

MI-KHUNG

Media and Democracy in Bhutan

Shining a light on what works in rural Bhutan

BY SIOK SIAN PEK-DORJI
BCMD

New rural voices are emerging in the news media through a media fellowship that aims to report the untold rural stories.

The year-long media fellowships was a culmination of annual media dialogues held in the past three years with support from Fetzer Institute, a US-based non-profit and the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD). The fellowships enabled a cohort of journalists, a blogger and a filmmaker to focus on stories of rural Bhutan to fill an important void in news.

Stories covered ranged from the plight of nomadic people who face impending glacial lake outburst floods

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A stuffed tiger placed in the fields of Lingmithang in Mongar to scare away monkeys. In recent years, stuffed tigers have become a symbol of eastern farmers' resilient response to the wildlife depredation of crops. Photo: Yeshey Dorji

Journalists call for a united fraternity

BY NEEDRUP ZANGPO
BCMD

The participants of Bhutan Media Dialogue 2015 called for better collaboration among the Bhutanese journalists. They agreed that a close-knit journalism community would make the Bhutanese media more organised, united and professional.

Twenty journalists from different media gathered at the Raven's Nest resort in Paro on 23 and 24 May to reflect on and discuss a possible Bhutanese approach to journalism. The dialogue identified the challenges facing the Bhutanese media and explored creative solutions to them.

The journalists pointed out the difficulty in getting information

as a major stumbling block for the Bhutanese media. They said bureaucrats and politicians are reluctant to give information and interviews to journalists. A reporter recounted that he once got an interview only after being directed to the eighth official. Another reporter said the constant "advice" from people to be "careful" about a lot of things makes a journalist "scared to take up issues".

However, the dialogue also explored the stories of possibilities, of hope and opportunity. Among the stories of possibilities is the opportunity for the Bhutanese media to be sensitive to the Bhutanese culture and way of life. The challenges facing journalism

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Shining a light on what works in rural Bhutan

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due to climate change, to communities grappling with alcoholism, and rural-urban migration. Several stories shared ideas on how imperative it is for Bhutan to support the local economy to revitalise farming.

A compelling short film highlighted the courageous story of 95-year-old Meme Tshering who remained rooted to his ancestral home and fended for himself at the end of his days.

The fellowships encouraged journalists to find stories that show the resilience of people despite challenging circumstances and environments. It tested the possibility of journalism to point out not just what has failed, but to shine a light on events, people, places that work in rural Bhutan.

Problems scream and solutions whisper

Global trends show the tendency for news stories to focus on violence, tragedy, dysfunction, and corruption. US advocate for solutions journalism, David Boorstein, describes news reports as a place where “problems scream and solutions whisper”.

San Francisco University’s journalism professor, Jon Funabiki has been facilitating BCMD’s media dialogues. He is piloting ‘restorative narrative’ that encourages media to go deeper into a story and focus on how people move on after tragedies and calamities. This approach attempts to highlight renewal, resilience and recovery in a society.

Here at home, reporters believe that journalism focuses on stories of corruption, and negativities as these stories make it to the front page. “That’s when people take us seriously,” says Pema Namgay, a BBS correspondent in Trashigang. “People call us to report on their grievances and shortcomings in the village.” Editors also tend to send reporters out to investigate “problems”. But there is room for watchdog journalism to exist alongside more constructive stories.

Our fellows made new discoveries from their foray into rural Bhutan.

“It’s difficult to write a story on how people with alcohol problems cope when their life is so terrible. I met many women who are victims of alcoholic husbands,” says Kuensel reporter, Tashi Dema. “I saw how these women pinned their hopes on their children, how they spent their life in misery hoping their children would grow up and make their lives better. Such stories helped me to focus on the positive side of things so that others living in similar conditions would learn from such stories.”

“I was surprised that stories receive more response (from readers) when you tackle them positively,” she adds. Another story that elicited readers’ response was her story on a group of widows in the remote Langdurbi village who coped with life after their husbands perished in a boat mishap.

“The resilience and strength of people living in villages offer inspirations that are hardly reported,” says Gyembo Namgyal, a reporter in Pemagatshel. “Bhutan’s media is essentially urban centric, where a minority of urban dwellers get more attention than the majority rural population.”

“This must change,” says Gyembo. “Media in Bhutan can focus more on rural issues. The strength of our small geographical and demographic size lies with our communities that are the last bastion of our tradition and culture – the only way Bhutan can be identified

in an increasingly globalised world.”

The media fellowship and dialogues also changed the way reporters looked at their subjects and situations.

“Having gone into the field and interacted with people, those who migrated and those who were left behind, I see a more humane side of the (rural-urban) issue and not merely in terms of structures failing because of the pressure created by the state,” says blogger Yeshey Dorji.

Jigme Wangchuk from Kuensel says, “I got to see lot of things – such as cultural differences and the challenges that rural people and community face with and the solutions they seek themselves.”

Former crime reporter, Chenchu Dema, says she always wrote negative stories. “I needed people to read my stories. After hearing from everyone at the media dialogue, I’ve learnt that it’s not about writing a rape story for the front page. How about journalism changing the mindset of people? How can we write about a rape victim so that she can still be a part of society?”

Our media dialogues and fellowships have shown us that the news can move away from projecting every person as a victim of society, and that not everyone is helpless in the face of adversity, calamity or challenge.

We know there are many in Bhutan who have overcome personal challenges and even tragedy – their stories of hope and resilience are waiting to be told.

Share your feedback on Mi-Khung. We encourage readers to contribute articles. Most articles run between 300 and 500 words. Submissions relevant to BCMD’s mission of developing a culture of democracy are welcome.

Please send in your contribution to tnuden@bcmd.bt

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How many is too many?

Civil society matters

BY SIOK SIAN PEK-DORJI
BCMD

“Civil Society Organisations (CSO) are playing an important role in Bhutan’s democracy and have contributed to nation building by complementing the efforts of the government in improving the lives of the people in Bhutan”. That said, in his 2015 state of the nation report, the Prime Minister Lyonchhen Tshering Tobgay also warned that a small country like Bhutan could have too many CSOs that could lead to a duplication of efforts.

Coincidentally, this is a concern recently shared by civil society organisations themselves in a CSO forum. With 47 registered CSOs, people are beginning to question if CSOs are sustainable and if the organisations were indeed duplicating their mandates.

The question, however, is how do you quantify an appropriate number of CSOs in Bhutan? Should the magic number stop at 50, or even 100 CSOs? How many do you need to serve 750,000 people living in 20 districts, each with its own diverse needs?

The concern could be triggered by the proliferation of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the region, some of them being obvious rackets. The founder of Janvikas, a Centre for Social Justice in India, Gagan Sethi, says that people in his country are beginning to lose faith in the ability of the numerous NGOs that do not deliver what the people actually need nor want.

Those of us in the civil society sector are aware of the unhealthy trends connected in an uncontrolled non-profit culture but also know that a modern society is incomplete without well-intentioned non-profits.



Civil Society Dialogue on 7 and 8 October 2014 in Thimphu

Bhutan recognised the importance of CSOs in democratic transition and enacted the Civil Society Act of 2007. The Act describes CSOs as organisations that will fill in the gaps or ‘complement’ the work of government.

A basic tenet of civil society is to provide the space that citizens need to fulfill the responsibilities of citizenship. We learn to associate with others who share similar interests and, in the process, examine our values and work together often to serve the public. A strong civil society shows that people are ready to engage in and take care of issues that hitherto were solely left to the state.

The Civil Society Authority and other agencies have put in place processes to ensure greater accountability and responsibility among CSOs. At this moment in time, we also reflect on how civil society can be more inclusive. How can we create space for people to take charge of themselves and their own interests, and to respond to Bhutan’s various needs and concerns?

While the unhealthy proliferation of CSOs must be controlled, simply

putting a cap on the number of CSOs will throttle the ability of people to learn to exercise their voices and actions. It goes against the very idea of civil society and a democratic space.


We stand to gain from an open policy towards civil society as they give us the opportunity to learn the skills and values of democracy – through the sharing of diverse ideas and through citizen participation that makes engagement in public life rewarding and more sustainable.

“We are all one big civil society with different interests and purposes,” says Tashi Pem, Deputy Country Director from Helvetas, Bhutan. “We need not only the government, but private sector and civil society are also important actors in a democracy. With this balance, they can question each other, collaborate where they can and keep an eye on one another.”

The development of a civil society culture in Bhutan is not different from the development of Bhutan as a country with an ambitious vision. We can learn from societies where non-profits work as well as from those where non-profits do not work.

Essentials tips for a safer password to your online world



How safe is your password? Do you think it is safe and strong?
Here are a few tips to a strong password 



Password: Pema_123@staysafe#

Make passwords eight or more characters long. Longer passwords are harder to crack than shorter ones

Try not to use common words. Include numbers, letters and symbols. Create a password that is unique

Password: pema1992 



Password: 17861760

Don't use your nick names, address or phone number as your password

Sharing your password with friends is not a good idea. Even if you trust them they might unintentionally do something that puts you or your information at risk

 Share password



Change your password every 6 months. This way even if someone knows your password they will not be able to log into your account for long

As an increasing number of children and youth go online, mostly without understanding the cyber world, they risk their personal safety. Therefore, we present this small guide.

HOW CAN CHILDREN AND YOUTH STAY SAFE ONLINE?

Never set your phone number or email address as user name or password on sites like Facebook, Twitter, and WeChat.



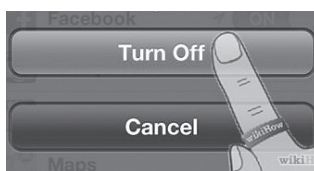
Never give away your internet password to any individual or company in any situation.

Avoid befriending strangers online.

Never share pictures of yourself and your personal information with someone you have met online.



If somebody is flattering you excessively, be careful of him or her.



Turn off the GPS feature on your phone when you are posting pictures and text on the internet. GPS gives out your exact location to potential stalkers.

If you are using somebody's computer or device, log out of the sites you visited immediately after use.



If you feel pressured by someone online – tell your teacher, parent and friend. Close down your service to avoid being “bullied”.

And remember – don't post what you would not want your friends and family to see!

A united industry can push the boundaries



The Bhutanese media managers meet on 26 May 2015 in Thimphu to discuss the challenges and opportunities for the Bhutanese media. From left: Choki Tshomo, the managing director of Kuzoo FM; Gyembo Dorji, the CEO of Gyalchi Sanshok; Prof Jon Funabiki, the resource person.

BY PREMESH CHANDRAN
MALAYSIAKINI

Bhutan is unusual. In the midst of green hills, fresh air and crystal clear rivers, 750,000 people attempt to strive on a path that combines competitive democracy with the serenity of peace and happiness. A journey that accepts the tyranny of a market economy with an ideology of happiness. A nation set to open up to the world, and yet maintain its distinct culture and character.

Perhaps more than any other sector, the Bhutanese media is caught in this contradiction. On one hand, it's called upon to be the watchdog of the young democracy. And on the other, it's expected to keep its 'Bhutanese character' – maintaining harmony and constructive politics. While press laws provide a healthy independence from the state, the media heavily depends on government for advertising revenue. The two main sources of news – the public broadcaster and the main

newspaper are state-owned, although structured as independent from political powers.

A gathering of Bhutanese journalists shared their anxieties and challenges during a two-day dialogue. In a quaint hotel in the scenic town of Paro, nestled under the famed Tiger's Nest, an honest telling of anxieties and newsroom pressures told a story of passion fighting fatigue, of journalistic ideals challenged by budget squeezes. A journalism school inspiring students to tell their stories, a journalist on a 22-day trek to the ice glaciers to find a declining rural sector, left behind as the youth move to the cities, a reporter covering a teenage suicide only to uncover the source of her misery. Real stories, untangled from the political boxing match, a constant against the noisy buzz of social media.

The journalists of this generation will mould the new Bhutan, just as they are moulded by the Bhutan they know. They will record these early

days of Bhutan's democracy, and relate the present with Bhutan's past.

To move forward, Bhutanese journalists and media can recognise their historic role, and unite to establish greater support for the media industry. Journalists should plan two steps ahead, recognising the need for a supportive ecosystem that supports professionalism, revenue, new talent and innovation. A united industry can push the boundaries. There are opportunities in e-commerce, education and entertainment that media can explore to make the industry more viable.

It's been called the happiest place on earth. It's certainly serene and scenic. But as explained to me, happiness is an inner state. No government, no person can give you that. It's a powerful idea, one that moves away from a consumerist society, or dependence on the state. I believe that this generation of Bhutanese has what it takes to move the country forward.

An uplifting encounter with Paro communities

BY TSHEWANG NGEDUP

TEACHER, TARAYTHANG PRIMARY SCHOOL

I have seen news and highlights of community mapping workshop organised by BCMD in the newspapers and social media. This time I got lucky to be a participant in the fourth community mapping workshop.

The community mapping workshop organised by the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy at the Paro College of Education from 1 to 8 July 2015 saw 26 teachers and youth come together for a social cause.

The workshop participants comprised 23 youth, three teachers and three facilitators from the BCMD. It was a gathering of people from places across the country. Meeting with them for the first time, everybody looked a stranger to me. However, it did not take long to know one another.

The first three days of workshop facilitated by Sherub Dorji and Jigme Choden from BCMD fed our minds with rich information on the community we belong to, the change we could possibly bring to it, the generation of the 21st century and the situations and challenges of Bhutan as a country.

The executive director of BCMD triggered each one of us to ponder how well we know our own communities and changes we would like to bring to them. In different sessions, Dasho Tshering Dorji, the deputy chairperson of National Council, talked to us about the importance of democracy, Needrup Zangpo from BCMD about interviewing skills, and Karma Tshering, a teacher of the Royal Academy and the participant of third community mapping workshop, showed us the way forward with his experience.

The insight gained from these inspiring people equipped us for the task ahead. Out into the community,



The participants of BCMD's fourth community mapping workshop sketch out the map of Shaba community in Paro

divided into five groups, I chose Tshongdue community. It was the first day, the first sight, and we created awareness on waste mismanagement. The place became an eyesore to passersby and we decided to build a wooden dustbin.

The very intention of building a wooden dustbin was killed by the landowner. Still, we held on to our hope, and back to town we came across the public toilet in the town. The iron fence behind it prevented the taxi drivers and commuters to get its service. We planned to make a gate and a path in between. The idea was proposed to the municipal engineer which was eventually turned down. He said that the path is a few metres to the toilet and easily accessible to all.

Walking by the town, we met youth with their own set of stories. We listened to their stories and we were definite that we will make their stories heard. This gave birth to a

youth project, "Begin Youth" in Paro where we even got Lhab Tshering and Tshering Wangchuk to volunteer as the "Begin Youth" coordinators. The show "Wake up call" in Paro town plaza was exhibited with the underlying message: youth are our concern and indeed the asset of the community.

Finally, the presentations on our own communities in a gathering of policy makers and people from local communities at a local hotel gave voice to assets, issues and challenges of the communities. We brought some change with our "Begin Youth" project and others did bring change by waging a war against garbage.

Now we know Paro more and the little change in the five communities has been possible with the community mapping workshop. Through these eight days, the BCMD taught me more than life and gave me hope that I can be the agent of change. BCMD made this happen and I am forever grateful.

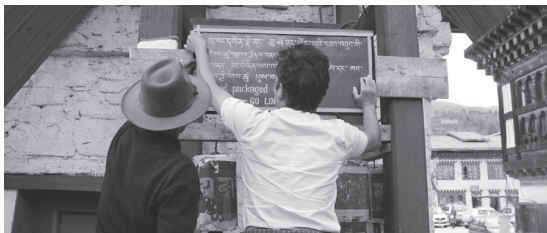
Looking Back

Bhutan Media Dialogue



Twenty journalists from different media participated in the Bhutan Media Dialogue 2015 in Paro on 23 and 24 May. They reflected on and discussed a possible Bhutanese approach to journalism. Resourced by two foreign journalists and a Bhutanese spiritual guide, the dialogue explored creative solutions to the challenges facing the Bhutanese media.

Community Mapping



BCMD's fourth community mapping workshop was held at the Paro College of Education between 1 and 8 July 2015. The eight-day workshop saw 26 participants, including teachers and students, from across the country explore five different communities in Paro. The workshop sought to deepen the understanding of the communities that the participants lived in and find solutions to the issues and challenges they faced.

YI summer training



The Youth Initiative (YI) summer training was held from 6-10 July. The training, undertaken by 20 youth representatives, focused on service learning, planning, discussion and active listening. It also reflected on challenges facing the YI and issues related to concerns in the country.

Coming Your Way

Photo journalism for multimedia storytelling



BCMD will hold its photo journalism for multimedia storytelling in September. One of BCMD's tools is multimedia with photojournalism. BCMD trains members from civil society organisations, youth groups, school students and other individuals to tell their stories through multimedia. The training usually involves basic photography and basic editing.

Photography training



BCMD will hold a basic photography training programme in November. The training will be resourced by BCMD staff who underwent training in photography by Fedric Roberts Photography in January 2015. The training will aim to reach out to out-of-school youth.

Open Mic Night



Join us for our monthly Open Mic Night. This event brings together people from all age groups and different walks of life for a two-hour creative and fun session. The session usually takes place after office hours, between 5 and 7 pm. BCMD announces the date and theme for the Open Mic Night on our Facebook page /bhutancmd and our website www.bcmbd.bt

Audio books to enhance students' reading skills

BY SONAM YANGDEN
EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

The Early Learning Centre (ELC) in Thimphu is recording student-read audio books. Produced as part of the project called Read to Lead, the audio books are inspired by His Majesty the King's launch of the National Reading Year and they commemorate the 60th birth anniversary of His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo.

We hope that the audio books will contribute to enhancing English and Dzongkha literacy among students across Bhutan. Moreover, this project will help document traditional books and stories that are slowly disappearing.

The reading of books will enable ELC students to model good reading skills, such as fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, intonation, and stress, among others. For student listeners in rural schools, the audio books will provide exposure to exemplary spoken language.

The creation of audio books will promote a fun way of learning to read and it will improve the listening skills of students. This is particularly important because before we learn to speak, we learn by listening.



An Early Learning Centre student at the recording sets

ELC is collaborating with M-Studio to record the audio books. Meanwhile, the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD) has granted us the permission to record two of their story books that promote citizenship and democratic values – *Who's Responsible?* and *What's Fair?*

This pilot project is several weeks old. The teachers selected the ELC students for reading based on their reading skills. The two audio books

being recorded are divided into smaller portions for different students to read. The selected students practise and rehearse their parts.

After the completion of the recording, ELC hopes to distribute the final recordings to the Design for Change and Young Ambassadors for Change partner schools, radio stations, and other media platforms. We also hope to distribute the audio books through BCMD.

The Druk
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Spring 2015
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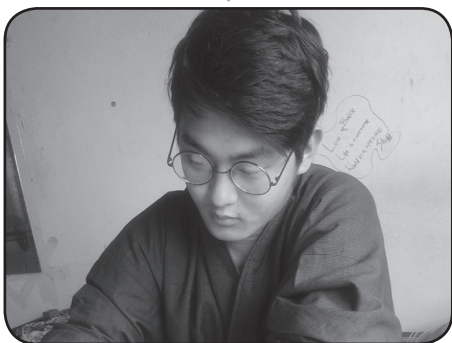
www.drukjournal.bt

What do you think is the most important issue that the Bhutanese media should cover, and why?

I think the Bhutanese media should cover politics – not just elections, but specific issues related to campaign promises and what the political leaders do after getting elected. Some leaders may do what they promised to do. This should be covered. Some leaders may not fulfil what they said they would do during the election. This should also be made known to the people in detail so that people are well-informed and educated on their choice.

I think the Bhutanese media lack follow-up stories. They cover stories that are interesting like the one on the recent Golden Youth Awards organised by the Bhutan Youth Development Fund. The media have, of course, covered the event and mentioned who has won the award. I think it would be interesting to see the media doing follow-up stories of the winner after 2-3 years to see how it has changed his or her life. This is a simple example. It would be interesting to see the media cover follow-up stories on sensitive issues.

I think the Bhutanese media are doing their best. I feel they cover almost all the stories and that they don't leave any stone unturned. I think this might mainly be because of the many private newspapers we have these days. Before, it was only Kuensel and BBS covering stories of the whole country. Now, if the two old media houses miss any story, the private media houses take it up. I believe in a few years from now, media houses might have to fight for stories. We are just fishes living in a very small pond.



PEMA NORBU, MEDIA STUDENT, THIRD YEAR, SHERUBTSE COLLEGE



CHIMI RINZIN, BUSINESS WOMAN, THIMPHU



KARMA DELMA, UNIVERSITY GRADUATE, THIMPHU

Old wisdom for contemporary times

མང་པོ་གཅིག་དུ་སློབ་མཐུན་ན། ཉམས་ལུང་གིས་ཀྱང་དོན་ཆེན་སྐྱབ།

If many people are united in one thought,
Even the humble can achieve great goals.

Exploring the truth through journalism

BY KHENPO PHUNTSOK TASHI
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF BHUTAN

Many Bhutanese journalists gathered at the Zhiwa Ling Hotel in Paro for a three-day dialogue aimed at exploring the truth and learning mind training under the guidance of four international and two local resource persons.

Journalists are passionate about discovering the truth. They are also excited about receiving a 'spiritual package' for use, especially when they encounter challenges while reporting.

I was asked to share my reflections on the dialogue after each session. I posed the following questions to the group: Why did you choose to become journalists? Was your decision based on the desire to become famous, wealthy, or to gain power and influence? What is the role of journalists in society, particularly in a new democratic country like Bhutan?

I think journalists should be good listeners, patient, and compassionate.

Journalists should not speak for themselves. They should reflect the voice of the people and speak on their behalf. But in order to speak for them accurately, it is important to first listen to them.

Journalists must be patient in order to get to the bottom of a story and find the truth. Journalists can serve as a medicine for society in that they can heal wounds inflicted by injustice, harmful actions, inequality, corruption, or biased stories by exploring possible solutions or actions.

Journalists should always be mindful and, as much as possible, strive to follow the middle path in order to be unbiased. They should always remember that they embody the wise and compassionate who aim to bring harmony and peace to society by revealing important issues, telling the truth, and seeking and promoting workable solutions.

News stories make things real for others. Therefore, it is important to reflect on the kind of reality journalists

are creating when they publish or broadcast news.

I think that the nature of journalists' work is much like that of bodhisattvas' who work tirelessly for the benefit of others. Journalists should strive to develop both right wisdom and unconditional compassion in order to enable their audience to see the things as they truly are.

Journalists can earn positive reputation and respect and, at the same time, generate much positive karma by telling the truth. Truth is higher than god and everyone loves to see it.

Every journalist should have three qualities of a successful or effective leader, namely knowledge, compassion, and strength or *khen tse nue sum*.

Journalists should also have faith and trust in the government, provide support to what the government does even as they judge what it does.

This article was written after the 2014 Bhutan Media Dialogue.

Journalists call for a united fraternity

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today, some participants pointed out, could be turned into opportunities. The participants agreed that journalists need to recognise this silver lining to give a positive tone to the stories they tell.

In this context, the dialogue discussed the concept of restorative narrative as an alternative form of journalism. Restorative narrative gives a positive deviance to the conventional form of journalism which tends to focus on gaps and problems. It recognises the power of telling inspirational stories and the power of storytelling itself. Studies have found that inspirational stories make both the storyteller and the reader, listener or viewer feel good. Restorative journalism challenges the

inverted pyramid style of storytelling and says that a story can begin in the middle or end.

The dialogue discussed that restorative journalism may be particularly relevant to Bhutan as Bhutan goes through a democratic transition and elections tend to divide communities. The Bhutanese media's tendency to focus on the negative also makes it relevant.

The Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy's journalism fellows shared their experience of covering rural stories at the dialogue. Among the stories reported under the journalism fellowship are the stories of rural to urban migration and highland communities threatened by glacial lake outburst floods. The

fellowship encouraged reporters to travel to remote parts of Bhutan to cover stories that not only show challenges, but also hope and resilience.

As part of the journalism visioning exercise, the participants of the dialogue wrote a reflective piece each on their struggle with journalism and how they overcame it. They then charted their vision for journalism for the elections of 2017 and 2018. They envisioned a media that is more credible, more mature, and more inspired to create less divisive elections through their reporting.

Organised by the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy, Bhutan Media Dialogue is an annual journalism discussion forum created in 2010.

What does it mean to be a citizen?

For me, at the most fundamental level, to be a citizen of Bhutan means to uphold the Constitution of Bhutan. This basically means to owe our allegiance to His Majesty the King, enjoy the rights and shoulder the responsibilities enshrined in the Constitution. Beyond that, it means to reflect and be grateful for the peace and happiness we enjoy in this peaceful Kingdom and to serve with integrity for the greater good of the whole nation whatever it is that we do for a living.



DR TSHERING CIGAY DORJI, CEO, THIMPHU TECHPARK

Being a citizen to me means having a good place to live and there should be an identity as a Bhutanese which is not dependent on any external force. Besides, being a citizen means having freedom to express one's thought, irrespective of cast, creed and gender. A citizen should have an opportunity to all avenues to live life to the fullest without prejudice and bias.



KARMA CHODEN, HOMEMAKER IN PARO

To me, being a responsible citizen doesn't take much. We need to have a good mind with a bit of good understanding. Insulting our own country is like piling dirt in the plate you eat your food from. It is very important to be sensitive to be a responsible citizen. It is not necessarily to learn how to become a responsible citizen. There have been a thousand examples. A driver like me needs to be a responsible driver. That's it.



KEZANG DAWA, DRIVER, BHUTAN POWER CORPORATION.

ONE DEFINITION

Civil society

The space outside of government, the family, and private sector businesses where people are free to organise themselves for social and political purposes. People use free speech, the free press, and other rights to address shared issues and concerns, sometimes by joining civil society organisations.