's doing programming among the youth and all that. We have been training all the teachers on media literacy so that they are able to warn children. We have to tell the people what the intentions of the advertisements are. We educate the uneducated lot through the media, especially BBS.

In rural areas, when we talk about the influence, where they don't even have TVs, the foreign contents are also limited and mean while they have BBS.

It's already implemented in the schools but we still have a long way to go but we have already trained to an extent through teachers, clubs at schools. We have a policy which is to train media people and to expand media literacy among the audience at the same time.

Not guidelines for the media but we just have to create awareness but what we can do through advertising guidelines and all that is , you know just telling people is sometimes not enough but what we will say is suppose we have subsidy, some budget and we have been already doing this. We decide on which media to give the budget or how we will fund. Someone who does a serious story in some particular topic, we will give some funding. For a media that is purely sensational, why should the government support it. In the allocation of funds, we will be happier to support a serious media.

We don't have GNH specified in the terms and conditions or the rules. GNH can be used only in the broadest terms; we can't hit people with GNH, unless we have more clarity. GNH is something that makes people think or should be making people think.

When we talk about television, BBS is the only TV station in Bhutan at the moment and we are fully funding BBS to be Bhutanese. That's why BBS has full Bhutanese content. Bhutanese content means Bhutanese culture. All the religious festivals are broadcasted, cultural institutions; cultural activities are promoted and given coverage. That's the only way we can promote our culture and helps people understand. And BBS in fact does not carry any foreign content. Even in the future, with private stations, we will discourage wrong kind of content like some of the meaningless entertainment. This will have to be there in the policy.

Indicators? One of the biggest problems is...you know we are at the moment talking about the values and culture where we cannot define indicators. The only indicators we can come up with are through surveys and all, media impact studies and all that and we have been doing that. Impact studies, assessment studies and all that and by interviewing people, what have changed. One indicator is that today the media are bringing up our children, not the parents. The children are learning everything from the media. How they dress and talk? These are the indicators which we see through studies.

Some of what we talked is already there in the policy. It's there in the law like the BICMA regulations where they talk about what you cannot do in films etc. The regulations have come from the policy so some of it is already there.

Best practices: If you talk about the broadcast media, the public service broadcasters are the good practices and that will include BBC, NHK, PBS in the US. These are the good broadcasters. And the worst practices also in these countries which does criminal practices. These are the things we don't want to have and it's always good to learn from the good media.

## Appendix B

### **Interview with Kinley T. Wangchuk, Director, Department of Media, MoIC:**

1. What is the current media model used or referred in Bhutan and which countries were the most influential while developing one?
2. What are the challenges faced by the government in producing its own model?
3. What are the important objectives you look at while drafting policies for the local broadcast media?

At this point we are still trying to define a model because we keep mentioning to ourselves that this is the time where we have the opportunity to shape our model that is unique to conditions and that suits our purpose but there is still no consensus as such and anything which we tend to do unilaterally is not well received by the media and we tend to discuss during the conferences such as the “The role of Media in the GNH society” conference held at Paro, one of our intentions was to develop a model and we were trying to see how receptive the media would be if we were to propose or suggest a GNH model. There is a certain amount of misgiving as well as reluctance from the media on any intentions either perceived or not to try and even discuss with the government agency trying to promote sort of a model. Therefore we are still trying to look for a suitable model. But at the end of it, we are saying now, even if we are not able to strike a definite model, what we are aiming is to develop a responsible media and the attitude or the measure the DOIM or the Ministry has taken on the whole is that as long as we can promote professionalism, that itself would translate into a more responsible media and it is with that intention that we are trying to develop professionalism through specialized training courses to the media professionals and we with that objective have conducted quite a series of courses . We did one on scripting for the films, producers, writers and we also had a course on photo journalism, and then we have done a course on pre-production and design, and we have also had a course on animation. So these were some of the training modules that we conducted. We haven’t been looking at other media models from other countries. Even if we were to come up with an agreed model, I think it has to be a balance between what is perceived to be pro-government, pro regime oriented control against one where there is just no control at all. So I guess there has to be a balance between those two supposedly extreme propositions. One

difficult inadequacy we now face with our media is the lack of literate and participatory readership. With that in mind we try to promote media and information literacy. We piloted this in 5 selected schools, we have trained trainers to take this advocacy forward and we will be continuing with the information and media literacy and our ultimate hope will be to get a readership or audience which is fully engaging as well as participating media as well as exerting some sort of indirect control on the duties and responsibilities of the responsible media.

The first and foremost is the aim to bring to bring about a responsible media. Secondly we are again at a defining moment that the BBS should be given more public service mandates, that is equally important. The third issue is that we are trying to make them realize that the contents should also be of interest to the rural population because we feel that ..in fact we have done a study on the media development indicators using this UNESCO framework. What that study has revealed is that most of our media as of now tends to be urban centric and there are marginal communities that are left out. That would be an important requirements any public service broadcaster has to fulfill, to ensure that the reach is quite evenly spread and the interest and needs of the rural population is equally addressed.

#### 4. What have been the challenges faced while incorporating those objectives.

One of the challenges is that the lack of agencies that have taken up these challenges to go into the production of local content and lack of expertise because we have tried as a part of our ongoing effort to promote local content, we have actually tendered out production of three documentaries of social as well as topical interest to our community, one was on youth related social issues, one was on child and teenage labor in some of the industries and third was on drug related social issues. We found that after outsourcing them and reviewing them, a lot needs to be done in terms of technical as well as professional capacity of our local production houses. We hope that the courses that we have conducted and still continue to conduct will actually help honing their skills and improve their level of professionalism. There is need for us to encourage them in many ways but we will continue to bring about professional expertise.

In terms of radio, we agree that there is very little content in terms of local content but as far as monitoring aspect is concerned, we are not a monitoring entity. From our side we have taken the more of a promotional, development oriented intervention.

5. Who participates in the drafting of policy documents?
6. Are there international people/consultants who help draft the policy or do you have local consultants or anyone from outside the Ministry?
7. What are the required criteria for the consultants to be able to participate in the policy making?

Actually we follow several stages. Firstly if we have in house capacity then it is initiated at a local level, and if we think that we don't have the necessary skills or the expertise to do it in house, then we try to identify a local or a foreign consultant to initiate the drafting process and then it goes through several stages, we have the in house consultations and if we think that our concerns are address, then we share it with a broader level where we invite stake holders from the relevant agencies and it is only after feedback and concerns and reviews are taken aboard then we try an finalize it. That's the procedure we have always been following.

The first requirement is professional and educational background and that we do it mainly through analysis of their CV's and references that they provide. Second element would be whether they have expertise in the area that we are looking at and thirdly would be whether they have any past experience or involvement in the Asian context or specifically in the Bhutanese context or whether they are familiar with the situation that we are in and whether they have any idea of the prevailing system of the Governance, the legal regime that we are familiar with. Those are the things would actually be in favor of the consultant and we also employ a similar sort of criteria for the selections of the local expertise also.

8. GNH is said to be referred as the guiding principle of development in the country, how does the government conceptualize GNH in broadcast media services? Examples?
9. What have been the challenges faced?

My position would be as long as the media are ethical and as long as media is responsible, I think it would not be straying away from the GNH concept. That's my personal feeling. As long as they keep in mind what they are doing is for the, or should be for the public interest. If this is done that generally the four pillars of GNH would be taken into account. I said if they always are ethical and responsible in what they do and they do it in the interest of the public then indirectly

they are already performing to the GNH requirements. But I think indirectly or overtly they also have to ensure that stories or news that somehow brings development issues that creates the necessary space for the lesser heard sections of the society and as far as they promote the discourse of good governance and democratic systems, I think they would directly be contributing to the achievement of GNH goals.

We don't have any category in the policy which states that media has to follow the GNH goals. And the strategy that we developed to intervene on the promotion or development has always been to ensure that they are mindful of the sensitivities of the local population and citizens and in that we hope we can indirectly contribute to conforming to the GNH values and principles.

Our media generally shares the same concerns and believes but once in a while there are instances where they tend to give way to sensationalism but I guess these counters which are faced by any media that is developing.

10. What measures has the Ministry take so far to ensure that the Bhutanese culture be promoted in the local TV and Radio programming?
11. What are the current challenges faced?
12. What kind of support does the government provide to the local broadcasters (Private as well as public service broadcasters) in order to enhance Bhutanese content?

We have given assistance to BBS. For instance they have locally produced documentaries and the department besides directly engaging with the production of such documentaries has also promoted and assisted in the airing of these documentaries by providing financial assistant to air such programs and we have also assisted local institutes coming up with drama and cultural performances based on local themes and we have also directly tried to promote the production of books and locally based comics on local folklore, religious autobiographies etc. so these are the direct intervention that we are taking to ensure the continuity of the locally produce material. As far as radio is concerned, we have also promoted radio dramas. In fact there were two instances where we directly assisted them to produce local drama to air their local stations and we also assisted in procuring some basic equipment to help them develop such local content and air their programs.

Some of the Challenges have been lack of media professionals, in fact one of the trainings we conducted were for radio presenters and producers on how they should go into production of programs as well as teaching them some basic interview techniques but we need to do more especially with reference to the radio stations because as of now we don't even have a sort of broad guideline which actually ensures that they follow a focused direction on the programs and presentation requirements, so this is one area we need to focus on and develop certain standards and requirements to ensure that their content is also more suitable for local audience and the public interest at large.

13. When we talk about Broadcast TV, we also have the cable operators, who according to the rules have to have a local channel. On what bases are they asked to produce the local channel?
14. Are they fulfilling their role envisioned by the government?
15. What are the problems faced?

I don't think they are fulfilling the role envisioned by the government or BICMA because I think they are tending to engage in more of a broadcast service provider and without a broadcasting license, even the airing of cultural programs and advertisements are not in keeping with the license conditions.

The local channels need to come up with more creative and innovative ways of using the opportunity given to them because as of now, it's basically a repetitive airing of school concerts which are not creatively done and which are not much of value to ensuring appreciation of our culture and traditions. The reasons is because of the lack of interest on the part of the cable operators themselves to come up with more innovative means of using their air time and secondly there is a need for the government to directly intervene to ensure that they are more creatively using their air space. It has to be two way process. Both the cable operators and the government have to be involved in the process to improve their local content.

16. On one hand, the Constitution of Bhutan guarantees freedom of media and dissemination of information and on the other hand GNH talks about preserving and protecting the culture of Bhutan which is also enshrined in the Constitution. Which one do you think is more important?



17. How do you think GNH limits the freedom of media or vice versa?

I think that both are important. What we often tend to ignore is that right to information is or right to freedom of expression also comes with the right or the obligation to be responsible. In fact any sort of right is also conjoined to a responsibility. These two are inseparable. Therefore I feel that both have to go together. GNH does not limit freedom of media or vice versa because GNH, in fact one of the pillars of GNH is good governance and media is indispensable to good governance. I think Media in fact promotes good governance through ensuring transparency, through promoting accountability and I think this can only be achieved through a responsible and public service oriented media, holding the reins in power accountable to their electors. That can only come through if the media provides space for discourse and understanding of the issues that are at stake.

18. Bhutan is bombarded with 45 plus foreign channels which bring in global culture and values into the country and Bhutan have only one local TV channel to compete with the huge inflow of foreign channels. What are the measures taken by the Ministry in order to stop excessive inflow of outside programs/content and what are the challenges faced in implementing those measures?

The foreign channels coming to Bhutan are a concern but we feel that the only effective measure that we can take is through the promotion of local content. I don't think we can actually stop foreign content. In fact this pervasiveness or the invasion of foreign content presents both an opportunity as well as a challenge. Opportunity in the sense that, through globalization we have this platform where if you are creative, you also have the same platform to put on or share creativity people anywhere. It is an opportunity in the sense that there is a platform where it is open to everybody and that's the positive side. The other way of effectively combating it is through promoting local content.

19. According to you, currently what percent of the content on BBS TV is Bhutanese? And how much of it promotes our culture?

In terms of BBS, I would say almost 80-90% is local content which is Bhutanese and I think BBS that way is playing a very effective role in sustaining this appreciation for our local culture and in fact according to the impact assessment that we commissioned, almost 90% -95% of the

viewers say if given a choice, they would still prefer BBS TV. It's quite encouraging to know that if given a choice, the choice of the people is resoundingly of our local production.

20. Is the percentage going to increase or decrease in the future?

80-90% I say will increase in the future because one of the policy directives of the government has been to ensure that BBS increases their air time. I think the directive for BBS were to go 24/7, so it has a good chance of increasing provided that they keep with their obligations as well as I think, our local production houses will be given an opportunity to venture into this increased air time.

21. With broadcast media especially TV being powerful medium in enhancing globalization, to what extent is the cultural preservation reflected in the broadcast policy of Bhutan?

22. What are the strategies currently used by the Ministry in integrating GNH in the media policy making and media program development of the broadcast media?

23. What are the challenges faced by the ministry in making the private radio broadcasters adhere to enhancing Bhutanese content or promoting Bhutanese content?

24. So far, how has the Ministry measured the effectiveness of the implementation of GNH in broadcast media policy and broadcast media program?

25. What has been or are the techniques used to measure the effectiveness of implementing GNH in the Broadcast policy or the broadcast media programs?

Specifically we have not addressed such issues specifically with reference to GNH but we have made certain efforts to try and introduce this concept of a media which is conscious of the GNH values and one of the effort that we have made is through the proposed draft advertising policy. So we are saying that one among the mixed of criteria for award of government advertisements and withholding of government advertisements would be if certain media would be able to repeatedly make mistakes, factual errors which are antithetical to GNH or irresponsible reporting. Then that would be one of the conditions on which such advertising opportunities could be withheld.

Right now we have only one rule on content but we do see the need to define what is a public service broadcaster as oppose to or visa vie a commercial broadcaster but a commercial broadcaster would be one that in terms of its content or presentation would be where their

responsibility to the public is not important as their commercial interest, engaging in more advertisements, trying to promote certain products with view to attract investors to sponsor certain of their programs. Therefore, there is a need to actually define with separation of responsibility as well as distinct models on what would actually constitute a commercial broadcaster against one which would be public service oriented. This distinction is not there at the moment.

We don't have a broadcast policy as of yet. We have it in our plans to develop a broadcast policy. In the absence of a broadcast policy, we have always been in dialogue with BICMA trying to get to a consensus and agree that in the absence of a broadcast policy, such problem could be addressed by BICMA ensuring more quality control on their licensing terms and conditions. Till we have a comprehensive broadcast or media policy, we feel that the only tool at our disposal is for BICMA to take more stringent mechanism through licensing and regulatory mechanisms.

We don't have a draft policy also. Right now we are relying on the provisions of the BICMA act and BICMA has been framing their licensing guidelines and regulatory mechanisms based on the existing provisions but there is a need to come up with a policy.

We are expecting the broadcast policy to be there hopefully by the first half of 2012.

## Appendix C

### **Interview with Karma Tshetem, Secretary, GNH commission:**

1. The objective of GNH commission is to ensure that GNH is mainstreamed into the planning, policy making and implementation process by evaluating their relevance to the GNH framework, what kind of strategy has been adopted by the GNHC to encourage GNH in the general policy making and development of the country.

All policies of the Royal government irrespective of where they originate, must be endorsed by the GNHC. This is a function of the GNHC and to ensure that there is some GNH due diligence done on those policies we have what we call the GNH screening tool. And what this screening does is based on the 26 GNH related variables like equity, justice, stress etc., so a host of variables that is drawn from the 72 indicators of the GNH index. This GNH screening tool is available on the website. It looks at whether the policy is going to have a negative impact on the variable or have an impact which is not known or have an impact which we know is neutral and has positive impact. The threshold the policies must pass is to be either neutral or has a positive impact and if its negative, it's not acceptable. So basically we evaluate all the policies through the 26 variables and at the end of it we come up with a score and this is done both in the GNHC secretariat using this same tool and it is also done in the ministry originating. We encourage a group of 10-15 people to evaluate this policy. We have already evaluated a number of policies and passed using the GNH policy screening tools, the most recent once being the national irrigation policy and the renewable energy development policy. So this is the concrete way in which the royal government of Bhutan to ensure that its policies are developed with the development philosophy of GNH.

2. It is also the role of the GNHC to direct and coordinate the formulation of all policies, plans and programs in the country and ensure that GNH is mainstreamed into the planning, policy making and implementation process by evaluating their relevance to

the GNH framework, how far has the GNHC been successful in implementing this role?

3. What are the challenges faced by GNHC in applying GNH as the guiding principle for policy development in the country?

Successful in implementing is that, we have drawn up a protocol and we brought this tool and we have begun implementing it. Obviously this is a new area. There is no one we can look up to for reference because this type of thing, only we are doing. So I guess like everything else there will be learning by doing and we are doing that actually. As we are improving the way we use these tools, we are improving the way we use these tools are facilitated deeper discussion and debate which is primarily what it does. Before we introduced this GNH tools most of our debate would be based on the conventional policy parameters of economy of social sectors and may be environment to some degree but now because of our GNH policy screening tools we are not only at these aspects, we now look at all the things that matter to Bhutanese in the end like families, like stress, like the impact of time use, and impact on everything that is considered valuable that is outside the conventional policy framework.

The main challenge is because is this so cutting edge, what we are doing is so new and that there is no lessons and experience to draw from, so when you are trailblazing a new path yourself but that's the challenge always comes in doing things in a new way and we just accept it being a part of the learning process but what we see is that GNH dimensions are enriched in the policy, the debate and discussion that under line formulations of policies and that can be a good thing.

4. What about the Media policies? We know media can play a big role in disseminating values of GNH. In what ways have you encouraged MOIC to incorporate GNH as a guiding principle to develop rules and regulations for the Media?

At the moment we have not done anything on the media policies because it is not one of the policies that have come before the commission. Were it to come before the policy, the policy screened using the same tools. We will see if the media policy is one which promotes equity, which helps to strengthen the pillars of GNH. So any policy that helps to be initiative of the

government and helps to strengthen those pillars is good for GNH and that's what we want to promote. So we would evaluate the media policies in the same way but just now nothing has come before us. The responsible ministries originate the policies but once they originate the policy, they must receive the endorsement of the commission before they can become official policy. Right now the ministry has not initiated any dialogue with us so we are not aware of any media policy being formulated.

5. Bhutan is bombarded with 45 plus foreign channels which bring in foreign values and culture and Bhutan have only one local TV channel to compete with the huge inflow of foreign channels. Economic development can bring about social change, which changes the country's traditional culture-cultures. For how long do you think Bhutan can keep our traditional culture alive?

I feel that as long as Bhutanese development continues to be guided by this philosophy of GNH, it will continue. The reason is very simple. For example, if we talk about a development that is consistence with GNH, it means very much about aspirations for a Bhutanese way of life and when we talk about a Bhutanese way of life, the identity is very critical to even beginning to define the Bhutanese way of life. Once you ask yourself what is the foundation of your identity, then it very quickly comes down to your culture and traditions and values. All these together allows you to point to yourself and say that I am Bhutanese even though you may be educated and may be living in a totally different world. As long as Bhutanese have the idea that we want to promote and preserve or Bhutanese way of life even if we take advantage of all that modernization has to offer, then I think culture and everything will flourish and remain as it is today simply because they are not separable. I believe in fact what Bhutan is doing, it is now showing way to other countries who in their blind pursuit of development discounted the importance of culture for their identity which is so critical for their happiness and wellbeing. When they now look at us, they see in Bhutan what they could have been and what they have lost because they have achieved tremendous economic benefits, something which Bhutan cannot achieve for many years but look at the cost. I think they see the wisdom in what we are trying to do even though they realize that we have other challenges like our economic development is not keeping up with the type of aspirations we have.

6. What steps are you taking in order to keep our culture alive and what problems do you face in combating domination of global culture in Bhutan?

I must say that defending our culture of preserving our culture has not become really a challenge because I think that the wider Bhutanese committee have this understanding that we cannot separate or culture, our traditions, our values from the Bhutan we want to develop, so at least from where we are seeing, we don't see a challenge in terms of people not wanting culture and government is trying to force it down. I think it's not that. If at all I think over the past decade, people have been realizing more and more the value of culture. It's not just culture, value because it gives a sense of pride and strong sense of identity which is extremely important but also because it makes Bhutan, what Bhutan is, unique and different from others and this difference has a positive impact on everything we do. Even the goods and services we increasingly need to provide to survive as a competitive self-reliant country, it requires our culture. In fact if you look at prominent sectors in our country, like tourism, it is thriving on culture, so we do not see as challenge as such because I think our culture is flourishing. Certainly there are other aspects that while our own culture is flourishing, of course there is lot of foreign influences, but these are the tradeoffs of developments we have to deal with on a continues basis so I think there is nothing to be overly concerned off if we keep the right policies in place which we have done through our GNH philosophy for which culture is one of the pillars.

7. According to you, what percent of local program is showcased in BBS TV and as compared to international programs and how much of it promotes Bhutanese culture?
8. What about the radio stations?

Anything that promotes our culture and traditions, anything that strengthens our four pillars of GNH, we consider that as being consistence with strengthening GNH. So if we look at what our local TV and the small but growing movie industry has done, I think not withstanding some debate on qualitative aspects but we will have to appreciate that they have actually done quite a bit to promote our own language, our own traditions, our culture. If you remember 10-15 year ago, the streets will be blaring with Hindi music and our movie theaters will be only running that and all of us would be watching those movies. Today that have been completely wiped out and it

has always been Bhutanese movies and music and people may say that they are poor copies of others but the fact is that it is produced by Bhutanese, made with Bhutanese ingenuity, innovation and I must say they are doing well providing good entertainment, promoting our language, so I see those as good developments. And from our sides something we should promote, our arts and crafts, performing arts, as well as all the fine arts, we must continue to promote as they are very important for our culture. Our culture cannot be only religious oriented, there is this whole other facet and our TV is doing an important job. According to me, radio stations basically they are entertainment, but their entertainment programs have a wide reach and again, they are promoting our own songs, our own language and there is this retelling of all stories in some of them which I thought is a good initiative. What shows clearly is that there is demand for our own culture and tradition and all these TV and radio stations are simply trying to meet that demand. So I think it is a good indicator. For the qualitative aspects, I think we should always try to improve and that they are trying to do it continuously.

Well through the ministry, we are providing some sort of support mainly through the human resource development and trying to provide some sorts of training etc., we are also not sure what the best intervention is since the industry seems to be doing well. But we are trying to bring in people who are very good in this industry and see if we can give more training and all that but otherwise there is a general support towards this sector but at the moment it's a small sector so our support has also been quite small. As society and as more and more development takes place and as our per capita income increases, we become well off, like any country, entertainment will become bigger and bigger industry and it will be good to have our own local domestic entertainment that provides much of the entertainment, promoting our culture, our values and we will be happy to support in whatever we think is feasible. It's basically ideas. I think if there are good ideas which can have a huge impact, we are happy to provide all sorts of support.

The main support for the TV and radio has mainly through trainings and awards and other indirect supports are through ads.

9. What is Bhutanese culture and what does it consist of?

10. What is the GNHC's definition of culture?



We don't have a definition of our culture as such. Our culture is everything we see in Bhutan. Firstly there are the physical facets of our culture. From the architecture to our clothes, to instruments we use (swords , the scarf's as we wear as some symbol of service), to all the artifacts we use and what we do with them, those are all part of culture. So culture is something which cannot be narrowly defined. It includes all physical facets and more important the underline values of compassion, respect, generosity, politeness, that we try to teach in schools. Culture is one of the things which will escape easy definition. To describe culture one needs to bring in every aspects of thing Bhutanese do in their daily lives. Language is the most important aspect of our culture. In fact many say that "one's own language is the language of culture". It's like the language of English in Bhutan is more the language of business. When we talk in English among the Bhutanese, then a lot of our culture disappears. For instance when we talk Dzongkha, we will never be able to be as direct as we talk in English. That's because our culture has this subtleness, we avoid confrontation, so our language itself ensures some values are imparted in the way that it forces us to interact. Language is an extremely important part of what we call culture.

Most of the urgent need for cultural preservation is to renovate dzongs, lot of the softer components are talking with education in educating about GNH, imparting values (not by telling students to respect but telling teachers to enact that value in order for them to understand and learn) then we support to dratsang lhentshog (religious) which is very much part of culture because of the influence of Buddhism in our daily lives is so wide, so basically it touches on everything. Which is why it's very difficult to easily define Bhutanese culture because then we will have to define everything.

11. On one hand the Constitution of Bhutan guarantees freedom of media and dissemination of information and one the other hand GNH talks about preserving and protecting the culture of Bhutan which is also enshrined in the Constitution. Which one do you think is more important?

12. How do you think GNH limits the freedom of media or vice versa?

I don't see a conflict between the two, so I think they can exist harmoniously together but if you judge them on their own, from values perspective, freedom should be upheld the highest. There is obviously no question of that being subjugated to any other. So from a values perspective, as a society, we should strive to be a free and open society and the intention of our constitution is very much to do that. When we talk about GNH and the preservation of culture and tradition, all we are saying is a free and open society has adjust that what it wants from development is these among these culture and traditional. GNH is the idea that Bhutan's development should meet Bhutanese aspirations, and all we are trying to say is Bhutanese aspirations in terms of what we want from our development is a little different from maybe other countries want. That's all we are trying to say but nowhere does it mean that this would come at the expense of freedom. In fact we are saying that this is coming from the Bhutanese people. All we are saying is what Bhutanese wants from their daily lives and what the country does in terms of development that they two must mean the same thing. So there is no saying which one is more important but they come from each other.

The idea of GNH is, sometimes people may misinterpret that GNH means a preformed idea of what life in Bhutan should be and everyone should conform to that but like I was saying that is not true. GNH is a concept, all that concept is saying is Bhutanese development should be in line with Bhutanese aspirations of what they want from development and that is nothing but that the Bhutanese way of life continues even as we modernize and take advantage of what it has to offer. So as long as we are doing that there is no preconceived notion. The only notion is that development should meet our aspiration and our aspiration is to continue with the way of life because we have seen all the models in every developed country and we think it's not so worth it. There is something not working and we feel that in their development they have ignored important parts of development like family relationships, values, cohesive community, keeping this real, keeping this at people's scale etc. We consider these things to be GNH. It's only the concept that we have to follow but GNH does not mean that it's a pre conformed vision and everyone must conform to that. Of course that would not be GNH at all. Every generation will define its GNH and GNH could change from generation to generation. It must remain relevant to the generation. Today our generation thinks that GNH is about the clothes we were and stuff like that 100 years down the line, the country may still be pursuing GNH but it may not mean a different set of things.

13. According to you what should the role of the media policy makers and the media be in a GNH society?

GNH society is about creating a cohesive, caring and compassionate society and media could try to be one which does that. Of course it should play at its pedestal, at its highest, always reporting without any fear or favor of truth to society but that said, how it goes about it etc, I think it could be in harmony with GNH values and GNH values is always about helping, about compassion and things like that so, our hope is that media in terms of its primary role as telling the truth to society should be done without compromise. As to how it goes about it is I think it should be much more about Bhutanese and not be too negative because that would not be contributing to the four pillars and the GNH.

Media policy makers all they can do is keep rules simple that they can always flourish. That should be its primary concern. Once its created a field for people to be open, for people to speak without fear or favor, then from a policy perspective, our job is then really done. There after it's up to the people involved in the sector. Our concern is that the media will behave like a media in a GNH consistent society and not bring negative aspects of media that we see elsewhere which is more based on sensationalism.

Culture is the pillar that really differentiates our approach to development from other countries development because other thing they are also doing like good governance, economic development and conservation. It's on culture part which we are doing successfully which other countries has sort of not been able to deal with.

## Appendix D

### **Interview with Karma Ura, President, Center for Bhutan Studies:**

1. Bhutan is bombarded with 45 plus foreign channels which bring in foreign values and culture and Bhutan have only one local TV channel to compete with the huge inflow of foreign channels. Economic development can bring about social change, which changes the country's traditional culture-cultures. For how long do you think Bhutan can keep our traditional culture alive?

The backbone of Bhutanese culture is two types. One is that which is based or deeply influenced by Vajrayana Buddhism, the other is slightly indigenous which may not be recognizable outside Bhutan but has evolved within our country. So there are two sources of Bhutanese culture, the indigenous and the universal Mahayana Buddhism. The universal Mahayana Buddhism is also a culture which is shared in the entire Himalayan region. When we say that how long will be able to keep the Bhutanese culture, one might bring it down to these two conceptual frames. The indigenous one can be also threatened by the Mahayana Buddhist culture. This is not a usually noticed thing. For example, there are many rights and rituals which are prominent feature of tradition of indigenous culture which local ceremonies, dance of the local varieties in local languages, intimately tied to the ecology and history of local places. Now that can be threatened under two competing forces. One is the forces of TV and the other one is the Mahayana culture itself. When the “tshechu” replaces a local ritual of a slightly bon type, that is a new change or when the local tshechu of a Bon type is not held for economic or social reason, that indigenous part disappears but the Mahayana and Vajrayana culture gets spread. The Vajrayana, Mahayana tradition itself might be minimized or threatened by the force of western media. Those that are supported by the state might be strengthened because there is state support for them but where the communities are weak and cannot support them, this might disappear. Finally, there is this question of life style. It includes anything which we can consider, from food to, dress to other kind of artifacts around our life like architecture to our thoughts and concepts we use. These are all parts of lifestyle. Lifestyle, if we break up concept of culture, we may decipher it a lifestyle

and if you break up lifestyle, then it will consist of artifacts to ideas. Now this lifestyle can change quite seriously. Food habits can change, the dress can change etc., for example, we may not notice but the way you wear the kira must have changed although you are wearing kira. The underlining question is the fabric and who has woven it. If you are wearing a tego which is made of Chinese brocade instead of it being woven in Bhutan, it has huge consequences through the linkage up to the artisans who weave it and you are supporting her lifestyle. Most of what is around us has changed. Before we used to sit down square legged now we have chairs. Our ideas of what is goal in our life have changed but how we fulfill our goal of livelihood is completely new under new circumstance. Our goal of what is life meant for, is it just living well or living well in an ethical manner according to Buddhist principles. To live well in a material life is very different one from living well according to ethical principles of Buddhism. No one knows how much things have changed but visually we can see so many changes. The houses are improving, the materials we are using has changed. So housing has changed, agriculture has changed.

As a every changing subject itself, the culture, they say culture is dynamic and as a dynamic force, even though some things have become beyond reorganization, we will always say the culture is existing but the key feature is what are the essential features and have they changed or not.

2. In what ways have you encouraged MOIC to incorporate GNH as a guiding principle to develop rules and regulations for the Media?

Firstly you have to be clear in an analytical term what media is. It has to be specified. Media is anything that allows must translation of point of view. That's what it is. The form it takes, if it is technological, necessarily it will be a technology in a technology society. If it is non-technology, it will definitely exist because there will always need to bind people together, so there will always hum mechanism to take the place of today's modern media. Take example in a rural setting, what media need to transmit. One it is always about values. Why do you want values? So that behavior of the people which is not motivated by selfishness, one's own concern, at least do not break out into conflict, so you have to moderate peoples motivations to an agreeable level, so that people will observe some common rules. This is the purpose of values. So when you want to communicate that there is always involvement of some mass communication. The ancient system

in our country is the monk body. You can assume that every 6000 monks who are doing that is equivalent to journalists. Now they don't play certain role, they are passive. Now the role is being played by the modern media. Modern media includes, film makers, book writers, the artistic world and not just TV and radio. Most of the artistic thinkers are the content of TV. That's one type of media. Objective, analytical, research oriented, they put out new information. However if the media is penetrated by obsession with celebrities, supposedly good things that will be sold to the government, or if it is providing some sort of sedative functions of society forgetting about serious issues sometimes, so it can play that sort of appeasing role also. For common masses, BBS and rest of the cable is the main media. The thing is that out of the 50 cables or so, we have no influence, what so ever. We don't have a complete agreement on how to run BBS forget about the other cables we receive. So it is up to the Ministry or the board of the directors to do this.

3. According to you, what percent of local program is showcased in BBS TV and as compared to international programs and how much of it promotes Bhutanese culture?
4. What about the radio stations?

I was one of the board members in 2005. I tried to change the format that everything has to be done through a GNH format. You should get the earlier format and in theory they are still running according to that but not according to content. The level is same. They talk about the community, agriculture, good governance but the content is not praise worthy.

For example, when they say good governance, they should be dealing about corruption, freedom index, trust index, etc. (which are all themes under good corruption) for example, because it should go according to the themes under GNH. When they discuss, under good governance is elections. They were completely obsessed with the activities of the elections and they have discussions about politicians which has no bearing on the improvement of the thought of good governance. This they consider good governance program. There is nothing about right to information, freedom, discrimination, issue of gender etc. serious discussions should be there but there is hardly anything. They discuss only small petty issues.

Programs under environment also don't have much substance. It's more about petty things. Even under education, they don't discuss about fundamental issues. This might be a question of journalistic standard or education and qualification. People are not aware. These might be limiting their perspective of the main issues. So in theory the format is according to GNH but in terms of content it is not sufficiently vagarious. The guideline of how the media should operate should be different. Since the rest of the media outside is like this, the local media has to compete against them for sales, channels etc., but BBS does not have to do that. It's paid by the government. They should not be influenced by outside. It should be truly educational which in my view, is the main function of media. Education doesn't mean only about schools, so many levels of education can be imparted.

To change the media in our country is possible in our country. The quantity of the media is not much of importance, what a matter is the quality of the content of the media which lacks in our media. I feel that we must make the media servants of GNH and Bhutanese values and culture.

The government should work more on the increasing the quality of the program rather than increasing the quantity or the time of our media. For example the singing competition program on the BBS TV is a dulling of the Bhutanese mind. The people are now drawn toward non issues. What does it matter who is the best singer in this country? Whose life is it improving?

What about chungdra and boedra?

If you look closely, repeating chungdra and boedra is done throughout the country. The royal academy of performing arts is also there but it is the new songs which should capture the Bhutanese imagination by depicting the serious issues in this country. For examples, like a Bob Dylan song, it has some distinctiveness in it, it evokes something about the American live, landscape etc. where is anything like that in our new songs. They are not able to relate anything to resonate on Bhutanese issues just now. The music can be traced back to Bollywood like the tunes and even the words. The songs have cheap idealization of females which is typically Hindi film approach which is mainly on the physical image of the female. This not at all reflective of things here and it is just artificial creation. It is artificial because it has no experiential content because it is just being copied. It is sometimes to think if its invasion of Hindi influence in Bhutanese language or whether it's strengthening of Bhutanese vocal side. It's something to

think about. For example, if a love affair has been destroyed by some reasons and it spills over into music, there must be a powerful experience in that. That is good. Expressing universal themes but if you are just copying something into Dzongkha, that is what we call total depreciation. You have to distinguish what is happening. It is up to you to examine. This is just my impression.

There is no doubt that the motive and the attempt put by BBS is to produce Bhutanese culture but the outcome is something different because the outcome depends on the quality, the outcome depends on right topics you choose. It's not only enough to have motivations.

In the local channels which are 24 hrs. dance and songs and we can see that there is no new attempt to follow some serious action. The dances have no good choreography and is basically copied from outside. So again it is a question of influence of the outside in the form of wearing kira or it's the creativity of Bhutanese music makers to do something original.

In BBS we don't see such things. They have discussions, there is attempt to pick up Bhutanese issues. They have program on some aspects of culture like Tshechus, dzongs etc. but it is not enough. They are not adventurous enough to bring these stories from all round the country. They do it on the main dzongs and sites or rituals. The problem with main dzongs is that they replicate each other. The variation is lacking so the compensation would be to go and truly encourage indigenous ones which have not been explored. Those things need to be picked up and give them a chance to be observed by all the Bhutanese. This will show some creativity. If you just stick to the popular ones, of course they are national institutions but from the viewer's point of view the programs can be monotonous. They might now watch it every time. Variety of entertainment has to be there.

All radio stations are devoted to local content except for some which plays western songs quite a lot. I listen to radio only when I am travelling in the car and I hear mostly western music, requests, radio jockeys copying the western style of announcement including in Dzongkha. They have perverted the Dzongkha to fit the western jokey style.

I thought the request shows they have is very interesting. The unpredictable audience participations in songs from all around the country is quite interesting. They can conjure up a village girl wanting to participate on a wider platform and this is her only chance. This is a very



innovative step of the radio stations. Other programs are not so praiseworthy from my side. There was one show which has a Tibetan lady talk about her life. Suddenly it came though that within one generation she has assimilated and become fully Bhutanese. This was extraordinary because society is always challenged by diversity as much as it is enriched. Sometimes people are here but they do not try to integrate or somehow the integration force is not enough, so there I suddenly heard a story of integration. The need to integrate and unify amongst ourselves is very important. We have to live in way that reflects good neighborhood, good community and such stories open up people making them think that if someone who has come from Tibet into Bhutan and within 20-30 years they have integrated so well into Bhutan, we should make an attempt too. These are positive programs. My observations are very random.

We have run some workshops for them but there is not systematic induction of journalist into GNH view. This should have been there. Every time a person enters a media organization here in Bhutan there should be a course to teach them on GNH. But it is not there. There is no coordination.

We have always said that we would run workshops for the media to let them understand about GNH, the domains, these are values which you can use , these are the criteria's, these are the activities which you should pay more attention etc. but they also cannot resist the formats of media around the world which have become more commercial.

Recently, the ministry of communication has attempted to define a concept of what should media do in this country. But out of 50 channels, if you can influence only our media, basically we are open to outside influence. The journalists here are not trained in GNH, so the use of criteria of GNH to approach issues is difficult for them.

#### 5. Should GNH be in the media policy?

Yes they should. The boldness of the step is yet to be seen in this effect. It has to be seen in many area also. We have no authority and we might informally tell them what to do but it has to come through some other channel in their procedures. I cannot impose anything on the policies with no authority.

If you look at media, they had these articles on what you should wear for fashion and if we look from a GNH point of view, people must censor from certain things. It's a critical point or the sharp point because this is dividing blade on which you want to walk or not. One side is GNH and the other side is normal. If you follow the normal thing such as the nation must have fashion, beauty pageant etc. otherwise you are good as other countries, you know you must be model meeting and competition. This is the same thing then. What is different about Bhutan from the point of view of GNH's influence on the media? No influence. If you follow the entire thing and do it then where does GNH stand? So, you have to be creative, you have to be bold and you have to have the conviction that some things have bad consequences in the society as a whole. Now people take time to have that clarity, but in the meanwhile the world is changing and you may not be able to bring it back. This is the danger. Anything that leads to social competition leads to inequality which has to be prevented because social competition is not a competition not in itself a good competition, it is a competition only in order to go up the ladder of social esteem or status and lots of goods are consumed only for that purpose but we know that consequences on ecology or on your life is not very advantageous. At the end to consume such goods, you have to earn, some earn and some don't which sets a huge inequality which is very bad from the point of GNH. So we have to be bold on this and convince the population on this but just to do this to say that it's based on freedom to do everything is not adequate. Media can say that it's a freedom of speech to have a column on fashion for example and say that the government is preventing us from doing this. The question of freedom is a key question, you have to clarify this. They can ask us who we are to prescribe it because we are preventing them from expressing or doing things etc. These are large issues and it will be seen as GNH infringing freedom and in that case GNH will look very authoritarian but the secret of this is by understanding what is going wrong in this world by doing exactly doing the conventional things. The media should really work on promoting this understanding of human nature which is wrong. Even in Buddhism the key thing is understanding human nature and understanding of what is the path to happiness, good values, consensus based on good values.

6. What is Bhutanese culture and what does it consist of?

7. What is the CBS definition of culture?

Your specification of culture may be different from mine. People will have different meanings. Broadly the traditional culture of Bhutan as opposed to modern culture of Bhutan is broadly influenced by Mahayana Buddhism and it is also deeply influenced by indigenous forces and that local is not national in the sense that each places in the country has their own indigenous culture in the way they do thing etc...food, festivals dialects etc. and this is what I mean by local culture where as the general Mahayana influence is sort of coming down from the central monastic body.

You have to crack down culture but you have to read on culture by great writers because it is not as simple as we sometimes describe here like architecture, driclam namzha, zorigchusum, etc. It is now classified usually into zorigchusum but this is a skill classification. Zorigchuzum cannot be the beginning and end of culture because it is just a skill but how this skill influence the life, if at all does, is a different issue. The question of value and ideology is outside this skill. One of this is material skill based and we can take zorigchusum in terms of productions of artifacts in this country from clothes, weaving tailoring down to architecture. This is encompassed in zorigchusum. The other one which has to be discussed really is about values. Specify the key values about Buddhism. The definition is there but it is so simple. So many books in Bhutan begin with what is Bhutanese culture. The simple definition is simple. It will consist of diets, architecture, institutions, textiles, values, language. In the GNH website, it consists of mother language, zorigchusum, the fundamental Bhutanese values etc. it's actually divided into two parts, institutions and values.

8. On one hand the Constitution of Bhutan guarantees freedom of media and dissemination of information and one the other hand GNH talks about preserving and protecting the culture of Bhutan which is also enshrined in the Constitution. Which one do you think is more important?

9. How do you think GNH limits the freedom of media or vice versa?

This is going to be the key confrontation amongst those who do not understand, amongst those who cannot understanding anything that is limiting or seem to be limiting, they will blame on GNH. GNH can become a scapegoat instead of people who are implementing it wrongly.

Government may escape by saying this is the philosophy of GNH, people who are doing wrong may escape the true blame. It is important to understand what is freedom because we are all in some ways or the other to attain liberation free from oppression so that the choices are truly our own but true choices also depend on the demand vast degree of understanding of yourself, your motives, society's good and other people's happiness. If your choices are however just reflection of bad media such as commercial advertisements, you may believe in it. So autonomy and autonomous consumer has become very important in today's world, it's the key thing. Unless the consumer is not autonomous, clear thinking, it will reflect in consumer demand and that will reflect in consumer production. So through the huge influence of media, you have made the consumer feel that what has been insinuated by the media is your true choice. So it is a world of complete illusion where your choice is no longer a reflection of your own thought. This is the main danger that you are beginning to own as your own thoughts and choice, what actually has been subtly implanted in you. This is the main problem of modern persuasion. There cannot be anybody who cannot appreciate freedom, firstly to be fulfilled with our physical needs of survival. After that that freedom should serve the attainment of happiness, this is what GNH is about. There is no need to discuss about liveliness, that must be fulfilled but then we recognize that the fundamental quest of people is to be happy and the choice of all the other conditions of their life must be in ways that only serve the fulfillment of life. But the choice people make must be provided by the wider problems, this is another point of GNH. GNH has to be linked with sustainability, GNH has to be linked with the notion of freedom, it has to be linked with notion of equality, and otherwise it will be rejected. In a larger conceptual world if it does not address sustainable development, what is the use of GNH? The world will explode if it if it is not able to address it. Suppose if some people may instigate, GNH is against freedom, then GNH will not be acceptable, so we have to link all these things. Now GNH, the quest of happiness of government, the community and of individuals must be informed by these larger problems. Problems of equality in the world, problems of lack of freedom in the world, problems of ecological footprint of individual consumption, problems of sustainability of our consumption in the planet as a whole. If GNH is communicated irresponsibly, it is no different and it will be a diesel kind of philosophy without any consequences on ecology, sustainable development, or on people etc. So the quest of happiness must be informed of the wider problems we face in the world. That is

what values and ethics about. Values and ethics are about how we coexist with others. The quest means immediately the question of individual freedom and liberty.

This is the concept of happiness with responsibility and ethics towards others. The GNH does not limit the freedom of media but it gives them more burden of responsibility. New media shapes the taste of people towards the mean world hypothesis as Robert Putnam put it. The world is portrayed as mean and the world actually tends to believe it. This is how the bad media affects the world.

10. According to you what should the role of the media policy makers and the media be in a GNH society?

Well, they should set impartial standards for everyone to follow according to the principles and values of GNH. This should be the role, that is to say that the regulations of media will be different because the regulation of the media in the west is based on libertarian principles. Now we also accept libertarian principles, in the good governance you will find out that discrimination, freedom, respect for everybody etc. is enshrined and we measure these things but there are some fundamental difference according to GNH and its principle. We have to respect animal lives, we have to respect good values and we have to cultivate positive emotions. Good value is recognized by everybody around the world but to cultivate positive emotions is not very obvious to people outside. We have to say clearly through the regulation that may be media's help is to support people in the quest for happiness through informed autonomous choice, not in the sense of a misleading choice that makes your life more unattainable from the point of view of happiness. So those distinctions from the point of GNH must be known before you make a regulation. Otherwise the regulation will be a copy of the libertarian states.

## Appendix E

### **Interview with Siok Sian Pek (Author of the Media Impact Study, 2003, 2008):**

1. In your report you have mentioned that BBS TV has overtaken international channels in terms of viewing, what about the local channels produced by the cable operators? Do they have similar viewership as the BBS TV? What percentage of the people views these local channels?
2. How popular are those channels as compared to the other channels? Can you give estimation?

I didn't because at that time, we did not consider it as a broadcaster. It wasn't popular. It was just running ads and some filler although in our focus group we did talk about it. but we didn't make an effort to look into that. But in 2003 study I do remember, I have reflected things like how cable operators see it like their own personal TV channel. I feel like whatever they feel like watching for that night, instead of taking it home instead they just put it on the channel. Many of the district cable technicians would put on a Bollywood film to watch it and they let the whole town watch it. It was more of an amateur, and sort of a thing to fill their air time. At one point they got approval from BICMA to run ads so they started to create space and put in more content so they can sell that ad strip and that's when they started to do the easiest thing, just to put in school concerts and the movie industry decided to use them.

3. Do you think the government's strategy of enhancing Local content by making it mandatory for cable operators to have a local channel working?
4. What are the challenges faced by these operators as well as the government in making this strategy work?

They don't take the governments vision for having more local content seriously. For them it's just a channel that's available and they just fill it up with something. I don't think they plan it

properly, I don't think they consider what they put on, and they just put anything. They are more like a community station sort of outlook but without any guideline or rules and certainly in terms of GNH I don't think they even think about GNH. As long as they get something to fill it up they will put it down and that's also an opportunity to get advertising to offset the cost of running it. But if the government wants to consider that as a proper channel, then there should be proper monitoring, there could be discussions and then monitor and evaluate and have some guidelines. There is not good balance in those content and it's nonstop. Yes they have trailers of Bhutanese movies so for many people to watch the movies but it is not serious programming. It is not real programming. It's just some guy there filling up the airwaves. There is no review of programs and there is no clear vision of what they want to do.

5. What do you think needs to be done by the government to enhance Bhutanese content in the broadcast media? How should the government and the media promote our Bhutanese culture?

I think they are trying but they can do a lot more. For example, DDC put a lot of money into films but I said films are doing so well that they can get commercial support. If they really want to support culture then they should support mainstream media which doesn't get a lot of support and train some of these young who just come in without any kind of training.

6. According to you what should the role of the media policy makers and the media be in a GNH society?

Media policy makers in a GNH society must imbibe GNH principles. I think they need to understand what GNH is. May be we don't well know enough. That seems to be tendencies that perpetuate policies that are not really GNH. Right now we are looking at things like advertising policy, the government saying let's wait. This is not GNH. To be GNH, sometimes you have to make decisions like that which are not easy. I think if we say we are Bhutan and the beauty about it, we say is we learn from others, sometimes decisions may not be popular but if we are doing something for the greater good, then there must be some ways for expressing that view and then telling people that this is actually ok, may be you think is restrictive but I think its ok to think of it in a more holistic manner. Sometimes you have to take hard decisions. In a GNH

society, first of all policy makers must themselves subscribe to GNH, they must have that understanding of GNH. In general in certain sectors of Bhutan, I mean the highest levels if very pro GNH but there are many skeptics who are not convinced. I think we are not been able to take GNH out of academic sort of study. People think that is just about study or something that is extreme. So not everyone subscribes to it and its actually time to learn about it. The part of the role of the media is to educate us on about this because GNH is now enshrined in our constitution. It's not about the current ruling government espousing GNH...no..it was something that was espoused by the previous King of Bhutan and the current King subscribe it. So it is enshrined in the constitution, the document that is guiding our new democracy.

7. On one hand, the Constitution of Bhutan guarantees freedom of media and dissemination of information and one the other hand GNH talks about preserving and protecting the culture of Bhutan which is also enshrined in the Constitution. Which one do you think is more important?
8. How do you think GNH limits the freedom of media or vice versa?

I don't see it as two sides of two extremes. I think that media is culture. Media reflects culture, media reflects society, I don't think it is one or the other. I think it's the possibility to find a way that media is also sensitive to the evolving culture because after all that's why we have this debate today. Some newspaper say they work very hard, some papers just download content which is not Bhutanese. So I don't think it is two ends of a dichotomy or anything. Media is culture. So when you want to talk about a freedom of media and the need to also understand and enhance culture, in fact a free media can do that far more. A free media can reflect a greater diversity of voices and cultures.

GNH does not limit the freedom of media or vice versa, in fact it is a very liberating idea. GNH doesn't mean we always write about happiness. GNH also demands that as a media we explore and investigate and understand why there are gaps like why are there still people who are poor, inequality etc. That's why you know if you look into the GNH studies, they also look at all the challenges. So I think this is one misconception that sometimes the media think that when you talk about GNH it means only about being happy. Happiness is made out of good things, and



lack of happiness is also due to causes of suffering, so also need to look at the gaps. So I don't think it restricts, in fact it actually emphasizes how important it is to look at all angles.

9. According to you, what percent of local program is showcased in BBS TV and as compared to international programs and how much of it promotes Bhutanese culture?

10. What about the radio stations?

I feel that BBS content is largely Bhutanese except the few NHK type programming they get. I would say 98-99% of Bhutanese content is Bhutanese. They promote traditional Bhutanese culture quite well. They try and attempt to include tshechu etc. so they do that. They also showcase a lot of evolving culture. BBS is the only channel we have and we think about it is the only window to Bhutan and Bhutanese culture. I don't listen much to the radio so I cannot pass a judgment. I only listen to them in my car and the cursory impression is that they are very entertainment oriented, very much music but at the same time some of them provide very useful forums where they give people opportunity to call in and the right to ask questions and discuss issues. Some radio stations try very hard to engage a group of people such as Kuzoo, who is trying hard to build a sense of Bhutanese identity such as the Kuzoo family and all that but I would say that most of them may be because they are new, short staffed, lack of training, so lot of them tend to go the easiest way such as playing music and not quite realizing the importance of good broadcasting.

11. Bhutan is bombarded with 45 plus foreign channels which bring in foreign values and culture and Bhutan have only one local TV channel to compete with the huge inflow of foreign channels. Economic development can bring about social change, which changes the country's traditional culture-cultures. For how long do you think Bhutan can keep our traditional culture alive?

Right now in Bhutan the sense of identity and culture is very strong. I think most people cannot put a finger to it but whenever people come back from travel, they want to have the dose of Bhutanese food etc. for example. So that's there but the difference is that we now stay around in our jeans and we enjoy that. So I think the sense of that identity is very strong and the sense of

culture is very strong. But what we are not very good at is reflecting on and looking at how our culture is evolving and making accommodations for it. For examples, I think that sometimes the more restrictive we are sometimes it might back fire. For example the recent film review board, sometimes they dictate how women should be dressed in traditional clothing and all that and at the same time they allow scenes with women wearing the latest clothing, very revealing clothing. I mean that's fine because the world is like that, and the world is a melting pot and Bhutan being a small country amongst giant is very hard. If we wanted to remain ourselves as in the past then maybe we should have never opened up. The minute we open, we also need to evolve and to change and sometimes change is not always bad. Understanding and appreciating our culture doesn't mean that we should be mired in the past. For example, the clothing is now changing, the colors, etc. but that is still Bhutanese. Their essence is Bhutanese. What we are not very good at is in terms of buildings. Maybe the windows are Bhutanese but other structures are not. So in the urbanization process, we are losing some of the more physical trappings, the architecture and it is also not the physical but it is also the spaciousness. We are losing the luxury of space. That brings up a whole new culture of feeling lost, loneliness stress etc. I think, the places where the greatest change will come are in our towns and cities. I feel that the government has a huge role to play and the private sectors too. I am sure that if we bring them on board, sometimes I say that we bring on the skeptics or they might not even be the skeptic. If we brought them on board and make them understand why GNH can make such a difference, they would really change the way we work. Maybe they are right now, unenlightened, they don't know or they never thought about it. So we should think in terms of how they should be brought into the fold, so they also understand.

Government should have more discussions with the private sectors as well.

Like some radio stations, for example during the last elections, all they do is read rules. They read it badly and it's obvious that for them it is just fulfilling a requirement because they are paid to do that so they just do it and it doesn't matter if the listeners understand, whether you speak clearly or too fast or whether the rules are meant to be read or whether you can rewrite it or whether they can give people opportunity to call them and ask about the rules, ...?? I feel that if they look at the audience and try to do the job better, they will have more audience. The audience will grow and they will have more support.

With more TV stations in the future the Bhutanese content will only increase and must increase otherwise, its 50 plus channels. In the media literacy we tell people that you need to choose what you watch, need to choose what you read and when you have a choice of 50 other channel, then one of our own, many of our youth don't switch on BBS. One of the biggest achievements that we made when we were involved with BBS is to push the initiation of child and youth section but of course it is only one station. That's why we need to support public service media in some ways coz only public service media would do that. Most others won't do that, they want something which is quick and entertaining. I think competition would be good for BBS as well as others and We need to have possibly one more channel or I don't know how many we can support in a country like this to make it viable.

I feel that sometimes, it shouldn't just be the government making decisions. Government and the owners, I was thinking of more this partnership called co-regulations where it is not one authority which is regulating but bring in the community, the people who care, social workers, youth groups etc. and engage them and see what kind of rules they want. Then the media houses will also not feel that they are being controlled by government and they are also answerable to the people they serve. So I think that is a far better model.

12. What steps do you think need to be taken in order to keep our culture alive and what problems do you think the government will face in combating domination of global culture in Bhutan?

I feel that if our policy makers and the community is little more enlightened maybe we can stall that rapid change but who knows. We cannot put a time frame to it. Although my concern is that we just don't have our own content and if we are not telling our own stories then whose stories are we telling? You know our children are not listening to us, they are listening to all global stories and they are going to be very different from the rest of us more so because in our society, we have so little writing, films, etc. Even our films are not very Bhutanese. The romance scenes, the gender issues etc. are changing our culture immediately. It's just that we are in gho and kirra but you know the idea of idolization of womanhood as just being as an objective desire with not much thinking, whereas our women are very different. They work hard and very enterprising. If you look at most of the families, the women keep the homes together. They raise the children,

they make the decisions these are not reflected in many of our films. So that is worrying and the change will be good to actually track that and find ways to sort of steer it more closer to home, in a more GNH lens.

13. According to you, currently what percent of the content on BBS TV is Bhutanese? And how much of it promotes our culture? Is the percentage going to increase or decrease in the future?

We don't have enough programming on our own. We listen to all those western songs but our own music is limited. So in terms of culture it is very important to support media, writers, thinkers, artists, artisans, singers, music, art, etc. you know in the old days there was some kind of support but now we are going through a phase of rapid urbanization and modernization and we are not supporting any of the things that would go along and temper the pace of change and sort of built an environment where we continue to understand what it means to be Bhutanese. We don't have that. What we have is very little, and perhaps the government can play a big role. Private sector, they will support films but they won't support anything else. They will support only where there is commercial interest. This becomes a GNP model.

14. With broadcast media especially TV being powerful medium in enhancing globalization, to what extent is the cultural preservation reflected in the broadcast policy of Bhutan?

Well the currently the only one is to say that it must be Bhutanese content but it doesn't say what and it got to be sensitive to Bhutanese culture. In terms of culture, what we did then was that there should be no billboards. The rules are still not in place and I think that they shouldn't take too long in implementing those rules. The global point of the view of the world is so strong as we know. The whole idea of GNH or happiness is losing out to global conversations and the longer we wait the longer it is hard for us to do anything. We can have so many consultations but we need to decide as well. Sometimes, the majority is not always right. Sometimes, if you feel that it is a good decision and that is important, then one must have a moral courage to push it and

implement it. I feel that sometimes in a democracy, I feel it is more challenging. You want to please everyone. We don't do things just because outsiders want us to do it, we have to do it when it's logical.

15. What kind of strategies can be used by the Ministry to integrate GNH in the media policy making and media program development of the broadcast media?

First of all they need to ensure themselves that they understand what it means to be a GNH media. Then they need to bring media on board to understand that too. This is not an option anymore. It's in the constitution of Bhutan, so that should drive policy but the problem is persuading people and understanding it ourselves. GNH policy doesn't mean that more is best. GNH also means that we should also decide on sensitive advertising policies, sensitive programming policies. We must be exceedingly careful about programming targeting children. They need to model pro social behavior. They need to think about public service. The bottom line is how is this going to make an impact on the people but it doesn't mean that it has to be dull and boring and preachy. This is a misunderstanding that GNH programming can be boring. It can be really fun but it must just reflect GNH values like compassion, unity etc. and these values must be embedded in the programming. For example, in the US, the FCC is in total lack of control, the media houses are so powerful, the businesses dictate everything and children's programs is no longer a child's program. So we need to prevent that kind of thing from happening in Bhutan as we already see it there. The sooner the policy can be started the better.

16. What kind of Media Model do you think Bhutan is following at the moment?

17. What kind of challenges does the government need to face while adopting its own unique model?

I feel that we are just following the global capital world model, the business model and of course in a small like ours we ask ourselves, how we can sustain ourselves, that is an issue but I think we are seeing media around the world and also in our neighboring countries like India. They are becoming more business entertainment oriented. People tend to want more sensational type stories. These kinds of stories fill up 24/7. So I think it's very much a global model and that is a

problem because we are largely agrarian still and we still have a lot of basic problems. And if the media is only reflecting on middle class materialism then it's not reflecting on the society.

Challenge faced the government could face while adopting GNH model?

I think we can achieve to have this model. First of all, I guess the challenge would be convincing media that this is the model and why that is and can actually ensure that their businesses do better. It's just that there is a lack of understanding right now because the media also sort of have not much feeling about what GNH is because they do not understand it and they don't know what impact they can have on our own culture.

## Appendix F

### **Interview with Sonam Phuntsho, Director, Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority (ICT and Media Regulator):**

1. What are the criteria one needs to fulfill to be able to get a broadcast media license from BICMA?

We are not saying at this point of time. We have an Act which is the basis and also that we still do not have a policy guideline from the Ministry except to license but that is not sufficient. If we have to license TV, first thing we have to ensure that there is transparency. We shouldn't be giving license whenever people put up proposals. The Act requires us to do these things openly. So I think what we have to assure before anything else that when we make such an offer, it has to be done publicly so that everybody knows that the government is inviting the expression of interest for people to make an application. Secondly I think we need to provide a format in which they will make their expression of interest, to enable BICMA to assess the interest that has been expressed, whether they are fit persons to start a TV service or not. I think that is required by the Act. So these are some of the basic things that are there in the act which we have to ensure.

Well when I say the fit person it also includes the qualification and so in the expression of interest when we give the format we will also tell them the criteria to meet while obtaining a license. Here I am now preempting anything. There will be certain requirements. I don't know whether you know sometimes people mistake it for some formal degrees and all that but qualification is basically certain competence one must have to be able to make such a proposal. So I think we will have to work on that basis. The media act clearly says that there is no foreign ownership which means anybody who applies will have to be Bhutanese and that I think even without the policy guidelines, it is there in the Act and other laws so I can easily say that foreign ownership is not entertained.

2. How many private companies have applied for a broadcast license so far? And what were the outcomes?

There are applicants but we are not even looking at their proposals because if we try and entertain on that basis then we will make mistakes. Things that we need to do before we start something we will be doing after we start licensing someone. So therefore we are not even looking at the proposals. We have received 5 applications but we have not even looked at what they wrote because that is not what we want to do. We want them to put them in our format not vice versa.

3. What does the terms and conditions of broadcast license consist of and how much does it mention promoting of culture?

Well we don't have any for the TV but for the radio they are licensed for entertainment and entertainment is essentially playing songs. Every private radio stations are for entertainment at the moment but Kuzoo has some component of news and programs. The others have exclusive license for entertainment only so that's why when they have talk show and things like that we tell them not to do as they don't have license for that.

BBS radio is a different issue all together because BBS radio has been there in fact before many of the government agencies, so BBS is anyway a public entity. They have their own code of ethics and things like that which is fairly of international standard but of course once we have our broadcasting policy, even they will have to conform to the new regulations.

At the moment when we license radio stations, there is a terms and conditions provided to them. I think to avoid too many procedures what BICMA has done is to only give entertainment license. So in their terms and conditions it tells them to do entertainment, that's all.

4. Bhutan is bombarded with 45 plus foreign channels which bring in foreign values and culture and Bhutan have only one local TV channel to compete with the huge inflow of foreign channels. How important do you think is to have in place policy/rules and regulations on the program contents of the local broadcasters and even the international broadcasters?



Local content, I think it's the government's desire to increase the local content but the thing is we cannot do our local content for the sake of developing content, it has to be of certain quality and for that I think we need to have some certain policy directives from the government on how do we intend to do that. Once that is there we are here basically to implement. Right now besides the act, we don't have any specific policy directives that these needs to be looked into except to look into the possibility of licensing new TV station. So in terms of content itself we don't have anything but fact of the matter is that we already have rules on content. So if somebody wants to do a production they can do this as long as they follow the general rules on content. I think that some of the regulatory framework is already there in terms of what sort of content you can develop or produce. That is covered in the content rules but in terms of facilitating that is one area which the Ministry can answer.

5. You have a rule on the content of films, what about the contents on broadcast media, such as TV and Radio? What sort of rules do you have on program contents of broadcast media? Which one do you think is more important and needs to be regulated?

On the foreign content, BICMA has not added anything after the new cable operators were licensed. In fact we are following the same content. The number of content may have gone up and down but I think there has not been a major new inserts to the content. From this year we have the cable TV licensing rules in place which requires cable operators who come for renewal of license they will have to give a list of channels they want to show on their cable and we will probably discuss with them if there are certain objections that we have received from the public on some of their contents but of course we will have to do it formally and there should be legitimate complains. This is a legal entity and we will have to do things formally.

Censoring or redubbing foreign content cannot be done by BICMA but if the government tells us to implement with whatever resources is given, we will do it. (need recourses for these kind of things). That sort of a direction has to come from the government.

Well the rules on content are quite generic. It's not just for films. Films are something which has just come up so you can easily relate it to films, but there are also things which apply to print media to broadcast media. We look at it as a general rule which will apply to all.

Both broadcast media and films need to be regulated equally because both are for public viewing.

6. One of the functions of the Regulator is to develop standard of programs, what kind of standard of programs have BICMA created for the broadcast media and what are the challenges faced in implementing those standards?

This we have not looked at yet because somehow the government regulations are always behind the industry. It's only when there is a certain proposals from the industry, the government then starts thinking about it like how to regulate and how to ensure that they do the right way. So that's why some of the complains in the media are valid in the sense that we generally don't budget and I think that's how government functions are designed and how we work, I think because starting from budget to man power because I think for one to do anything we need to have a budget head and one need to have certain expertise within the organization. If you don't have both, I think one don't do it. So I think this is how we plan. I think because of our planning mechanism, our system of planning, we are slightly behind the industry and that is also because of the overall planning mechanism with the government. So in this case we are now coming up with the necessary programming codes and things like that but it will take time.

There are problem because the rule on content was consulted extensively but at that point of time people didn't see the implications, so everybody agreed but now when we implement people have a different point of view and say how can we tell them to do this and not to do that and the find difficulty in following it. So we have to keep telling them that this was a rule developed jointly so therefore we are only implementing what has been agreed. So I think the challenges are because people didn't see the implication at the time of formalizing it.

7. What percent of the standard of program consist of promotion of traditional culture of Bhutan and has the broadcast media been able to perform as per BICMA's standard of program?

I think right now the BBS is doing their best to bring about a balance although there are no regulations for them to do that. They are doing it anyway. We don't have any say in it but I think

when the new terms of licenses come in for the new TV services, then we will have that. But they will have to first propose how much they are willing to have content on the culture and all that. So it is not something that we are going to dictate but it is something they have to propose so that we can work on that basis. Content rule is purely a general rule and includes things that internationally not acceptable. We don't go into culture and all that in that rule. That is something we cannot put it in the content rule.

8. Will it be there in the standard of program?

That is something we have to work with the individual licensees.

9. What about GNH being the guiding principle. Do you apply this concept in the rules?

I am a particle person, I am a regulator. I don't go with concepts and GNH is a concept at the moment and how these concepts are applied in the different programs are something which the promoters or the licensees will have to come up with it in the proposals and we will have to see if there is a balance and that this will be something that will be useful to the public. I respect the concept and its importance in our day to day work but we don't have to sell it every day. We have specific mandates in our Act and we have to follow that.

10. When we talk about Broadcast TV, we also have the cable operators, who according to the terms and conditions of BICMA have to have a local channel along with the other international channels. On what bases are they asked to produce the local channel?

When the cable TV was first introduced one of the conditions was that they must have a local channel. This was there long before BICMA was formed but we are now going to figure out in the new terms and conditions of broadcasting what we should do with this. Right now we cannot do anything because the terms and conditions were given to them much earlier. Once we will license a TV station, we have to do a ruling on the fate of the local channels. For that I think we have to put a proposal to the ministry and they will have to approve.

11. How are they fulfilling the role envisioned by the government in terms of its content?

What percentage of their content according to you is promoting Bhutanese culture?

Well it depends who you ask, if you ask me I really don't know because sometimes our kids love them but for me I don't watch them. A regulator cannot regulate on each content without any feedback. If there is a formal complaint, then we have to work on it. I don't think it is right to make a subjective judgment on what is already approved by the government. It's not our role. Monitoring is something we are required to do but we will not implement or monitor something we are not required to monitor. If there are some content which are prohibited by the rule, those thing we will monitor. That's something people tend to misunderstand. Our role is to basically to ensure that something is implemented as per the law or the rules and also monitor that it is being carried out consistently and not to make our own subjective judgments.

12. How does BICMA conceptualize GNH in broadcast media services?

The way we do it is that when we do an assessment of proposals, we will look at it purely from the mandate given in the act. One is providing the right information to the people, secondly the accessibility to those information through whatever medium and third aspect is to look at programs that promotes the harmony, national security and other things and also ensure that some of the programming are contributing to the education of the general public and of course to entertain people etc. That is something we have to look into. We need to have the right mix, so if we do that then there is GNH. From our side, we look at the different things coming together which will contribute to the overall development of the citizenship. I think that what we would like to focus on and I think GNH will be attained if we do that.

13. Through what strategies does BICMA intend to encourage GNH in the media program development? What has been or are the techniques used to measure the effectiveness of implementing GNH in the Broadcast policy or the broadcast media programs?

This is something which is not in our terms and conditions. Something like this needs to be independently done. If we do this then we will always be biased because this is our area.

14. What do you think the role of BICMA as the regulatory body for ICT and media, should be in GNH society?

For us we are just a technical regulator. Our bible is the Act. We have to go by certain technical specifications that are provided in certain legal framework. Translating the Act and linking it to certain concepts can be done by the policy makers and people who are empowered to make certain policy statements.

15. What is the role of commercial radio according to BICMA?

We don't give a commercial license. They come and tell us they want to do entertainment so we give them. Other things are expensive. To play songs are the cheapest.

## Appendix G

### **Interview with Wangay Dorji, Head, Telecom Department, BICMA:**

1. What are the criteria one needs to fulfill to be able to get a broadcast media license from BICMA? How many private companies have applied for a broadcast license so far?
2. And what were the outcomes?

The overall criteria to obtain a TV license are, since we have an open licensing regime here, we consider the financial aspect to be the most important followed by technical aspect. Financial aspect is important because we would like genuinely interested people to operate the stations because what happens is that when we allow everyone to get a license, then everyone may not start the services. From my personal feeling financial aspect is the most important criteria and after that it's the technology. We have to see what sort of technology they are going to deploy because now there is a transition from analog to a digital system. If somebody comes and wants with only analog system then it might not serve the purpose because later on they might have to migrate to digital which may involve lot of cost again. They third aspect we will consider and look at is the ethic and professionalism concept such as the structure of the organization (individual owned or a joint venture). This is important because we want the broadcast media to be independent of any interference. The Act also requires the media to function in a very independent way. We also look at whether the person or the group who is applying has any affiliation with the political parties. Right now in Bhutan even though we don't have a direct policy which say that media cannot be owned by people affiliated with political parties, as a regulatory body we don't want such cases where they can use media as a propaganda forum.

So far we have received 5 applicants out of which two to three of them have the potential to set up a TV station or get a license. We have already finished the first draft of the application procedure. Before the year ends, I feel that we should be the position to float the expression of interest and people should be able to submit all their details. So if everything turns fine, then it won't take long to issue a license. It is true that there are no policy directives on the broadcast licensing but the Ministry has already given us the go ahead signal. Normally what happens is that there should be a policy on broadcast and the government should also give us a clear

instruction on the requirements one must meet to obtain a license. We have to take the requirement into consideration while reviewing the proposals from the stakeholders. But in principle, the ministry has already given us a green signal and has told us that it should be a open licensing regime. When it comes to criteria, if the government does not give us any requirements, BICMA can come up with its own requirements to issue those licenses and we also have to refer to the foreign direct investment policy where it says that there cannot be a foreign direct investment on the broadcast sectors, so it has to be a purely Bhutanese owned. With this said I think we are in a position to license but at the same time there are few things that we need to clarify with the government. Before we float the expression of interest, BICMA will first have a dialogue with the government on the procedure and get their endorsement. Once there is the endorsement, we can then go ahead with the licensing.

3. What does the terms and conditions of broadcast license consist of and how much does it mention promoting of culture?

Well, like I said we are looking into more technical and financial aspect. Right now the proposal says that we want to evaluate the whole process under 5 categories. First is the financial aspect, then technical, then comes programming, professionalism, the fifth one is what we call the impact assessment report in which the applicants have to submit an essay kind of report where they will mention the benefits they are willing to provide to the people of Bhutan and what sort of programming they are aiming at and what will be their contribution towards promoting GNH which of course includes culture. So these are some of the topics that we have identified that needs to be included in the impact assessment report and based on that we will do the evaluation. Content is of course going to be a critical element because even if we license them we will review their content and make sure that if their content is against the nation or against our culture or if we feel that certain programs which may deteriorate our strong tradition and values, that may we may not allow it. So the content will be a special element we need to check.

4. Bhutan is bombarded with 45 plus foreign channels which bring in foreign values and culture and Bhutan have only one local TV channel to compete with the huge inflow of foreign channels. How important do you think is to have in place policy/rules and regulations on the program contents of the local broadcasters and even the international broadcasters? What measures needs to be done?

I think it is very important to have standards or regulation even on the foreign channels but again what we have to see is whether we are in a position to bring up such regulations and implement it because here in Bhutan by virtue we are a small market and if we want to do such things it will cost a lot and when the cost is high, ultimately it is the end users/consumers who has to pay and right now our users may not be in a position to pay for all this.

We are right now battling the foreign invasion as we have only one local TV station and that the reason why we are looking at opening up more Bhutanese TV stations. If we have more local stations, gradually our local content will improve and when they do, I am sure people will change their taste of programs. For instance the recent survey conducted by DOIM clearly indicates that Bhutanese people likes Bhutanese content more than the international content but since BBS has a restricted air time they have no options but to watch other channels. Even now if you take an example of the singing competition program which is shown on BBS, people leave their work to watch it. That shows that Bhutanese people have an affiliation towards our own content and one way of countering the foreign content would be promoting our own local content and that will be done by licensing local broadcasters so they have a platform to showcase our own content. Right now what happens is since we have only BBS TV, it is difficult for people to use their platform to showcase their product because firstly being a monopoly they charge quite a lot, secondly they have their own policy where they are not allowed to entertain more commercial activities. But once the private stations are licensed, they will provide more platforms for contents which are desirable by the Bhutanese people. So in competing among themselves, they will be providing lot of local content and also improving on them. But at the moment it is quite difficult to counter the foreign content invasion.

5. You have a rule on the content of films, what about the contents on broadcast media, such as TV and Radio? What sort of rules do you have on program contents of broadcast media? Which one do you think is more important and needs to be regulated?

At present we have no regulation on the foreign content but like I said once we have our own local TV stations, things can be looked into it. Then we can see how best we can regulate. You know one way of regulating the foreign channels will be to download all their signals inside Bhutan and then retransmit so that all these commercial activities which is not required for Bhutanese audience can be filtered out and can be replaced by those content which is required



for the people here. Of course we have thought of setting up such facilities but what matters at the end of the day is the cost and right now we are not in the position to bear that cost. Gradually I am sure in future we might adopt such technology.

6. One of the functions of the Regulator is to develop standard of programs, what kind of standard of programs have BICMA created for the broadcast media and what are the challenges faced in implementing those standards?

Both film and broadcast are equally important because both are reaching the general market. We don't have a specific programming rules on broadcasting but certain aspects of content programming is already taken care in the rules on content such as what has to be done in providing a content or while advertising. We have also mentioned that if a program is not desirable to be watched by the people especially young children, then there will be consequences etc. so in general we have rules on content. But again once we license the TV stations we will have to come up with more specific programming codes for the broadcasters.

The DoIM will be working on the standard of programs and once it is done then we will adopt it but if DoIM doesn't come up with it then before we finalize the whole process, we will have to work on the standard of programming.

7. What percent of the standard of program consist of promotion of traditional culture of Bhutan and has the broadcast media been able to perform as per BICMA's standard of program?

In terms of percentage, 50% of our general rules touch on culture and if the two clients who are following this rule are the broadcasters and the film industry. If you look at the broadcasters especially the TV, they are living up to our expectation because we can see that most of their programs are targeted towards promoting the culture, or history, values and our development concepts. If we look from the radio point of view, things are different. Radio is more commercial which actually does not promote much of our culture and values. Films are promoting our culture and values but with lot of innovations and film industry is one industry where a lot of innovation is required in order to sustain themselves.

Culture and tradition is evolving. If we look at culture 10 years before must have been totally different from now. The concept of culture keeps changing. There are radio stations which are purely commercial but there are radio stations which are also serious like the BBS radio. They

promote more of our folk songs which is also our tradition. The others are more into the modern songs but they are also innovation of our traditional songs which are made to meet the taste of their audience. So we can see a gradual change in our culture but what is important is that the core of everything is that it is Bhutanese.

8. When we talk about Broadcast TV, we also have the cable operators, who according to the terms and conditions of BICMA have to have a local channel along with the other international channels. On what bases are they asked to produce the local channel?

Initially in 1999 when the cable TV was introduced, the government felt that there was a need to balance the content coming from outside. So they asked the cable operators to come up with a local channel but the noble objective of the government was never translated meaning the cable operators were not in the position to come up with their own content or buy good local content. So what they did was they went to the schools and shot school concerts, went to tsechu and recorded the process etc. and showcase in the channel, so in that way the whole purpose was defeated.

9. How are they fulfilling the role envisioned by the government in terms of its content?

Comparing to years before, they are not gearing towards fulfilling the government's vision. One way of promoting our own local content through the cable system is that we have to change the whole process of the cable system. Right now the cable system is based on a whole analog system. So they do not have much control over the content. So what we are trying to do is to see if it is possible to convert that into digital format, a conditional access system whereby they can have their content in the server and people can choose what content to buy. That way the cable operators will be in a position to customize the product for the end users. And we can do that then there will be lot of potential in a way where Bhutanese content can be promoted and there will also be lot of opportunities for the content provider to come up with lot of local content to sell to the cable operators on a cost sharing basis so that their products can also be sold through the cable network system. So if we can do that they will also be in a position to support and promote local content but if we still stick with the analog system, it will be difficult.

10. What percentage of their content according to you is promoting Bhutanese culture?

The local channels right now is not promoting Bhutanese culture at all. I would say less than 1%. Once the TV stations are licensed and if the trend in the local channels remains the same, there is high probability that they will be lifted because right now they don't have a broadcasting license. We only allow them to rebroadcast because there is no medium for Bhutanese content to be showcased especially the films. We were requested by the film industry that the only network they can advertise their films is the cable channels because they cannot afford BBS airspace plus they restrict themselves from having too much commercial activities. So based on their request, we have still kept the local channels. But the moment we have licensed the broadcasters we have to look into the process and see what we can do because right now the content they provide is really not worth being watched. So we have to look in terms of having good content instead of bad content.

11. What do you think the role of BICMA as the regulatory body for ICT and media, should be in GNH society?

Our role as a regulator, what is more important is to make the ICT and Media services accessible by all Bhutanese people. This is the role we contribute towards promoting GNH. When people have accessibility to information, media, entertainment then we attain GNH

## Appendix H

### **Interview with Kesang, GM, BBS Radio:**

1. What is the current program schedule followed by BBS Radio and how are the time slots divided?

Right now we go 16 hours on air every day in four languages. From 6 am till 9 am we have Dzongkha and we always emphasize on Dzongkha because first it is the national language a language which is understood by everyone at the same time we have the obligations to go into other regional languages. Sharchop we give 3 hours of the 16 hours, English is also 3 hours and Lhotsam we give 2 hours. So, Dzongkha is 8 hours as we give more emphasis on it especially during the peak hours or the prime time. As for scheduling right now Dzongkha is taking the center stage and we gave all the prime time space to Dzongkha because the maximum listenership is in Dzongkha. As for English we really can't target the audience because of the one channel problem, we have to spread different languages over one channel. Lhotsam, we have audience but it's a small number. One of the main reasons why we do most of our programming in Dzongkha is because the audience for radio is basically the rural population which consists of 70% of the population and also Sharchop too and both of them are the most important language right now. English is also a very important but right now because of our current scheduling we cannot get much audience. The reason is also because since we cannot put same languages at the same time, the timing for English is from morning 11 am which is totally off the track if we talk in terms of audience because English is listened to mostly by the civil servants and students who at that time will be at work and school. In the afternoon at 2 pm when we play English, again there are no people to listen to. The third scheduling comes by 9 pm where people are either glued to TV or sleeping.

1. From the program schedule, how much time is given for entertainment and how much time is given for serious programs?
2. According to BBS, what does serious programs consist of and what comes under entertainment?

Serious programs are issued based such as current affairs, panel discussions, political and legal related programs, good governance which is corruption, and educational programs like health, agriculture etc. Entertainment genre is basically music, drama, talk shows with singers and actors etc. and when we talk about drama, it also comes under programs which is educational, culture based etc.

3. What percentage of the music slots consists of Dzongkha and regional songs?

I would say that all the songs are played are Dzongkha even in the Sharchop section and Lhosampa has Nepali songs. So they have two hours in a day and if it is an entertainment slot, they play only Lhosampa songs. It's equal if you go by the time slots. But if you take in only the time, then Dzongkha dominates the songs slots.

4. What are the objectives and mandates of BBS radio?

5. What are the challenges faced by the organization in implementing those mandates?

Over all the BBS's mandate it towards an informed society. For the radio, we are using the three mandates to inform, entertain and educate the people. Why we are still doing that is because ours is totally rural based, targeted toward rural audience who doesn't read or write and who doesn't have access to TV and other forms of media. We will always focus on the rural population of Bhutan and the problem with us now is reaching to the people. Transmission is one big problem. We go on FM through put the nation but the nature of transmission is such that of you behind the leeward area, it is very difficult to get the transmission. We have been trying to intensify but we always say that FM is 100% but no, it can't be. So the reach is not 100%. We have a short wave but because of the technical problems, short wave doesn't not reach early morning and late evenings in winters and also during the summers because of the rains, tower destructions and all that. So these are the challenges in terms of dissemination and in terms of content production, human resource is a big challenge. People come in fresh from college and there are no training centers here. So we have no professionals and professionalizing is a big problem.

6. What kind of support do you get from the government for program development especially on cultural promotion?

We don't get subsidies from the government specifically for cultural program development especially because BBS is fully funded by the government. How we use the fund in content production is up to us and the editorial decision is left up to us. We have our own in house code of conduct which the reporters and journalist have to abide by.

7. How would you compare BBS with other radio stations? What makes BBS different?

BBS radio is different because we give news, programs which are educational, awareness everything but when it comes to FM radio, right now it's all music. They are just totally entertainment focused. BBS just cannot do that because we have a different role to educate people, create awareness and to national culture and etiquette etc. so in a way that's that difference. Other difference would be that BBS is nationwide while the FM stations aren't. Kuzoo is nationwide but if you look at it, it is only in the urban areas and their focus is complete commercialism. We don't do commercials right now. We just do notifications and public announcements.

8. When you were given the license to operate BBS radio, what were the terms and conditions or guidelines provided by BICMA?
9. What are the challenges faced by BBS in abiding by the guidelines.

The government has provided some sort of guidelines and our main role is to promote our culture, language and life of Bhutanese. We should not deviate from that. Once you are granted a license, it is understandable that the national media is supposed to do all the above role. It is an unwritten kind of a law actually. We don't have any challenges while abiding by the terms of conditions from BICMA because it mainly comes as a terms of reference and not really as guidelines. We have the Act to provide the guidelines. Right now we are proposing to become a public service broadcaster and the proposal is under consideration.

10. Do you think that BBS Radio has achieved most of its objectives so far?

11. What has been difficult?

12. What are the current challenges faced by BBS in its operation?

We are doing fairly ok in achieving our objectives because what we are supposed to do, we are fulfilling looking at the types of genre we are doing in terms of programs and even in terms of coverage. In the past three months we covered all the 205 geogs with programs, news stories, bringing voices from all parts of the country etc. we have 1500 chewogs (blocks) and we even went into those in providing the programming. So that means, we have diversity of listenership is there and almost 90% of the people listen to BBS radio according to the 2008 media impact study. We also target the youth. If you look at the schedule, you will find that there are a lot of youth program. Now, the thing is that it is not just to produce a program for the youth but the program has to be about the youth and to blend all the culture, tradition etc., into programs which is targeted at youth is not ok unless you package it in a different way which people will listen to. Unless we can't do that I don't think we can lure our youth. They need to appreciate it themselves. If they don't get the sense I don't think the programs will do for them and support us. Even Dzongkha , we had a debate on TV and radio both, people are saying that Dzongkha should not be the medium of instruction because English is more creative, more easy to learn etc., so these are the kind of findings you will get during the panel discussions. So having known all these, the question is how you go about. It's all about packaging now. Is about how will BBS sell culture and traditional programs to the youth in order for them to like it and embrace it. For this we really require professionalism, creativity etc. which we are little bit behind but we are fast picking up. For example, we have a program in English which is called the "generation me" where the producer brings in a youth, bands, drug addicts etc. where they sing songs, do everything they want. And a senior person is also brought in who is knowledgeable put together with these people and while the youth talks about rock and roll music, he comes in with inputs from our culture and traditional side. So it's all about packaging.

13. What are the future plans of BBS Radio?

Public service broadcasting is a whole plan for BBS but for radio because of the problems I told you we were facing with one channel and scheduling, we are now planning for a second frequency, totally in the national language. The other three languages will come on the other frequency which will go on for 12 hours. That means that there will be more time for different kinds of programming. So this is the first priority. The second priority is still improving on the quality of the programming, packaging. We are also looking at involving people with us more than before if we want them to listen to us. I am also thinking making use of the new media where I can put all the programs online to expand the listenership.

In terms of improving human resource, the government gives us the budget to buy capital assets (equipment) and they give us operation budget which includes program production, sending people for training etc., so there is no HRD budget. In terms of the human resource, the lack of professionalism also comes because of lack of exposure.



## Appendix I

### **Interview with Kencho Tshering, GM, Kuzoo FM (English):**

1. What is the current program schedule followed by Kuzoo and how are the time slots divided?

We have the early bird which starts from 6.30 am show followed by the breakfast show, then contemporary hit radio hour, in the afternoon, we have a new show which is called the genre show, followed by the evening drive show, and we have talk show from 6-7 in the evening which is then followed by the two hours request show (heart to heart show) from 7-9 pm and from 9-10 pm we have golden oldies. Each show is for two hours but all of these shows are on hold right now because of the recruitment process we are going through. We have less staff and we are operating the radio with part timers for the time being.

2. From the program schedule, how much time is given for entertainment and how much time is given for serious programs?
3. What percentage of the music slots consists of Dzongkha and regional songs?
4. According to Kuzoo, what does serious programs consists of and what comes under entertainment?

In all the shows we play music so by default everything is entertainment in a way. We try to concentrate on the details of songs and artist. We have a show called sing along where we give opportunity for callers to sing and also give them an opportunity to win a prize. And we give in announcements in between, advertisements from government and different commercial houses. We charge for the advertisements but for some we don't especially with organizations we have partnership for different reasons.

Basically, our radio is more to educate and entertain. We have talk shows for youth called the voices of the youth, where they volunteer and experience how is it in the radio, and we talk on various topics related to youth such as drugs , alcohol, dating and fun topic etc., we also had

people call in to participate in these discussions. We did this for three long months every Saturdays. So, this can be regarded as a serious program. Talking to government head on different issues, bringing a doctor in the studio to explain to people on health related issues etc., would be serious issues. We used to have this show called the specialist hour where we talked about politics, on new organizations, social issues etc. we also used to do a quiz show on various topics such as science, literature, art, game, current affairs, etc., every Sundays.

5. What are the objectives and mandates of Kuzoo FM?

6. What are the challenges faced by the organization in implementing those mandates?

Kuzoo started with the main motto to be the voice of the youth or for the youth of Bhutan, mostly to be an entertainment and a discussion forum where the whole youth of Bhutan come together. What we were able to achieve is that Kuzoo has now become a family to the listeners. We have annual gatherings where people from as far as the east come to join and celebrate with people from all parts of the country here in Thimphu.

Budget is not a problem, the five years of our existence is because of the smooth functioning of our financial structure. We have organizations like the Bhutan media foundation, which will be now responsible for all the funding for the capacity building. The process further would be for us to not being an autonomous agency and start being a civil society organization (CSO) where there will be funding from international organizations. These are some plans in the process. Right now we have decent revenue from marketing but we have still not reached a level for us to stand on our own feet. You can say that we have not been able to tap the full potential as of yet.

7. What kind of support do you get from the government for program development especially on cultural promotion?

We do get support from the government in terms of cultural promotion. The Dzongkha department has been supported by the DDC (Dzongkha Development Commission) in terms of the Dzongkha terminology contest. We are also planning to implement it in English. We are already in some kind of a partnership with them in terms of some shows where they fund and we get certain programs done for them. Through radios we share what are the right words to be used

in Dzongkha basically to improve the language. But mostly we do it in mutual understanding for the benefit for the general public. We get support from the government (MOIC) in terms of human development such as training and further studies. We also get to go for workshops specifically for program production. These kinds of help from the government really help us to learn and understand more on what we need to be doing as a broadcaster.

8. How would you compare Kuzoo FM with other radio stations? What makes Kuzoo different?

Our mandates are totally different from the other private radio stations. If we go by the preamble, we do not have any commercial inclination but of course when it comes to the case of survival, we the marketing as the main force. The other difference I feel we have is that Kuzoo although can be listen to by any age group, we are more youth centric. The reach we have also makes us different from the rest of the private stations. We also have two frequencies where people can choose which stations to opt for. If people are not comfortable with Dzongkha, the can switch to the English station and then vice versa but the other stations have only one frequency and they mix both English and Dzongkha. We are trying to follow BICMA's advice on not using "Dzoglish" very strictly now. There might be some incidences where the RJ messed up but we try as much as we could.

9. When you were given the license to operate Kuzoo FM, what were the terms and conditions or guidelines provided by BICMA?
10. What are the challenges faced by Kuzoo in abiding by the guidelines.

Whether we have a license with BICMA or not, I think we have this understanding that we follow the guidelines. That way we are structured around BICMA.

11. Do you think that Kuzoo has achieved most of its objectives so far? What has been difficult?
12. What are the current challenges faced by Kuzoo in its operation?

The Problems we are facing right now is shortage of staffs. Without enough staff members we cannot have consistency in program productions. We have part timers coming in but it is difficult to coordinate with them as they have other priorities. We need permanent people working here.

After the breakfast show which is only music, we have a program called the word of the day which is more educational. We have a well know personality, Bhutan's first women writer who comes in with a new word with meaning etc. so that people can learn. We also have a program called the wisdom bites which is on Buddhist religion and all that which goes on for few minutes. We also have programs called know your culture, GNH etc.

### 13. What are the future plans of Kuzoo FM?

We are also looking at having Kuzoo clubs across the country where we can have youth from different places to come together to interact with each other; do some voluntary social work and other youth activities. Our main aim was to expand our reach and we have already achieved it. We are also in the process of improving our content of programs so that we can live up to the levels expected from us by the government and the people.

## Appendix J

### **Interview with Phub Gyeltshen, GM, Kuzoo FM (Dzonghka):**

1. What is the current program schedule followed by the station and how are the time slots divided?

From 6.30 am till 8.30 am, we have the call in shows where people request for songs and send messages to their loved ones. 8.30 to 10 am, we have a show called the Thungtuthungtu Karmao's program which is a love program where we have only romantic songs played. 10-11 we have the request show, where people write to us and then we read out the letters. This is actually initiated because today we can see that writing letters is diminishing and at the same time, people are forgetting to write especially in Dzongkha. So we wanted to keep this writing tradition alive. In this show we accept only the letters written by hand but it is received through either fax or by post. Some people come all the way up to our station to reach the letters personally. From 12noon -1 pm, we play Bhutanese songs which are influenced by rock songs. From 1-3 pm, we again have request show. From 3-4.30, we have a show where we play zhungdra and boedra, our own traditional songs. From 4.30-6 pm is where we give our audience the opportunity to sing and give them a platform to showcase their singing talents. This is done through the phone. From 6-8 we have the music program where we play only patriotic and religious songs. And from 8-10 we again have request show. So this is done every day but sometimes we have package programs which we produce and then play on Mondays from 7.30 and finishing depending on the length of the programming. And on Tuesday, we have the Rangshigi natang which is given about 25 minutes, starting from 7.30 pm. On Wednesday, we have a show called Na gi aum, which is based on women issues talking about women and their role in the society as a strong personality. Thursday we have a show called the Lamsel, which is based on our traditional way of living. Similar to this program, on Saturdays we have a program on Lozay rigsel. We go around the country, meet with the elders ask them about the earlier days in Bhutan, learn old poems from them, and other stories so that we bring back to the studio and disseminate the information we get. This is done mainly to keep our tradition alive among the people of today. We also have a program where our own anchor or RJ read out educational books, old Bhutanese stories, Historical books etc. We also have a program on general

knowledge. Whatever questions we ask, the audience has to give the right answer. We have programs on health as well where we call in doctors and discuss on health issues and make people to participate as well. We have a program where we read books written by our people. We have a program on different pilgrimage places where we talk about the sacred and holy places around the country. We also have a program called Dangphu Denphu, which where we narrate old and traditional popular stories. In this show we call in kindergarten and school students and we tell the stories to them along with the other listeners. We also ask them to tell stories which they have learnt from their parents or other elders. So the children also interact with the listeners through the phone. On Sundays we have a show called nazhoen lamten, which is based on youth related issues. Youth are always the vulnerable group to be swayed by anything. So we thought that we should bring out teachers for them to show the right path. Therefore, we call in people from various fields like from the monk body, teachers and let them talk about the right way to life. On Mondays we also have a show where we call in the youth and make them interact with each other through singing, reciting poems, etc. So this is the whole program of Kuzoo Dzonghka.

2. From the program schedule, how much time is given for entertainment and how much time is given for serious programs?

If we talk about the programs, I would say that most of our programs come under entertainment. The only time we have serious programs is during the evenings from 6-8 pm every day and also during the morning when we have religious programs right before we start the kuzuzangpo show. This program is very helpful to the people. Other than that the rest of the timings it is mostly request shows and music which can come under entertainment. We also have on Sundays a show on the Bhutanese movies where we call in people related to the movie industry and interact with them.

3. What percentage of the music slots consists of Dzongkha and regional songs?

If we look at the percentage of the songs we play in terms of its genre, about 70% of what we play are the contemporary Bhutanese songs because most of the time when we ask people for the requested song, they go for the newest songs from the newest movies. Looking at the importance of promoting and protecting our culture as one of the pillars of GNH, we are now thinking that

that the best way to promote our traditional songs like boedra and zhungdra is to come up with three different slots for music request where we can strictly play all three types of genres. Right now we have not done it yet but we are planning to implement it soon. I feel that if we don't have someone to control, they will go only for more fun.

Comparing to before listeners of boedra and zhungdra has been increasing because before during the singing show, many people liked singing rigser songs but because we have been giving importance to the traditional songs by playing the traditional songs during the given slot whether they like it or not, that's how they learnt and took the interest, so people have started liking it.

4. What are the challenges faced by the organization?

For the Dzongkha station the biggest challenge has been on getting relevant people to speak on the important shows we have, like on environment, health etc. It's difficult to get people on the shows. We also don't have enough people to work on programs. Most of the people we have are part timers and because they are mostly class 12 passed, even with their interest, they cannot make good programs. So we don't have many experienced people.

5. What kind of support do you get from the government for program development especially on cultural promotion?

From the DDC we have been getting support and financial assistance for the Dzongkha promotion and development which is also part of the culture but in terms of other cultural program development, we haven't received much assistance.

6. How would you compare the station with other radio stations? What makes it different?

The difference between Kuzoo and other radio stations is we have kept names of the radio jokey based on the old Bhutanese story characters which make people remember the story characters. We also create a Kuzoo family among the Kuzoo listeners and participants who also like to get their virtual names from the station and interact with each other. Many of the participants have built relationship within themselves on air. Therefore we also had a grand picnic for the listeners at the Kuzoo station. In the picnic we organized, people from as far as Trashigang (east of Bhutan) came and participated. Apart from this what we also do is that we try to help people

Speak pure Dzongkha when they are on air especially during the call in shows where we try to correct them with their word if they use English and Dzongkha mixed.

7. What are the future plans of the station?

If we have enough people, we would like to take more initiatives on the youth programs. We have no problem with our reach, so we are also thinking of making programs in line with the development programs of the government and also to help the general public with issues concerning them.



## Appendix K

### **Interview with Kinley Wangchuk, Managing Director, Radio Valley:**

1. What is the current program schedule followed by the station and how are the time slots divided?

Our current program schedule is designed as per the listening habits of the residents of Thimphu. Our adult shows are mostly clustered around the time when people are driving to work, driving for lunch and driving back home. The programs for the youth are in the late evenings, during dinner time and after dinner. We have a lot of music programs, talk shows, call in request shows, trivia shows, cultural shows etc. Most of our shows are entertainment oriented.

2. From the program schedule, how much time is given for entertainment and how much time is given for serious programs?

95% is given for entertainment and the rest for other programs such as announcements, ads and others.

3. What percentage of the music slots consists of Dzongkha and regional songs?

Now, as much as 50% is given to Dzongkha and regional songs

4. According to the station, what does serious programs consists of and what comes under entertainment?

Information that is forced upon the listeners would be categorized under serious programs, including campaign messages and announcements from various government and non-government organizations. Whereas talk shows, trivia shows and other shows where a lot of educative and informative materials are aired are considered entertainment. Although we do have programs through which we address serious issues and matters but we try not to make people feel like school students by airing very serious educative programs.

5. What are the objectives and mandates of the station? What are the challenges faced by the organization in implementing those mandates?

Our objective and mandate as a radio station is to make our station sustainable by giving the listeners what they want to listen to. People want the latest hit songs to be aired (both local and western); we try our best to give them that. People like Humor; we try to give them that. People want us to address social and political issues; we try to give them that. Now as a radio station, it is our responsibility to educate and inform, to inculcate the age old Bhutanese values, to promote our tradition and culture, to be sensitive to national security and to most of all, to make people be able to think for themselves and decide for themselves. Challenges are many. We would love to employ the best of people to achieve our objectives through quality programs but cannot afford to hire them due to limited income. We would love to get our signal nationwide but the return on such an investment is going to be poor. The regulatory authority, BICMA stands as an obstacle as they cannot comprehend our vision nor have faith in us as a private media. Most people would choose entertainment over a boring program, even if it is addressing a serious subject. Moreover, people tend to get offended when the intent of a program is forced upon them. We choose to be an entertainment radio station so that we have as many listeners as possible and consequently have more number of lives to educate, inform and empower by incorporating subtle educative, cultural and informative campaigns in the programs. We do not know how much we have achieved in educating, informing and empowering through our entertainment but all of us here at radio valley, especially the radio personalities have been promoting human values, appreciating the good, shunning the bad, sharing our knowledge and experience, celebrating our culture, guiding the youth, questioning the flaws in this democratic systems and making people aware of drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, diseases etc.

6. What kind of support do you get from the government for program development especially on cultural promotion?

Support depends from organization to organization but DOIM has been providing good support for the development of media content. They had funded a radio drama that we had proposed to produce. Recently we wanted to insert a weekly hour long program on how to and why various traditional, cultural and religious happenings as conducted but we did not get cooperation from the Department of Culture to assist us with information and material on the same.

7. How would you compare the station with other radio stations? What makes it different?

Although we started off very different from the conventional way of programming and radio hosting, now there are other radio stations who have borrowed our style of programming and radio hosting. We had been considered the ones who revolutionized radio entertainment in Bhutan and no other radio station can take away the credit of having introduced the very casual style of radio hosting in Dzongkha. Radio Valley is a progressive radio station and we have experimented and introduced many radio shows that are favorable to the Bhutanese market and taste. We have even tried to encourage people sing to karaoke tracks through the phone. We do not think there is any other radio station which is as progressive as us.

8. When you were given the license to operate the station, what were the terms and conditions or guidelines provided by BICMA?

9. What are the challenges faced by the station in abiding by the guidelines?

We were initially not allowed to carry out news only. Currently, our license only allows us to provide us to broadcast music both in Dzongkha and English, Announcements of events and advertisements. This basically leaves us to the mercy of BICMA's interpretation. On those grounds, one of our very popular talk show 'Scoop from Supe' which had been on air from the year we launched in 2007 has been shut down by BICMA with the reason that our license does not cover talk shows.

10. Do you think that station has achieved most of its objectives so far? What has been difficult?

11. What are the current challenges faced by the station in its operation?

We have achieved a lot of our objectives especially in providing healthy entertainment for the youth, guiding the youth and the ignorant and promoting our local music and local stars, the national language, Bhutanese films, Bhutanese values, Local Festivals, Culture and Tradition

We could have done better but due to constrain in the budget to create, design and improvise our old culture and festivals to suit modern taste, we still have a long way to make them as strong and as glamorous as the western and Indian.

The advertisement market is small and it retards the growth and expansion of our station Media is very young and we get a lot of interference from the government and BICMA. Even a

single person's concern is taken too seriously by the government and BICMA and tends to interfere with our programming. We hardly get any advertisement from the Government on which the other media totally depends on. There are hardly any useful people in the market to enhance our radio shows and programs. The ones who are talented are already in jobs and get paid much more than what we can afford.

## Appendix L

### **Interview with Tashi Dorji, GM, BBS TV:**

1. What is the current program schedule followed by BBS TV and how are the time slots divided?
2. From the program schedule, how much time is given for entertainment and how much time is given for serious programs?

The current schedule is of 5 hours, from 6-7 pm is in Dzongkha, 8pm is in English and 9-10 is again Dzongkha and again we have English at 10pm. We start with the news followed by weather advertisements and announcements and then the remaining hour is filled by programs. We also rebroadcast the next morning with an addition of one hour of Buddhism programs where we have prayers.

If you look at the week, after the news announcements, at 9.30 pm, we have the entertainment slot where we have serials and on Sunday because it's a holiday we increase our time by three more hours. Instead of starting at 6pm, we start at 3 pm and from 3-5 it is again entertainment and from 5-6 we fill it up with children programming and apart from that it's mostly educational, documentaries etc.

3. According to BBS, what does serious programs consists of and what comes under entertainment?

According to the audience survey more than 55% of the population consists of the youth, so that is our main target and for that we have children units both in Dzongkha and English, we also have youth units in Dzongkha and English and also for parenting. Parenting basically targets children below the age of 6 years, it basically tips on how to bring up a child. This is a very important component. So the 6 slots are taken by them. While for the children and youth programming, it's more of a magazine format because we know that attention span is much shorter for them. We have this children program called my world which comes on Sundays and for the youth we have the "nazhoen express". For the youth programs we also have a program

called the tutorials which is basically free tuition on air especially for children who are weak in some subjects like math, science, English and we focus more on these subjects as generally children are mostly weak in these subjects. So it's very short segments on different issues linked by an anchor. Then we have the slot for culture and lifestyle in English, where we look at the history and the changing trends, then we have economic and environment looking at developmental activities and we also look after any agriculture related programming in that slot. Then we have the documentary section which is more cultural, where we do profiles of the geogs, monuments like temples and dzongs etc. so these are the serious programs we have.

In the entertainment front, the 9.30 slot which is dedicated to the Bhutanese serials but it is not just for entertainment. These are serials which have a social or serious theme in it. We try to educate people on domestic violence, drug abuse, alcoholism, etc. through the format of entertainment. One that is totally entertainment based is the Sunday movies, where we buy films from the local producers and broadcast it. We also have a call in show called Trowa, which is more entertainment based. This is where people call in and interact with the anchor and make request for songs. Then on Sunday we have Trowa live discussions which is either stereo based or its out on location looking at the latest movie trends, the new releases etc. Also one aspect of entertainment we are looking at is sports. We also have this a reality singing show and one of the mandates of as a public service broadcaster is also to help stimulate and support assistance to the production houses in the market and this show is very popular because basically it's on the theme of American idol and we felt that rather than getting weaned on outside productions, we can actually do something similar adapting to our own environment. It's different in the sense that we have zhundra and boedra, so that in itself is another way to promote our own culture. I think music is the best way to promote our identity and culture so the show has made some impact. Of course rigser is more popular among the people but still it's Bhutanese which is more important. If you remember four five years ago, when we travel by buses or if you travel, we usually listen to Hindi songs but now you see the change. Everybody is listening to Bhutanese songs, which is a very positive point.

#### 4. What are the objectives and mandates of BBS TV?

The mandate of BBS is very simple. As a public service broadcaster, we are basically a platform for the people and it's important especially in a democratic setup that the people's voices are heard and this is something we are doing. The current affairs program are very popular and interactive and we ensure that there is maximum participation by keeping the phone lines open where the people can call in and actually question the decision makers in the panel. So it's basically a bridge between the government and the people and on the other hand we help the government by showcasing the activities that they have done. So it's a two way bridge but more importantly we serve the public and inform and educate them on what is happening in the country and as the only broadcaster we play a very important role. There is this audience survey, done one in 2003 and one in 2008 and we just completed one by ourselves and what we have seen is the emerging trend. In 2003 when we talked of what channel do you watch including the international channels? We were somewhere down on the seventh or eighth position. By 2008 we were number one and it continues to be so even in the most recent survey. We also found out that people watch BBS firstly for news and as far as news is concerned everybody says our news is timely, accurate and credible and that they trust BBS. In comparison to even international news channel, we are more trusted. So to sum it in a nut shell, BBS's mandate is to inform, educate and entertain and I feel we are doing all of that.

5. What are the challenges faced by the organization in implementing those mandates?

One of the biggest challenges that we face is the fact that there is an absence of institutes that teach communications or media. Those who come in normally have a general degree. So this is the challenge as then we have to teach or train them on the job and also while recruiting them, it very difficult to see if they can do the job. So selection it is difficult as we will know the capacity only after they join the work. So this is a challenge because for us to become more professional, we need to have people who have the capacity where they can come up with quality programs. In this way we have to start from the scratch such as training people on the job so its difficult to grow very fast.

6. What kind of support do you get from the government for program development especially on cultural promotion?

The government gives us an annual budget and we divide it up ourselves among the five departments that we have. Again as a corporation, we do not get any budget for human resource development which is another concern that we have. We have been able to go along because of our good relations with international broadcasters. We are members of many international broadcast organizations and they also provide funding for HR development which is how we are able to send people out but otherwise no allocated budget from the government. The government supports with the financial assistance but what is missing there is the HRD.

7. How would you compare BBS TV with the other channels? What makes BBS TV different?

We are quite different from the other cable channels. The advantage that we have is that our focus is national. Nobody else will be able provide Bhutanese news or programs other than BBS. So in that sense there is not much of a competition but on the other hand, the other news channels are watched to be able to be in touch with the outside world. The difference is that here we don't have so much of negative news which are highlighted like the other news channels. I think that news outside thrives on negativity such as terrorism, violence etc. but here not so much although we once in a while have incidences which we report but I feel that we have good balance between more feature based stories and a mix of hard news.

8. When you were given the license to operate BBS TV, what were the terms and conditions or guidelines provided by BICMA?

For terms and conditions, what we have been doing is we have managed to gather and gain experience by looking beyond our borders, broadcasters especially the public service broad service broadcasters. For the news although we don't have a detailed one but we have an editorial guideline and as far as programming is concerned, it's basically based on educating the masses through entertainment as well as documentaries. And that we try to update by doing an audience survey which gives us feedback as to where we are going right, what we need to change or improve. Right now the only written document we have is the Royal edict written by His Majesty in 1992. We have also drafted a charter and submitted to the government and we are waiting for the approval and there it clearly states the mandate of BBS, the role of the



management, financial independence of BBS in order to ensure that we have a separate budget allocated to BBS so that the government of the day will have no influence on us. While drafting the charter we kept in mind the GNH philosophy.

9. How do we make news or programs which promote GNH?

I feel that it is very simple. It has to be fair, it has to be balanced, it should not be bias, and it has to be responsible. Once we do these things, it will go a long way in ensuring transparency in the country and in promoting equity and justice.

10. What are the future plans of BBS TV?

BBS is trying to gear towards going 24/7. Sadly we have been dictated by the development of technology in the media world. Everything is converging now. So our next step is to now go on the web and also see what we can do with the mobile platform. So these are the areas we would be moving towards.

## Appendix M

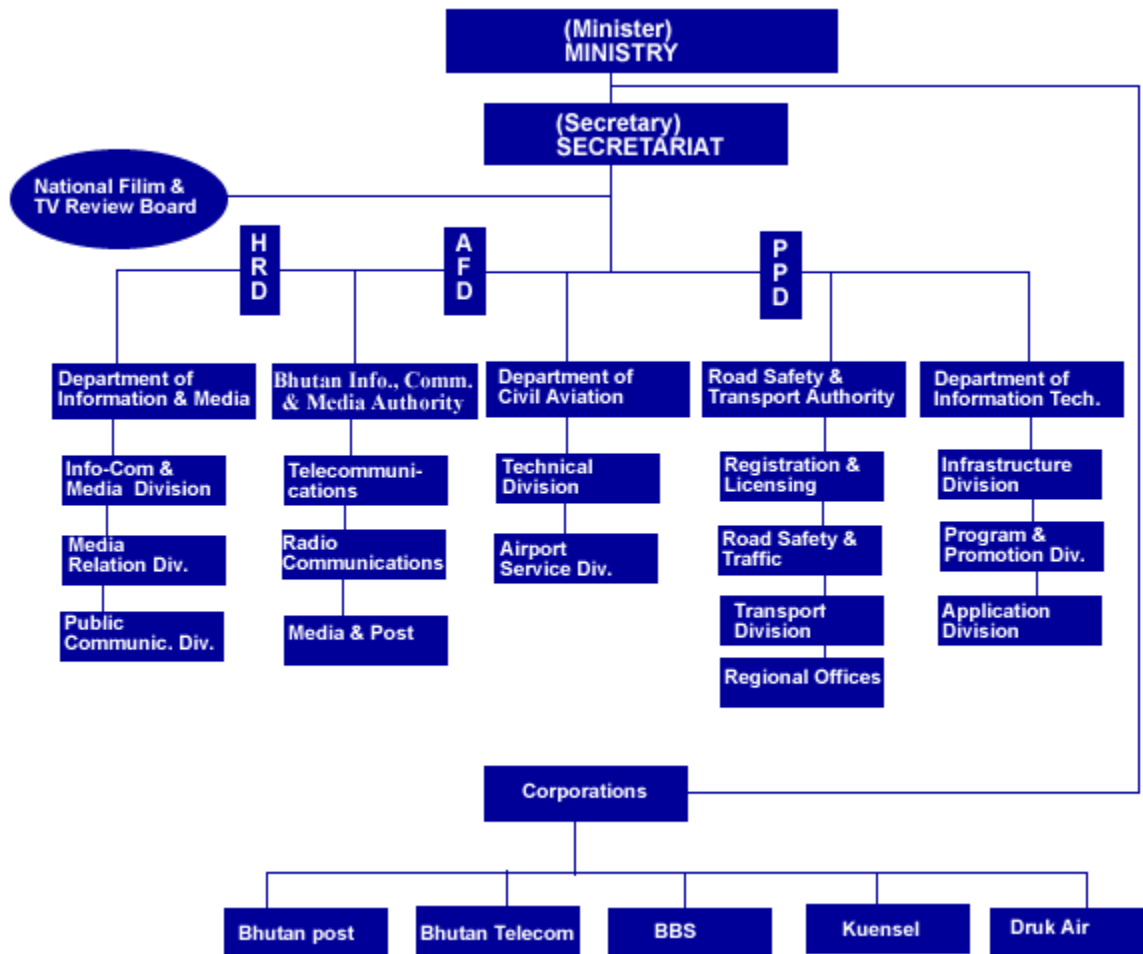
The Nine Domains of GNH according to Center for Bhutan Studies are:

1. Psychological wellbeing
2. Health
3. Time use
4. Education
5. Cultural diversity and resilience
6. Good Governance
7. Community vitality
8. Ecological diversity and resilience
9. Living standard

Retrieved in December 2011 from,

[http://www.grossnationalhappiness.com/docs/GNH/PDFs/Sabina\\_Alkre\\_method.pdf](http://www.grossnationalhappiness.com/docs/GNH/PDFs/Sabina_Alkre_method.pdf)

## Appendix N



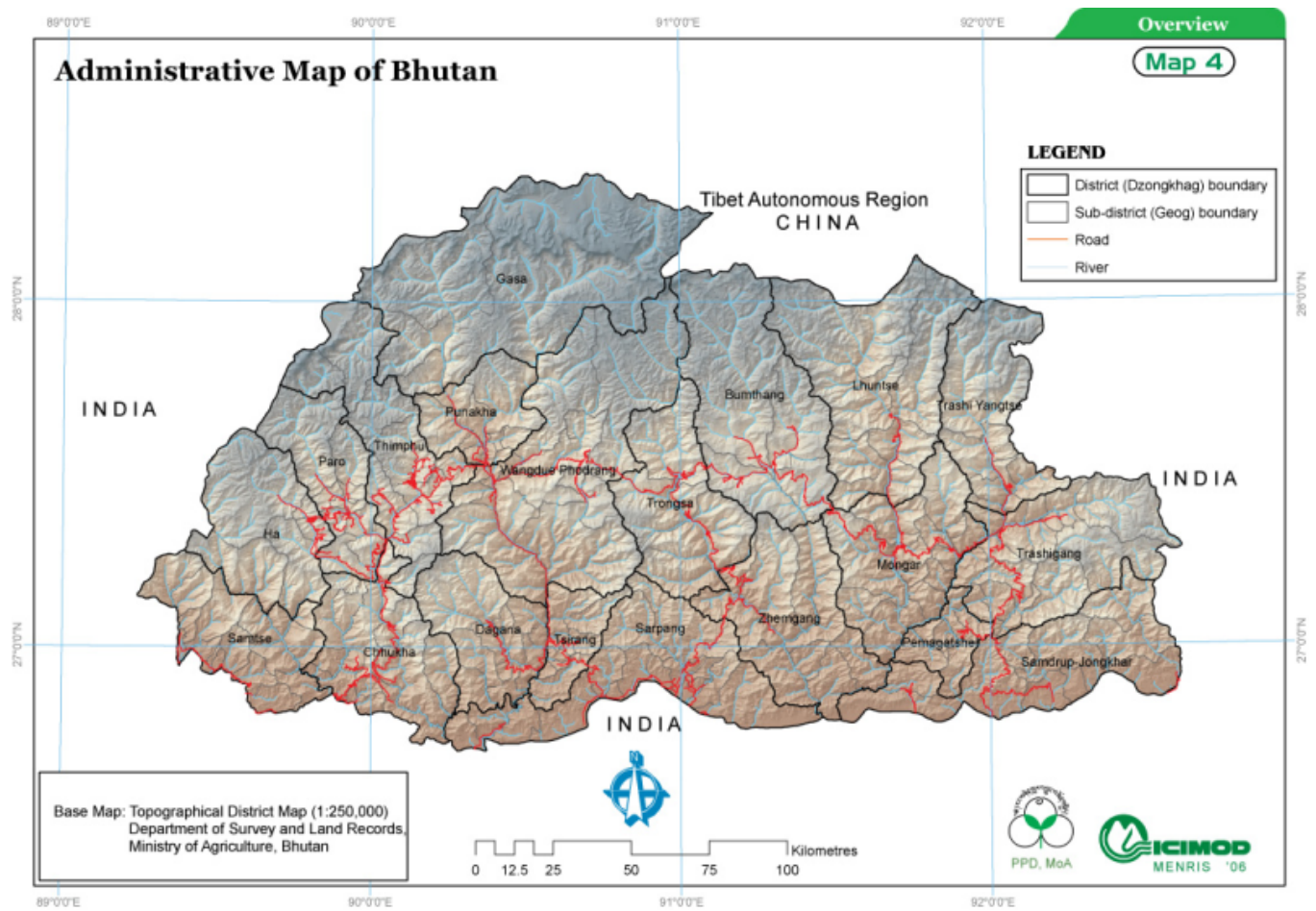
Ministry of Information and Communication Organogram. Retrieved on November 2010 from, [www.moic.gov.bt](http://www.moic.gov.bt)

## Appendix O



Geopolitical position/map of Bhutan. Retrieved on November, 2010 from [pakistanhindupost.blogspot.com](http://pakistanhindupost.blogspot.com)

## Appendix P



Administrative Map of Bhutan. Retrieved in December, 2011 from,  
[http://www.fao.org/geonetwork/srv/en/graphover.show?id=33606&fname=map4\\_administrative.png&access=public](http://www.fao.org/geonetwork/srv/en/graphover.show?id=33606&fname=map4_administrative.png&access=public)

## Appendix Q

BBS Radio Program Schedule. Retrieved December 2011 from, [www.bbs.gov.bt](http://www.bbs.gov.bt)

DZONGKHA SCHEDUEL							
TIME (HRS)	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
0605—0615	Morning Prayer						
0615-0630	Choe-shed (Teachings- Buddhism)						
0630-0635	Zakar/Music/Weather						
0635-0700	Namthar	Sherig	Zhey/Zhem	Sanam	Midey Neythang® (Social Issues)	Zhungdra Music (Traditional Songs)	Boedra
				(Farming/			
				Livestock			
0700-0730	News & Announcements/Zakar/Weather						
0730-0800	Zhungchhong (Good Governance)	Current Affairs	Chha-Yig Khathen (Request Letters)	Drugi Ngeonrab	Women's World	Music (LIVE)	Folk Songs (From Village)
				Zangpo			
				(Culture &			
				Tradition)			
0800-0830	News & Announcements/Zakar/Weather						
0830-0900	Drugi Ngarsel Zangpo	Tserig (Sports)	Chha-Yig	Current Affairs	Tshoe-Se-Gong-Tshe (Vegetable Prices) (LIVE)	Music (LIVE)	Children's Voices
			Khathen				
			(Request Letters)				
1300-1320	News & Announcements						
1330-1400	Lungcho	Lungcho	Lungcho	Lungcho	Lungcho	Call in Show	Dhuenthra

	Neytang	Neytang	Neytang	Neytang	Neytang	(LIVE)	Kudren Layrim
	(P/ling Bureau)	(B/thang Bureau)	(T/gang Bureau)	(Gelephu Bureau)	(Tsirang Bureau)		(Guest of the week)
	(LIVE)	(LIVE)	(LIVE)	Bureau)	(LIVE)		
				(LIVE)			
1700-1730	News & Announcements/Zakar/Weather						
1730-1800	Current Affairs (LIVE)	Current Affairs (LIVE)	Trowa	Drongsep	Thrimzhung	Nazhoen-Youth	Call in Show (LIVE)
			(Singers in Studio)	Gongphel	Layrim		
			(LIVE)	(Rural Dev.)	(LIVE)		
				(LIVE)			
1830-1830	News & Announcements/Zakar/Weather						
1830-1900	Tha-Kor Neythang	Thrimzhung	Trowa	Jangdra Dungtsho	Duenn-Thra	Call in Show (LIVE)	
	(Environm ent	(Series on	(Singers in Studio)	(LIVE)	Nge-Tshuel		
	Matter)	Penal Code)	(LIVE)		Bhutan This Week		
1900-1930	News & Announcements/Zakar/Weather						
1930-2000	Midey Neythang	Callers Singing		Sung Dha	Sanam ®	Call in Show (LIVE)	
	(Social Issues)	(LIVE)		Goedro	Farming/		
				(Folk Stories &	Livestoc k		
				Jokes)			
2000-2030	News & Announcements/Zakar/Weather						
2030-2100	Choe Chog	Callers Singing		Health Matters	Sid-drel Layrim	Call in Show (LIVE)	
		(LIVE)			(Mee the Politician )		
2300-0200	DZONGKHA MUSIC						
0200-0600	Re-Broadcast of Dzongkha Programme						

SHARCHOP SCHEDULE							
TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
0902—0930	News & Announcements Zakar/Weather						
0930-0958	Nazhoen	Sherig	Ranglug	Zhungchhong	Women's World &	Music	
	(Youth)	(Education)	(Culture)	(Good Governance)	Children's Voice	(Call in Show)	
1200-1215	News & Announcements Zakar/Weather						
1215-1230	Light Music						
1230-1258	Sanam	Sowa	Music	Mila Namthar	Current Affairs	Music	
	(Agriculture/ Farming)	(Health Matters)	(Call in Show)	(Drama Series)	(LIVE)	(Call in Show)	
1500-1515	News & Announcements Zakar/Weather						
1515-1558	Tam Da Goedro	Voices of the Poeple	Thrimzhung Series	Choe-Chog	Bhutan This Week	Music	
	(Folk Stories & Jokes)		(Legal Affairs)	(Buddhism Series)		(Call in Show)	
1558-1559	Music & Sign Off						



ENGLISH SCHEDULE							
TIME	MOND AY	TUESD AY	WEDNESD AY	THURSD AY	FRIDAY	SATURD AY	SUND AY
1100—11 20	News & Announcements/Weather						
1120- 1135	Health Tips &	Music (RJ's Selection )	Music	UN Calling Asia	Music	Programm e for Children	Music
	BBC English Learning		Call in Show	(From UN Radio)	Call in Show		Call in Show
1135- 1145	Music			Music			
1400- 1415	News & Announcements/Weather						
1415- 1420	Light Music						
1420- 1445	Focus on Health ®	Topical Tuesday ®	Music	Women's World &	Bhutan This Week	Generatio n Me	Music
			Call in Show	Children's Voices ®	(News, Views & Interview )	(Platform for Youth) ®	(Call in Show)
1445- 1459	Light music						
2100- 2120	News & Announcements/Weather						
2120- 2200	Focus on Health	Topical Tuesday	Music	Women's World &	Drama Series	Generatio n Me	Music
			Call in Show	Children's Voices	(Buddhis m)	(Platform for Youth)	(Call in Show)
2230- 2300	English music						

LHOTSHAM							
TIME	MOND AY	TUESD AY	WEDNESD AY	THURSD AY	FRIDA Y	SATURD AY	SUNDA Y
10:00—10 15	News & Announcements/Weather						

1015-1030	Music						
1030–1035	News in Brief						
1035-1055	Pariya-Varan	Maila ta- tha- Bal Balika	Music	Sahitik Manch	Krishi Kari- Karam	Listeners Choice	Listener s Choice
1055-1059	Music and Sign Off						
1600-1515	News/Announcements/Zakar/Weather						
1615-1630	Lok Geet	Pop Music	Music	Istaniya Sangit	Adunik Geet	Music	
1630-1655	Dzongkh a Learning	Humro Swastha, Humro Prathamika	Music	Current Affairs	Bhutan This Week	Music	
1655-1659	Music and Sign Off						

Note: The Bhutanese words in the program table will be translated in the Glossary at the end of the Appendices.

## Appendix R

BBS TV Program Schedule from 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011 to 10<sup>th</sup> April 2011. (Source: BBS TV Department)

<b>Telecast for 5th April 2011 (Tuesday)</b>						
Time	Tape #	Programme Title	Duration	Proguention Dt./Yr	Producer	Remarks
6:00 PM	No.1	Thrimzhung Larim		2011	Wangchuk Tobgyal	Live
7:00 PM	No.2	Thrimzhung Larim		2011	Wangchuk Tobgyal	Live
8:00 AM	No.3	The Tobacco Debate		2011	Current Affairs	Repeat
	Teaser	My World teaser final		2011	Children Unit	New
	Teaser	Alcohol debate		2011	Current Affairs	New
9:00 PM	No.4	Nima Dawa Ep# 16		2010	Norbulingka Multimedia Production	Repeat
10:00 PM	No.5	Parenting Tips		2011	Phuntsho Choden	Repeat
<b>Telecast for 6th April 2011 (Wednesday)</b>						
6:00 PM	No.1	Gelyong Keyeg	24'40"	2010	Phub Dorji	Archive
	Teaser	Japan Relief Fund		2011	Tshering Dorji	New
7:00 PM	No.2	Panel Discussion on Water Sector (Urban)		2011	Current Affairs	Live
	Teaser	Japan Relief Fund		2011	Tshering Dorji	New
8:00 PM	No.3	Panel Discussion on Water Sector (Urban)		2011	Current Affairs	Live

	Teaser	My World teaser final		2011	Children Unit	New
	Teaser	Alcohol debate		2011	Current Affairs	New
9:00 PM	No.4	Dhu Ngyel Ep# 13		2010	Dolma Picture production	Repeat
	Teaser	Japan Relief Fund		2011	Current Affairs	New
10:00 PM	No.5	A Bicycle Business	28'44"20"	2009	Wangchuk	Archive
	Teaser	My World teaser final		2011	Children Unit	New
	Teaser	Alcohol debate		2011	Current Affairs	New
<b>Telecast for 7th April 2011 (Thursday)</b>						
6:00 PM	NO.1	Gomkora Tshechu	29'50"	2003	Namgay	Archive
	Teaser	Japan relief Fund		2011	Tshering Dorji	New
7:00 PM	No.2	Live Discussion on Alcohol Issues		2011	Current Affairs	Live
	Teaser	Japan relief Fund		2011	Tshering Dorji	New
8:00 PM	No.3	Live Discussion on Alcohol Issues		2011	Current Affairs	Live
	Teaser	My World teaser final		2011	Children Unit	New
9:00 PM	No.4	Sangtaam Ep#15		2010	Kin Den Entertainment	Repeat
	Teaser	Japan relief Fund		2011	Current Affairs	New
10:00 PM	No.5	Jangchub Shing-Sogyal Rimpoche		2011	Karma Dendup	New
	Teaser	My World teaser final		2011	Children Unit	New
<b>Telecast for 8th April 2011 (Friday)</b>						
6:00 PM	No.1	Histroy of Wangdue Dzong	14'10"	2004	Kinga Penjor	Archive

7:00 PM	No.2	Histry of Wangdue Dzung	12'35"	2004	Kinga Penjor	Archive
8:00 PM	No.3	Bhutan This Week		2011	Current Affairs	New
9:00 PM	No.4	Bhutan This Week		2011	Current Affairs	New
10:00 PM	No.5	Pha Dang Bhu EP# 15		2010	Druk Ghi Melong Production	Repeat
<b>Telecast for 9th April 2011 (Saturday)</b>						
3 PM- 5 PM	No.1	Trowa Live call in Show	2 hrs	2011	Tshering Dorji	Live
5 PM- 5.30 PM	No.2	My World EP#	30 mins	2011	Children Unit	New
5.30 PM- 6 PM	No.3	Physis Uncoded EP# 7	30 mins	2011	Youth Unit	Repeat
6:00 PM	No.4	Singye Dzung Part -2	25'58"	2006	Kinga Penjor	Archive
7:00 PM	No.5	Gaki Pelzom gi Zhitsa		2011	DDC	New
8:00 PM	No.6	Press briefing on Local Governance		2011	Tsheltrim Gyeltshen	New
9:00 PM	No.7	Towards Druk Super Star		2011	Tshering Dorji	Repeat
10:00 PM	No.8	Golden youth Camp	23'20"24"	2009	Sonam Phuntsho	Archive
<b>Telecast for 10th April 2011 (Sunday)</b>						
3 PM-5 PM	No.1	Movie- Sungchop Magmi	1hr45mins	2010	BBS Copy Right	Archive
5 PM- 5.30 PM	MTV	Sonam Sonam	5mins30sec		BBS Copy Right	Archive
	MTV	Sem Hing Meto choe	4' 36"		BBS Copy Right	Archive
5.30 PM- 6 PM	No.3	My World My Talent Ep#8	30 mins	2011	Children Unit	New
6:00 PM	No.4	Dungtsho BBS		2011	Wangchuk Tobgyal	Live

7:00 PM	No.5	Dungtsho BBS		2011	Wangchuk Tobgyal	Live
8:00 PM	No.6	Dungtsho BBS		2011	Wangchuk Tobgyal	Live
9:00 PM	No.7	Lets talk about feature film- Jalam Ghi Ashi		2011	Tshering Dorji	Live
10:00 PM	No.8	Meme Haylay Heylay	31'20"	2001	BBS	Archive

## Appendix S

Radio Valley Program Schedule. Retrieved in December 2011 from,  
[http://www.facebook.com/rv99.9?sk=app\\_7146470109](http://www.facebook.com/rv99.9?sk=app_7146470109)

<b>Time</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>
07:00	Rise and Shine!	Rise and Shine!	Rise and Shine!	Rise and Shine!	Rise and Shine!	Rise and Shine!	Rise and Shine!
08:00	The <i>Suja</i> Show	The <i>Suja</i> Show	The <i>Suja</i> Show	The <i>Suja</i> Show	The <i>Suja</i> Show	The <i>Suja</i> Show	Energy Shocks!
08:30	Energy Shocks!	Energy Shocks!	Energy Shocks!	Energy Shocks!	Energy Shocks!	Energy Shocks!	Energy Shocks!
09:30	<i>Taah Yo'e</i>	<i>Taah Yo'e</i>	<i>Taah Yo'e</i>	<i>Taah Yo'e</i>	<i>Taah Yo'e</i>	<i>Taah Yo'e</i>	<i>Duenthra Charzu</i>
10:30	<i>Taah Yo'e</i>	<i>Taah Yo'e</i>	<i>Taah Yo'e</i>	<i>Taah Yo'e</i>	<i>Taah Yo'e</i>	<i>Taah Yo'e</i>	<i>Ema Datsé Blues</i>
11:30	<i>Dhamkha Chabsa!</i> (song request show)	<i>Dhamkha Chabsa!</i>	<i>Dhamkha Chabsa!</i>	<i>Dhamkha Chabsa!</i>	<i>Dhamkha Chabsa!</i>	<i>Dhamkha Chabsa!</i>	<i>Sung Sung Dorji Sung</i>
12:30	Back to Back	Back to Back	Back to Back	Back to Back	Back to Back	RV Top 10	Beautiful Sunday
13:30	Back to Back	Back to Back	Back to Back	Back to Back	Back to Back	Voice Your Choice	Beautiful Sunday
14:30	Back to Back	Back to Back	Back to Back	Back to Back	Back to Back	Music Rocks	Beautiful Sunday
15:30	Country Valley	Rock Valley	World Music	Country Valley	Rock Valley	Cafe Valley	Beautiful Sunday
16:30	G.E. Dasho Benji's	<i>Yoena Mena</i>	<i>Yoena Mena</i>	<i>Yoena Mena</i>	Scoop from Supe	<i>Enna Mena(Eng)</i>	Beautiful Sunday
17:30	Under Current	Under Current	Under Current	Under Current	Under Current	What do we do?	Beautiful Sunday
18:30	Today's	Today's	Today's Hit	Today's Hit	Today's	<i>Yoena Mena</i>	Beautiful

	Hit Music	Hit Music	Music	Music	Hit Music		Sunday
19:30	Artist of the Week	Ema Datsi Blues	Music Rocks!	Cheezy Love	Wit Luv frm Home	Voice your choice	Classic Valley
20:30	Voice your choice	Voice your choice	Voice your choice	Voice your choice	Voice your choice	<i>Mangi Dhamkha</i>	Classic Valley
21:30	<i>Mangi Dhamkha</i>	<i>Mangi Dhamkha</i>	<i>Mangi Dhamkha</i>	<i>Mangi Dhamkha</i>	<i>Mangi Dhamkha</i>	Party Thimphu	Classic Valley
22:30	Today's Hit Music	Today's Hit Music	Retro Valley	Today's Hit Music	Rock Valley	Party Thimphu	Classic Valley
01:00	Hits and Kicks!	Hits and Kicks!	Hits and Kicks!	Hits and Kicks!	Today's Hit Music	Today's Hit Music	Classic Valley



## Appendix T

Kuzoo FM Dzongkha Schedule (Source: Kuzoo FM Dzongkha Department)

	WEEKLY PROGRAMME SCHEDULE				
Sl. No	Programme	Day	Time	Duration	Remarks
1	<i>Rango Rangdrang</i> (Self Sufficiency)	Mon	7.30 pm	25 mins	Package programme
2	<i>Rangzhing Neytang</i> (Environment)	Tue	7.30 pm	25 mins	
3	<i>Phazhing</i> (work and employment)	Wed	7.30 pm	25 mins	
4	<i>Nangee Aum</i> (Women issues)	Thu	7.30 pm	25 mins	
5	<i>Lamsoel</i>	Fri	7.30 pm	25 mins	
6	<i>Lozey Rigtsel</i>	Sat	7.30 pm	25 mins	
	WEEKLY TALK SHOWS AND RECORDED STORIES				
Sl. No	Programme	Day	Time	Duration	Remarks
1	<i>Namthar/Nazhoen Gatoen</i>	Mon	6-7.30 pm	25 mins-1 hr	Recorded and Talk show
2	<i>Karey Karey</i> (GK)	Tue	6.30-7.30 pm	1hr	Live Call in
3	<i>Sowai Laptoen</i> (health)	Wed	6.30-7.30 pm	1hr	Talk Show
4	<i>Densang Gi Soong</i> (Modern Stories)	Thu	6.30-7.30 pm	30 mins	Recorded
5	<i>Neyshed</i> (pilgrimage)	Fri	6.30-7.30 pm	15 mins	Recorded
6	<i>Dangphu Dingphu</i> (Story Telling)	Sat	6.30-7.30 pm	1hr	Talk Show
7	<i>Nazhoen Lamtoen</i> (Youth Counsiling )	Sun	6.30-7.30 pm	1hr	Talk Show
8	<i>Kuzoo Trophel</i> (entertainment)	Sun	10-12 pm	2 hrs	Talk Show
	<b>Daily</b>				
	Roster				

	Programme Name	Time	Programme Type		
	<i>Kuzoozangpo</i>	6.30-8.30 am	Music		
	<i>Thrunghrung Karmo</i>	8.30-10am	Music		
	<i>Kalapinkai Khaten</i>	10-12pm	Request Show and music		
	<i>Zhaphtra Laymo</i>	12-1pm	Music		
	<i>Khujungoenmoi Khaten</i>	1-3pm	Request Show and music		
	<i>Soong dramngyen (Zhungdra and Boedra songs)</i>	3-4.30pm	Singing Competition		
	<i>Soong Kaed</i>	4.30-6pm	Music		
	<i>Yudruk Ngoenmo</i>	6-8pm	Music		
	Live Call IN	8-10pm	Music		

## Appendix U

Kuzoo FM 105 English Schedule. Retrieved in December 2011 from [www.kuzoo.net](http://www.kuzoo.net)

<b>Timings/ Days</b>	<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>TUESDAY</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>SATURDAY</b>	<b>SUNDAY</b>
<b>06:30 – 08:30</b>	<b>Early Bird Show</b>						
6:45	Wisdom Bytes						
7:30	Word of the day						
8:00	<b>Kuzoo Reports</b>						
8:00	<b>Kuzoo Reports</b>	Women Matter	Junior Book Worms	Bhutan Experience	Have your Say (Youth)	Down to Earth	Know your Culture
<b>08:30 – 10:00</b>	<b>Breakfast Show</b>						
<b>8:45</b>	<b>Package Ad's</b>						
9:00	Commentary						
9:15	Word Of The Day						
9:30	Health Capsule	Origin of Sports	Down to Earth	Women Matter	<b>Art Rock (R)</b>	The year That Was	English Window
<b>10:00 – 11:30</b>	<b>Country</b>						
10:30	Word of The day						
<b>11:00</b>	<b>Package Ad's</b>						
<b>11:05</b>	Have your Say (Youth)		The year That Was	A Gentle Voice(R)	Around The World	Kuzoo Buzz	Classic FM
<b>11:30 – 1:00</b>	<b>Modern Rock</b>	<b>Slow Rock</b>	<b>Active Rock</b>	<b>Album Rock</b>	<b>Vintage Rock</b>	<b>Alt Rock</b>	<b>Alt Rock</b>
<b>12:00</b>	Word of the day						
<b>12:15</b>	<b>Package Ad's</b>						
12:30	Know Your Culture	Kuzoo Buzz	English Window		Health Capsule	Origin of Sports	Around The World

1:00-2:30	Contemporary Hit Songs						
1:15	Word of The Day						
1:30	Commentary						
2:00	Package Ad’s						
2:30 – 4:00	Country Time						
2:45	Word Of The Day					<u>Youth Unplugged</u>	
3:00	Package Ad’s					<u>You Call We Play</u>	
3:30	The Year That Was	Are You Happy	Health Capsule	Kuzoo Buzz	Know Your Culture		
4:00 – 6:00	Drive Show						
4:30	Word Of The Day						
5:15	Package Ad’s						
5:30	Kuzoo Reports						
5:35	Down to Earth	Bhutan Experience	Around The World	Origin of Sports	Classic Fm	Junior Bookworms	Women Matter
6:00 – 7:00	A Gentle Voice	Art Rock		Are you happy	Kuzoo Speaks	Sing Along	Kuzoo Quiz
7:00 – 8:30	Heart to Heart						
20:30 – 21:00	English Window	Classic FM	Have your Say		Bhutan Experience	Are You Happy	Health Capsule
9:00-10:00	Down Memory Lane						Jazz & Blues
10:00 – 06:30	Mid Night Shows						

## Glossary of Bhutanese words in the program tables

<i>Densang gee Soong:</i>	New Stories
<i>Dhamkha chabsa:</i>	Choose (Do it)
<i>Dramngyen;</i>	Bhutanese guitar
<i>Duenthra Charzu:</i>	Weekly Review
<i>Ema Datsi:</i>	Traditional Bhutanese dry/green chili curry prepared with cottage cheese.
<i>Enna Mena:</i>	Is it, Is it not
<i>Gatoen:</i>	Celebration
<i>Kalapinkai:</i>	Nightingale
<i>Karey:</i>	Hit
<i>Kedra Chen:</i>	Popular/famous singers
<i>Khathen:</i>	Verbal Message
<i>Khujungoenmoi:</i>	Kuku Bird
<i>Kuzuzangpo:</i>	From of Greeting (wishing good health)
<i>Laptoen:</i>	Explain/Advice
<i>Lamtoen:</i>	Guide
<i>Laymo:</i>	Nice/good
<i>Mangi:</i>	People/Public
<i>Nangee Aum:</i>	Lady Master of the House
<i>Neyshed:</i>	Pilgrimage explanation
<i>Ngoenmo:</i>	Beautiful Blue
<i>Phazhing:</i>	Ancestral Property

<i>Rango Rangdrang:</i>	Self Sufficiency
<i>Rangzhing Neytang:</i>	Environment News
<i>Soong:</i>	Story/tale
<i>Soongkaed:</i>	Melodious voice
<i>Sowai:</i>	Health
<i>Suja:</i>	Butter and salt tea (traditional Bhutanese tea)
<i>Taa Yo'e:</i>	Great Enjoyment
<i>ThrungThrung Karmo:</i>	Crane (white)
<i>Tro-Phel:</i>	To enjoy/ to grow or increase
<i>Yudruk:</i>	Turquoise Dragon
<i>Zhaphtra:</i>	Dance

## **CURRICULUM VITA**

Deki Palden Thinlay was born in Thimphu, Bhutan. The eldest child and the only daughter of Col. Sangay Thinlay and Sonam Dema, she graduated with Bachelor's Honors in Journalism from Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi, India in 2005. In 2006, she joined the Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority, the Regulatory Body for ICT and Media under the Government of Bhutan. In 2009 she was awarded the Royal Government of Bhutan scholarship for her further studies in the U.S. While in the U.S she entered the Graduate school at the University of Texas at El Paso in the fall 2009 where she pursued her Masters in Communications under the College of Liberal Arts.

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