

# C·O·N·T·E·N·T·S

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## 01

## Media &amp; Democracy Literacy

## About BCMD

In 2008, Bhutan embarked on a journey of democratic transition making it the youngest democracy of its time. The transition to democracy was soon followed by the proliferation of media that ushered in a new era of media and democracy in the country. The Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD) was then established to nurture and improve the standard of the media in the country and foster a culture of democracy.

BCMD is one of the first registered Civil Society Organisations in Bhutan with a mandate to strengthen a culture of democracy. BCMD works with a cross section of society to explore issues that concern youth, society, governance, education and environment. Media is a tool, used to investigate such issues to learn how to consume information of different media outlets (print, social and audio-visual medias). Through the production of print and media resources, citizens are educated on responsible use of media to express themselves while being sensitive to use of language and rights of others.

Citizens also learn to value journalism and news in a world of social media where “fake” news and “hate speech” are posing new challenges to our ability to discern the facts from opinions, and to identify perspectives amongst the infinite inflow of media messages.

### Our Vision

A Gross National Happiness-inspired vibrant democracy that engages all citizens

### Our Mission

Nurture democracy in Bhutan through civic engagement, public discourses and media literacy

### Our Values

Openness to change, Innovation, Transparency, Integrity, Accountability

**Figure 1:** BCMD vision, mission and values



Figure 2: BCMD strategy

## 02

Media &amp; Democracy Literacy

# Setting the Context

Democracy is more than elections and the creation of democratic institutions. In the case of Bhutan, it is about creating an awareness and understanding of democracy. With a Constitution adopted and institutions established, Bhutan is now preparing for its third general elections in 2018. We now face the critical task of developing a culture of democracy and strengthening an independent media that can inform and educate the public. We need to grow more critical and analytical as Bhutan is now increasingly overwhelmed with numerous global, regional and local media since the country was first introduced to TV and the Internet in 1999.

Our democratic transition comes at a time when the media is introducing new values to an unsuspecting traditional society. Bhutanese are beginning to turn to media more for entertainment than for the important news and information they need to make informed decisions. There is an urgency to create awareness on why news matters in Bhutan's changing society and system of governance. People are beginning to value a free and independent media as being an important component of an evolving democracy.

We face several challenges in a country where newspapers, TV and the Internet were introduced in recent times. Skills to identify reliable and verified information in the news need to be strengthened, especially among youth. We must arm ourselves with the ability to judge, evaluate and demand quality journalism. To do that, we need to understand how news and journalism works and its implications for us as citizens.

Media also provides the forum for people's views and creates a "public space" where the issues facing the young democracy can be debated and challenged. It is important that we understand the role of the media and the role of citizens in a country that is going through historic change.

Bhutan's colleges and schools need to be able to guide young people in recognising the differences between news and propaganda, news and opinion, bias and fairness, how media are constructed, advertising and a range of media issues to prepare them to make informed decisions about what they see, hear, and read. However, there is very little in the education or the public domain that prepares the youth to be critical and smart consumers of news and media. Our aim is to make teaching staff, and in turn, young people understand the important role that media plays in creating an informed society, and in promoting democracy. This guide on Media and Democracy literacy teaches young people to consume media critically- from how media shape political messages to the increasing pervasiveness of advertising and persuasive techniques in media productions.

## 03

## Media &amp; Democracy Literacy

# About the Guide

This guide is intended to be a supplemental resource to the existing curricular material of the Ministry of Education on Civic education and Media literacy. It is written for teachers who have the responsibility of preparing students not just for exams, but also most importantly for life. It is intended for teachers and club coordinators who organise and support Media and News literacy activities in schools.

This guide on Media and Democracy Literacy draws largely from News literacy course of Stony Brooks University, New York (See their website <https://www.centerfornewsliteracy.org>) offered by BCMD as part of its Educating for Citizenship programme. We have contextualised the lessons for Bhutanese learners with local examples and added some lessons on active citizenship. The guide is designed with the primary objective to develop youth to be more aware of the role of citizens in a democracy. It is also intended to make youth to be smart consumers of news with critical thinking skills that is imperative in this digital age. Taking an active-learning approach, the activities in the guide elicits active student participation and demands teacher's expertise in facilitating group discussions and activities. Guided discussion through reflective questioning, group activities, presentation and use of case studies are some of the suggested common methods.

The topics on Media and Democracy Literacy are divided into sessions of 45 minutes to suit the school period allocation. Each session is detailed out with learning objectives, activities, resources and notes for the teachers. The lessons in this guide follow an experiential learning cycle. The lessons typically start with an introduction followed by individual or group activities and ending with reflective debriefs. As a guide, teachers are provided with sequential instruction in introducing, facilitating and wrapping up the sessions.

It is expected that the teachers will not confine themselves to the literature and resources provided here but broaden their understanding of issues and topics in this guide through further exploration. This guide is not intended to be prescriptive, teachers are rather encouraged to draw on their own experience, expertise and resources in facilitating the sessions.

Through real-life and current case studies, the objectives of the guide is to:

- facilitate the development of students into smart news consumers who are better able to recognise the power of information and the role of citizens in a democracy
- develop the knowledge and skills that are essential for students to be able to analyse the credibility of news reports
- promote critical thinking in students as they share, use and disseminate information that is easily accessible in the Internet-age
- facilitate the understanding of media productions as constructed, value-laden and designed with creative language to appeal to audiences and achieve set objectives.

A section on Facilitation in this guide explains the process of facilitating learning. The emphasis here is on providing students with a safe and supportive environment to deliberate on real-life issues with sensitivity and to develop critical thinking skills.

## 04

## Media &amp; Democracy Literacy

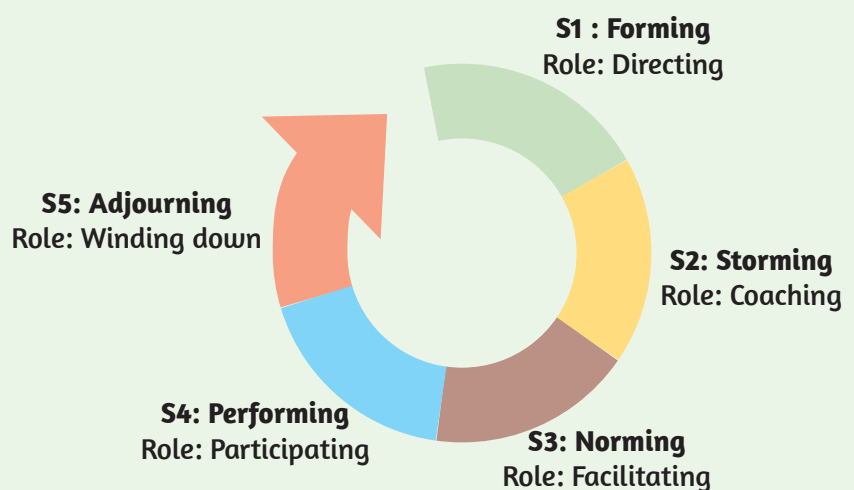
# What is Facilitation?

Facilitating a group is not the same as leading, nor is it same as teaching which traditionally involves transmission of knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is more about ensuring structures and processes that assist groups in meeting the intended learning objectives. A facilitator's main task is to manage group dynamics and processes. A lot hinges on the facilitator's ability to forge relationships and create learning spaces where participants feel safe to participate and take risks in learning. A facilitator sets a positive tone for discussion, ensures that the group stays on task and on track. It is imperative for a facilitator to remain non-judgmental and to encourage participation from all. But this does not mean that there is no space for facilitator's personal views or that you do not challenge participants' misconceptions or misinformation with gentle probes and queries. However, sharing of your personal view should not dominate the discussion.

Unlike teachers who are expected to be an expert on the subject, the facilitator is an expert on facilitation and may or may not be a subject expert. As such, in facilitating groups, there is a two-way communication between the facilitator and the participants. Participants express views freely, ask questions and engage in a dialogue with other members and the facilitator. The members find solutions in their groups, often with minimal or no input from the facilitator. The facilitator only provides the space and the structure for deliberation on issues.

Remember not every group is the same. Sometimes, facilitators encounter difficult personalities who can ruin the whole atmosphere. In such an event, it falls on the facilitator to use ingenuity to diffuse tension in the air or to ensure groups that are able to work together. It is useful to have strategies on your fingertips to deal with difficult personalities or diffuse heated debates. Feeling the pulse of the group and setting a positive tone right from the outset goes a long way in ensuring fruitful discussions and group activities.

## Stages of group formation and facilitator's role



**Figure 3:** Stages of group formation & facilitator's role

Stages of group formation	Facilitator's role
<b>Stage 1: Norming</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All are individuals</li> <li>Unclear group culture and rules</li> <li>Unclear individual roles and responsibilities</li> <li>Conversation is polite and superficial</li> <li>Members looking to the facilitator for structure and guidance</li> </ul>	<b>Directing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate introduction of participants (e.g. through games)</li> <li>Provide structure – explain what is going to happen during the training/workshop/session</li> <li>Ice breaker (make every body feel comfortable)</li> <li>Set tone for group behaviour, activities and interactions</li> <li>Define roles and responsibilities of the facilitators, participants and logistic support</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 2: Storming (Learning to work as a group)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Groups begin to take responsibility</li> <li>Groups feel more comfortable and begin to assert their personality and position</li> <li>Sub-groups may form and tensions may begin to brew</li> <li>Groups need to focus on the task and avoid becoming distracted by relationships</li> <li>Compromises may be required to enable group progress</li> </ul>	<b>Coaching</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Let go of some responsibility and allow natural leaders to develop from the group</li> <li>Organize team building activities</li> <li>Use strategies to shuffle groups to avoid formation of cliques</li> <li>Encourage inclusion of all in group activities</li> <li>Encourage quite and the shy to integrate in the groups</li> <li>Resolve conflicts with early intervention</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 3: Norming (getting closer)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roles and responsibilities are clear and accepted</li> <li>There is growing trust and unity within the group</li> <li>The group develops its processes and working style</li> <li>Decisions begin to be made collaboratively by the group</li> <li>There is greater acceptance and appreciation of each other</li> </ul>	<b>Facilitating</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take a step back and let the group develop naturally</li> <li>Encourage each team member in his/her role and responsibilities</li> <li>Enable group decision making</li> <li>Watch out for new group members</li> <li>Allow whole group to feel responsible for their learning</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 4: Performing (working together)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The team knows what is to be done and why</li> <li>Disagreements are resolved within the group amicably</li> <li>The group is able to work towards achieving the goal</li> <li>Team members look after each other</li> <li>There is real integration – everyone participates</li> </ul>	<b>Participating</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be part of the team</li> <li>Offer new challenges</li> <li>Allow group autonomy and natural leaders to lead</li> <li>Be vigilant of tensions and formation of cliques</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 5: Adjourning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All are tired</li> <li>Thinking of home</li> <li>Less motivation to work</li> </ul>	<b>Winding down</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sessions lighter</li> <li>Keep group motivated and involved</li> <li>Prepare for evaluation</li> <li>Gather insights and reflections from members</li> <li>Organise farewell</li> </ul>

**Table 1:** (Adapted from Tuckman's stages of group formation and facilitator's role  
<http://www.ventureteambuilding.co.uk/forming-storming-norming-performing/>)

## 05

Media &amp; Democracy Literacy

# Democracy and Citizenship

## What is Democracy?

The term democracy comes from the Greek words “demos” and “kratos” which means “rule by the (simple) people”. It is defined as “Government of the people, by the people, for the people” (U.S. president Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1865). It is a system of government in which a country’s political leaders are chosen by the people in regular, free, and fair elections. The people are the highest authority in a democracy. They choose between different candidates and parties to lead the country. People also have the right to criticise and replace their elected leaders and representatives if they do not perform well. (<https://web.stanford.edu/~ldiamond/iraq/DemocracyEducation0204.htm>) Most democracies in the world were created as a reaction to concentration and abuse of power by certain groups of people in position. However, the introduction of democracy in Bhutan is quite unique. It came as a gift from the throne, and with the responsibility to make democracy achieve the greater goal of societal unity and harmony. His Majesty says, “...achieving democracy is not the goal. The real fruits of our efforts should be that democracy brings greater unity, harmony and prosperity to our nation” (105 National Day address, 17th December 2013).

His Majesty maintains that democracy is a responsibility of every citizen. In his address to the nation on the 109th national day celebration on 17th December 2016, His Majesty said, “Democracy is the collective responsibility of our people, the vital force from which our country will draw its strength, and the foundation of peace and happiness for our people.”

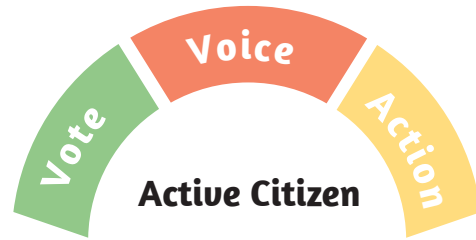
Democracy is not just about exercising our vote once every five years. Having exercised the formal responsibility of choosing our leaders, we have the responsibility of keeping them accountable. As citizens we should provide feedback to our elected leaders so they can continue to address the needs and concerns of the people of Bhutan. Democracy is not an end in itself but a way of life, and its success depends on the actions of each citizen.

Bhutan is a democratic constitutional monarchy. His Majesty the King is the Head of the State and the symbol of unity. It is a form of governance in which the King reigns as a non-partisan head along with a democratically elected government (The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan). And the Constitution, which is the fundamental law, guides the government in how it can legitimately operate.



# Active Citizenship

Active engagement of citizens brings democracy alive in a nation. Democracy thrives when its citizens exercise real choice in decisions and take actions to shift decisions that govern their daily lives. Besides casting vote every five years, active citizens are those who seek verified information on issues of concern and remaining connected with their community. They exercise their rights with duties, express views and opinions on issues of concern, hold their representatives accountable, and take action to address the issues.



**Figure 4:** Characteristics of an active citizen

## Be an engaged citizen



### Talk

Talk with Friends about issues that are important to you. Having discussions and debates can help you reflect on your positions and understand other perspectives.



### Be Informed

Read the newspaper or other media sources about current issues. Citizens must be informed in order to make good decisions and hold their leaders accountable.



### Ask Questions

Only by asking questions will we be able to understand what's happening in the world around us. If you do not understand a decision, an idea, or what someone writes - ask. Learn to ask your teacher, the authorities, and even MPs about anything that is unclear to you.



### Write

Share your opinions by writing letters to the editor and op-editorials - and then submit them to the relevant newspaper. Engage in online forums as a registered member.



### Be an everyday engaged citizen

Be an example for others by (1) acting responsibly and (2) bringing sustainable living practices into your life. What is a 'sustainable living practice'? Any practice that uses the earth's resources in a way that induces less pressure on the earth - walking to school instead of driving, turning off the lights when you are not using them, buying local foods rather than imported, packaged foods like instant noodles.



### Volunteer

Give your time and assist in an activity to benefit the community.



### Know your Rights & Duties



### And last but not least... Vote!

Vote for the representative that you think can best lead the country.

**Figure 5:** An active citizen checklist (Source: BCMD, 2017, A Citizen's Guide to Making a Difference)

# Rights and Duties

'Right' is a moral or legal freedom to have or obtain something or to act in a certain way. For instance, the Constitution of Bhutan grants certain fundamental rights to all citizens (See figure 6). However, 'rights' need to be understood in cognisance of the fact that not all cultures or people are the same, nor are the ways people think across the world. Even within a geographically small country like Bhutan, there is diversity in culture, faith, dialects, food habits, dress and so on. In exercising one's rights, an individual has to be mindful that it does not infringe on the rights of other people. Hence, rights and responsibilities go hand in hand. As a citizen, each one of us owes duties to the Tsa Wa Sum – the king, people and the country. We have a responsibility to ensure that the common good and harmony of the country is not compromised in mindless exercise of one's rights.

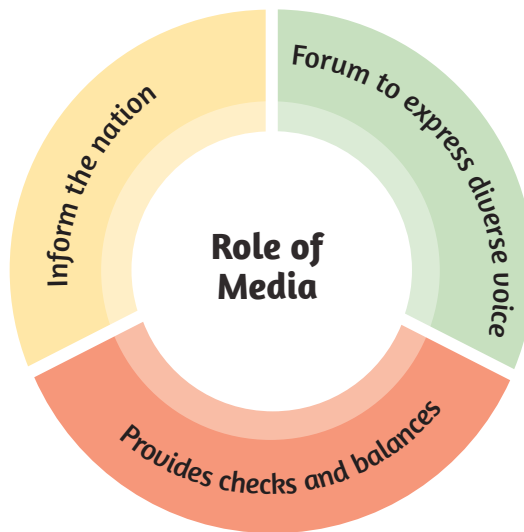
Rights, in this way are not absolute, but are subject to some restrictions. The restrictions on rights and freedom are in the interest of national security, to preserve public harmony, to maintain moral standards, and to secure the respect for the rights and freedoms of others in the society (<https://www.ourcivilisation.com>).



**Figure 6:** Rights and Duties (Source: BCMD, 2017, A Citizen's Guide to Making a Difference)

# Role of the Media in a Democracy

In a democracy, citizens confer authority upon a political party by electing it to power. By the same token, citizens have the right to ensure that the authority and power is used properly by the elected government to achieve the objectives it has set. The media, as the means to both acquire and disseminate information, has the crucial role in promoting transparency and accountability. It serves as a means through which the society holds the government accountable by writing and reporting on the plans and activities of the government.

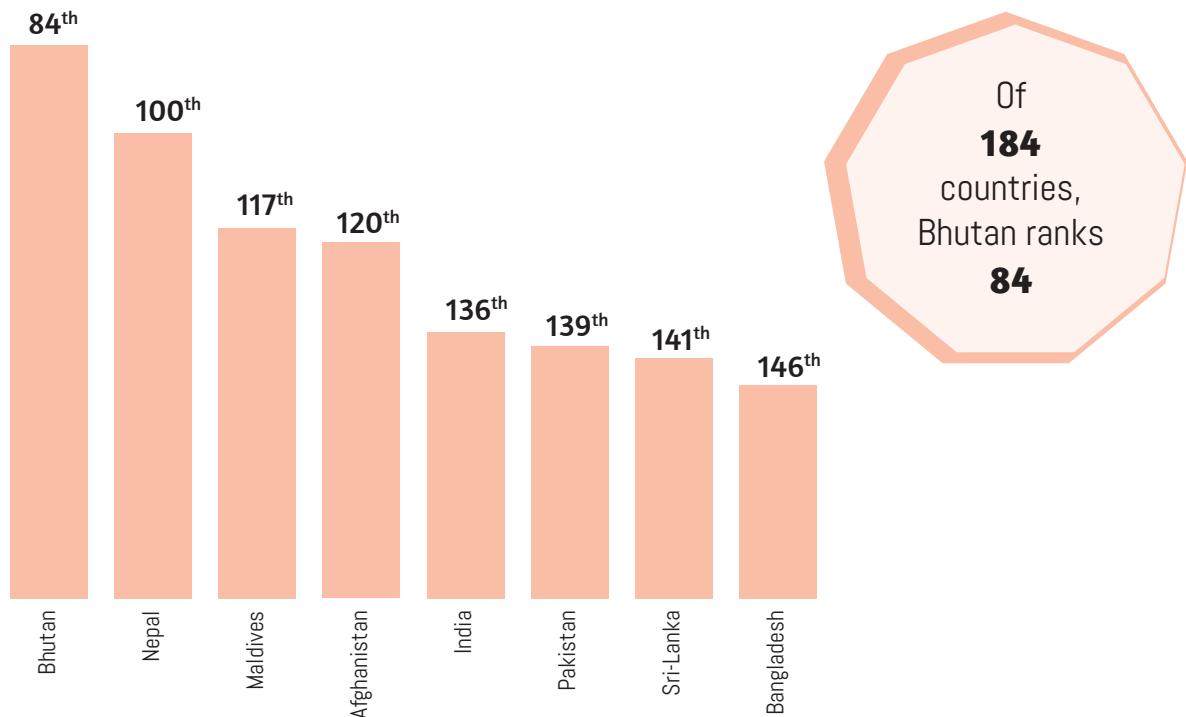


**Figure 7:** Role of Media

## The Power of Information

All humans have the need to receive and share information; information alerts them to new opportunities and dangers. The need to seek and spread information is part of human DNA. Without information systems that alerted them to dangers, humans would not have survived. But information-seeking and information-spreading have a lot to do with power, which makes it challenging. For instance, in Germany in the 1930s, where the Nazi Party bought weak newspapers before it came to power started producing propaganda. Once in power, the Nazi Party licenced newspapers and dictated content. Even non-partisan papers agreed to print Nazi propaganda free of charge and to take no advertisements from Jews, for the sake of their license. Thus, Germany's controlled newspapers did little to challenge Hitler.

## World Press Freedom Index by the Reporters Without Borders



**Figure 8:** Source: <https://rsf.org/en/2017-world-press-freedom-index-tipping-point>

Information is power. Modern dictators fear an informed public, and they try to control the public by controlling access to information. Each society or government decides how much information should be controlled. China, for instance, places emphasis on stability over free press. It, therefore, bans media from reporting on sensitive events like the collapse of a bridge under construction near Fenghuang that killed 47 people in 2007 (For details, see <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/08/17/AR2007081700752.html>). America, on the other hand values openness and supports access to information for its citizens. Similarly, governments can also control the way history is told through the authoring of history books. It is important, therefore that we learn how to read information and determine its accuracy and validity. We also need to know where the information comes from and who has written the information.

## Benefits of an Open Society

An open society is one in which there is freedom of thought and expression. These rights, coupled with access to information, enable the citizens to partake in governing their own affairs in the true spirit of democracy. An open society allows access to information that is crucial for citizens to make informed decisions and to hold government accountable. It provides space for citizens to comment on government activities pushing them towards improved decision and actions. An open society respects diversity in perspectives and strengthens democracy by listening to views of all sections of the society. An independent news media is both a condition and a symptom of an open society.

## 06

Media &amp; Democracy Literacy

# News and Media Literacy

“A lie gets half way around the world before the truth has a chance to put his pants on”  
- Winston Churchill

Since the introduction of television in the country, Bhutan has experienced an unprecedented development in Information and Communication technology, media and the Internet. Bhutan has now joined the worldwide information revolution. According to Internet World Statistic, there are 250,000 Facebook users in Bhutan as of June 2017 (<http://www.internetworldstats.com/asia.htm#bt>) and 331,423 Internet users in 2016 for a population of little over seven hundred thousand. Bhutan's newspapers and broadcasters are moving a lot of their reports to their websites and Facebook accounts. Bhutan Telecom makes it easier every year for all Bhutanese to read news on the mobile. How do you know the information is trustworthy? How do we determine the information on Facebook or Twitter is reliable and credible?

In a way the Internet has proven to be unique in the scope of its empowerment. It has enabled anyone with some ICT skills to be publishers and broadcasters and not just consumers of news. It has had a democratising effect, enabling diverse voices to be heard without censorship of the 'professional gatekeepers' who sift through news on behalf of the public. However the flipside of it is that it promotes a culture that is dismissive of expertise because all information, whether valid or not, is just a few clicks away. Expert or not, it allows anyone to publish and disseminate information.

As of July 2015, more than 400 hours of video content were uploaded to YouTube every minute and according to YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki, more than 1 billion hours of content are consumed on the platform every single day as of March 2017 (<https://www.statista.com/topics/2019/youtube/>). There is a proliferation of both junk and educational material online. Firstly, the challenge for consumers is information overload. Secondly, how do we find out the truth of the information when unscrupulous advertisers try to make their marketing and publicity



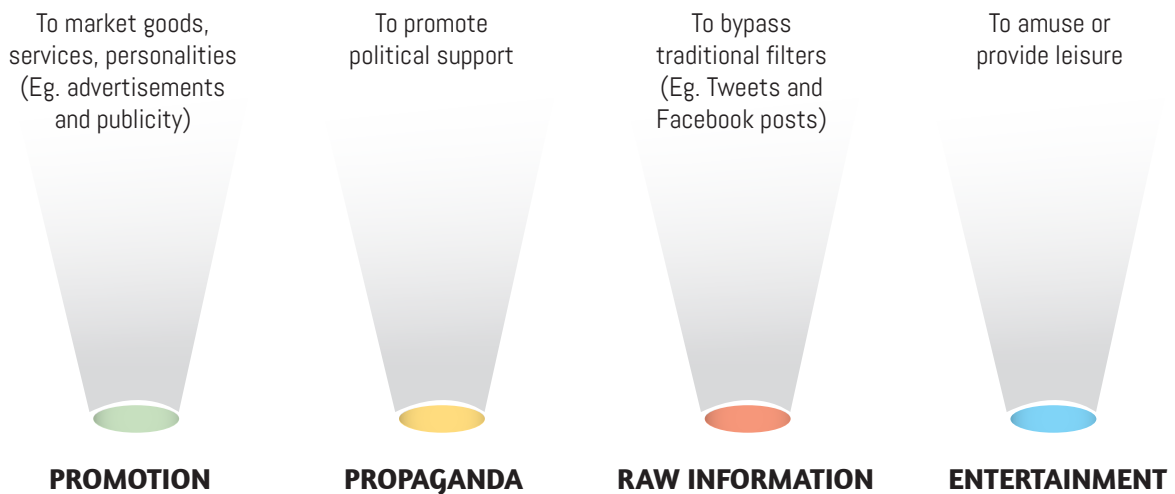
look like news reports? Of greater concern globally is the emergence of ‘fake’ news or fabricated information posing as ‘truth’ on the Internet. The danger is that the public may not pay heed to serious and authentic information due to fatigue. And thirdly, how do we overcome our own biases to open our minds to information we may not want to hear about people or institutions we admire?

Equally important, if not more, is that Bhutan is a fledgling democracy trying to establish democratic ideals guided by the philosophy of Gross National Happiness. And news media plays a pivotal role in making democracy work. As the ‘fourth estate’ of governance, the news media has an important responsibility of discerning what is worthy of informing, and the courage to inform the society. It is through news media that the public is informed about processes of governance by its elected government. It serves as the bridge that helps the public hold its government transparent and accountable. But how do the public determine if the information in the news report or social media are reliable and credible?

News Literacy is the ability to use critical thinking skills to judge the reliability and credibility of news reports, whether they come via print, television or the Internet (<http://drc.centerfornewsliteracy.org/why-news-literacy-matters>). In this digital age, news literacy has become even more important because it now rests on consumers of information to determine what is true and what is not.

# News Literacy

## News Neighborhood



**Figure 9:** News neighbourhood



# What is News?

Given the unprecedented deluge of information available today, the concept of journalism - and news - is more important than ever. News is information that is cross-checked and verified. The commitment of a journalist is to seek truth and report it. The primary mission is to inform by collecting and presenting information according to standards that define journalism. A journalist is trained to research credible sources to confirm facts and to seek various - sometimes opposing-views and opinions to provide objective and balanced information.

In other words, news is not the gossip, rumours, speculation, guesswork, falsified information, and hate speech that is the bulk of the information available as oral, written, and digitised communication today. Providing news is a responsibility to inform the public and to protect listeners, readers, and viewers from being misinformed.

What sets news apart from other kinds of information is that it should have undergone a process of verification and written with freedom from the control, influence, or support of interested parties (independence), and the journalists remain accountable to their viewers, readers and listeners for their work.

A process of collecting evidence that establishes or confirms the accuracy or truth of something

**How? -** Not taking one person's word for it but performing independent analysis of evidence

## Verification

Freedom of the journalist and the journalism organisation from the control, influence, or support of interested parties

**How? -** Objectivity guarded by a journalist's conscious effort to set aside pre-existing beliefs and a system of check and balances by peers with the same goal

## Independence

Responsible or answerable for your work

**How? -** Put name, phone or email address on the work so that any individual can report factual errors

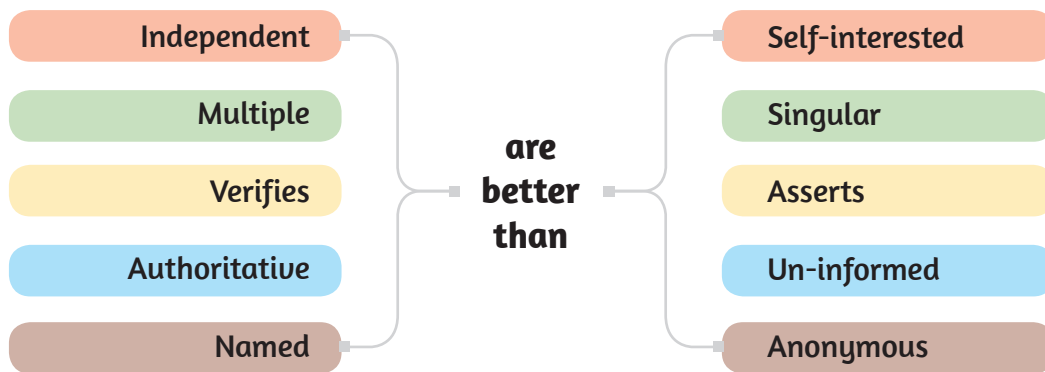
## Accountability

**Figure 10:** The key attributes of Journalism

# Evaluating sources and why sources matter?

When it comes to judging the credibility of news reports, the news consumers have two main concerns: evidence and sources. Sources are people quoted in a news report and are not to be confused with outlets which merely produce the news (e.g. BBS, Kuensel, Bhutan Times, The Bhutanese, Bussiness Bhutan etc.). For instance, if you want statistics on teachers and students in Bhutan, the Ministry of Education is the most credible source.

Sources can be described as Independent vs. Self-interested, Multiple vs. Lone or Sole source, Verifies vs. Asserts, Authoritative/Informed vs. Uninformed, Named vs. Unnamed (mnemonic IMVAIN or pronounced as I'm Vain for easy recall.)



**Figure 11:** Sources of information

Judging the sources of news is a complex process. Not all anonymous sources are inaccurate. Sometimes self-interested sources, who have a stake in it, may know more about an issue than an independent source or any one else. Often times, the most authoritative sources, who are well-informed about an issue, may have reasons to tell only half-truths. Consider, for instance, the case of invasion of Iraq by the US over claims of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). A number of authoritative and named sources claimed that Iraq had WMD and was ready to use it against the US or its allies. And a majority of the Americans supported the war only to be awakened with the CIA report that found no evidence of WMD after thousands of lives have been lost from both sides.

## Judging the sources: Case of invasion of Iraq

After 9/11/2001 and then in the months leading up to the invasion of Iraq by U.S. forces, the New York Times had scoop after scoop by star reporter Judith Miller, whose long work in the region gave her sources no one else had, painted a picture that Saddam Hussein had nuclear weapons and was ready to use them. For all the accusations that the Times is a Democratic Party organ, it's interesting to note she was delivering the same message as the Bush White House, which may be why few questioned the reports.

On February 5, 2003, US. Secretary of State Colin Powell addressed the United Nations Security Council with evidence, he said, that Saddam Hussain had weapons of Mass Destruction and that the invasion of Iraq would be the only way to stop Hussein from using them on the U.S. or other enemies (See: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/feb/05/>)



iraq.usa). He was what you'd call a top-notch source and he was saying what the Times was reporting: Look Out. Iraq has WMD and will use them. By March The Times and CBS News (See: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/poll-support-for-war-effort-grows/>) reported their joint polling showed 55% of Americans supported an invasion of Iraq.

More than 100,000 Iraqis have died in the conflict that began with the "Shock and Awe" bombing on March 19, 2003. Over the last 8 years, more than 4,400 U.S. soldiers were killed and 31,827 were wounded in action.

And, then in April 5, 2005, CIA reports no evidence of WMD in Iraq.

(See: [http://www.nbcnews.com/id/7634313/ns/world\\_news-mideast\\_n\\_africa/t/cias-final-report-no-wmd-found-iraq/#.V9ZT2GUcMdU](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/7634313/ns/world_news-mideast_n_africa/t/cias-final-report-no-wmd-found-iraq/#.V9ZT2GUcMdU))

What appeared was that Judith Miller had relied on Ahmed Chalabi who later turned out to have fed her with bogus story about Iraq's amassing weapons of mass destruction. Here is how a former CIA analyst described how Chalabi took her on a ride with the story on weapons of mass destruction:

"Chalabi is providing the Bush people with the information they need to support their political objectives with Iraq, and he is supplying the same material to Judith Miller. Chalabi tips her on something and then she goes to the White House, which has already heard the same thing from Chalabi, and she gets it corroborated by some insider she always describes as a 'senior administration official.' She also got the Pentagon to confirm things for her, which made sense, since they were working closely with Chalabi."

(See: <https://mediamatters.org/blog/2014/07/01/how-the-iraq-war-still-haunts-new-york-times/199946>)

A decade after the Iraq war, Media Matters (<http://mediamatters.org>) reflected on how America failed to question the credibility of the sources and challenge the claims made. The box below shows what was in the Editor's note of the New York Times, 5/26/2004

But we have found a number of instances of coverage that was not as rigorous as it should have been. In some cases, information that was controversial then, and seems questionable now, was insufficiently qualified or allowed to stand unchallenged. Looking back, we wish we had been more aggressive in re-examining the claims as new evidence emerged -- or failed to emerge.

The problematic articles varied in authorship and subject matter, but many shared a common feature. They depended at least in part on information from a circle of Iraqi informants, defectors and exiles bent on "regime change" in Iraq, people whose credibility has come under increasing public debate in recent weeks. (The most prominent of the anti-Saddam campaigners, Ahmad Chalabi, has been named as an occasional source in Times articles since at least 1991, and has introduced reporters to other exiles. He became a favorite of hard-liners within the Bush administration and a paid broker of information from Iraqi exiles, until his payments were cut off last week.) Complicating matters for journalists, the accounts of these exiles were often eagerly confirmed by United States officials convinced of the need to intervene in Iraq. Administration officials now acknowledge that they sometimes fell for misinformation from these exile sources. So did many news organizations -- in particular, this one. [New York Times, 5/26/04]

Source: <http://mediamatters.org/research/2013/03/19/where-are-the-medias-iraq-war-boosters-10-years/193117>

## BALANCE, FAIRNESS AND BIAS

# What is balance and fairness in news literacy?

Balance and fairness are classic buzzwords of journalism ethics. In objective journalism, stories must be balanced in the sense of attempting to present all sides of a story. Balance is more technical; a quantitative measurement. In News Literacy, balance means that we do not just hear from each side, but each side gets exactly the same amount of space on the page, or length of time in a broadcast.

But, what does: “fair to the evidence” mean? Does it mean fair to the news consumer, or better yet - the facts? Is balance the same as fairness? These are challenging questions that weigh on journalists as they collect and disseminate news.

Would it be fair to give equal airtime to an abuser justifying his/her aggression and a victim explaining his/her trauma? Is it balanced? Of course, it is. But is it fair? Maybe it's not. In a case like this, a precisely measured ‘balance’ could be inaccurate, giving undue justice to aggressive and abusive behavior. Think about the larger implications – the message it sends to the public.

Fairness means that a journalist should strive for accuracy and truth in reporting, and not slant a story so a reader draws the reporter's desired conclusion. Fairness is marked by impartiality and honesty. Free from self-interest, prejudice, or favoritism. Being fair to the evidence.

Fairness in news is maintained through fair play, fair language and fair presentation. In fair play, a journalist makes all the effort to include relevant perspectives through the inclusion of people, and organisations responding to negative charges. You would not notice it, probably, unless you were looking at multiple news outlets. To use fair language means to avoid loaded words or to be neutral.

Some critics argue that journalists never succeed in being completely balanced and fair in telling all sides of a story. News coverage often represents the voices of those only on both extremes of the spectrum or voices of those who are the most powerful. While balance is something to certainly strive for, it can be very difficult to look objectively at everything -- we are humans after all.

Here's an example of a news headline from the Kuensel – ‘Schools grappling with shortage of iron tablets’ by Nirmala Pokhrel, April 26th 2017 (See appendix for the article).

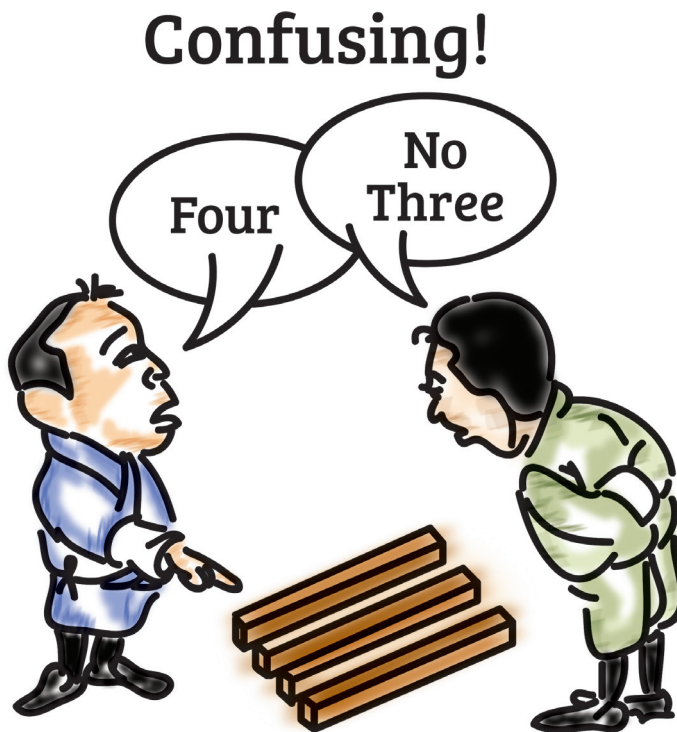
Does the headline reflect the content of the news report? What message does it send across? Read the article and see if the voices or views of other organisations, individuals need to be heard? Is the article fair, balanced and unbiased?

Fair presentation goes beyond where the information appears and what is emphasised in a newscast or in a written report. It includes the selection of illustrations and visual journalism (photos, videos, charts & graphics). Charts are used frequently to provide comparisons to numbers, but their presentation can be misleading if not reviewed carefully.

## What is bias?

Bias is a pattern of unfairness. Bias is not an isolated event. It must be proved by a set of previous actions or data. Bias is easy to allege, but without evidence, it amounts to little more than name-calling.

One of the common phrases is that “the news media is biased”. However, this is an over-generalisation. A credible assessment of bias must apply to a single news outlet or news report but not the entire “news media”. “Guilt by association” is another common fallacy. The assumption here is that you are automatically guilty if your brother does something illegal. The third common fallacy is that “There is no bias in any newsroom” – There is a bias for stories about conflict and about change in any newsroom.



If different people see different bias in words or story selection, then perhaps a major factor at work in the perception of bias is the news consumers' own bias.

Concept source: <http://karoenjoy.pk/its-really-confusing/>

Is it really news media bias or consumer bias? News consumers are humans too just as the journalists are. As a news consumer, if we are not thoughtful about our own biases, multiple studies show that we can end up dismissing reliable information or not even being able to take it in.

The field of Social Psychology studies how humans react to uncomfortable feelings caused in holding two contradictory ideas simultaneously, such as empathy for chickens and a hunger for Chicken McNuggets. It is theorised that people are powerfully motivated to reduce feelings of discomfort from conflicting beliefs. In order to get rid of the feeling, people will change their beliefs and behaviours, or they will justify and rationalise or even block and warp new information. For instance, we may say that Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse also preaches that it is the Karma of the chickens to be slaughtered for food for they must have created negative karma in their previous lives. Or, we look for information or evidence that support our own views.

Further, researchers found that our memory is not terribly reliable and that recent events are remembered more clearly than those further in one's past, and that every time certain kinds of memories are recalled, it is altered a little. Additionally, humans have the need to conform to the larger society. So our perceptions can be shaped by peer influence or what is culturally appropriate.



**Figure 12:** Balance, Fairness & Bias

# Social Media



In a healthy democracy, citizens must be able to express themselves – individually and collectively. Facebook has provided a platform to do so. We can protest, rally, picket and demonstrate online.”

– Bhutan’s Prime Minister, Tshering Tobgay

## What is social media?

Oxford dictionary defines social media as websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. In simple words, it’s a platform where people have conversations online. Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, Youtube, WeChat, Viber, Snapchat, Instant Messenger etc. are a few examples.



## Trends of Social Media in Bhutan

Today, an increasing number of Bhutanese are beginning to use social media. In 2012 there were 76,360 Facebook users in Bhutan. As of December 2016 for a population of 792,877, according to Internet World Stats, the number of Facebook users in the country has grown to 250,000, and there are a total of 331,423 Internet users, which is approximately 41% of the population, (<http://www.internetworldstats.com/asia.htm>). Celebrating World Ozone Day on 26th September 2016, the government of Bhutan decided to go paperless by adopting applications and networks that allows communicating, sharing and storing of information electronically and online ([www.kuenselonline.com](http://www.kuenselonline.com))

Most agencies have a Facebook page where users can get the latest news and announcements and not to mention that the numbers of marketing websites are on the rise. (E.g. B-Bay Bhutan, Myntra, Amazon etc.). News is already made available on your cell phones and so are updates on your bank transactions.

## Social Media - The double-edged sword

Social Media has changed the way we communicate with each other. It has given us the ability to communicate instantly anywhere, anytime and with anyone. For instance, advertisement on social media allows business firms



## Online Predators

Concept Source: <https://www.geeksaresexy.net/2010/10/26/we-should-meet-up-lol-p-pic/>

But social media can also be misused and result in social ills. Youths are more vulnerable to the evils of social media. Spending countless hours on the social media sites leads to addiction, living in a virtual world and experiencing social isolation in the real world. People develop a condition called fear of missing out (FOMO) and constantly feel the urge to go online while they may be disconnecting from the real world around them. One most common danger for youths is cyber bullying. Cyber bullying is using the digital media to communicate false and embarrassing information about another person.

to connect with targeted customers without much cost; the only cost is time and energy. Social networks such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn are the most popular and viable choice of communication for bloggers, writers and content creators. Social media allows experts and students to share and communicate information on health and education though one has to be wary of the so-called experts on social media. Social media is not only for socialising, sharing photographs or moments; it also provides a platform for like-minded people to engage in discussion on common social, political and economic issues and bring about positive changes in the society. During times of disaster, when the landline is down, social media prove useful in communicating with the rest of the world.

Another common issue of social media amongst youth is sexting. It is sending, receiving and forwarding sexually explicit messages, photographs or images over cellphones and other digital devices. Social media puts the privacy of youths at risk because they do not know what is appropriate to share. It also exposes youths to myriad of information that influence their behavior, values and attitudes. Think about how youths have to come to dress or keep their hair. Be wary of media sites that often profess to be news sites but communicate unstated biases (e.g. supporting one political party over another).

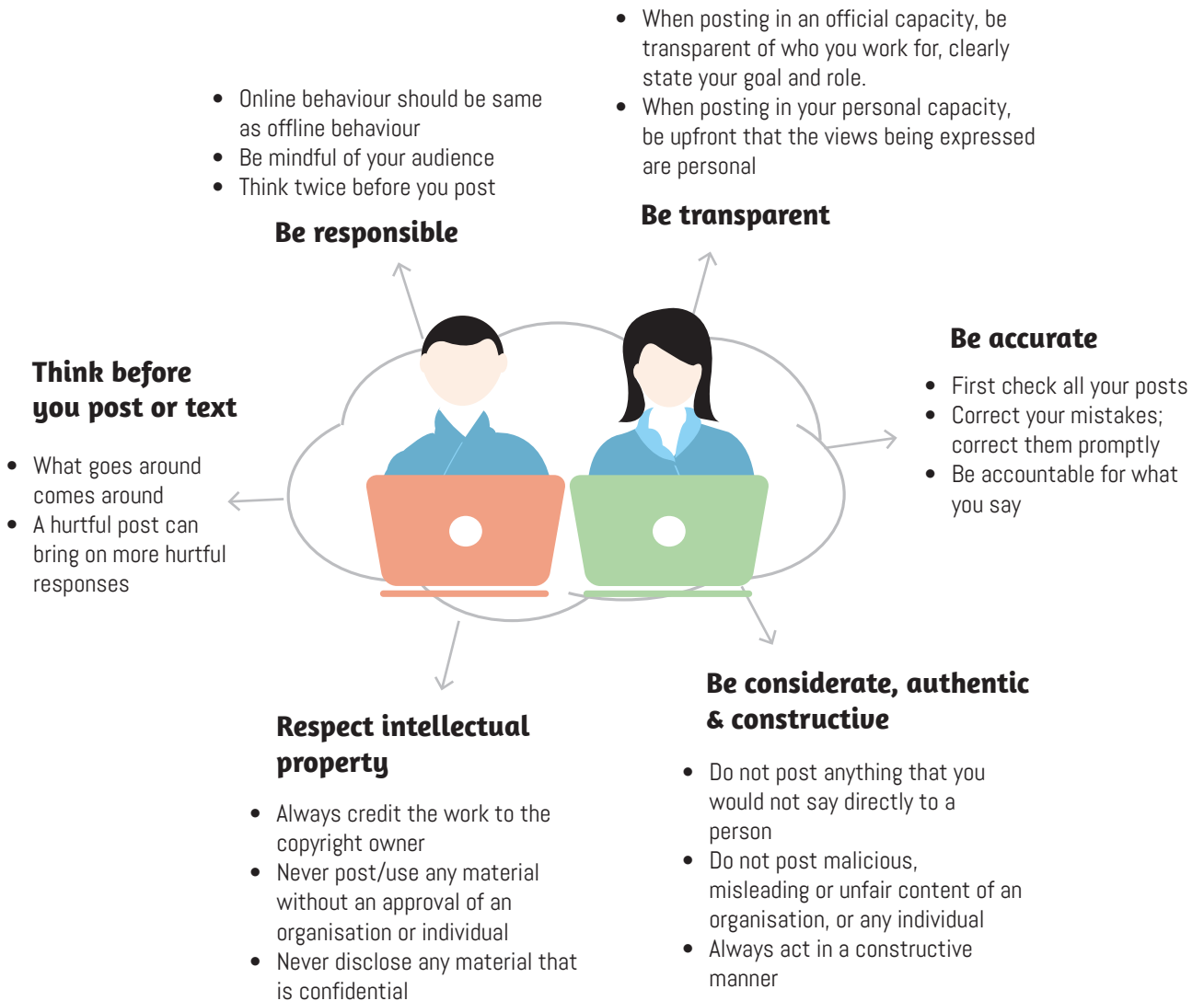
People come online with varying intents and purposes. Some to have fun and while away time, others to connect with friends, relative and professionals, and yet some with the intent to con or prey on others. Because it is so easy to create false accounts and hide behind anonymity on social media, pedophiles and conmen can easily prey on young girls and boys and adults alike (See: Police detains man for alleged rape and murder <http://www.kuenselonline.com/police-detains-man-for-alleged-rape-and-murder/> Also included in appendix.)

## Social Media Guidelines

In the past, traditional media like the newspaper, radio and even websites just provided information, and users could not comment or provide feedback. Now the web has evolved and it is interactive. Anyone can generate information and disseminate it and any user can comment in real time. And once information is uploaded on a social media network, it circulates far and wide, fast and for long. However, social media is not inherently good or evil. It is in how we use it. It can help build as well as ruin relationships.

Government can develop social media policies, but on its own it cannot regulate all users. Self-regulation is the best and here are some guidelines on how you can use social media responsibly to voice your views.





**Figure 13:** Social media guideline  
(Adapted from: A Citizen's Guide to Making a Difference, 2017, BCMD)

# Core concepts of media literacy

## Core concept 1: All media messages are ‘constructed’

Media texts are built just as surely as buildings and highways are built and their construction shapes the message they carry. The building materials involved vary from one kind of text to another. In a magazine, for example, there are different words printed in various sizes and fonts, different photos composed and illuminated in an assortment of colors, and its all designed taking into consideration the layout, budget, and audience. TV and movies have hundreds of building blocks, from camera angle and lighting to music and sound effects.



Source: Bhutan Scout Association

While this might seem obvious enough, we rarely consider the implications of these decisions on the content of the media we consume. Since we do not always see the construction process, we never get to see or hear the words, pictures, or arrangements that were rejected. We only see, hear, or read what was accepted. And what was accepted is influenced by all the people involved in the construction process who shape the way the images and sounds are used. So it is important to remember that no matter what movie we see, song we hear, TV programme we watch, it is only one version of many that could have been.

This version, which is constructed by a relatively small number of people, becomes ‘normal’ for the rest of us. The final media product seems to deliver its content objectively, while the building blocks, like the air we breathe, become invisible, and usually go unquestioned. In the end, we get only one perspective that reflects the position of those who created it.

All media messages are created by people who must make decisions in creating and shaping them—whether it’s a TV show, comic book, email, or the cover of a new CD. This means, that it could have been made differently. The success of media texts benefits from their apparent naturalness; most of us turn off a production that looks fake. But the truth is that it’s all been constructed—even the news. Choices are made about what stories will be covered and in what order, for example. That does not mean we cannot still enjoy watching a movie or listening to music. Media literacy creates the critical distance we need to be able to ask important questions.



## Core concept 2: Media messages are created using a creative language with its own rules

Media messages are created using a creative language of its own. Combination of various components such as colour, light, sound, movement camera angle influences the meanings we take away from a media message. For instance, the use of colours create different feelings, camera close-ups convey intimacy, scary music heightens fear and so on. Because most of the communications are increasingly in visual format now a days, it is important to understand how it is created to enhance our appreciation of art of creation and also to be less vulnerable to manipulation.

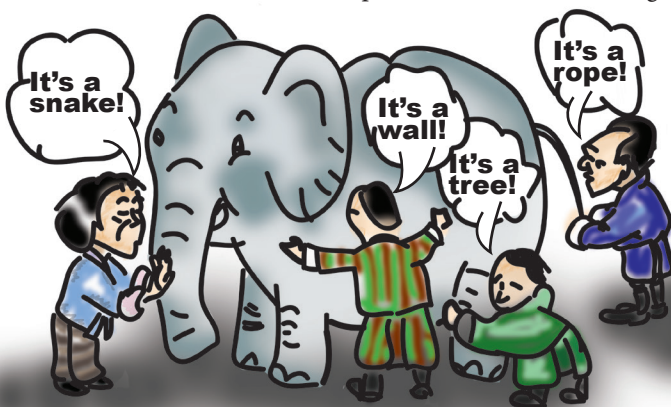


Source: Hema Hema: Sing me a song while I wait (A movie by Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Norbu)

## Core concept 3: Different people experience the same media message differently

The third core concept presents the idea that our personality, experience and background influence our interpretation of media messages. Our differences influence various interpretations of media messages, and our similarities create common understandings.

When you watch a movie or a news report, no two individuals will have the same interpretation or feel the same way. Each individual brings to each media encounter a unique set of life experience (age, gender, education, culture) which influence their interpretation of a media message or reaction to it.



Concept: Adopted from Google

This concept turns the tables on the notion of TV viewers as just passive “couch potatoes”. The fact is, our bodies may not be moving but in our heads, we’re constantly trying to connect what we are seeing, hearing, or reading with everything else we know.

As humans we are always making sense of the world. The more question we ask about what we and others are experiencing around us, the more prepared we are to evaluate the media message to accept or reject it. And hearing multiple interpretations can build respect for and acceptance of diversity in perspectives.

This concept reminds us that media literacy is not about getting one “right” interpretation, but is intended to help us recognise how different people can arrive at different conclusions from the same media text. We bring ourselves and our experiences to interpretations of media messages.

## Core concept 4: Media have embedded values and points of view

There is no such thing as value-free media. All media carry message about who and what is important.

At their core, media are storytellers. Even commercials tell a quick and simple story. But embedded in the stories of a movie, a TV show or an advertisement are values promoted through the choice of a character's age, gender, or race mixed in with the lifestyles and behaviors

etc.. Even the news has embedded values in the decisions made about what stories go first, how long they are, what kinds of images are chosen and so on.



Source: Google

The understanding that all stories are told from someone's perspective and always carry with them a set of values and points of view inherently means that other values are not being represented. Being able to recognise and name missing perspectives is a critical skill of democracy as we use the social media, watch TV and read information everyday.

Since we often consider media to be objective messengers of entertainment or information, we rarely consider the deeper implications of this concept. It is important then to learn how to read all kinds of media messages—to deconstruct the construction—in order to discover the points of view embedded in them and how to assess them as part of the text rather than merely accepting them as natural. Only then can we critically judge the value of the message for us and for others.

The recognition that bias is always present does not mean that bias is bad. It just reinforces our understanding that media texts are never neutral. This concept aims to build an awareness of the subjectivity of media messages and the need to peel the onion of media construction. This analytical process helps uncover the embedded values.

This concept helps to peel back the layers to reveal how the choices made in constructing a message inevitably communicate values, lifestyles, and points of view that favour some people and ideas more than others. The content of any message can, therefore, be analysed through a series of questions that help students first recognise and then uncover many ideas embedded within.

## Core concept 5: Most media messages are organised to gain profit and/ or power

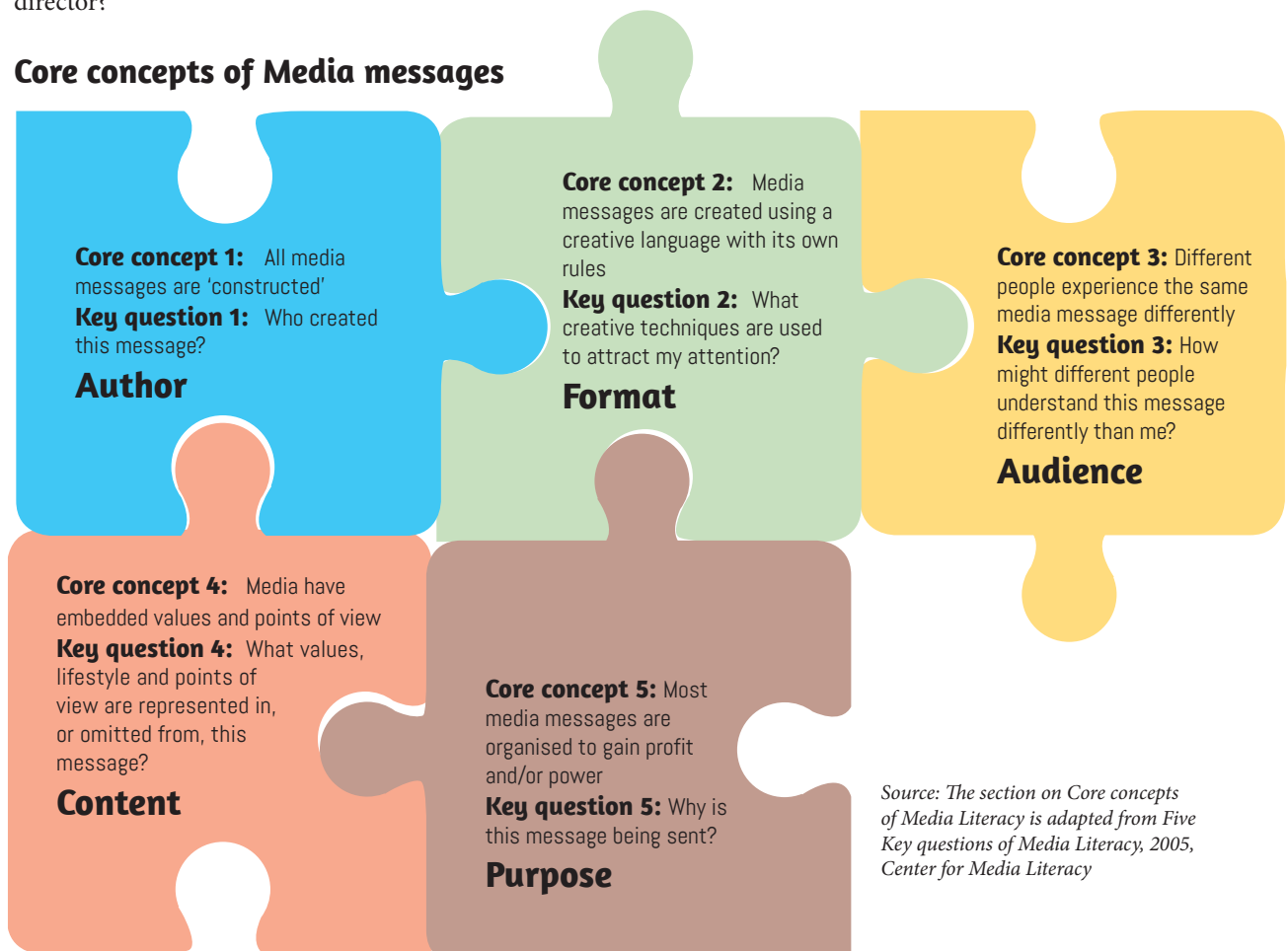
With this concept, we look at the motive or purpose of a media message—and whether or how a message may have been influenced by money, politics or any other purpose. To respond to a message appropriately, we need to be able to see beyond the basic content motives of informing, persuading or entertaining, and explore the principle organising motives that are shaped by economic and political systems within which all media operate.

The vast majority of the world's media has developed as a moneymaking enterprise, and continues to operate today as a very large commercial business in which advertising is the motor to generate profit. Newspapers and magazines often lay out their pages with ads first; the space remaining is devoted to the news. Likewise, commercials are part and parcel of most TV programme. What most people do not know is that what is really being sold through commercial media is not just the advertised products to the audience; it is the audience to the advertisers.

And that is the primary purpose of programmes on TV—to create an audience so that the network can sell time or space to sponsors – or what some in the business refer to as “renting eyeballs”. This concept challenges us to consider why a message was sent and where it came from. Too often, we believe the role of media is simply to entertain or inform, with little knowledge of the economic structure that supports it.

Most media production in the country is a business. Even the so-called public media, like BBS, have to raise money to survive. When you watch media, you need to ask yourself: who paid for this? What's the economic structure behind this piece of work? And how do these financial pressures affect the choices of the author or director?

### Core concepts of Media messages



## 07

Media &amp; Democracy Literacy

# Session overview

Session	Topics
Session 1	1. Democracy and Active Citizenship 1.1 What is democracy? 1.2 What is active citizenship?
Session 2	1.3 Rights and duties
Session 3	2. Media Literacy 2.1 The role of News media in a democracy
Session 4	2.2 The power of information and benefits of an open society
Session 5	2.3 News neighbourhood • Entertainment • Promotion • Propaganda • Raw Information
Session 6	2.4 What is news and why news literacy? • Who is a journalist? • Verification, Independence, Accountability (VIA)
Session 7	2.5 What is social media and how to use it? • Trends of social media in Bhutan • Social media - The double-edged sword • Social media guidelines
Session 8	2.6 How to evaluate sources and why sources matter?
Session 9	2.7 Judging the credibility of news • Balance, Fairness and Bias
Session 10	2.8 Core concepts of media literacy

# Media and Democracy Literacy Lessons

## Session 1: Democracy and Active Citizenship

### Aim of session:

At the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. explain what is democracy
2. explain the role of citizens in strengthening democracy

**Time: 45 minutes**

### Outline of activities

Introduction - KWL

Activity 1: What is democracy?

Activity 2: Active citizen and the role of citizens in a democracy

Closure - KWL

### Resources

PowerPoint slides

White/black board

Meta cards

### Notes to the facilitator

Prepare necessary PowerPoint slides

Read:

- Democracy and Active Citizenship
- Prepare meta-card

### Introduction (5 minutes) - KWL

Project the lesson overview, speak to it briefly and distribute the meta-cards. Ask them to write down what they already **know** and **want to know** on the cards marked **K** and **W** respectively.

Suggested introductory remarks: *Bhutan is a young democracy. We transitioned from monarchy to democracy only in 2008. Unlike in other countries, democracy came as a gift from the throne and this is something unique in the world. But what does democracy mean? What does active citizenship mean?*

### Activity 1 (10 minutes): What is democracy?

Ask: What is democracy? Accept all responses and write down key points on the board.

Use the following questions to probe and lead a discussion to help students understand the concept of democracy:

- How is a democratic government formed?
- Who elects the government?
- Who holds the government accountable?
- Who do the government serve?

Project the slide with definitions of democracy and draw connections with students' responses.

## Activity 2 (25 minutes): Active citizenship and the role of citizens in a democracy

Having discussed the concept of democracy, explore the concept of citizenship and the role of citizens in strengthening democracy.

Ask: *As citizens, what are your roles in a democracy?*

Use the following probes and generate a discussion around each question to facilitate the understanding of active citizenship:

- *Is it sufficient to cast your vote?*
- *What else do you need to do?*
- *How do you decide who to vote for as your representative?*
- *Where do you get the information from to help you make decisions?*
- *Where can you go to express your views and opinions? Who provides that space?*
- *How do you know if the government is fulfilling its pledges?*
- *How do you hold them accountable?*

Through questioning, generate a discussion to facilitate the understanding of active citizenship as exercising the right as well as the responsibility to vote, voice and to act on issues of concern.

Project the slide on active citizenship and connect it with students' responses.

## Closure (5 minutes) - KWL

Distribute the card marked L and ask the participants to write what they learned. Review the KWL cards. Invite some participants to read out what they already **knew**, what they **wanted to know** and what they **learned**.



## Session 2: Rights and Duties

### Aim of session:

At the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. state the rights and duties granted by the constitution of the kingdom of Bhutan
2. explain what it means to exercise rights responsibly.

**Time: 45 minutes**

### Outline of activities

Introduction

Activity 1: Knowing your rights and duties

Activity 2: Understanding how to exercise one's rights

Closure: Takeaway

### Resources

PowerPoint slides

Case studies

### Notes to the facilitator

Prepare necessary PowerPoint slides

Read:

- Rights and Duties

### Introduction:

*Democracy in Bhutan was not fought for but bestowed on its people as a gift from the throne. But, His Majesty the King, in his address to the nation on the 109th national day celebration on 17th December 2016 said, "Democracy is the collective responsibility of our people, the vital force from which our country will draw its strength, and the foundation of peace and happiness for our people."*

*While democracy grants its citizens some fundamental rights, it also holds the citizen to some duties.*

### Activity 1 (10 minutes): Knowing your rights and duties.

Ask: *What is a right?*

*What is a duty?*

Invite students to brainstorm their understanding of rights and duties. After establishing an understanding of the two concepts, get them to list down their rights and duties as a citizen. Have the students compare their list with rights and duties listed in figure 6 and reflect on their awareness of the rights and duties.

### Activity 2 (25 minutes): Exercising rights responsibly

Divide the class into groups of 4-5. Ask the following questions. Assign each question to a group for discussion. Instruct the groups to note down different points of view shared in the group. After 10 minutes, discuss each question at a time as a whole class.

- You have the freedom of speech, but can you speak whatever comes to your mind anytime, anywhere and however you want? Why/ Why not?
- Because you have freedom of movement, can you have fun on the streets throughout the night? Why/ Why not?
- Democracy gives freedom to the Press and the Media. Can you write whatever you like on the social media? Why/ Why not?

Prompt and lead a discussion to help students realise that rights are not absolute. As citizens, we ought to be responsible for our thoughts, speech and actions. More importantly that certain restrictions apply to rights and freedom to maintain larger interests such as harmony in the community and national sovereignty.

### **Closure (10 minutes): Takeaway**

Distribute meta-cards and ask the students to reflect on the session and write down one takeaway and how he/she intends to use that learning.



## Session 3: The Role of News Media in a Democracy

### Aim of session:

At the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. recognise News media as a source of credible information and education
2. explain the role of news media in a democracy
3. distinguish news from editorial

**Time: 45 minutes**

### Outline of activities

Introduction

Activity 1: Role of News media in a democracy

Activity 2: How is editorial report different from news article?

Closure: Fill in the blanks

### Resources

PowerPoint slides

White/black board

Meta-card

Sample editorial report (See article: Tracksuit ruling requires more thought)

Sample news report (See article: Tracksuits disallowed for assemblies and classes in Thimphu schools)

### Notes to the facilitator

Prepare necessary slides

Prepare meta cards

Read:

- Role of media in a democracy
- Difference between editorial and news article

### Introduction (2 minutes)

*Suggested introductory remark: As we have discussed in session one, being informed is essential for citizens to make decisions about who to vote for, to keep the elected government working in the interest of the public, and to be aware of issues in the country. And it is the news media that is one of the important sources of information for citizens.*

### Activity 1 (20 minutes): The role of News media in a democracy

Ask the class to imagine life in Bhutan without News media. Take few responses.

Divide the class into groups of 4-5 and ask them to discuss what will happen to Bhutan's democracy if there is no News media? The class can consider the following probing questions:

- From where will you get information if there is no News media?
- What are the implications on your decision-making without credible information to rely on?
- What are the likely outcomes of a democracy without News media?

After 10 minutes, invite the groups to share their thoughts.

As you project the slides on the role of News media in a democracy, connect it to the discussion emerging from the class.

## Activity 2 (20 minutes): How is editorial report different from news article?

In the same groups, pass a sample editorial and a piece of news report (See appendix). Invite the groups to analyse the two and list differences or similarities observed. After 10 minutes, invite the groups to share their observations.

## Closure (5 minutes): Fill in the blanks

Distribute meta-card and ask the students to reflect on the session and complete one of the following sentences:

1. Information is power because .....
2. An independent media is important to democracy because .....

Invite few students to share their responses.

## Session 4: The Power of Information and Benefits of an Open Society

### Aim of session:

At the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. describe how information is a powerful tool
2. explain why government/leaders censor information and its potential outcomes
3. explain the benefits of an open society

**Time: 45 minutes**

### Outline of activities

Introduction

Activity 1: The power of information

Activity 2: Benefits of an open society

Closure: Fill in the blanks

### Resources

PowerPoint slides

White/black board

Meta-card

### Notes to the facilitator

Prepare necessary PowerPoint slides

Read:

- The power of information
- Benefits of an open society

### Introduction (5 minutes)

Ask:

- *How many of you read newspapers or watch news channels?*
- *Why do you read newspapers or watch news channels?*
- *Why is it important for you?*

Connect the discussion to the idea that information is power.

### Activity 1 (25 minutes): Power of Information and Censorship

Project slides on censorship and explain the concept. Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5 and have them discuss the following questions for about 15 minutes:

- Why do governments censor media?
- What can be the consequences of censoring information?
- Is censoring bad at all times?

Invite responses from the groups and lead a discussion highlighting the importance of information to human beings and why governments, cultures and leaders control and censor information and whether censorship is bad at all times.

## Activity 2 (10 minutes): Benefits of an Open society

Suggested introductory remark: *An open society is where there is freedom of thought, expression and access to information. Existence of an independent media is a sign of an open society.*

Having stated what an open society is, ask: *Where would you prefer to live – in an open or a closed society? Why?*

Get the groups to discuss and invite each group to share. Derive the benefits of an open society from students' discussion and connect it with the slides prepared on benefits of an open society.

## Closure (5 minutes): Takeaway

Distribute meta-cards and ask the students to reflect on the session and write down one takeaway and how he/she intends to use that learning.

## Session 5: News neighbourhood

### Aim of session:

At the end of the session, the student will be able to:

1. identify the distinctive attributes of each news category
2. infer the messages embedded in the various categories of news
3. deconstruct and point out the intended objectives

**Time: 45 minutes**

### Outline of activities

Introduction

Activity 1: News neighbourhood

Closure – Fortune rolls

### Resources

Slides

Video clips (See resource folder)

Case studies (See appendix)

Fortune rolls and a bowl

### Notes to the facilitator

Read:

- What is news literacy? Why news literacy?
- News neighbourhood
- What is news?
- Journalistic Values - VIA

Prepare necessary PowerPoint slides

Prepare fortune rolls with questions on the lesson. Roll them up and put them in a bowl.

### Introduction (10 minutes)

Suggested introductory remark: *Since the introduction of television in the country from mid 1990s, Bhutan has experienced an unprecedented development in Information and Communication, media and the Internet. Media houses and government offices are going online and paperless. Social media is flooded with news and advertisement and so on. But how do we know what is news and what is not? How do we know if information on news reports and social media are credible?*

Brainstorm by asking:

- How many of you read or listen to news?
- What is news?
- How do you know what you are reading/listening to is news?
- What other kinds of information do you read/listen to?
- What makes news different from these kinds of information on the media?

Accept all responses, do not correct misconceptions but note them down for discussion later in the session.

### Activity 1 (30 minutes): News neighbourhood

- a. Project an advertisement clip (See videos folder: Aman resort commercial) and guide the deconstruction of the clip by asking
  - What is this video about?
  - Who do you think made this video?

- *What messages do you get from it?*
- *How it has been packaged and why?*

Or

- *What is appealing about this video?*
  - *Why was it made using those appealing features?*
  - *What is the intended objective of the clip?*
- Project a propaganda poster (See videos folder)  
Use appropriate questions from the list above to deconstruct the propaganda poster and discuss how it is different from the earlier video clip. The key here is to highlight what distinguishes advertisement from propaganda.
  - Project an entertainment video clip (See videos folder)  
Use the same set of question as above to deconstruct the entertainment clip and discuss how it is different from the earlier clips. The key here is to highlight what distinguishes an entertainment from an advertisement or propaganda.
  - Project a Facebook post – Raw information (See videos folder)  
Use the same set of question as above to deconstruct the entertainment clip and discuss how it is different from the earlier clips. The key here is to highlight what distinguishes raw information from other categories of media information.

After the guided deconstruction of the news neighbourhood, project the slides prepared on 'News Neighbourhood' and speak on it. Highlight the intended objectives of each news neighbourhood and the way messages are packaged to meet those objectives. Wherever appropriate, connect this presentation with earlier discussion.

Tell the class that raw information (unverified information) on social media is not news. Even information on a TV channel is not necessarily news. At this point, some students may realise their misconception of what news is, but still may not be able to coherently say how it is different from other pieces of information. The next session on 'What is news?' will clarify what makes news different from the various other categories of information.

## Closure (5 minutes) – Fortune rolls

Have each student pick a fortune roll from the bowl and answer the question in it. Randomly call on few participants to share their responses.

## Session 6: What is news and why is news literacy important?

### Aim of session:

At the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. discriminate news from other categories of information.
2. analyse news reports against values of journalism.
3. appreciate the necessity to be news literate.

**Time: 45 minutes**

### Outline of activities

Introduction – Recap session 5

Activity 1: Who is a journalist and what are the journalistic values (Verification, Independence and Accountability)? What is news?

Activity 2: Analysing news report

Closure: 1 k (knowledge) 1 A (action/behaviour)

### Resources

Slides

Case studies

News article: Lack of bus stops irks commuters

Fake news article: Donald Trump signs visa-free travel policy for Bhutan

Kuensel editorial report: Beware of Fake News

### Notes to the facilitator

Read:

- What is news literacy? Why news literacy?
- News neighbourhood
- What is news?
- Journalistic Values (Verification, Independence and Accountability)

Prepare necessary slides

### Introduction (5 minutes):

Suggested introductory remark: Project the slides on news neighbourhood and recap the earlier session.

*In the session on News Neighbourhood we ended by saying that entertainment, advertisement, raw information and political propaganda are not news. What, then is news?*

### Activity 1 (10 minutes): What is news? & VIA

Have all the participants write their understanding of ‘What is news?’ on a piece of paper. Get few of them to share and probe:

- *Can a piece of information written by anyone on the media be considered news? Why? Why not?*
- *What makes news different from these kinds of information (referring to news neighbourhood on the slide on the media)?*

Through questioning, probe the participants to think about ethical standards in producing news reports.

Project slides on: Who is a journalist? Journalistic values [Verification, Independence, Accountability (VIA)] and speak on it.

Explain that news is a piece of verified information written or reported by a journalist who maintains independence from any interest groups and remains accountable to his/her work. It is the VIA that makes news different from other categories of information on the media. Explain with examples what verification, independence and accountability means.

Ask the participants to go back to their earlier definition of news and invite few reflections.

## Activity 2 (15 minutes): Analysing a news report

Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5 and give each group a news report (Article: Lack of bus stops irks commuters) to assess using VIA for 10 minutes.

Instruct the groups to discuss:

- If the news reporter maintained independence? How?
- If the reporter remains accountable to his or her work? How?
- Whether due diligence has been done by the reporter to present the truth to the public? How?

Have the groups underline the news segments that indicate VIA in the report.

Ask a reporter from one group to present their analysis. Generate discussion by inviting supplementary comments or reactions from other groups to the first group's analysis. Discuss any different views from other groups.

## Activity 3 (10 minutes) Why news literacy?

Distribute the article: Donald Trump signs a visa-free travel policy for Bhutan. It is a fake news on social media that looks legitimate. Many Bhutanese were duped into believing the news (See Facebook screenshots following the article in the appendix).

Lead a discussion on the article exploring the authenticity of the piece of information, ways to judge its authenticity and legitimacy and the dangers of not being news literate.

Suggested probes:

*What do you think of this piece of information?*

*Is it real news or fake news? How do you know it is real/fake?*

*What questions can you ask yourself to distinguish real from fake news? (e.g. Is it too good to be true? Is there such a legitimate media house as USA-Television.com? etc)*

Distribute the Kuensel editorial report: Beware of fake news and invite students to discuss why news literacy is important.

## Closure (5 minutes):

End the session by asking students to share one new thing they got from the session and one thing they are going to do differently from today.



## Session 7: Social media: What is social media and how to use it?

### Aim of session:

At the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. distinguish social media from news media
2. recognise both productive and harmful uses of social media
3. develop social media guidelines

**Time: 45 minutes**

### Outline of activities

Introduction

Activity 1: Uses of social media

Activity 2: Gallery walk - Social media guidelines

Closure:

### Resources

Newsprints/chart

Markers pens

Cello tapes

Meta cards

Case study: Man arrested for rape and murder of 19 year old (See appendix for the news report)

### Notes to the facilitator

Read:

- What is social media?
- Trends of social media in Bhutan
- Uses and misuses of social media
- Social media guidelines

Prepare necessary PowerPoint slides

### Introduction – (5 minutes)

Suggested introductory remark: You can begin this lesson by stating that many people now a days are familiar with Internet, and by generating some discussion around the following questions:

- *What social networks are you on?*
- *What do you use these networks for?*
- *How often and how long are you on these sites?*

Project the slides on what social media is, the difference between social media and news media and discuss the trend of social media in Bhutan and its pervasiveness.

### Activity 1 (15 minutes): Uses of social media - its benefits and negative consequences.

Let the students read the news article: 'Man arrested for rape and murder of 19 year old', and stimulate a discussion by probing:

- *What has happened here?*
- *How safe is social media?*
- *What are other negative influences or harmful uses of social media?*
- *What are the beneficial uses of social media?*

As students respond, note down the benefits and negative influences/uses of social media on the whiteboard.

## Activity 2 (25 minutes): Gallery Walk - Develop Social Media guidelines

Using Think-Pair-Share strategy let the students discuss if social media is a blessing or a curse.

Ask: Is social media good or bad?

Probe:

1. *If social media is not inherently good or bad, then who makes it good/bad? (Expected realisation is that it's the users who make it so).*
2. *If it is us (the users) who makes it so, how can we behave properly on social media?*

Guide the discussion to make the students' realise that social media is a double-edged sword, and it depends on the users and their ability to self-regulate.

Next, distribute chart papers and markers pens to groups. Ask the groups to discuss how one should and shouldn't behave on social media (Social media guideline)

After all the groups have their guidelines ready, put the charts up on the wall and invite all for a gallery walk (Participants visit each chart while members from each group take turn to stand beside their chart to answer or respond to any clarification.)

Project the slides on social media guidelines. Connect it with student-generated guidelines and elaborate and supplement wherever necessary.

## Closure (5 minutes)

Suggested prompt: What is that one thing you are going to do differently from today on social media? Why? Invite the students to share their reflections.

## Session 8: Evaluating sources & Why sources matter?

### Aim of session:

At the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

- distinguish sources of news from news outlets.
- evaluate the sources of news reports and judge its credibility.
- appreciate the importance of thinking critically about sources and the complexity of judging news in the real world.

**Time: 45 minutes**

### Outline of activities

Introduction

Activity 1: Sources (I'MVAIN) and why sources matter?

Activity 2: Evaluating sources in news reports

Closure: 3-2-1

### Resources

Slides

White board

Case study

News article: Lack of bus stops irks commuters

### Notes to the facilitator

Prepare necessary slides

Read: Judging the credibility of news: Evaluating sources and Why sources matter?

### Introduction (5 minutes)

Suggested introductory remark: When it comes to judging the credibility of news reports, the news consumers have two main concerns: evidence and sources.

Ask:

- *What is a source?*
- *What is an evidence?*
- *What is a news outlet?*
- *What is the difference between outlet and source?*
- *How is source different from evidence?*

Brainstorm ideas and note them down on the board.

### Activity 1 (15 minutes): What is a news source? Why do sources matter?

Project slides on:

What is a news source? Vs. What is a news outlet?

Types of sources: Independent vs. Self-interested, Multiple vs. Singular, Verifies vs. Asserts, Authoritative vs. un-informed, and named vs. anonymous. Explain each type of source with examples.

Lead a discussion by asking:

- *Why independent sources are better than self-interested?*
- *Why multiple sources are better than singular?*
- *Why authoritative sources are better than un-informed?*
- *Why sources that verify are better than those who assert?*
- *Why named sources are better than anonymous?*
- *Are authoritative sources always better than anonymous ones? Why? Why not?*

As you discuss students' responses to these questions, highlight how there is often no clear conclusion in judging the credibility of news in the real world. Give example of the invasion of Iraq by the US government over claims of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to illustrate its complexity.

### Activity 2 (20 minutes): Evaluating sources

Divide the class into groups of 4-5. Hand out a news report each and have the groups analyse the sources and judge the credibility of the news.

Have the groups underline the segment of the news that indicates the truth or lack thereof.

Invite the groups to present their analysis and stimulate a discussion by inviting countering views.

Probes:

- *Who are the sources in this news piece?*
- *Are they all named or anonymous?*
- *Are they independent sources or self-interested? How?*
- *Do the sources verify with proof or simply make a claim?*
- *Are the sources authoritative on the issue or not? How?*
- *On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 represents least believable and 10 most believable), how would you rate the credibility of the news?*

### Closure (5 minutes): 3-2-1

Invite the class to reflect on the lesson and write down:

- 3 new things learned
- 2 misconceptions clarified
- 1 lingering question

End the session by inviting a few participants to share and clarify the lingering questions.

## Session 9: Judging the credibility of news: Balance, Fairness and Bias

### Aim of session:

At the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. identify indicators of fairness, balance and bias in news reports
2. differentiate fairness from balance
3. judge fairness, balance and bias in a news report

**Time: 45 minutes**

### Outline of activities

Introduction

Activity 1: Discuss the two versions of the story about 'The three little pigs' (See appendix for the original story and the video file for the story as re-told by Jon Scieszka). There is also a dzongkha versions available.

Activity 2: Presentation - Balance, Fairness, Bias

Activity 3: Group activity – Analysis of news report.

Closure: Snowstorm

### Resources

Videos/Scripts on the original story and the story re-told by Jon Scieszka about the three little pigs.

PowerPoint slides

Case study

1. Construction of toilet takes more than a year
2. Schools grappling with shortage of iron tablets

### Notes to the facilitator

Read:

Balance, Fairness and Bias

Prepare necessary slides

Read the stories thoroughly if you choose to narrate them orally

### Introduction – (5 minutes)

Suggested introductory remark: *Have you read or recollect reading the story 'The three little pigs and the wicked wolf' as a kid? What do you remember of it? Take few responses.*

### Activity 1 (10 minutes): The story of 'The three little pigs'

Read out loud the original story of 'The three little pigs and the wicked wolf' and lead a discussion using the following probing questions:

Probes:

- *Why are the pigs running?*
- *Why was the wolf huffing and puffing?*
- *What did you learn about wolves from this story?*
- *Is there anything missing from this story?*

Students may conclude that the little pigs were running for their lives because the bad wolf was chasing to eat them.

Proceed to play/read out loud the story as re-told by Jon Scieszka. Use the questions below and guide a discussion to help students see the wolf's version of the story.

Probes:

- *This story is also about the three little pigs, but what do you think about the wolf now? (Expected response – he isn't as wicked as he was portrayed in the earlier version of the story)*
- *What was missing in the earlier version of the story? (Expected responses – wolf's side of the story)*
- *What is the lesson in Jon Scieszka's re-telling of this fairy tale? (Expected response – That there are different perspectives/versions to stories or news.)*
- *Is it fair to choose one perspective of a story over the others?*
- *What is fairness in reporting news?*

## Activity 2 (10 minutes): Presentation – Balance, Fairness and Bias

Present slides on Balance, Fairness and Bias. Explain the concepts.

Ask:

- *How do you check news for balance, fairness and bias?*
- *Is balance the same as fairness?*
- *What does "fair to the evidence mean"?*

Make participants think before presenting on what indicates balance, fairness and bias.

## Activity 3 (15 minutes): Group activity – Case study

Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5 depending on the class size. Assign the two stories to different groups. Get the groups to underline segments of the story that indicates fairness, balance and bias. Invite the groups to share their analysis.

Probes:

- *Is this story fair?*
- *Are there multiple views represented?*
- *Are there evidences of personal bias?*
- *How can you spot bias in news?*

## Closure (5 minutes)

Have the participants write what they learned on a piece of paper, and crush it up into a paper ball. Give a signal and everybody throws the paper snowballs in the air. Then each participant picks up a nearby response and reads it aloud.

## Session 10: Core concepts of media literacy

### Aim of session:

At the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. understand that all media messages are constructed
2. identify the use of a creative language in media messages
3. discern the implicit values or views promoted through media productions
4. recognise the intended objectives behind media productions

**Time: 45 minutes**

### Outline of activities

Introduction:

Activity 1: Guided deconstruction of media messages

Activity 2: Presentation – Core concepts of media literacy

Closure: Takeaway

### Resources

Newsprints/chart

Markers pens

Cello tapes

Videos

Promotional video of Aman Kora/ Tashi airlines

Mayo's noodles advertisement

Thai Life Insurance advertisement

### Notes to the facilitator

Read: Core concepts of Media Literacy

Prepare necessary PowerPoint slides

### Introduction – (5 minutes)

Suggested introductory remark: *All of you experience media messages every day, either in print or audio-visual form through TVs and the Internet. But have you questioned:*

1. *Who created that message?*
2. *What was involved in making it?*
3. *What choices were made and what were rejected?*
4. *Who was it intended for?*
5. *What view is being promoted?*

Project these questions one at a time on the slide and get students' reactions. Generate a brief discussion on why is it important to ask such questions.

### Activity 1 (25 minutes): Guided deconstruction of media messages

Show Aman Kora or Tashi Airlines' promotion (videos folder)

Lead a discussion using the following prompts to illustrate that all media messages are constructed using a language with its own rules.



- *What is the message in this video?*
- *Who created this message?*
- *What do you notice about the way the message is constructed (colors, shapes, sound effects, music, sets, framing, lighting, composition)?*
- *How is the story told?*
- *What do you like about this production?/ What's the emotional appeal?/ Persuasive devices?*
- *What makes it seem 'real'?*
- *What makes you feel uncomfortable/comfortable?*

Show Mayos noodles advertisement (See videos folder)

Lead a discussion using the following prompts to illustrate that media messages have implicit values and that it is created to benefit or profit:

- *Who created this message?*
- *What is the message being sent in this video?*
- *Who are they sending it to? / Who is the target audience?*
- *Why are they sending this message?*
- *What is being 'sold' in the message? What is being 'told'?*
- *Who profits from this message?*

Show Thai Life Insurance advertisement (See videos folder)

Lead a discussion using the following prompts to illustrate that different people react differently to media messages:

- *What did you feel as you experienced this media product?*
- *What do you think the author wants you to feel?*
- *What did you learn about yourself from this experience?*
- *What did you learn about other people's responses, and their experiences?*
- *How could this be understood differently?*

## Activity 2 (10 minutes): Presentation of the core concepts of media literacy

Use the following prompts to get participants' reactions and reflection first. After brief discussion following each question, present the core concept one at a time and connect it with participants' responses wherever appropriate.

Ask:

1. *Having analysed (deconstructed) the three videos, what do you conclude about media messages?*
2. *Are media messages born out of natural phenomena? Present the first core concept – All media messages are constructed.*
3. *How are media messages constructed? / What are the 'raw materials' for media production? Present the second core concept – Media messages are created using a creative language with rules of its own.*
4. *Do all people experience the same media message in the same way? Present the third core concept – Different people experience the same media message differently.*
5. *Are media messages free of values? Present the fourth core concept – All media have embedded values and points of view.*
6. *What is the main purpose of most media messages? Present the fifth core concept – Most media messages are organised to gain profit and /or power.*

## Closure (5 minutes): Takeaway

Get the participants to share their takeaway from the session and why it is important for them.

## 08

Media &amp; Democracy Literacy

# Appendix

## Session 3:

Role of News media in a democracy

## Activity 2:

How is an editorial different from news report?

CASE STUDY 1: A SAMPLE EDITORIAL

## Tracksuit ruling requires more thought

March 24, 2017 Editorial

Thimphu Thromde has decided that school students in Thimphu will not be allowed to wear tracksuits during assemblies and in classes. The decision comes from a desire to promote or maintain the country's national identity.

The move has received mixed reactions. Some have lauded the decision. Some are flabbergasted by it.

One question that has arisen from the debate that the move has flamed is whether the wearing of a tracksuit on one school day out of six, dilutes our national identity. Any answer would be subjective and depend on one's understanding or interpretation of culture.

Aesthetics is an important aspect of our culture and being appropriately attired during assemblies and classes at all times would be a priority for many. Some may argue against concentrating too much on aesthetics and rather on inner values and practises. This perennial debate will never end and it would be unwise to expect an answer.

However, what we can question is whether the decision was made taking into account the difficulties some schools may face in implementing the new rule, especially as the thromde requires immediate compliance.

Another question is whether the thromde consulted with the schools or with parents on what the possible implications of such a move might be.

One of the first possibilities that may arise is that students will have to carry heavier bags to school. Studies are finding that students who carry heavy bags suffer physical ailments later in life. Our students are already burdened with heavy bags and many have to walk long distances to get an education, even in Thimphu.

One way of addressing the heavy bag problem is to have lockers in our schools, which we don't. Until we do have such facilities in place, we would encourage the education sector to explore ways to reduce the load our students carry.

However, even if our students are able to comfortably carry their uniforms to school,

other problems arise. One is where do they change. It would either have to be in their classrooms or changing rooms, the latter of which may be lacking in the majority of schools. When it comes to younger students in the lower grades like pre-primary, will there be enough teachers to help students change back into their uniforms once their health and physical education classes are completed.

One of the possible solutions suggested by the thomde is to designate Saturdays for health and physical education, during which the students can don their tracksuits for the entire school session. Some schools have already adopted such a strategy from the start of the academic year.

However, some schools will face challenges. If the entire school is having their health and physical education class together, there may not be enough physical education instructors or equipment to ensure all students receive enough attention and activity. Concerns have also been raised that there may not even be enough space in some schools for all students to be undergoing their physical education class at one go.

Clearly there is a need for more careful thought on how the tracksuit rule is implemented. It may have to be done gradually and in close consultation with the schools.

(From: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/tracksuit-ruling-requires-more-thought/>)

## CASE STUDY 2: A SAMPLE NEWS REPORT

# Tracksuits disallowed for assemblies and classes in Thimphu schools

March 23, 2017 News

**S**chool students in Thimphu will no longer be allowed to wear tracksuits during the morning assembly and in classes, the thromde has decided.

The decision is a resolution of the 11th Thimphu Thromde education conference held on March 8 at Paro.

The March 16 notice states that in keeping with government policy to promote the country's national identity, directives are issued to the schools for immediate compliance. The notification states that students will have to wear either gho or kira while in school, and also while going and returning from school.

Students will be permitted to wear tracksuits only during health and physical education (HPE) periods and annual sports days. Schools are asked to arrange their health and physical education classes on Saturdays and tracksuits should be worn uniformly only on that day.

"School principals will ensure that students carry tracksuits separately for HPE classes and also make arrangements with HPE teachers/instructors to adjust time of about 5-10 minutes for changing the dress," the notice states.

While the notice was issued on March 16, some schools received it only yesterday morning.

The notice has elicited mixed reactions from secondary schools. However, primary schools have expressed concerns over the decision.

Secondary schools like Nima and Pelkhil stopped allowing students to attend assembly and classes in tracksuit from the start of the academic year. "Though we received the notice only yesterday morning, the school has refrained from allowing students to come in tracksuits in the morning assembly and classes," Pelkhil High School principal, Umesh Kumar said.

Nima Higher Secondary School principal, Wangchuk Namgyel said that his school didn't wait for the notice. "We informed the students from last year that HPE classes will be conducted on Saturdays," he said.

Both schools also hold their HPE classes only on Saturdays. "No parents have objected to the school's decision to disallow tracksuits for the morning assembly and in classes," Wangchuk Namgyel said.

Some secondary schools like Lungtenzampa, Dechencholing, and Yangchenphug have been holding their HPE classes on Saturdays for a few years now. "But since it was difficult to cover over 1,864 students on Saturday, HPE classes for preprimary to III were conducted in periods during the weekdays," Dechencholing Higher Secondary School vice principal, Kuenga said.

In the three schools, students are allowed to wear tracksuits only on Saturdays. "As for classes PP-III, we allow the children to wear tracksuits until the afternoon," Kuenga said.

Lungtenzampa Middle Secondary School has its HPE day on Friday since the school is closed on Saturdays.

But Pelkhil's principal Umesh Kumar said that conducting HPE classes for over 570 students on the same day within a span of two-three hours is difficult and ensuring quality is a challenge. "It's difficult to engage every student and give each an equal opportunity for activities on the same day," he said.

Principals from other higher secondary schools had no issues with the new rule. Principals from these schools in fact lauded the directives to do away with tracksuits during the morning assembly and classes.

However, the new rule has worried primary school principals. Most feel that it will be difficult to conduct HPE classes on Saturdays. "Firstly, the school has only one physical education instructor who cannot cover over 348 students on the same day," Jungshina Primary School principal, Sangay Dorji said, adding that even resources like space and sport equipment would not be enough.

Zilukha Middle Secondary School principal, Dawa Tshering said that the school has only limited resources to be able to conduct HPE classes on Saturday for all of the school's 29 classes. "The school is discussing on how to conduct the HPE class," Dawa Tshering said.

He added that changing rooms would also be required if students have to change in the school. "While students from the higher classes won't have any issue, children from the lower classes especially the primary level would have problems since they would not know how to wear their uniforms," Dawa Tshering said.

**Tempa Wangdi**

(From: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/tracksuits-disallowed-for-assemblies-and-classes-in-thimphu-schools/>)

**Session 6:**

Why News literacy?

**Activity 2:**

Analysing a news report for VIA

\*The same case study can be used for session 8 on Evaluating Sources (IMVAN)

CASE STUDY 3:

**Lack of bus stops irk commuters**

December 12, 2016 News

**C**onnectivity: It is a windy Sunday evening in Thimphu. Tshering Wangmo, her six-month-old daughter and her 54-year-old mother have been waiting for the city bus for the last 20 minutes. Without a proper enclosure at the city's first model bus stop in Changjiji, those waiting for buses at the stop are confronted with several challenges. "During winters, it is very cold waiting for the bus here. And the dusts from vehicles plying on the expressway makes it worse," said Tshering Wangmo.

During summers, the leaf-like bus stop does not protect the public from rain. However, city bus commuters like Tshering Wangmo are at least happy that they have a bus stand where they can rest while waiting for the bus.

"In other places there is just a pole designated as a bus stop," said Tshering Wangmo adding that the bus stops don't even have a place to sit. "For old people like my mother, it is difficult to stand there and wait for 20-30 minutes."

Currently there are about 170 city bus stops in Thimphu of which only 70 are identified as feasible for a bus shed. With the addition of 18 more buses to Thimphu city bus fleet, the requirement for additional and proper bus stand is felt evermore.

Transport director with the city bus service, Sonam Dendup said that along with the increasing number of buses and improved services, it is important that the thromde create facilities like footpaths and bus stops for the convenience of the public and the bus services.

"It is not the mandate of the city bus service to establish bus stops but it is the thromde's responsibility," said Sonam Dendup.

Thrompon Kinlay Dorjee said that according to the thromde's plan, there are plans for about 100 bus stands and currently the office is looking for funds.

"Not all 100 bus stops are required immediately so we will give priority to about 40 to 50 bus stops to be established in some densely populated areas within a year or two," said Kinlay Dorjee.

The thrompon added that the location and space the thromde has created for bus stops in areas like the expressway will be first blacktopped. "We are working on it and we are also exploring different bus stop designs for different spaces."

The city's model bus stop design, which was inaugurated last year, received much criticism on the design and cost. The information and communications ministry spent Nu 900,000 to build the model bus stop. Following the criticism, the ministry decided not to replicate the bus stop.

Kinlay Dorjee said that the main criticism on the Changjiji bus shed is that it is not wind proof. "If we have to make it wind proof then we have to build a wall or have glass fence," he said. "Miscreants will break the glass and the earlier bus stands that we have with walls look ugly and are not fully utilised."

The thrompon added that with all the criticism, the thromde is exploring measures to build public-friendly and efficient bus stands once the fund is acquired.

Meanwhile, the 18 new buses will start plying around the city from December 17. City bus services has identified an additional three more routes for the buses. The office also has plans to minimise the buses coming to the terminal and operate more from point to point, reducing congestion at the terminal.

With the addition of 18 new city buses, Thimphu today has 48 city buses.

**Younten Tshedup**

**Activity 3:**

Why news literacy?

CASE STUDY 4: SAMPLE FAKE NEWS

**Donald Trump signs a visa-free travel policy for Bhutan**

The United States President, Donald Trump has signed an executive order to allow all Bhutan nationals travel to the United States without visas.

The new order, serving as a change in visa policy for Bhutanese traveling to the United States, would permit them stay in the U.S for a maximum period of 180 days for Tourism or Business purposes only. Stay over 180 days would therefore require a visa.

Trump says this measure is to strengthen trade between the United States and Bhutan.

However, Bhutanese who hold dual nationality will be banned from entering the United States if their other passport is from Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen — the six Muslim-majority countries “of concern”.

It has emerged that trade and bilateral visa deals have been discussed by Trump and Bhutanese Diplomats in the States.

A source at the White House has hinted that Trump may revoke Australia’s opportunity of traveling to the United States without visas after cancelling all trade deals with the country.

Allowing Bhutanese to the United States freely is not the only order signed into force by Trump since assuming office. He has signed five new executive orders – including one to expedite environmental review and approval of high-priority infrastructure projects.

President Donald Trump signed executive orders to advance the construction of the controversial Dakota Access and Keystone XL pipelines.

He also signed an executive order barring federal funds from organizations that promote abortion around the world, including the International Planned Parenthood Federation, in what activists say is the president’s first major pro-life action while in office.

Time to pack my bedding.



Donald Trump signs a visa-free travel policy for Bhutan  
The United States President, Donald Trump has signed an executive order to allow all Bhutan nationals travel to the United States without visas. The new order, serving as a change in visa policy for Bhutanese traveling to the United States,...  
USA-TELEVISION.COM

Here is a good news for all the Bhutanese who have plans to visit the USA for 180 days... 😊.

Wish you all a wonderful holidays in the USA. ..😊.



Donald Trump signs a visa-free travel policy for Bhutan  
The United States President, Donald Trump has signed an executive order to allow all Bhutan nationals travel to the United States without visas. The new order, serving as a change in visa policy for Bhutanese traveling to the United States,...  
USA-TELEVISION.COM

**Screenshots of Bhutanese reacting to the fake news on free USA visa policy for Bhutan**

Additional reading for session 6

## Beware fake news

March 29, 2017 Editorial

Many, including journalists, recently fell for an old, by internet standards, prank or “click bait” on the internet.

In this prank, an online newspaper (that looks legitimate unless you dig deeper) carries an article about US President Donald Trump suddenly making an unexpected U-turn on his campaign promises and has granted all Bhutanese citizens visa-free travel to the USA. On top of that, Bhutanese would be able to reside there for up to 180 days.

This is not the first time President Trump has rewarded Bhutanese. A few months ago, he held up a declaration on which he, again, promised visa-free travel to the USA for Bhutanese for being “good Buddhists”.

To anyone familiar with internet pranks, such “too good to be true” are simply phishing or click bait. You come up with a statement or headline so catchy that you get the user to click the link to find out more. Usually the baiter just wants you to visit their site and bait you to click more links so that he/she/it makes money off another third party.

A quick search of the internet would also show that it wasn’t only Bhutanese that were granted visa-free travel to the US. The headlines are the same, just the country is changed. It’s fake news.

However, in this recent case, some Bhutanese even contacted government and US embassy officials to confirm the news. The line is getting harder to distinguish between fake news and real news.

And if even journalists are finding it hard to tell the difference, this is a dangerous development and this is where the media must raise their own awareness, because we’ve to play a stronger role. We need to react faster to such fake news and debunk them as they appear. Today, the fake news about the visas is relatively harmless. However, there could be a day when those with more sinister motives exploit this platform and cause more serious damage.

We’re already susceptible to fake news and conspiracy theories and scams, especially information we want to hear like better chances with visas. For instance, the police are currently holding a suspect who is alleged to have duped a number of people by promising them US work visas given so-and-so contact here and there. Many were parted from their money. This is in spite of the several stories all media houses have run on the same kind of visa scams.

If not already, media literacy teachers need to teach their students how to distinguish between real and fake news, and what questions to ask themselves or what checks they can make on their own to identify fake news and scams.

From: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/beware-fake-news/>



**Session 7:**

Social media: What is social media and how to use it?

**Activity 1:**

Uses of social media - its benefits and negative consequences.

## CASE STUDY 5

## Man arrested for rape and murder of 19 year old

Damchoe Pem 03/18/2017 Headline Stories

Gomtu police have arrested a 23-year-old man in connection with the rape and murder of a 19-year-old woman on March 1, 2017.

An employee of Penden Cement in Gomtu, Sukman Gurung from Phuntshopelri, was arrested on March 10. The deceased was a temporary employee in a private company.

The mother of the deceased lodged a missing person complaint on 6th March after her daughter went missing since the night of 1st March. On March 9th Gomtu police received information of an abandoned body on the Sukti riverbed. The body was identified as the missing 19 year old.

The decomposed dead body was found about 10 meters towards the right side of the riverbed near the rough road running below Lhaki Cement factory. The lower body was naked.

The deceased was also found with laceration wound on left temporal region, on the anterior neck and the right fingertips were also found missing.

On 1st March, the deceased visited her friend, a student of Gomtu MSS. That evening around 7:40 pm, the deceased asked her to accompany her as she was to meet someone and while they were waiting the deceased got a call from an unknown person and the deceased asked her friend to go home and that she will go alone to meet the person.

The deceased's friend tried to contact her after reaching home and found her number off and later when she came to know about her missing from work, she informed the mother.

The police managed to get to the suspect through various social media apps. They found that the suspect and the deceased was in contact through facebook whereby he constantly asked the deceased to come to meet him alone.

The suspect, Sukman Gurung confessed to the crime. The suspect confessed that he was in contact with her in facebook and he took a chance to call the deceased on 1st March.

However, when the deceased tried to resist and threatened to tell his wife and shouted for help, the suspect then strangled her with his right hand whereby she became unconscious and he then raped her.

The suspect further strangled her with the deceased's own hand towel. After knowing she was dead, he fled the crime scene.

The suspect confessed that, he alone was responsible for the crime.

From: <http://thebhutanese.bt/man-arrested-for-rape-and-murder-of-19-year-old/>

**Session 9:**

Judging the credibility of new: Balance, Fairness and Bias

**Activity: 1**

## The Original Story of the Three little Pigs and the Big Bad wolf

A mother pig has three baby pigs. One day she says, “You’ve grown too big for my little house. It’s time you had houses of your own.”

The three little pigs trot down the road. “Goodbye,” call mother pig. “Build your houses and never open the door to the Big Bad Wolf. He’ll eat you.”

The first little pig meets a man. He has a big bundle of straw. “Please give me some straw,” says the little pig. The man gives him lots of straw.

The little pig builds his house. He is very proud of it. It has two doors, two windows and a fine roof. “I’ll be safe and snug inside,” he says.

The second little pig meets a man. He has a big bundle of sticks. “Please give me some sticks,” says the little pig. The man gives him lots of big sticks.

The little pig builds his house. It has strong walls, two doors, two windows and a chimney. “I’ll be safe and snug inside,” he says.

The third little pig meets a man. He has a load of bricks. “Please give me some bricks,” says the little pig. The man gives him all he needs for his house.

The little pig builds his house. It has thick walls, two doors, two windows and a chimney. “I’m not afraid of the Big Bad Wolf,” he says.

The wolf comes to the straw house.

“Little pig, little pig, let me in,” he says. “Not by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin,” says the pig. The wolf huffs and puffs, and blows the house down.

The little pig runs to the stick house.

Soon the wolf comes to the door of the stick house. “Little pigs, little pigs, let me in,” he says.

“Not by the hair on my chinny-chin-chin,” reply the little pigs. The wolf huffs and puffs, and blows the house down.

The two little pigs run to the brick house. Soon the wolf comes to the door. “Little pig, little, let me in,” he says.

No, no, no. Not by the hair on my chinny-chin-chin,” reply the little pigs. The wolf huffs and puffs. He puffs and huffs but he can’t blow the house down.

**(As retold by : Heather Amery & Stephen Catwright)**

## CASE STUDY 6

## Construction of toilets take more than a year

April 15, 2017 News Leave a comment 788 Views

The Samdrupjongkhar primary school has been waiting for a new toilet for more than a year. Construction of the new toilets was supposed to have been completed by June last year.

The construction of 14 toilets for girls and boys began from December 2015, but the construction is still not complete. The school's administration claims they are unaware of the reasons for the delay as the construction is being monitored by the Samdrupjongkhar thromde.

According to the school's principal, Sonam Tshering, the construction of the school's toilets was approved because UNICEF requires a certain number of toilets and water taps based on the number of students. With the school introducing classes until level VI, the number of toilets needed to be increased by another 14, from the existing number of 14.

"But even after a year the toilets are still not ready and we've verbally complained several times," the principal said, adding that since there was no response, they are not sure what the cause of the delay is.

Construction of the toilets, according to the principal, is inconsistent and halts frequently throughout the week.

"We provide all the necessary assistance but still the contractor has not completed the work on time. It is not about how important the toilets are but meeting the deadline to meet the required policy of health and sanitation."

The principal added that the school is managing with the existing 14 toilets with different break times for the classes. But despite the differing break times, he added that most of the students relieve themselves outside the toilet because of the congestion, which is unhygienic.

"We didn't even receive any enquiry from the authority concerned to check on the delay of completion even after the complaint," he said.

The school has 616 students with 28 teachers. The construction of the toilets was estimated to cost of Nu 2.6 million (M) and was tendered out to the lowest bidder at Nu 1.9M.

The contractor said the work was delayed after 22 of his labourers absconded after advancing Nu 120,000 and he had to hire new workers, which is why the work was further delayed.

However, the contractor assured that this time the work will be completed on time and the toilets will be ready before this month ends.

**Yangchen C Rinzin | Samdrupjongkhar**

From: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/construction-of-toilets-take-more-than-a-year/>

## CASE STUDY 7

## Schools grappling with shortage of iron tablets

April 26, 2016 News Leave a comment 701 Views

**H**ealth: Schools in Tsirang are getting inadequate supply of iron tablets, resulting in irregular distribution.

Although no major cases of anemia have been reported, school health coordinators say that a systematic flow of supply to schools is necessary.

Phuentenchu Primary School in Tsirang received iron tablet supply only last week. The school has about 180 students. The school has not distributed iron tablets for last two months.

Health coordinator of the school, Hayimu Tamang, said that after numerous requisitions, the school got 1,000 tablets from the Basic Health Unit (BHU).

"I was told that there is acute shortage of iron tablets," he said. "This stock will be exhausted within a month or two. I don't know from where to arrange the tablets after that."

Mendrelgang Central School, too, received only limited stock of iron tablets. Until last year, the school provided iron tablets to both boys and girls from classes PP to VI, and to only female students from classes VII to X. Because of the shortage, the school has stopped providing the tablets to primary students because priority is given to menstruating female students, Mani Raj Thapa said.

"I just have about 1,000 tablets for about 300 female students," he said. "BHU too is running short of iron tablets."

Health coordinators of Damphu Lower Secondary School raised the issue during the central regional health coordination meeting yesterday in Tsirang. The meeting is being attended by dzongkhag health officers, medical officers and health workers of Tsirang, Dagana, Zhemgang, Trongsa, Bumthang and Sarpang.

Damphu LSS has not received its first phase of Vitamin A supplement. Irregular iron tablet supply is not a new issue in the school.

Senior officials from health ministry said that the ministry is yet to decide whether distributing iron tablets in schools should be continued. The system was introduced sometime in 2004.

However, procurement officer with the medical supplies and health infrastructure department, Pema Wangchuk, said that the department does not receive supply orders together, and so the delay. He added that the department has issued a circular to all dzongkhag education officers that quantitative requirement be submitted to the district hospital annually.

"This has never happened, which is why there is shortage of iron tablet supply in schools," said Pema Wangchuk. "We're currently supplying from our buffer stock."

Pema Wangchuk said that unless there is proper coordination between dzongkhag education officers and health officials, irregular supply of iron tablets will continue. "This is an issue common in schools across the country," he added.

The three-day meeting ends tomorrow.

**Nirmala Pokhrel**

From: <http://www.kuenselonline.com/schools-grappling-with-shortage-of-iron-tablets/>





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