Media Perception Index

Bhutan's First Citizen Survey 2025

Journalists' Association of Bhutan
(JAB)

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This survey is supported by the Department of Media, Creative Industry and Intellectual Property, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment

Acknowledgement

The Journalists' Association of Bhutan (JAB) expresses its heartfelt gratitude to the Department of Media, Creative Industry and Intellectual Property (DoMCIIP) under the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Employment for their generous financial support in conducting the 'Media Perception Index: Citizen Survey 2025.' This marks the first media perception barometer conducted in Bhutan since the liberalization of media licenses in 2006.

We are also thankful to the Center for Local Governance and Research (CLG) for their collaboration, which enabled JAB to conduct the survey and supervise enumerators in 14 Dzongkhags. Their support facilitated data analysis, interpretation, and the tabulation of survey findings.

We extend our appreciation to the National Statistics Bureau (NSB) for granting us 'Survey Clearance' to conduct our study in 14 Dzongkhags. Our sincere thanks also go to the Director General of the Department of Local Governance and Disaster Management, Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Director of the Department of School Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, for their generous support in facilitating local administrations, teachers, and students during the media perception survey. Their assistance made it possible for enumerators and supervisors to conduct timely face-to-face interviews.

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We thank all our stakeholders, 12 enumerators, and six supervisors for their meaningful involvement in this important initiative. This achievement was made possible by the dedication and hard work of our enumerators and supervisors, whose perseverance ensured smooth data collection even in challenging conditions. Together, we are shaping a more informed and vibrant media landscape in Bhutan, contributing to the strengthening of democracy.

Abbreviations

BBS	Bhutan Broadcasting Service
BMF	Bhutan Media Foundation
BICMA	Bhutan InfoCom and Media Authority
CLGR	Centre for Local Governance and Research
CLCS	College of Language and Culture Studies
CNR	College of Natural Resources
CST	College of Science and Technology
DoMCIIP	Department of Media, Creative Industry and Intellectual Property
GNH	Gross National Happiness
JAB	Journalists' Association of Bhutan
JNEC	Jigme Namgyel Engineering College
MoICE	Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment
MPI	Media Perception Index
NC	National Council of Bhutan
NSB	National Statistics Bureau
NYAB	National Youth Association of Bhutan
OTT	Over-the-Top
RGoB	Royal Government of Bhutan
RSF	Reporters Without Borders
SCE	Samtse College of Education
SMS	Short Message Service
TV	Television
X	Formerly Twitter
WPFI	World Press Freedom Index

Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Executive Summary

As Bhutan transitions into a more digitally connected era, understanding how citizens engage with and perceive media has become increasingly critical. To respond to this need, the Journalists' Association of Bhutan (JAB) conducted a comprehensive Media Perception Index (MPI) Survey, covering 703 respondents across 14 dzongkhags. The study explored access to and usage of various media platforms, public trust in the media, perceptions of independence and credibility, and the evolving role of both traditional and digital platforms.

The findings revealed that Bhutanese media continued to enjoy relatively high levels of public trust. Average credibility ratings ranged between 3.32 and 3.86 on a scale from 1 (very negative) to 5 (very positive), with television (TV) standing out as the most trusted format. BBS Television Channels 1 and 2 remained the most widely consumed media platforms. Channel 1 was watched daily by 7% and several times a week by 36% of respondents, while Channel 2 followed closely with 6% daily and 31% accessing it several times a week. Overall, over 60% of respondents engaged with BBS TV on a weekly or more frequent basis.

In contrast, the national OTT platform Samuh showed limited reach, with only 1% of respondents reporting daily use and 2% accessing it several times a week. A significant 59% reported never using Samuh, and 15% cited unavailability or a lack of awareness regarding the platform. Local cable television was moderately used, with 3% reporting daily viewership and 11% engaging several times a week. However, 47% indicated they never used it, and 14% reported being unaware of or lacking access to it.

Radio, once a key information source in Bhutan, registered notably low usage. BBS Radio had only 1% daily listeners and 4% reporting listening several times a week, with 52% indicating they never used it. Other FM stations, including Kuzoo FM, Radio Valley, Centennial Radio, and Community Radio, recorded even lower engagement. Daily use for these stations ranged from 0% to 1%, while non-usage rates were considerably high: 60% for Kuzoo FM, 67% for Radio Valley, 73% for Centennial Radio, and 75% for Community Radio. Additionally, between 16% and 20% of respondents reported either not using or being unaware of these stations.

Newspaper readership in Bhutan demonstrated considerable variation across different publications. Kuensel emerged as the most widely accessed newspaper, with 39% of respondents reporting weekly readership; however, 32% indicated they never read this publication. The Bhutanese showed the most dedicated readership, with 11% reporting that they read it multiple times a day. Conversely, 34% of respondents stated they never read The Bhutanese, and an additional 16% were either unaware of its existence or lacked access. Mid-tier engagement was observed for Business Bhutan, Bhutan Times, and Bhutan Today, which recorded weekly readership rates ranging from 20% to 30%. These publications also experienced relatively high non-readership, with rates between 36% and 43%. In contrast, The Journalist and Gyalchi Sarshog had the lowest reach, with only 1-2% of respondents reporting daily readership, and nearly 50% indicating they never read these publications. These distinct patterns highlighted significant disparities in access, awareness, and perceived relevance across Bhutan's print media landscape. These challenges in print, however, were concurrent with a broader digital disruption that was reshaping the entire Bhutanese media landscape. Social media has become the dominant information source for many, surpassing traditional formats like print and television. This shift suggests that traditional media outlets, such as newspapers and television, are losing influence and reach, potentially facing gradual obsolescence, much like trends seen worldwide. The rise of social media highlights a preference for instant, accessible, and interactive content, attracting a broader and more diverse audience.

The implications of this change are significant for media stakeholders and policymakers. There is a clear need to adapt to new communication channels, improve digital literacy among citizens, and develop strategies to ensure the dissemination of credible and responsible information in the digital age. However, despite its widespread use, trust in social media remained low, revealing a substantial gap between the popularity of digital platforms and their perceived credibility.

The survey also showed that media played a powerful role in shaping language use, cultural expression, and behaviour. More than half of the respondents acknowledged that media affected how they spoke, dressed, and behaved. This illustrated a broader cultural shift influenced by global exposure and digital content, particularly among the youth. While these changes can offer new learning opportunities, they also raise concerns about the dilution of traditional Bhutanese values as well as adoption of new ones.

Misinformation, media bias, and limited independence surfaced as recurring concerns. Although respondents generally expressed confidence in the credibility of Bhutanese media, the presence of such concerns underscores the need to strengthen journalistic standards and promote media literacy to ensure more responsible media production and consumption.

The survey paid particular attention to youth and children's digital habits. Data showed widespread access to mobile phones and the internet which offered significant benefits in terms of education and connectivity. Simultaneously, it also indicated a median daily use of 1 to 2 hours for non-educational purposes by over 31% of children. Many parents expressed concerns about excessive screen time and its ill effects on physical and mental wellbeing. These concerns included addiction, distraction from academic responsibilities, exposure to harmful or inappropriate content, and called for urgent action in the form of digital literacy education, parental guidance programmemes, and clear content regulation policies.

Differences in media perception were also noted across demographic groups. Rural respondents generally expressed more favourable views of media than their urban counterparts. Women were more likely than men to hold positive perceptions, and divorced or widowed individuals rated media more favourably compared to others. Interestingly, those with no formal education were more likely to express strong approval of the media, while those with higher education levels tended to offer more critical assessments. No major differences were found across age groups or occupational categories.

The consumption patterns across different media formats paint a mixed picture. BBS Channels 1 and 2 remain the most frequently used platforms, with over 60% of respondents engaging with them daily or several times a week. Samuh and local cable television recorded moderate weekly use of around 2%, while nearly half of respondents never used them. FM radio stations such as Kuzoo, Radio Valley, Centennial, and Community Radio showed high non-use rates ranging between 50% to 75%, indicating a low relevance compared to television.

When asked about media credibility, respondents rated domestic media like television, radio, and newspapers more favourably than foreign sources. Indian television channels and digital platforms, including social media and general websites, were met with much more skepticism. This reflects a global pattern in which people are increasingly dependent on digital media for information but are also more cautious about its reliability.

In summary, the MPI survey revealed a media environment in transition. Traditional platforms continue to anchor public trust, but digital innovation is rapidly reshaping engagement patterns. The average perception score of 3.81 out of 5 suggests that Bhutanese media is generally well-regarded. However, the differences in trust and usage across platforms indicate the need for strategic reforms.

To support a more robust and responsible media sector, the study recommends promoting culturally grounded content that balances tradition and modernity, improving journalistic integrity, and expanding access to regional and multilingual programmeming. It also highlights the importance of strengthening media and digital literacy, encouraging inclusive citizen engagement, and establishing regulatory frameworks to counter misinformation and promote independent media.

Bhutan stands at an important crossroads in its media development journey. With coordinated policy action, professional commitment, and active community participation, the media sector can play a transformative role in building an informed, resilient, and cohesive society prepared to navigate the complexities of the modern information landscape.

1. Bhutan's Media Background

Since the establishment of democracy in 2008, Bhutan's information and communication landscape has expanded significantly. The Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) initiated this journey with the Kuensel newspaper, which published its first bulletin in 1965 in the national language, Dzongkha, followed by English in 1967. Kuensel formally began weekly tabloid publications in 1986, catering to speakers of Dzongkha, Lhotsham, and English.

At this time, the Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS) radio evolved from the youth-led Radio NYAB (National Youth Association of Bhutan), which was founded in 1973. Initially, BBS primarily provided brief local and international news while focusing on entertainment programmeming, including music and traditional songs. For many decades, radio remained the preferred medium at the grassroots level due to its affordability, accessibility, and portability.

The introduction of television and the internet in 1999 further fuelled the growth of Bhutan's media landscape. BBS began broadcasting news and entertainment programmemes. However, news hours remained unchanged, despite the addition of two more channels.

In 2003, mobile communications broadened the media landscape, personalising mass communication. The liberal licensing policy adopted by the RGoB in 2006 led to the emergence of private newspapers, ushering in an era of pluralism in news and viewpoints and resulting in the most vibrant media environment the country has ever experienced. The subsequent introduction of private radio stations further diversified the media scene, alongside newspapers, internet services, a national television channel, and numerous international cable channels.

Evolution of the Media Landscape

With the advent of parliamentary democracy, Bhutan saw the emergence of 12 newspapers, six radio stations, two magazines, and a national television network by 2013. The media was assigned a clear role in the democratic process, providing a public space for democratic discourse, a vital process for fostering a democratic culture. As an essential element of a Gross National Happiness (GNH) society, Bhutanese media were given an even greater mandate.

Bhutanese media were expected to be active participants in the process of change, creating new realities while sustaining traditional values. The Constitution of Bhutan, adopted in 2008, guarantees "freedom of expression, freedom of media, and the right to information," empowering the media to strengthen good governance, a key pillar of GNH.

Subsequent elected governments have recognised that a professional media is crucial for a vibrant democracy. A free and independent media is viewed as essential not only for advancing democracy but also for ensuring institutional accountability and transparency. Hence, the culture of "Meet the Press" was born in 2008 and has been practiced monthly between cabinet ministers and media personnel since then.

"Media - newspapers, television, radio, and the internet - must play a crucial role. I appreciate that while some media agencies are young and lack adequate resources, they have strived to perform their duties with complete commitment. Moving forward, the media will be vital in keeping people well-informed and encouraging debate and participation, which are key to a vibrant democracy. Therefore, I have decided, through the exercise of my Royal Prerogative of Kidu, to strengthen media agencies so they can carry out their duties without fear or favour, in the interest of democracy." His Majesty's Parliament Address at the concluding ceremony of the 3rd Session of Parliament on July 30, 2009.

However, the rapid growth of media outlets has posed challenges to their sustainability. Given Bhutan's small population and an even smaller audience, the proliferation of media houses ultimately became unsustainable. Furthermore, most media outlets were concentrated in Thimphu and heavily reliant on government advertising. This dependence led to the closure of six newspapers, three radio stations, and two magazines between 2012 and 2013. The remaining outlets have also experienced a high turnover of senior journalists and editors since then.

Today, Bhutan has seven licensed newspapers, including Kuensel's daily publication, BBS's national channels 1, 2, and 3, BBS radio, and three other radio stations, excluding community radios.

Broadcast Media

In Bhutan, the following licensed Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and Media Service Providers are:

Sl. No.	Type	Licensees	Coverage	Launched
1	Broadcasting (TV)	a) BBS 1 b) BBS 2 c) BBS 3	Nation Wide Nation Wide Nation Wide	1999 2012 2021
2	Commercial FM Radio	a) BBS Radio b) Kuzoo FM c) Centennial Radio d) Radio Valley	Nation Wide Nation Wide Thimphu Thimphu	November 1973 1st September 2006 21 September 2008 12 April 2007
3	Community/ Campus Radio	a) Edi Community Radio (Tarayana Foundation) b) Lhop Community Radio (Tarayana Foundation) c) CST FM (Campus Radio) d) JNEC Campus Radio e) Rigzhung Lungta, College of Language and Culture Studies f) Campus Sherig FM, Samtse College of Education g) Sherubtse Community Radio, Sherubtse College	Dechen Pelri, Gelephu Lhotukuchu, Dorokha, Samtse CST Campus, Phuentsholing JNEC Campus, Dewathang CLCS Campus, Trongsa SCE and nearby places Sherubtse Campus, Kanglung	23 June 2016 23 June, 2016 12 July 2016 12 March 2021 12 March 2018 18 June 2020 8 May 2009
4	OTT	1. Samuh MediaTech Pvt Ltd 2. Shangreela 3. Songyala 4. Educare Skill Pvt Ltd		2020 2021 2020 2023

Print Media

Sl. No.	Type	Licensees	Language	Launched
4	Newspaper	1. Kuensel	Dzongkha & English (Daily)	1965 & 1967
		2. Business Bhutan	English (Weekly)	26 September 2009
		3. The Bhutanese	English (Weekly)	21 February 2012
		4. Bhutan Times	English (Weekly)	1 April 2006
		5. Bhutan Today	English (Weekly)	30 October 2008
		6. The Journalist	English (Weekly)	20 December 2009
		7. Gyalchi Sarshog	Dzongkha (Weekly)	12 November 2011
		Name of the Magazine	**Location**	**Launched**
5	Magazine	Bhutan Observer Focus	Babesa, Thimphu	2016
		1. Yeewong Magazine	Babesa, Thimphu	2011
		2. Bhutan Reel Stories	Babesa, Thimphu	2022
		3. Entrepreneur Bhutan	Semtokha, Thimphu	2023
6	Cable Television	1. Two MSOs 2. 92 Local Cable Operators		
7	Mobile Operators	Bhutan Telecom Limited (Bmobile) Tashi InfoCom Limited (T-cell)	Thimphu (HQ) Thimphu (HQ)	GSM network in 2002 GSM services on April 6, 2008

Source: BICMA (https://www.bicma.gov.bt/?page_id=539)

Social Media

The introduction of the internet in Bhutan has transformed the media landscape, which continues to evolve. Historically, communication was primarily oral, relying on word of mouth. As literacy increased, advancements in audio-visual broadcast technology followed, leading to the introduction of the telegraph, radio, and television at the turn of the 20th century. A generation ago, Bhutanese grew up listening to oral stories; yet since 1999, a new generation has emerged that cannot imagine a world without television. Today, we are in the digital age, often referred to as the era of social media.

According to the National Council's review report on the state of media in 2024, the first social media platform was Six Degrees, launched in 1997, followed by several others such as Wikipedia (2002), YouTube (2005), Facebook (2006), WhatsApp (2009), WeChat (2011), and Tik Tok (2016).

As of January 2025, Bhutan had approximately 470,000 social media users, representing over 59% of the total population. There were also 795,000 active cellular mobile connections in early 2025, equivalent to 100% of the total population (source: The State of Digital in Bhutan 2025).

A recent survey conducted by the Bhutan Media Foundation (BMF) revealed that social media penetration is very high in Bhutan, both in terms of extensive and intensive usage. About 90% of the population are active members of at least one social media platform. The report attributes this high penetration rate to widespread smartphone ownership and increased internet access. On average, Bhutanese spend 163 minutes daily on social media, with baby boomers (ages 60+), persons with disabilities, and illiterate individuals being among the least intensive users.

Social media encompasses a broad range of online interactions. Unlike traditional media (radio, TV, newspapers), where professionals create content for an audience, social media platforms allow individuals to consume, produce, and share content. This democratization of information enables thousands to connect instantaneously. Social media includes blogging, wikis, video-sharing sites like YouTube, photo-sharing sites like Flickr, and social networking sites like Facebook and Hi5.

As of December 2024, Bhutan had 536,800 Facebook users, which accounted for a little over 60 % of its entire population. The majority of them were men with about 52%. A Facebook group functions like an online club, allowing members to contact one another and send mass messages to groups of up to 5,000 members. These groups are commonly used to promote events, causes, and political agendas.

Blogging refers to a website that features an online personal journal, where the writer shares reflections, comments, and often includes hyperlinks.

SMS, or Short Message Service, is a text communication feature within telephone or mobile communication systems, allowing users to exchange brief text messages between devices.

Spam denotes an electronic messaging system that sends unsolicited messages to thousands of recipients. The most common form is email spam, where advertisements clutter our inboxes. Instant messaging spam is also prevalent on certain mobile networks.

Twitter, now known as X, operates as a microblogging and social media platform where users can send messages, limited to 140 characters, known as "tweets." Users can also follow others to read their tweets. Launched in 2007, Twitter can be accessed via phones and the Internet.

Social media create new opportunities for communities to connect, fostering civic awareness and engagement. Social networking sites provide a platform for individuals to express their opinions and discuss community issues that are often overlooked by newspapers and broadcast media.

In a geographically challenging country like Bhutan, where communication can be difficult, social media provides unprecedented access to information and communication, especially for those in remote areas. Users can engage with more media sources beyond the mainstream.

Social media facilitate rapid information sharing, allowing individuals to find communities and network easily. They are characterised by interaction, participation, and collaboration. However, it is essential to note that while social media offer quick and powerful avenues for information dissemination, they do not serve as traditional news media.

2. Bhutan's Press Freedom Ranking

Bhutan's position in the World Press Freedom Index has dropped from 147th in 2024 to 152nd in 2025, a decline that has surprised many. The recent ranking released by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) on the eve of World Press Freedom Day on May 3, raises growing concerns about the state of press freedom in the country. Citizens, journalists, and civil society groups have expressed shock and disappointment, emphasizing the urgent need for reforms. Bhutan's press freedom index has been steadily declining since 2021, falling from 33rd place in 2021 to 57th in 2022, then to 65th in 2023, and finally to 147th in 2024, making it one of the steepest declines globally.

RSF indicates that while physical attacks on journalists are the most visible violations of press freedom, economic pressure presents a more insidious problem. The economic indicator in the RSF World Press Freedom Index has reached an unprecedented low, continuing its decline in 2025. Consequently, the global state of press freedom is now classified as a "difficult situation" for the first time in the Index's history. Among the five main indicators that determine the World Press Freedom Index, the one measuring the financial conditions of journalism and economic pressures has significantly dragged down the overall global score in 2025. The economic indicator in the 2025 RSF World Press Freedom Index is at its lowest point ever, further confirming the global situation as "difficult."

Coinciding with these developments, JAB's review plans for the Media Landscape Rapid Assessment grew more urgent and was conducted in April 2025. The findings from the study further prompted a deeper study, resulting in a media perception survey that was conducted across 14 dzongkhags to develop the Media Perception Index 2025.

3. Objectives of MPI

The main objective was to develop a media perception index that assessed and measured public perceptions, opinions, and attitudes toward the media. This involved evaluating trust, reliability, and performance through face-to-face interviews, survey questionnaires, and engagements with educational institutions, government offices, and business entities. To facilitate this, JAB trained 12 enumerators on effective interviewing techniques prior to fieldwork, supported by six supervisors.

4. Methodology

Face-to-Face Interviews

The Media Perception Index (MPI) survey utilised a mixed-methods approach to assess public perceptions of the Bhutanese media landscape. Primary data collection consisted of a quantitative survey supplemented by desk research. A structured survey was conducted through face-to-face interviews using a pre-tested questionnaire to gather opinions, attitudes, and perceptions regarding various media platforms, including radio, television, print, internet, and social media. The target population included all residents of Bhutan.

According to the Bhutan Living Standards Survey 2017, the estimated adult population was 537,728. The sample size was calculated to ensure statistical significance and representativeness, employing a 99% confidence level, a Z-score of 2.58, an estimated proportion of 0.5, and a margin of error of 5%. This calculation indicated a required sample of approximately 665 respondents. To account for regional diversity and potential non-response, a target of 700 respondents was set. The sampling design stratified the population across 14 dzongkhags, aiming for 50 interviews per region, resulting in a total of 700 respondents. Within each dzongkhag, respondents were selected using a convenience sampling method.

Enumerators approached eligible individuals (aged 13 and above) in public spaces, markets, community centres, and other accessible locations, ensuring diversity across age, gender, and background while maintaining a random selection process. Twelve enumerators were trained and assigned to specific dzongkhags, each conducting 50 interviews, though some exceeded this target. Training focused on understanding survey objectives, obtaining informed consent, accurately following the questionnaire, and ensuring diverse representation in their convenience samples.

Data Management and Analysis

Data collected through the questionnaires were systematically managed to ensure accuracy, confidentiality, and ease of analysis. Completed paper-based questionnaires were securely stored and subsequently digitized into a database, while online responses were directly recorded on the google form set up for the survey.

Data Entry and Cleaning

Data entry was efficiently managed through a Google Form, with responses from paper surveys entered and captured in a Google Sheet. Following fieldwork, a rigorous data cleaning process was initiated, involving comprehensive checks for inconsistencies, missing values, and outliers. This meticulous approach ensured the high quality and integrity of the dataset for subsequent analysis.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from closed-ended questions were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) to summarize respondents' demographics, media access, and perception levels.

The quantitative data collected were entered, cleaned, and analysed using MS Excel. We employed descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) to summarize the sample's demographic characteristics and overall media perceptions. Inferential statistics (e.g., chi-square tests, ANOVA) were utilised to explore relationships between variables and identify statistically significant differences in media perceptions across various demographic groups and dzongkhags.

Qualitative Data

Responses from open-ended questions were thematically analysed to identify common themes, perceptions, and suggestions, providing contextual insights that complemented the quantitative findings.

Additionally, qualitative data from open-ended questions were thematically analysed to provide deeper insights and context for the quantitative findings. The results of the desk research were integrated to create a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing media perception in Bhutan.

Qualitative Desk Research

To enhance our understanding of the media landscape, we conducted desk research that included the following components:

- A review of the Bhutan Information, Communications and Media Act 2006 (BICMA) and its 2018 amendment, with a focus on content regulations, licensing, and complaint management.

- An examination of relevant institutional frameworks and policies pertaining to media in Bhutan.

- Media impact assessment on use of mainstream media for social advocacy campaign, 2019.

- Social media landscape in Bhutan, 2020.

- An analysis of best practices and international standards regarding media perception indices and regulation from around the globe. For instance, Rwanda Media Barometer 2021; Thinking about the media: A review of theory and research on media perceptions, media effects perceptions, and their consequences published by University of Wisconsin, Madison, in 2017.

- An analysis of best practices and international standards regarding media perception indices and regulation from around the globe. Throughout the survey design and implementation process, we consulted with the NSB to ensure methodological rigor and compliance with national statistical standards.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to basic standards in protecting respondents' rights and confidentiality. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection, clearly outlining the study's purpose, voluntary participation, and confidentiality measures. Data were anonymised, with access restricted to authorized personnel.

5. Limitations

Potential limitations of the study included respondent bias and logistical challenges in reaching remote or rural areas. Efforts were made to mitigate these issues through comprehensive enumerator training, careful sampling, and flexible data collection strategies, including online options where feasible. While surveys were conducted across a spread of 14 dzongkhags, due to time and resource limitations, interviews were planned and conducted in most populated areas leading to a larger urban respondent base. However, stratification of respondents (gender, occupation and literacy, etc) tried to minimize bias in choosing respondents.

Dzongkhags Surveyed

JAB proposed 14 dzongkhags for this study, selected based on their regional distribution:

1. Mongar
2. Trashigang
3. Samdrupjongkhar
4. Wangduephodrang
5. Thimphu
6. Paro
7. Haa
8. Punakha
9. Trongsa
10. Bumthang
11. Samtse
12. Tsirang
13. Sarpang
14. Chukha.

6. Respondent Distribution

Table 1 Dzongkhags Surveyed

Dzongkhag	Rural	Urban	Total
Bumthang	11	39	50
Chukha	16	33	49
Haa	21	29	50
Mongar	14	37	51
Paro	31	20	51
Punakha	28	24	52
Samdrup Jongkhar	16	34	50
Samtse	33	15	48
Sarpang	14	38	52
Trashigang	39	11	50
Thimphu	3	45	48
Trongsa	39	13	52
Tsirang	22	28	50
Wangduephodrang	21	29	50
Grand Total	**269**	**434**	**703**

The survey gathered responses from a total of 703 individuals across 14 dzongkhags, ensuring a broad geographic representation. Of these, 434 respondents (62%) resided in urban areas, while 269 (38%) were from rural communities. This overall distribution reflects a notable urban bias, attributable to factors such as higher population concentration in urban centres, greater ease of access for enumerators, or more frequent engagement with media and communication platforms among urban dwellers.

Figure 1 Respondent Distribution (Urban/Rural) Chart

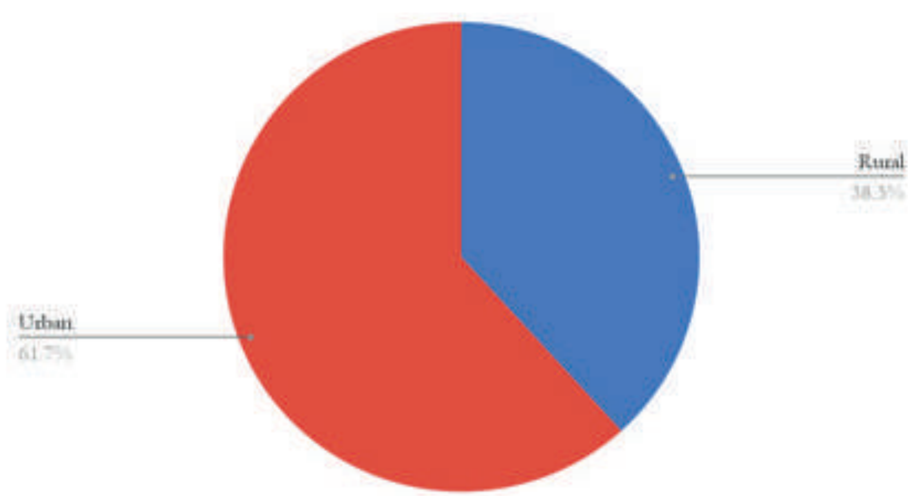


Table 2 Respondent Distribution (Urban/Rural)

Area	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Urban	434	61.7%
Rural	269	38.3%

At the dzongkhag level, there were clear patterns in rural-urban composition. Thimphu, the capital and most urbanized region, unsurprisingly had the highest urban share with 45 out of 48 respondents coming from urban areas. Mongar and Bumthang similarly had urban majorities, suggesting that the sampling in these areas targeted urban centers such as Mongar town and Chamkhar. In contrast, dzongkhags like Trongsa, Trashigang, and Samtse were dominated by rural respondents, with rural proportions ranging from 68% to over 75%. These areas are known for their more dispersed rural settlements and limited urban infrastructure.

7. Respondent Demographics

Gender of Respondents

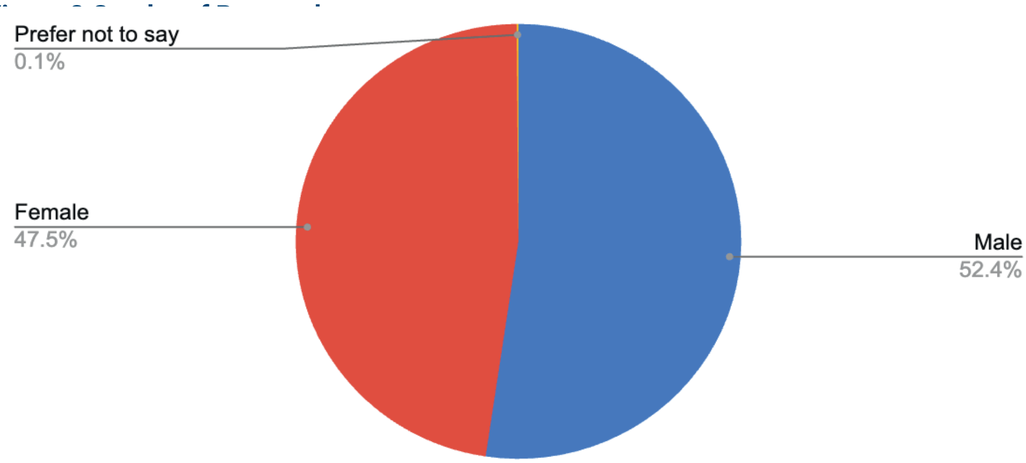


Table 3 Gender of Respondents

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	367	52.35%
Female	333	47.50%
Prefer not to say	1	0.14%

Males constituted a marginally higher proportion of respondents (52%) compared to females (4%). This indicates relatively balanced gender participation with a slight male dominance. Only 1 respondent chose not to specify gender, suggesting high clarity and willingness to disclose gender information. The near-equal distribution suggests gender is well-represented in the survey, providing a balanced perspective for media perception analysis.

Age of Respondents

Figure 3 Age Distribution of Respondents

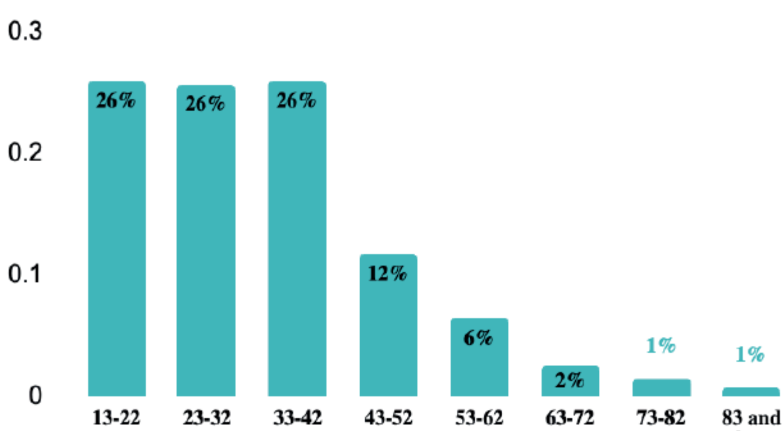


Table 4 Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Groups	No. of Respondents	Percentage
13-22	182	26%
23-32	180	26%
33-42	182	26%
43-52	82	12%
53-62	45	6%
63-72	17	2%
73-82	10	1%
83 and above	5	1%

The first three age groups (13-22, 23-32, 33-42) each comprised approximately 26% of respondents, indicating a balanced representation of young adults, capturing the perspectives of early to mid-career individuals and students. The survey shows that older age groups are less represented, with the 43-52 group constituting 12%, and the subsequent groups progressively decreasing to just 1% in the 83+ category.

Marital Status of Respondents

Figure 4 Marital Status of Respondents

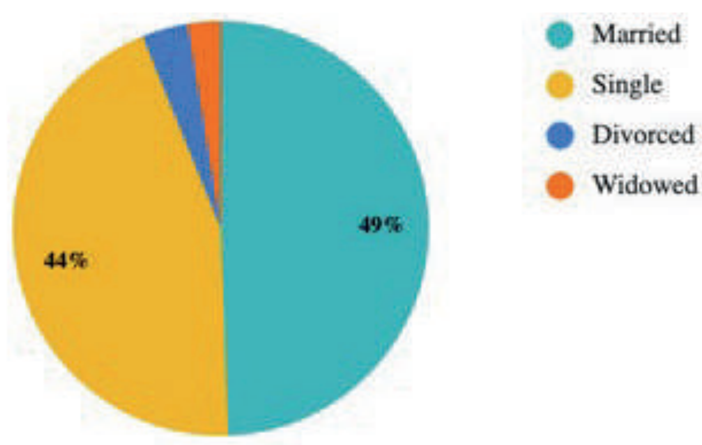


Table 5 Marital Status of Respondents

Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Married	346	49%
Single	311	44%
Divorced	25	4%
Widowed	18	3%

Nearly half of the respondents (49%) were married. A close proportion (44%) were single and divorced respondents made up 4% while widowed respondents accounted for 3%. In summary, the respondent group was almost evenly split between married and single, with a smaller representation of divorced and widowed individuals. This diversity offered an opportunity to explore how relationship status influences media perceptions and preferences.

Education of the Respondents

Figure 5 Education of Respondents

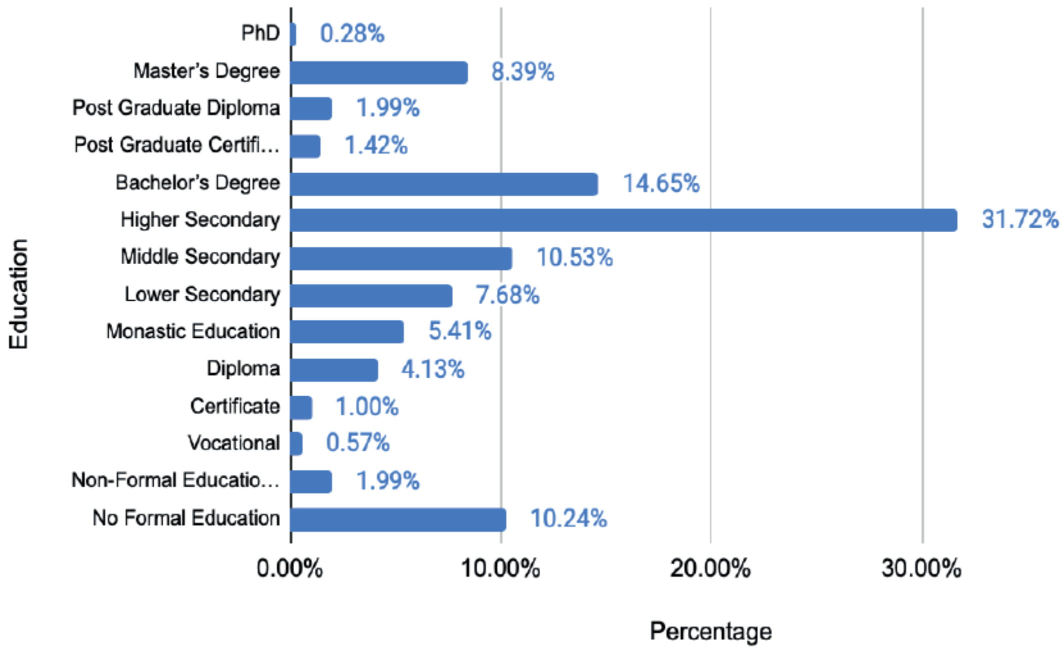


Table 6 Education of Respondents

Sl. No.	Education	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	PhD	2	0.28%
2	Master's Degree	59	8.39%
3	Post Graduate Diploma	14	1.99%
4	Post Graduate Certificate	10	1.42%
5	Bachelor's Degree	103	14.65%
6	Higher Secondary	223	31.72%
7	Middle Secondary	74	10.53%
8	Lower Secondary	54	7.68%
9	Monastic Education	38	5.41%
10	Diploma	29	4.13%
11	Certificate	7	1.00%
12	Vocational	4	0.57%
13	Non-Formal Education (NFE)	14	1.99%
14	No Formal Education	72	10.24%

The largest segment of respondents (32%) had completed Higher Secondary education, indicating that nearly one-third of the sample had attained education up to the high school level. This reflects a relatively literate population that is likely to access and comprehend general media content. A combined 23% of respondents had completed university-level education, with about 15% holding a Bachelor's degree and more than 8% a Master's degree in addition to Postgraduate Certificates (over 1%), and Postgraduate Diplomas (about 2%). This suggests that a significant portion of the population is educated beyond secondary school, with potential for engaging in more analytical and critical media consumption. A very small proportion of two respondents (0.28%) held a PhD, indicating limited representation of highly specialized academic professionals.

Respondents with Middle Secondary (over 10%) and Lower Secondary (8%) education levels also formed part of the broader secondary education base, and those with No Formal Education (over 10%) represented groups that may face literacy barriers or have limited access to formal media platforms. These groups may depend more on oral, visual, or local-language media for information.

Non-conventional education pathways were also interviewed with Monastic Education (over 5%) and Non-Formal Education (about 2%) that highlighted Bhutan's unique educational context, where spiritual and community-based learning systems complement formal education. These groups may engage more with culturally or spiritually oriented media.

Respondents with technical and professional training, such as Diplomas (4%), Certificates (1%), Vocational education (0.57%) formed a small but notable segment that may have specific informational needs related to their professions or trades.

Occupations of the Respondents

Figure 6 Occupation of Respondents

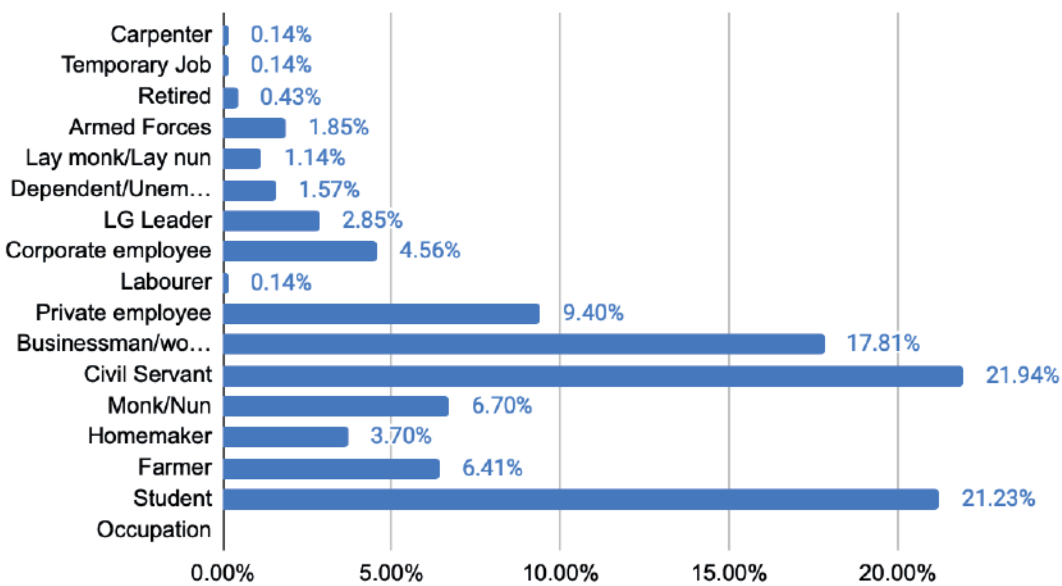


Table 7 Occupation of Respondents

Sl. No.	Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Student	149	21.23%
2	Farmer	45	6.41%
3	Homemaker	26	3.70%
4	Monk/Nun	47	6.70%
5	Civil Servant	154	21.94%
6	Businessman/woman (Self-employed)	125	17.81%
7	Private employee	66	9.40%

Sl. No.	Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
8	Labourer	1	0.14%
9	Corporate employee	32	4.56%
10	LG Leader	20	2.85%
11	Dependent/Unemployed	11	1.57%
12	Lay monk/Lay nun	8	1.14%
13	Armed Forces	13	1.85%
14	Retired	3	0.43%
15	Temporary Job	1	0.14%
16	Carpenter	1	0.14%

The occupational distribution of respondents reveals a diverse representation across various sectors, reflective of the socio-economic structure of Bhutan. The largest proportion of respondents were civil servants (about 22%), followed closely by students (21%). Together, these two groups made up nearly 44% of the total sample, indicating that a significant segment of the population was either employed in the public sector or engaged in formal education. Their strong presence suggests high levels of civic awareness and potential engagement with media and public discourse.

A substantial portion of respondents (18%) were self-employed or ran their own businesses, pointing to the growing prominence of entrepreneurial activity and the informal economy in Bhutan. These individuals were likely to consume media content related to economic opportunities, policies, and market trends. Private sector employees (over 9%) and corporate workers (5%) made up a smaller but notable share of the respondents, together accounting for around 14%, indicating moderate participation from the formal private sector in the national workforce.

Monks and nuns constituted 7% of the respondents, while lay monks and lay nuns accounted for an additional 1%. Their inclusion reflects Bhutan's strong spiritual foundation and the continued relevance of religious institutions in shaping public values and perspectives. These groups may engage with media differently, possibly favouring content that is spiritual, cultural, or delivered through community-based channels.

Farmers made up about 7% of the sample, highlighting the presence of rural respondents within the survey. Given the country's agricultural base, this group remains an important voice, even though its representation here is relatively modest. Homemakers accounted for nearly 4% of respondents, suggesting some degree of gender-based division of roles, with potential implications for how different segments of society access and interpret media.

Smaller proportions of respondents included local government leaders (3%), individuals in the armed forces (2%), and those who were dependent or unemployed (1%). These groups, while less represented numerically, still add to the diversity of perspectives captured in the data. Very few respondents were retired (0.43%) or worked in temporary or manual jobs such as laborers, carpenters, or casual workers each representing a meager 0.14% of the total.

Estimated Monthly Family Income

Figure 7 Estimated Monthly Family Income

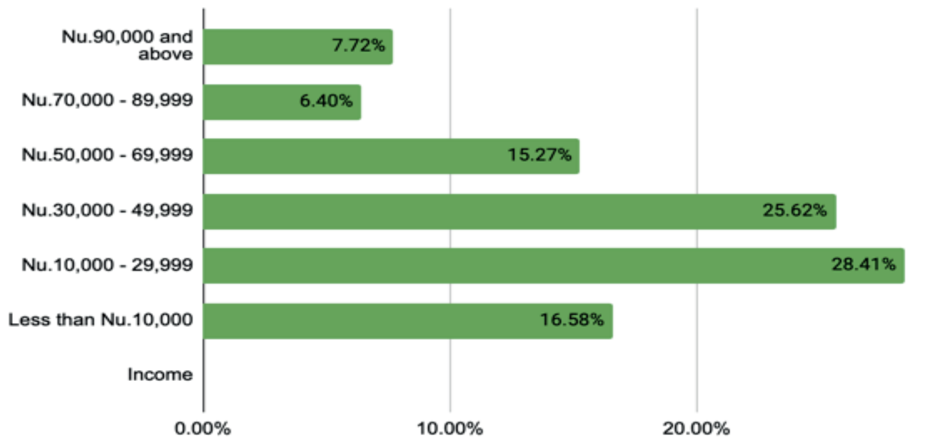


Table 8 Estimated Monthly Family Income

Income	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Less than Nu.10,000	101	16.58%
Nu.10,000 - 29,999	173	28.41%
Nu.30,000 - 49,999	156	25.62%
Nu.50,000 - 69,999	93	15.27%
Nu.70,000 - 89,999	39	6.40%
Nu.90,000 and above	47	7.72%

The income distribution of respondents presented a varied economic profile with a mode of Nu. 10,000 – 29,999 and a median income of Nu.30,000 – 49,999. Majority fell within the low to middle-income brackets. Among the 636 respondents, 46 individuals opted not to disclose their family income, leaving 590 valid responses for analysis.

The largest share of respondents (28%) reported a monthly family income between Nu.10,000 and Nu.29,999, indicating that a significant proportion of the population earned within the lower-middle income range. Closely following this group were those earning Nu.30,000 to Nu.49,999, comprising 26% of the respondents. These two brackets together accounted for more than half of the sample, suggesting that most respondents fell within modest income categories potentially balancing affordability with access to basic services and media.

Approximately 17% of respondents earned less than Nu.10,000 per month. This group may face challenges in accessing digital technologies or paid media content and could be more reliant on traditional or state-supported information channels.

Respondents earning between Nu.50,000 and Nu.69,999 represented 15% of the sample, while those earning Nu.70,000 to Nu.89,999 made up a little over 6%. A relatively small group (about 8%) reported earning Nu.90,000 or more per month, indicating the presence of a high-income segment with greater economic stability and potentially more diverse media consumption habits, including international or subscription-based services.

The income data suggests that while there was the presence of higher-income respondents, the majority were concentrated in the lower to middle tiers. This has important implications for content accessibility, pricing models for media and public services, and the design of communication strategies that cater to affordability and inclusivity. Given the notable portion of respondents who chose not to disclose their income (over 7% of the total), it also highlights the sensitivity surrounding financial disclosures, which may need to be handled with greater confidentiality in future surveys.

Estimated Monthly Family Expenditure

Figure 8 Estimated Monthly Family Expenditure

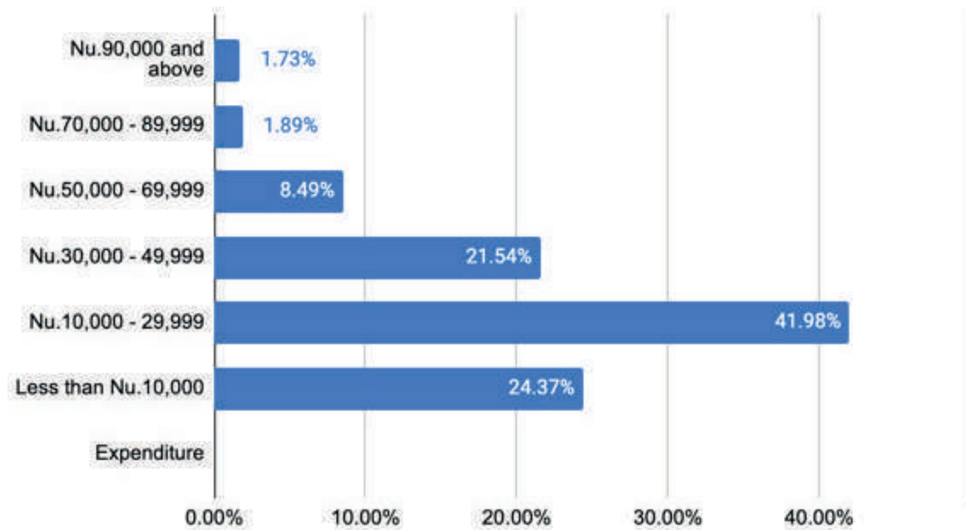


Table 9 Estimated Monthly Family Expenditure

Expenditure	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Less than Nu.10,000	155	24.37%
Nu.10,000 - 29,999	267	41.98%
Nu.30,000 - 49,999	137	21.54%
Nu.50,000 - 69,999	54	8.49%
Nu.70,000 - 89,999	12	1.89%
Nu.90,000 and above	11	1.73%

The expenditure patterns of respondents revealed a concentration of spending within lower to mid-range categories, offering insights into household budgeting and cost-of-living realities for most families. Of the 636 individuals surveyed, 67 chose not to disclose information about their monthly household expenditure, leaving 569 valid responses for analysis.

The largest segment of respondents (42%) reported monthly household expenditures between Nu.10,000 and Nu.29,999. This was followed by 24% of respondents reporting spending less than Nu.10,000 per month. These two groups together constituted more than 66% of the sample, reflecting a predominance of modest spending patterns across the population.

The median expenditure range, Nu. 10,000 – 29,999, further highlights this trend, as it contains the middle point of the respondents' spending habits. Additionally, 22% of respondents fell within the Nu.30,000 to Nu.49,999 expenditure range, pointing to a group with slightly more disposable income or higher living costs likely reflecting urban living, larger household sizes, or greater economic engagement. Meanwhile, only 8% reported spending between Nu.50,000 and Nu.69,999 per month, with a very small percentage of over 3% spending Nu.70,000 or more. This suggests that high-consumption households are relatively rare within the sample. The data paints a picture of generally cautious household spending, likely influenced by income constraints, cultural saving norms, and varying levels of access to goods and services. The fact that 67 respondents (about 10%) opted not to share their expenditure data also suggests a degree of sensitivity or privacy concern surrounding personal financial matters.

Access to Own Mobile Phone

Figure 9 Access to Own Mobile Phone

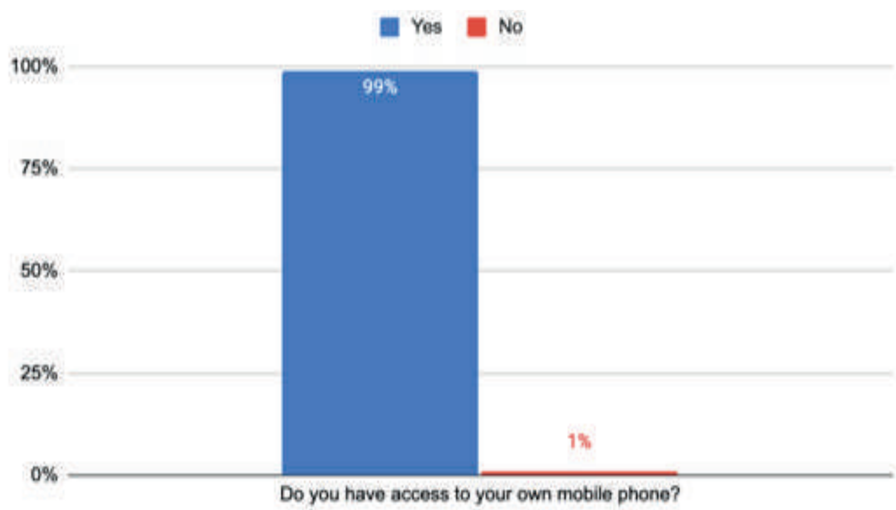


Table 10 Access to Own Mobile Phone

Do you have access to your own mobile phone?	Yes	No
No. of Respondents	696	7
Percentage	99%	1%

An overwhelming majority of respondents (99%) reported having access to their own mobile phone, while only 1% indicated they did not. This near-universal mobile phone ownership suggests high levels of personal connectivity and digital accessibility across the surveyed population. It reflects the widespread penetration of mobile technology in Bhutan, even across diverse socio-economic and occupational groups.

With such a high rate of ownership, mobile phones serve as a key medium for communication, information dissemination, media consumption, and public engagement. This also points to strong potential for leveraging mobile platforms for digital services, surveys, civic education, and targeted outreach, particularly through social media, messaging apps, and mobile-friendly websites.

Access to Internet on Phone/Home

Figure 10 Access to Internet on Phone or at Home

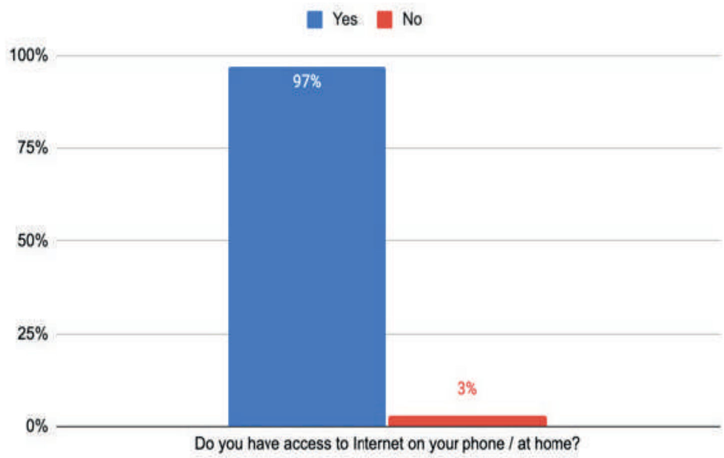


Table 11 Access to Internet on phone /at home

Do you have access to the Internet on your phone / at home?	Yes	No
No. of Respondents	682	21
Percentage	97%	3%

A significant majority of respondents (97%) reported having access to the internet either on their mobile phones or at home, while only 3% indicated they did not. This high rate of internet connectivity suggests that digital access has become nearly ubiquitous among the surveyed population, supporting widespread use of online platforms for information, communication, education, and entertainment.

The prevalence of internet access whether through mobile data or home Wi-Fi indicates strong potential for digital engagement and content delivery via online media. It also aligns with the earlier finding that 99% of respondents own mobile phones, reinforcing the role of smartphones as the primary gateway to the internet for most individuals.

8. Print Media Consumption

Figure 11 Print Media Consumption

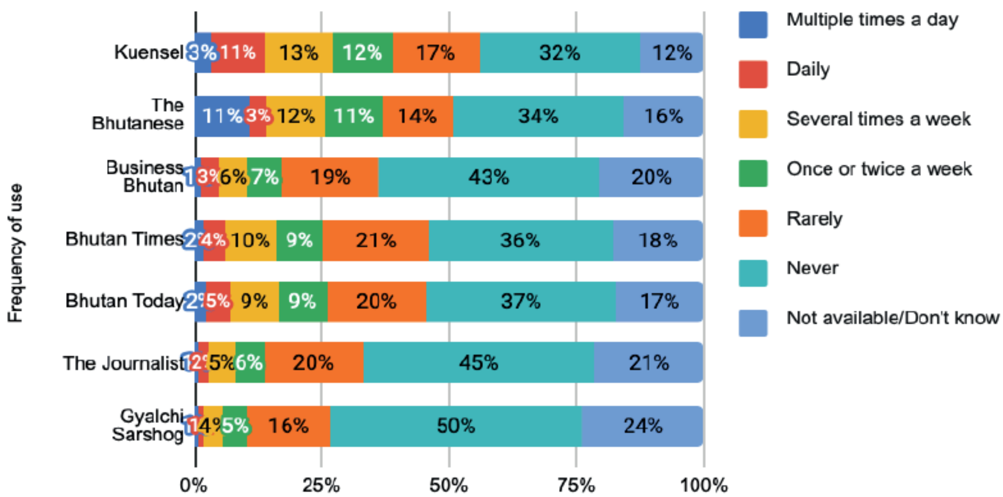


Table 12 Print Media Consumption

Frequency of use	Kuensel	The Bhutanese	Business Bhutan	Bhutan Times	Bhutan Today	The Journalist	Gyalchi Sarshog
Multiple times a day	23 (3%)	78 (11%)	10 (1%)	12 (2%)	15 (2%)	6 (1%)	6 (1%)
Daily	75 (11%)	22 (3%)	24 (3%)	31 (4%)	35 (5%)	15 (2%)	8 (1%)
Several times a week	93 (13%)	81 (12%)	40 (6%)	69 (10%)	66 (9%)	35 (5%)	25 (4%)
Once or twice a week	82 (12%)	78 (11%)	47 (7%)	66 (9%)	66 (9%)	39 (6%)	35 (5%)
Rarely	120 (17%)	97 (14%)	132 (19%)	145 (21%)	137 (20%)	138 (20%)	111 (16%)
Never	223 (32%)	236 (34%)	303 (43%)	252 (36%)	259 (37%)	318 (45%)	348 (50%)
Not available/ Don't know	87 (12%)	110 (16%)	143 (29%)	126 (18%)	121 (17%)	150 (21%)	166 (24%)

The data on newspaper readership frequency reveals significant variation in how Bhutanese print media outlets are consumed, highlighting patterns of public engagement, visibility, and relevance. Kuensel remained the most widely accessed newspaper, though its readership is not overwhelmingly frequent. Only 3% of respondents reported reading it multiple times a day, and 11% daily. However, when combined with those who read it several times a week (13%) and once or twice a week (12%), about 39% of respondents engaged with Kuensel at least weekly. Despite this, a notable 32% never read it, and another 17% do so only rarely, suggesting that while Kuensel maintained a strong presence, its reach is not universal.

The Bhutanese showed a different dynamic, with a higher proportion of frequent readers. 11% reported reading it multiple times daily, the highest among all publications suggesting a loyal and engaged readership. An additional 12% read it several times a week, and 11% once or twice weekly. However, 34% of respondents never read The Bhutanese, and 16% either did not use, did not know about, or did not have access to it. This indicates a mix of strong core followers and broad unfamiliarity among others, possibly due to its focus on more investigative or politically-oriented content.

Business Bhutan, Bhutan Times, and Bhutan Today occupied a middle ground, with each having about 20–30% of respondents engaging weekly or more. For Business Bhutan, 6% read it several times a week and 7% once or twice weekly. However, 43% never read it, the second-highest "never" rate after Gyalchi Sarshog, suggesting limited mass appeal or niche content. Bhutan Times and Bhutan Today show similar patterns: 10% and 9% read them several times a week, but 36% and 37% never read them, and nearly 20% fell into the "not available/don't know" category. These figures may reflect moderate visibility but limited penetration beyond core readership zones or digital platforms.

The Journalist and Gyalchi Sarshog had the lowest levels of engagement overall. Only 1% of respondents read The Journalist multiple times daily, and 2–6% do so weekly. The situation was even more stark for Gyalchi Sarshog, with half of the respondents (50%) reported they never read it. It also had the highest percentage (24%) of respondents who were unaware of it or did not access it, pointing to serious visibility and reach challenges.

Overall, Kuensel and The Bhutanese maintained relatively strong readership bases, albeit with different audience dynamics—one broader, the other more loyal and frequent. The rest of the newspapers faced moderate to low levels of engagement, with The Journalist and Gyalchi Sarshog struggling the most in terms of reach and recognition. The high "never" and "don't know" responses across several outlets highlight potential issues around distribution, content relevance, or digital accessibility, all of which are critical factors in Bhutan's evolving media landscape.

Recommendations

8.1 Prioritise digital transformation and accessibility to broaden reach by enhancing online accessibility for all publications, including Kuensel, by implementing flexible paywalls, mobile-friendly websites, and leveraging social media. This approach addresses the high "never" and "don't know" rates, particularly for outlets like Gyalchi Sarshog, by engaging a wider, digitally-inclined audience.

8.2 Strategically tailor content and distribution to niche audiences after conducting audits.

8.3 Invest in Dzongkha content development for print and digital platforms by increasing Dzongkha content across both print and digital formats, supported by journalism training and updated terminology. Offering bilingual or multimedia formats could boost its currently low readership and enhance cultural representation and public trust.

9. Broadcast Media Consumption

Figure 12 Broadcast & Streaming Media Use

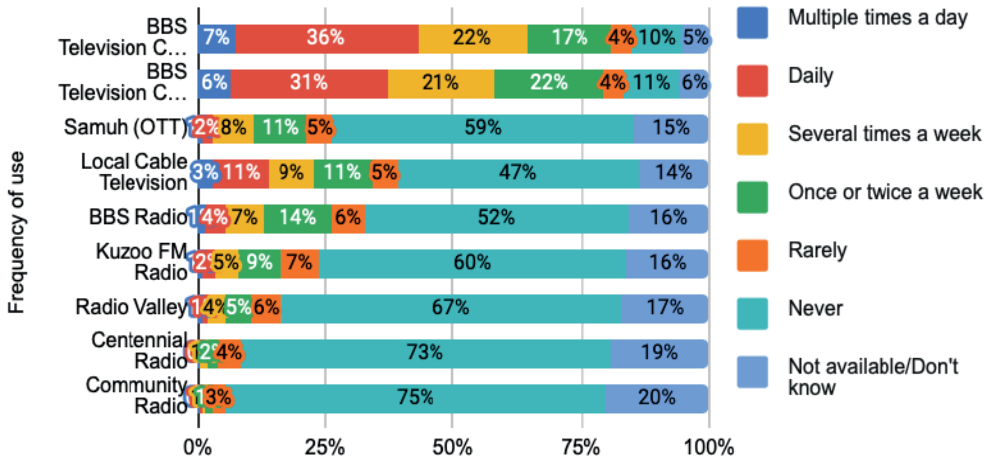


Table 13 Broadcast & Streaming Media Use

Frequency of use	BBS Television Channel 1	BBS Television Channel 2	Samuh (OTT)	Local Cable Television	BBS Radio	Kuzoo FM Radio	Radio Valley	Centennial Radio	Community Radio
Multiple times a day	51 (7%)	45 (6%)	5 (1%)	21 (3%)	8 (1%)	7 (1%)	5 (1%)	2 (0.28%)	2 (0.28%)
Daily	250 (36%)	216 (31%)	16 (2%)	77 (11%)	30 (4%)	15 (2%)	7 (1%)	2 (0.28%)	4 (1%)
Several times a week	152 (22%)	145 (21%)	55 (8%)	61 (9%)	52 (7%)	32 (5%)	26 (4%)	8 (1%)	4 (1%)
Once or twice a week	116 (17%)	152 (22%)	74 (11%)	79 (11%)	95 (14%)	60 (9%)	35 (5%)	16 (2%)	9 (1%)
Rarely	27 (14%)	26 (4%)	35 (5%)	35 (5%)	43 (6%)	52 (7%)	40 (6%)	29 (4%)	18 (3%)
Never	70 (10%)	79 (11%)	412 (59%)	333 (47%)	364 (52%)	422 (60%)	468 (67%)	508 (73%)	522 (75%)
Not available/Don't know	36 (5%)	39 (6%)	103 (15%)	96 (14%)	110 (16%)	113 (16%)	119 (17%)	135 (19%)	141 (20%)

The data illustrates clear distinctions in the consumption patterns of television, radio, and emerging over-the-top (OTT) platforms among Bhutanese audiences, reflecting both generational shifts and technological access. BBS Television Channel 1 emerged as the most frequently used media outlet. A substantial 7% of respondents reported watching it multiple times a day, while 36% watched it daily and another 22% several times a week. Altogether, 82% of respondents engaged with BBS 1 on at least a weekly basis (including 17% once or twice weekly), confirming its role as the most dominant and accessible television channel in the country. This aligned with BBS's status as the national broadcaster, offering news and programmeming in Dzongkha and English.

BBS Television Channel 2 followed closely in terms of audience engagement. It too recorded high daily viewership (31%), with a further 21% watching several times a week and 22% once or twice weekly. The frequency of use for both BBS channels reflected their broad reach and continued relevance in a media landscape that was slowly diversifying.

By contrast, Samuh, Bhutan's leading OTT platform, had yet to establish comparable reach. Although 8% of respondents reported using it several times a week and 11% once or twice weekly, only 1% used it multiple times a day and 2% on a daily basis. A significant 59% of respondents reported never using Samuh, with another 15% citing non-availability or lack of awareness. These figures suggested that while Samuh was gaining traction, particularly among urban, tech-savvy users, its penetration remained limited compared to traditional broadcast media.

Local Cable Television enjoyed moderate usage, with 11% of respondents watching daily and 9% several times a week. However, it also recorded high rates of non-use: 47% reported never using it, and 14% either lacked access or awareness. This could be attributed to regional differences in cable infrastructure and a shift toward digital and mobile platforms.

When it came to radio, usage had clearly declined across all stations. BBS Radio, though still the most frequently used among radio options, was only accessed daily by 4% of respondents and several times a week by 7%, while a large majority (52%) reported never listening to it. Kuzoo FM, once popular among the youth, recorded even lower engagement, with just 2% daily users and 5% weekly listeners; 60% of respondents reported never using it. Radio Valley, Centennial Radio, and Community Radio had very limited reach, with 67%, 73%, and 75% respectively reporting they never used them, and very few indicating daily or frequent listening (typically 0-1% daily and 1-4% several times a week).

The consistent trend across all radio stations was high non-engagement, suggesting that radio, once a key medium in Bhutan, was experiencing a steep decline in relevance, likely due to shifts toward television, internet-based media, and mobile consumption. Meanwhile, OTT platforms like Samuh faced the dual challenge of limited digital access and competition with entrenched broadcasters like BBS.

Overall, BBS Channels 1 and 2 dominated Bhutan's broadcast media landscape, maintaining widespread and regular usage. Samuh and local cable television were moderately used, with potential for growth, especially if digital infrastructure and content relevance improved. Radio, in contrast, was rapidly declining, with very limited daily or weekly users across all stations surveyed, signaling a need for reinvention if it was to remain a viable medium in the country's media ecosystem.

Recommendations

9.1 Broadcast media must upgrade traditional TV formats into mobile-friendly, on-demand platforms to keep pace with evolving viewer habits. This includes enhancing youth-centric and bilingual content will help engage younger audiences, promote inclusivity across demographics, and not only sustain its position as the most consumed media but also expand its reach.

9.2 Radio stations need to revitalize through digital transformation and interactivity, which would include adopting podcasting, live-streaming, and cross-platform formats to reach wider audiences. Some initiatives are already visible with BBS Radio streaming on Facebook. To stay relevant in rural and low-connectivity areas, they could enhance listener engagement for instance using SMS and Interactive Voice Response (IVR) tools.

International Media Consumption

Figure 13 International Media Consumption

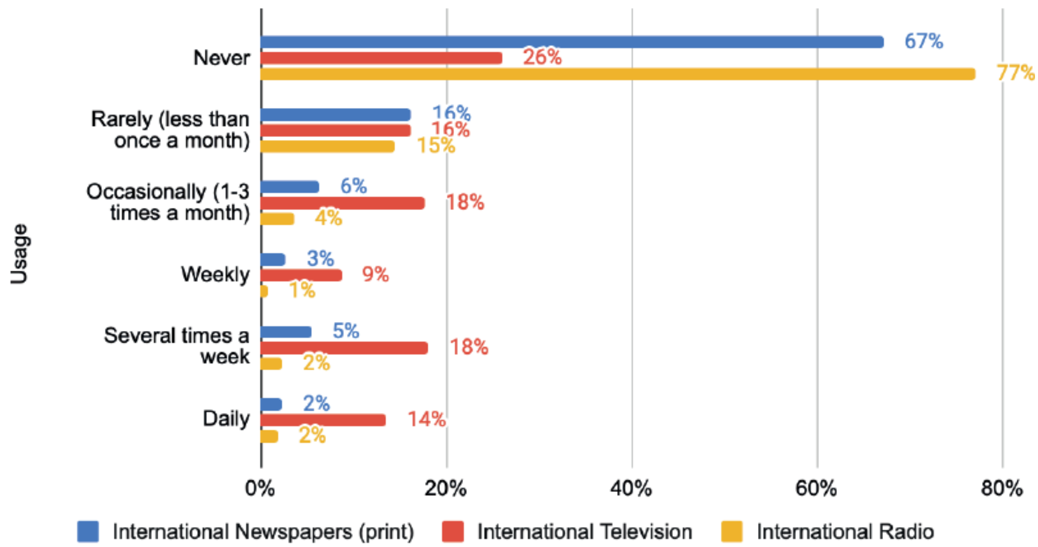


Table 14 International Media Consumption

Usage	International Newspapers (print)	International Television	International Radio
Daily	16 (2%)	95 (14%)	13 (2%)
Several times a week	38 (5%)	127 (18%)	16 (2%)
Weekly	19 (3%)	61 (9%)	5 (1%)
Occasionally (1-3 times a month)	44 (6%)	124 (18%)	25 (4%)
Rarely (less than once a month)	114 (16%)	113 (16%)	102 (15%)
Never	472 (67%)	183 (26%)	542 (77%)

The usage data for international media indicates stark contrasts in how different formats are consumed, reflecting both access levels and changing media preferences among Bhutanese audiences. International television is by far the most frequently accessed form of international media. While 183 respondents (26%) reported never watching international television, a substantial number engaged with it regularly. 14% watched it daily, and an additional 18% several times a week. When including weekly and occasional users, over 27% reported at least some degree of engagement with international TV content.

This suggests that international television through cable, or online streaming platforms has established a meaningful presence in Bhutanese media habits. It likely appeals due to the availability of diverse entertainment, news, and lifestyle programmeming in multiple languages. In addition to BBC, CNN, CNA, Al Jazeera, NDTV, NHK, CGTN, Arirang, National Geographic, Animal Planet and Discovery channels, most foreign channels are from India including both news and entertainment. As of March 2025, there were 60 television channels that included 51 foreign channels and the rest made up by local channels BBS 1, 2 and 3, and Samuh and other local radio channels.

In contrast, international newspapers in print had far more limited reach. Only 2% read them daily, and 5% several times a week. A total of 472 respondents, 67% stated they never accessed international newspapers in print. This is not surprising given the increasing digitisation of news, the logistical challenges and costs associated with importing physical copies, and the dominance of local or online content. International newspapers appear to be consumed only by a niche audience, likely more educated or professionally connected individuals who require or value foreign news coverage.

International radio showed the lowest levels of engagement among the three with 542 respondents (77%) indicating they never listened to it. International radio clearly plays a minimal role in the media habits of Bhutanese audiences. Only 2% listened daily, and another 2% several times a week. Even occasional use remains limited. This may reflect both a global decline in radio consumption and language barriers, as well as the limited accessibility of international radio channels in local contexts.

Overall, the data illustrates that international television has a moderate and growing foothold, while international newspapers and radio remained marginal, especially in traditional print and broadcast forms. This pattern aligns with global trends: visual, digital, and on-demand content are increasingly favoured over static and less accessible media. It also emphasises the importance of language, convenience, and platform compatibility in shaping media consumption behaviours in Bhutan.

Other Media Source Consumption

The vast majority of respondents (298 out of 305) did not use any additional news sources beyond those already listed. For the few who did, “Word of mouth” was the most frequently cited alternative, followed by “Through friends,” “Friends and staff members,” “From friends and family,” “From people,” “Friends,” “Through other individuals,” and “Community or Friends.” This suggests that while formal news outlets are prevalent, personal networks also play a minor role in news dissemination for a small segment of the surveyed population.

Building upon the previous observation that only a small minority of respondents utilised news sources beyond those initially listed, the data on consumption frequency further elaborates on this point. Among the nine individuals who reported using “other” sources, the frequency of engagement varied, with “Occasionally (1-3 times a month)” being the most common, cited by four respondents. Other frequencies mentioned include “Never,” “Rarely (less than once a month),” “Weekly,” “Daily,” and “Several times a week,” each reported by one or two individuals. This suggests that while these alternative sources are uncommon, when used, their consumption is generally infrequent.

10. Media Consumption Language

Table 15 Media Consumption & Languages

Language/Dialect	Bhutanese Television	Bhutanese Radio	Bhutanese Newspaper	Online News Websites	Social Media
English	54	24	295	394	367
Dzongkha	304	210	75	50	72
Tsanglakha	0	17	0	0	7
Lhotshamkha	0	28	0	2	6
Dzongkha, English	57	293	208	129	62

The data reveals clear trends in media consumption across various platforms. Television, radio, newspapers, online news, and social media based on the language or dialect preferred by audiences in Bhutan. Dzongkha, Bhutan's national language, remains the most dominant language for television and radio consumption. Programmeming in Dzongkha also has the longest hours. A significant majority of respondents, 304 for television and 210 for radio consumed media content in Dzongkha, pointing to its central role in traditional broadcast media. However, its use declined considerably in print and digital platforms, with only 75 newspaper readers, 50 online news users, and 72 social media users preferred Dzongkha.

In contrast, English is the leading language for newspapers, online news, and social media. An overwhelming 295 newspaper readers and 394 online news users preferred English, alongside 367 social media users. This suggests that the literate or urban population who are more likely to be digitally literate consumes media primarily in English, especially on platforms that involve reading or interaction.

Respondents who consumed media in both Dzongkha and English also formed a significant group, particularly for radio with 293 users and newspapers with 208 users. This bilingual media consumption pattern suggests a segment of the population that is equally comfortable navigating content in both languages, possibly indicating higher literacy and educational levels.

Languages like Tsanglakha and Lhotshamkha had very limited representation. Tsanglakha is used slightly in radio with 17 respondents and social media with 7 respondents, while Lhotshamkha showed minor engagement, especially in radio with 28 users and social media with 6 users.

Overall, the data underscores a bilingual media landscape, with Dzongkha dominating traditional audio-visual media, while English is the primary medium for print and digital platforms. The insights point to both opportunities and challenges in ensuring inclusive media access and content creation across Bhutan's diverse linguistic population.

Recommendations

10.1 Develop policies and invest in localized Dzongkha content for news portals, social media platforms, and mobile applications to reach broader audiences. Simultaneously, improve font compatibility, device usability, and ensure content accessibility for people with disabilities to reduce technical barriers.

10.2 Develop and promote balanced bilingual content for inclusivity by developing bilingual formats that cater to mixed-language audiences, ensuring both Dzongkha and English-speaking viewers are meaningfully served.

10.3 Consider national media language policy that encourages multilingualism, mandates language diversity in publicly funded media, and ensures that broadcasters and supported platforms reflect Bhutan's linguistic diversity.

Bhutanese Television and Language/Dialect

Figure 14 Bhutanese Television & Languages

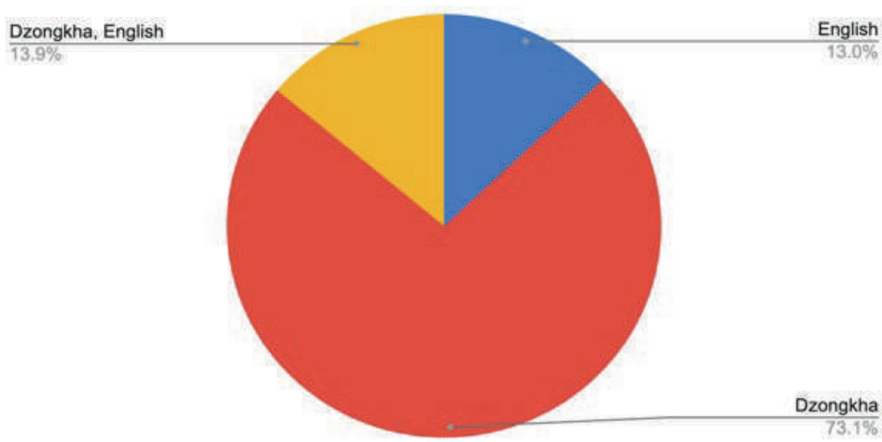


Table 16 Bhutanese Television & Languages

Language	No. of Respondents	Percentage
English	53	13%
Dzongkha	299	73%
Dzongkha, English	57	14%

The data on language preference for Bhutanese television viewership shows that Dzongkha dominates the screen, with 73% of viewers (304 respondents) consuming television content primarily in Dzongkha. This reaffirms the central role of the national language in mainstream media and public broadcasting.

A smaller but meaningful portion of viewers, 14% (57 respondents), reported watching television in both Dzongkha and English, highlighting a bilingual audience that may switch between languages depending on the programmeme type or context.

Meanwhile, 13% (54 respondents) viewed Bhutanese television exclusively in English, indicating preference and limited English-language TV content. Overall, the dominance of Dzongkha aligns with national identity and policy, but the presence of bilingual and English-only viewers suggests that media diversification especially in multilingual or urban settings could help broaden viewer engagement and inclusivity. The dominance of Dzongkha may also be attributed to government policy, translating into longer hours of content availability.

Bhutanese Radio and Language/Dialect

Figure 15 Bhutanese Radio & Languages/Dialects

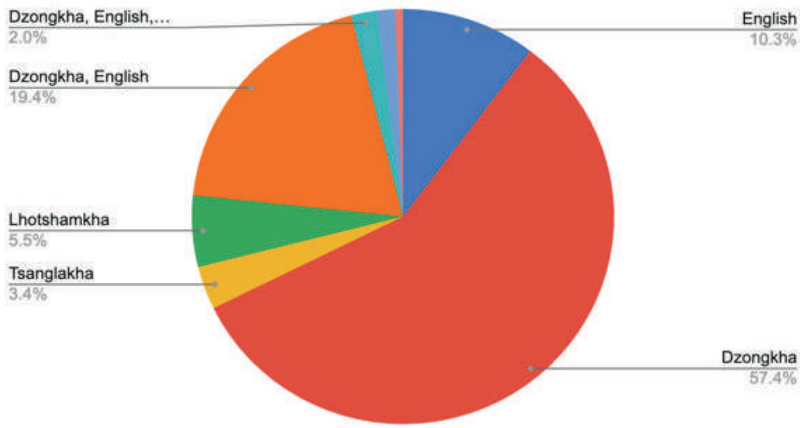


Table 17 Bhutanese Radio & Languages/Dialects

Sl. No.	Language	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	English	52	10.30%
2	Dzongkha	290	57.43%
3	Tshanglakha	17	3.37%
4	Lhotshamkha	28	5.54%
5	Dzongkha, English	98	19.41%
6	Dzongkha, English, Lhotshamkha	10	1.98%
7	Dzongkha, English, Tshanglakha	7	1.39%
8	Dzongkha, English, Tshanglakha, Lhotshamkha	3	0.59%

A significant 19.41% (98 respondents) reported listening to the radio in both Dzongkha and English, indicating a bilingual audience that likely engages with a variety of content ranging from government bulletins and local talk shows in Dzongkha to educational, entertainment, or international segments in English.

English-only listeners made up 10.30% (52 respondents), highlighting the reach of English-language radio content, possibly via FM stations or online streaming services that cater to youth, professionals, and the globally connected population. Listeners who consume radio content in Lhotshamkha stood at over 5% (28 respondents) and Tshanglakha at about 3% (17 respondents). While these figures are modest, they reflect important regional listening groups whose needs could be better met with more localized radio programmeming especially in southern and eastern Bhutan, where such dialects are spoken.

There are also small but notable multilingual audiences, including 2% who used Dzongkha, English, and Lhotshamkha, 1% who used Dzongkha, English, and Tshanglakha and less than 1% who used all four languages (Dzongkha, English, Tshanglakha, and Lhotshamkha. These multilingual listeners represent cross-cultural households and illustrate Bhutan's linguistic complexity.

Overall, radio remains a vital medium in Bhutan, especially for rural outreach. The findings suggest that while Dzongkha should remain the primary language of broadcast, there is growing demand for bilingual and regional language programmeming. Expanding content in English, Tshanglakha, and Lhotshamkha, as visible through some initiatives, could help radio stations better serve Bhutan's diverse and multilingual population, thereby enhancing information access, education, and cultural preservation.

Bhutanese Newspaper and Language/Dialect

Figure 16 Bhutanese Newspapers & Languages

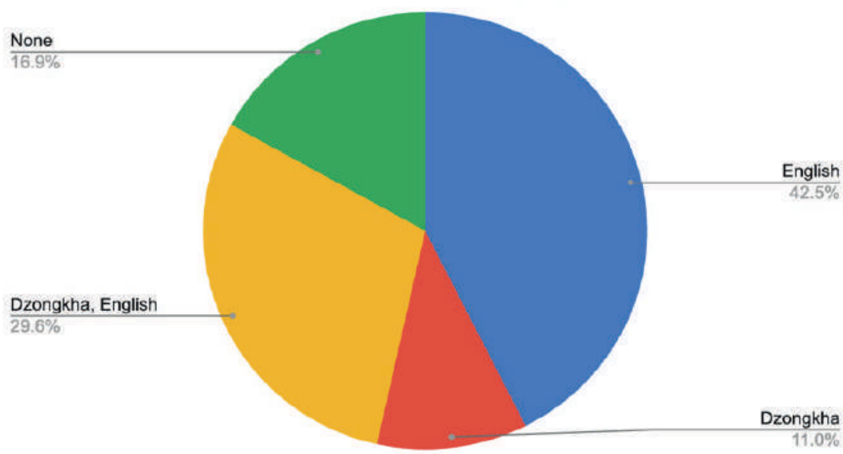


Table 18 Bhutanese Newspaper & Languages

Sl. No.	Language	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	English	299	45.53%
2	Dzongkha	77	10.95%
3	Dzongkha, English	208	29.59%
4	None	119	16.93%

The language preferences of the respondents for the Bhutanese newspapers reveal significant insights into media accessibility, cultural representation, and linguistic inclusion in the country. According to the data, nearly half of the respondents (46%) read print media primarily in English. This dominance reflects the continued role of English as the medium of education and also suggests that much of the newspapers publish their content in English.

In contrast, only 11% of respondents reported reading newspapers exclusively in Dzongkha, Bhutan's national language. This is a low figure, particularly in light of national efforts to promote and preserve Dzongkha as a vital element of Bhutanese identity. One key reason may be the very limited availability of newspaper content published in Dzongkha. The scarcity of Dzongkha-language journalism both in volume and thematic diversity reduces its reach and relevance for many readers. This, combined with challenges such as limited Dzongkha vocabulary for contemporary news discourse and a broader preference for English due to its global utility, raises concerns about the long-term viability of Dzongkha in the print media landscape.

Encouragingly, a significant portion of respondents (30%) reported reading in both Dzongkha and English. This bilingual segment of readers represents a crucial bridge between tradition and modernity. This group could play a crucial role in encouraging the normalization of Dzongkha use in formal and intellectual domains.

However, it is also concerning that 17% of respondents indicated they do not read newspapers at all. This could stem from several factors, including illiteracy, lack of access to print materials, digital substitution, or disengagement from traditional media altogether. For media practitioners and policymakers, this underscores the need for alternative formats, such as audio-visual media, community radio, or simplified print content to reach this segment of the population.

Recommendations

10.4 Implement bilingual formats, such as digital editions with language toggle features, to promote cross-language engagement and make newspapers more inclusive for both Dzongkha and English readers.

10.5 Print media should actively offer news in alternative formats, such as audio or video summaries, disseminated via popular platforms like social media or radio, to engage the significant segment of non-readers and adapt to evolving consumption habits.

Online News Websites and Language/Dialect

Figure 17 Online News Websites & Languages/Dialects

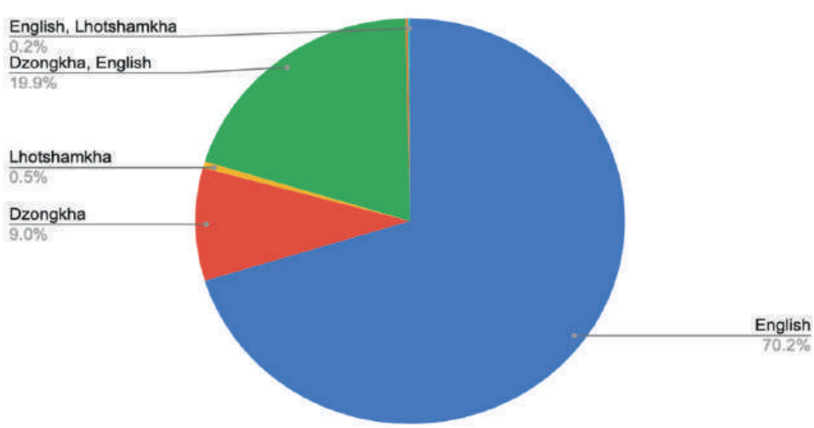


Table 19 Online News Websites & Languages/ Dialects

Sl. No.	Language	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	English	399	70.25%
2	Dzongkha	51	8.98%
3	Lhotshamkha	2	0.53%
4	Dzongkha, English	113	19.89%
5	Dzongkha, English, Lhotshamkha	1	0.18%
6	English, Lhotshamkha	1	0.18%

The data on online news readership in Bhutan presents a clear dominance of the English language in the digital media space. A striking 70% (399 respondents) accessed online news content exclusively in English, making it the most widely used language for digital news consumption. This trend reflects Bhutan's increasing digital literacy, global exposure, and the prominence of English in online platforms, particularly among urban, literate, and younger demographics.

In contrast, Dzongkha, the national language was used by only 9% (51 respondents) as their sole language for accessing online news. This comparatively low figure may point to a lack of sufficient Dzongkha content in digital news media, user preference for English in reading-intensive formats like websites or technical challenges with Dzongkha script integration online.

A notable 20% (113 respondents) consumed online news in both Dzongkha and English, indicating a significant bilingual digital audience. These users likely seek both national and international perspectives, preferring Dzongkha for local governance and community issues, and English for broader topics and analysis.

Smaller segments of the population consumed online news in regional languages or combinations. For instance, 0.53% (2 respondents) indicated that they accessed news via online websites in Lhotshamkha, 0.18% (1 respondent) in Dzongkha, English, and Lhotshamkha, and similarly, 0.18% (1 respondent) accessed news via online websites in English and Lhotshamkha. These minimal figures highlight the near absence of regional language content in the digital news space.

The online news landscape in Bhutan is heavily skewed toward English, reflecting the global nature of digital communication and the educational background of its users/content creators. While a sizable bilingual segment exists, Dzongkha and regional language content remain underrepresented online. Media houses and policymakers have an opportunity to address this imbalance by expanding Dzongkha and local language digital content, and promoting inclusive digital journalism to ensure broader access and cultural preservation in Bhutan's evolving digital ecosystem.

Recommendations

10.6 Digital media platforms should consider improving user experience for Dzongkha readers by addressing technical barriers such as font compatibility, keyboard access, and mobile responsiveness.

10.7 Develop media policies that offer incentives, such as grants or awards, for media outlets that consistently publish high-quality content in Dzongkha on digital platforms.

10.8 Complement policy efforts with targeted training in digital journalism, focusing on script handling, translation accuracy, and related skills for Dzongkha content.

Social Media and Language/Dialect

Figure 18 Social Media & Languages/Dialects

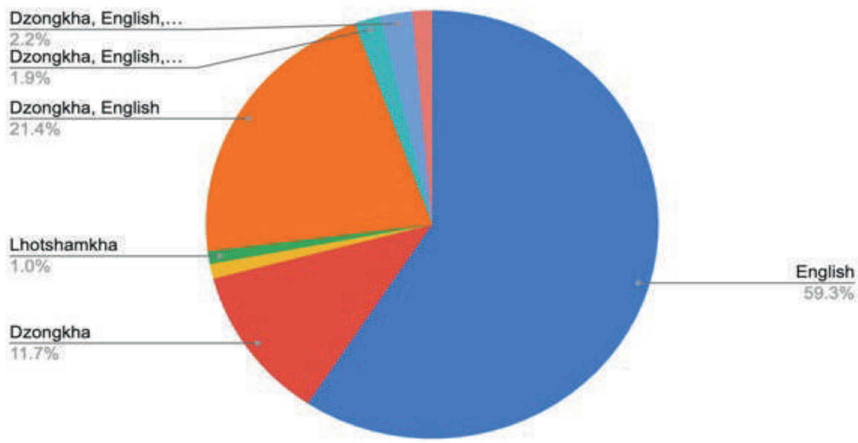


Table 20 Social Media & Languages/Dialects

Sl. No.	Language	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	English	371	59.27%
2	Dzongkha	73	11.66%
3	Tsanglakha	7	1.12%
4	Lhotshamkha	6	0.96%
5	Dzongkha, English	134	21.41%
6	Dzongkha, English, Tshanglakha	12	1.92%
7	Dzongkha, English, Tshanglakha, Lhotshamkha	14	2.24%
8	Dzongkha, Tshanglakha	9	1.44%

The data on social media language usage in Bhutan reveals a clear dominance of English, though with notable bilingual and multilingual engagement. A majority of 59% (371 respondents) used English exclusively on social media, making it the most dominant language on these platforms. This trend is likely driven by English's status as the global language of the internet, and its widespread use among Bhutan's literate and urban population who are most active on social media.

In contrast, only 12% (73 respondents) used Dzongkha alone, despite it being the national language. This relatively low number is due mainly because of several factors such as the dominance of English in social media apps, limited Dzongkha content, and script compatibility challenges on certain platforms.

A significant 21% (134 respondents) used both Dzongkha and English, indicating a sizable number of bilingual digital audience.

Among the respondents, a small but notable segment reported using multiple languages on social media. A total of about 2% (12 respondents) indicated that they used Dzongkha, English, and Tshanglakha, suggesting a trilingual proficiency and diverse linguistic engagement. Slightly over 2% (14 respondents) reported using an even broader range of languages, which included Dzongkha, English, Tshanglakha, and Lhotshamkha, reflecting the highest level of multilingualism in this data subset.

Meanwhile, a smaller proportion of over 1% (9 respondents) reported using Dzongkha and Tshanglakha, and a minimal share of respondents relied solely on regional languages 1% (7 respondents) used Tshanglakha only, and another 1% (6 respondents) used only Lhotshamkha, indicating limited monolingual social media use. These figures reflect a predominantly multilingual population among the respondents, with only a small fraction using a single local language, emphasizing the importance of linguistic inclusivity in digital communication strategies.

These figures, though small, suggest that social media offers a space for minority language speakers to engage and express themselves, possibly more so than traditional media channels. It also points to a trend of code-switching and mixed-language usage, which is common in informal digital communication.

Recommendation

10.9 Collaborate with social media platforms and developers to improve Dzongkha script compatibility and keyboard access, thereby reducing technical barriers for users.

Use of Other Languages/Dialects in Media Consumption

Table 21 Other Languages in Media Consumption

Sl. No.	Language/Dialect	No. of Respondents
1	Hindi	81
2	Korean	7
3	Chinese	4
4	Japanese	4
5	Nepali	3
6	Thai	3
7	Tibetan	2
8	Khengkha	1
9	Choekyed	1
10	FilipiNone	1
11	Turkish	1
12	Choe-cha-nga-cha	1
13	Brokpakha	1

In addition to Dzongkha and English, a diverse range of foreign and local languages were also used by respondents to consume media, highlighting Bhutan's multicultural media landscape and growing global exposure. Hindi stood out as the most widely used foreign language, with 81 respondents indicating they consumed media in it. This reflects influence of Indian media in Bhutan, particularly through television, films, and music. Following that, a small number of respondents reported consuming media in popular East Asian languages such as Korean (7 respondents), Chinese (4), and Japanese (4), a trend that aligns with the global popularity of K-pop, K-dramas, anime, and Asian cinema.

Languages such as Nepali (3 respondents), Thai (3), and Tibetan (2) also featured among media consumption preferences, reflecting both ethnic diversity within Bhutan and regional cultural ties. A few respondents reported consuming media in indigenous dialects including Khengkha, Choekyed, Brokpakha, and Choe-cha-nga-cha, each with 1 respondent. These responses underscore the presence of minority language speakers and hint at localized media or oral content circulation. Interestingly, there were also isolated mentions of Filipino and Turkish. Overall, while Hindi dominated among non-Bhutanese languages, the variety of languages listed reflects Bhutanese audiences' expanding access to international media, alongside the continued relevance of local dialects in certain communities.

Recommendations

10.10 Invest in initiatives that encourage the creation and dissemination of media content in indigenous dialects such as Khengkha, Choekyed, Brokpakha, and Choe-cha-nga-cha. This could involve supporting community radio, local storytelling projects, or digital platforms that provide a space for these minority languages, thereby preserving cultural heritage and serving specific community need.

11. Media Use for Entertainment

Figure 19 Media Primarily for Entertainment

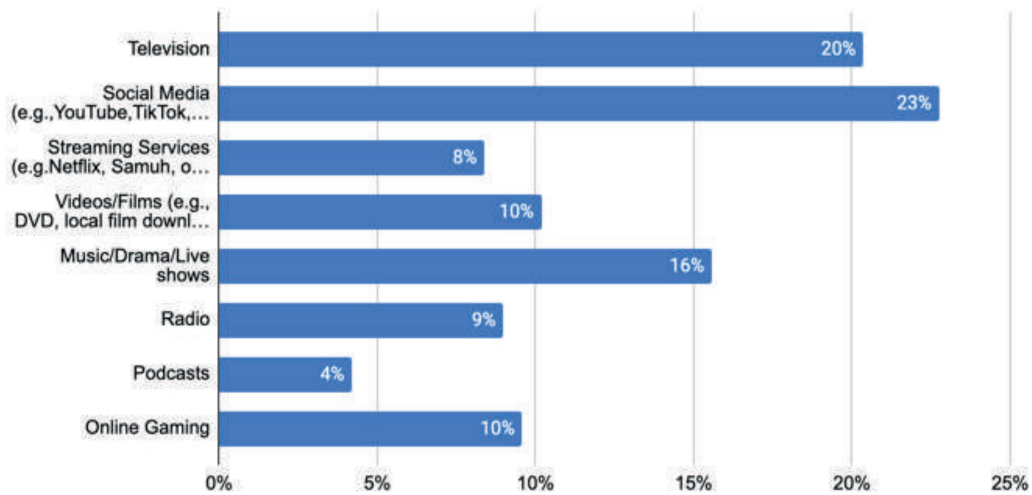


Table 22 Media Primarily for Entertainment

Sl. No.	Media	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Television	34	20%
2	Social Media (e.g.,YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, Instagram)	38	23%
3	Streaming Services (e.g.,Netflix, Samuh, other OTTs)	14	8%
4	Videos/Films (e.g., DVD, local film downloads)	17	10%
5	Music/Drama/Live shows	26	16%
6	Radio	15	9%
7	Podcasts	7	4%
8	Online Gaming	16	10%

The data reveals that social media is the most popular source of entertainment among respondents, with 23% (38 respondents) identifying platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram as their primary media for leisure and enjoyment. This reflects a clear shift toward short-form, visual, and on-demand content, particularly among younger and digitally connected audiences who are increasingly drawn to interactive and personalized media experiences.

Closely following social media is television, selected by 20% (34 respondents), underscoring its continued relevance despite growing digital alternatives. Television remains a stable medium, likely preferred for family viewing and traditional programmeming in local languages, particularly Dzongkha as well as foreign channels for news as well as entertainment. This suggests a dual pattern of consumption where newer platforms dominate among the tech-savvy, but television still holds cultural and generational value.

Music, drama, and live shows were cited by 16% (26 respondents) as a preferred entertainment source. This points to the importance of performance-based entertainment in Bhutan's cultural landscape, likely encompassing both traditional events and contemporary performances.

Videos and films whether through DVDs or locally downloaded content remained moderately used, with 10% (17 respondents) relying on this format. Similarly, online gaming, identified by 10% (16 respondents), showed a growing niche interest, probably reflecting broader global trends in recreational screen time.

Streaming services such as Netflix, Samuh, and other over-the-top (OTT) platforms were used by 8% (14 respondents). While still a smaller segment, this reflects a growing shift toward subscription-based, curated digital content. As internet access improves and digital literacy rises, this category is expected to expand.

Radio, once a dominant source of entertainment, was now used by just 9% (15 respondents), highlighting its decline in favour of more visual or interactive formats. Even more marginal is podcast consumption, selected by only 4% (7 respondents), suggesting that spoken-word digital content is yet to gain widespread traction in Bhutan.

Overall, social media and television continue to dominate Bhutan's entertainment media landscape, though they cater to different segments. Emerging platforms like streaming services and gaming are gradually carving out space, while traditional media such as radio and newer formats like podcasts remain limited in reach. These findings underscore a dynamic but uneven media environment where digital engagement is rising, but legacy formats still play an important role.

Recommendations

11.1 Continue to leverage the growing influence of social media and digital tools by supporting local content creators to produce high-quality, culturally resonant content by providing training in digital storytelling and media production, and encourage innovation across platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram. The recent policy initiatives under the Economic Stimulus Plan are seen as a positive step towards this.

11.2 Broadcast media need to consider modernising traditional platforms like TV and radio by integrating them with digital services, interactive features, and age-inclusive programmeming to ensure they remain relevant and accessible across generations.

11.3 Promote the creation of local OTT content that reflects Bhutanese culture, language, and narratives on platforms like Samuh. Encourage affordable bundling of OTT subscriptions with data plans to boost accessibility and expand outreach for less digitally literate users. Simultaneously, foster the development of local music, drama, and film content for streaming, ensuring it is readily available and promoted on these emerging platforms to cater to a growing audience segment.

12. Primary Reasons for Using Media

Figure 20 Reasons for Using Media

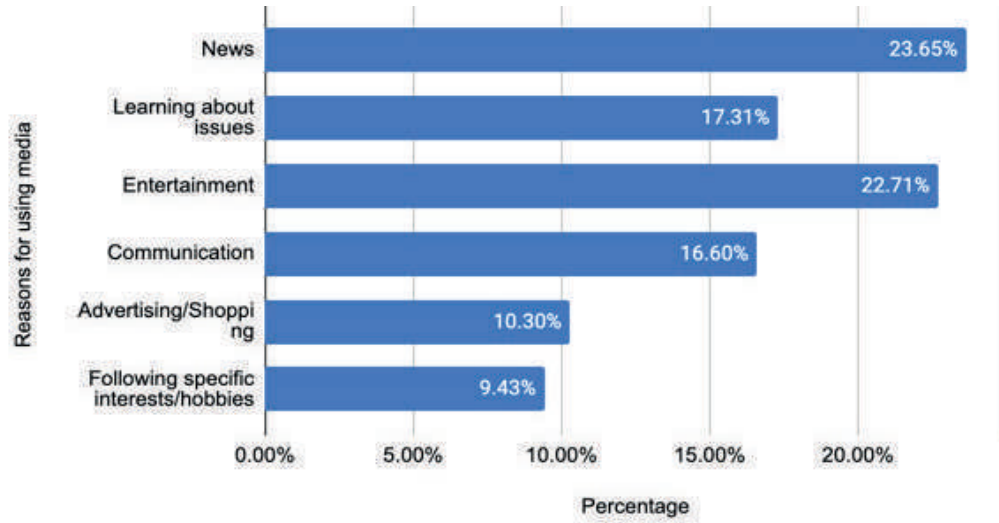


Table 23 Reasons for Using Media

Sl. No.	Reasons for using media	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	News	627	23.65%
2	Learning about issues	459	17.31%
3	Entertainment	602	22.71%
4	Communication	440	16.60%
5	Advertising/Shopping	273	10.30%
6	Following specific interests/hobbies	250	9.43%

The data highlights the diverse motivations driving media consumption among respondents, with news and entertainment emerging as the two most dominant reasons. The most frequently cited reason for media use was to stay informed about news, with 627 mentions accounting for 24% of total responses. This indicates that media continues to serve a critical role in public information dissemination, with people relying on it to keep up with current affairs whether national, regional, or global. This also reflects a level of civic awareness and engagement within the population.

Closely following news, entertainment accounted for 23% of responses (602 mentions). This suggests that media also functions as a vital source of leisure and emotional engagement, offering an escape or a recreational outlet for many. Social media, television, films, and live shows are likely primary contributors in fulfilling this entertainment need.

Another significant use of media was for learning about issues, including social, political, and cultural topics, which accounted for 17% (459 mentions). This indicates that a notable portion of the population engages with media not just for facts, but for deeper understanding and awareness pointing to the media's educational value and its role in shaping public perspectives.

Communication was another prominent reason for media usage, reported by 440 respondents (17%). This includes messaging, video calls, and other forms of online interaction facilitated by mobile phones and social media platforms, underscoring the central role of digital media in personal and social connectivity.

Advertising and shopping were cited by 10% of respondents (273 mentions), reflecting a growing trend of using media particularly online platforms for consumer purposes. This includes browsing products, comparing prices, and making purchases, indicating the rise of digital marketplaces and the commercialization of media spaces.

Lastly, following specific interests or hobbies was mentioned by 250 respondents (9%), suggesting a smaller but active group of users who engaged with media to pursue personal passions. These may include content related to travel, sports, religion, fitness, or arts, often through niche websites, YouTube channels, or hobby-specific social media communities.

Overall, while news and entertainment dominate media usage patterns, significant portions of respondents also use media for education, communication, and consumer-related activities. This underscores the multifunctional role of media in Bhutanese society as a source of information, enjoyment, connection, and even commerce reflecting broader global media trends.

Recommendation

12.1 Develop or reinforce policies that support a multifunctional media ecosystem by enabling diverse content formats, cross-sector collaboration, and platform interoperability to amplify media's role in education, empowerment, and social change.

Other Reasons for Using Media

The data shows that for the vast majority of respondents (281 out of 305), there were no additional reasons for media use beyond those previously listed. Among the few who specified other reasons, "Educational purpose" (including variations) was by far the most common, accounting for 20 responses. Other less frequently mentioned reasons included "Relaxation" (2 responses), and single mention for "To build connection with others," "Emotional support," "Job vacancies," and "Awareness purpose." This indicates that while education is a notable secondary use of media for some, other non-listed purposes are very marginal.

Types of Phones Owned

Figure 21 Types pf Phones Owned by Respondents

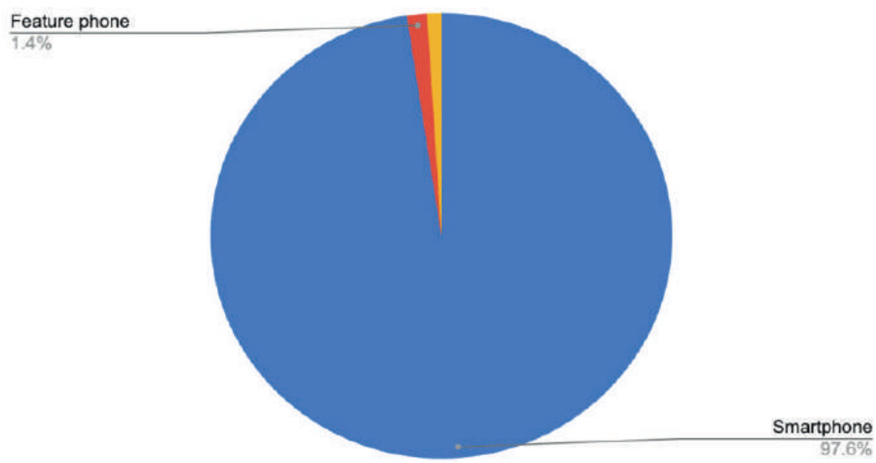


Table 24 Types of Phones Owned by Respondents

Sl. No.	Phone Type	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Smartphone	686	97.58%
2	Feature phone	10	1.42%
3	No phone	7	1.00%

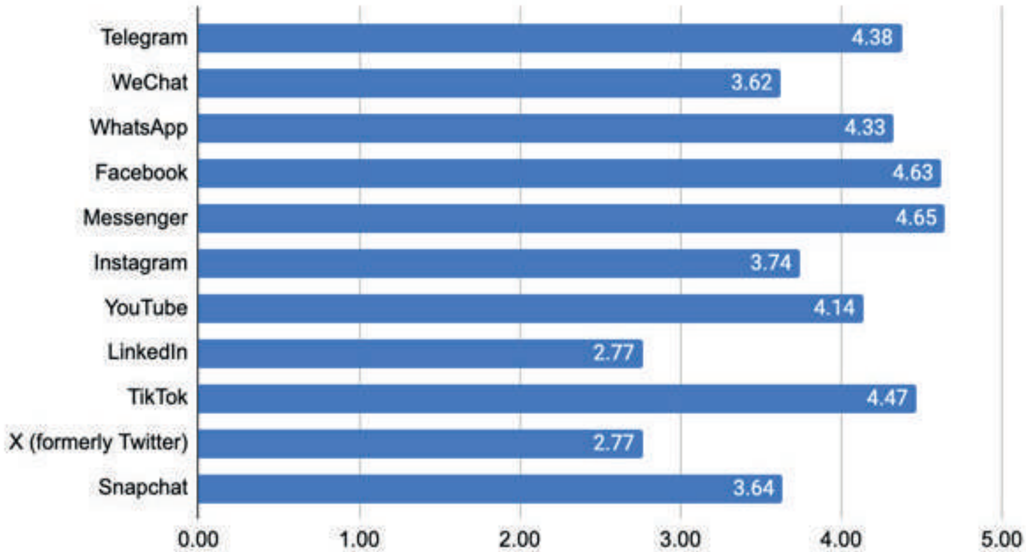
The data shows that smartphone ownership is nearly universal, with 98% of respondents (686 out of 703) reporting that they used a smartphone. This overwhelming majority highlights the deep penetration of modern mobile technology in Bhutan, suggesting that the vast majority of individuals are equipped to access internet-based services, social media, mobile applications, and multimedia content.

Only a small fraction of respondents over 1% (10) reported using feature phones, which are basic mobile devices with limited or no internet capability. An even smaller group of about 1% (7) reported having no phone at all, indicating that mobile connectivity has reached almost all corners of society, with very few still excluded. These individuals may face barriers related to affordability, digital literacy and preferences.

Overall, the near-total ownership of smartphones reflects Bhutan's rapidly evolving digital landscape and underscores the strong potential for mobile-first communication strategies, digital media delivery, online learning, and e-governance. The marginal presence of non-smartphone users suggests that digital inclusion efforts can now shift focus toward quality of access, skills development, and meaningful usage rather than basic connectivity.

13. Social Media Platforms Used

Figure 22 Social Media Platforms Used by Respondents



The data reveals a dynamic and diverse landscape of social media usage among respondents, highlighting both widespread adoption and varying engagement levels across platforms. Facebook and Messenger dominated as the most actively used platforms, with very high daily engagement and maximum user intensity, while platforms like LinkedIn, X (Twitter), and Snapchat showed relatively low engagement and niche usage.

Daily users of Facebook were recorded as 534 respondents and those using Messenger was 531 respondents, which is the highest in the dataset. Among all social media platforms, Facebook and Messenger exhibited the highest user intensity scores of 4.63 and 4.65 respectively signalling that users not only have accounts but also engage with them on a near-daily basis with high frequency. This suggests that these platforms remain deeply woven into the routines of everyday digital life. Despite global patterns that show younger audiences gravitating toward trendier platforms like Instagram and TikTok, Facebook continues to maintain a stronghold in this context. Its enduring popularity is likely attributed to the platform's multifunctional ecosystem encompassing news consumption, social networking, event coordination, and messaging all within a single interface.

Messaging platforms continue to play a pivotal role in digital communication, with WhatsApp and Telegram emerging as two of the most actively used services. WhatsApp records 581 users, with 390 of them engaging daily, reflecting a high use intensity score of 4.33. Telegram, meanwhile, not only had a slightly larger user base of 626 respondents but also surpassed WhatsApp in daily active users of 415 respondents and overall intensity score of 4.38. These figures indicate a subtle but significant shift in platform preference. While WhatsApp remains an integral messaging app, Telegram seems to be gaining traction as a more dominant or adaptable platform. Its growing appeal mainly stems from features that extend beyond basic messaging such as large group capacity, advanced privacy controls, efficient file sharing, etc., making it particularly attractive for both community coordination and content dissemination.

YouTube stands out as one of the most widely used platforms, with 620 users ranking just behind Facebook, Messenger and Telegram in overall reach. However, its daily engagement (318 users) and use intensity (4.14) fell slightly below the levels seen in messaging platforms like Telegram and WhatsApp. This pattern suggests that YouTube functions more as a destination platform than a habitual one. Users typically access it with intent to watch specific videos, tutorials, or entertainment content rather than for constant, real-time interaction. Unlike messaging or social networking apps that demand frequent engagement, YouTube supports more passive and episodic consumption, making it highly valuable for targeted content delivery but less central to users' daily digital routines.

Instagram registered a moderate level of uptake, with 419 users overall and 190 engaging daily. Its use intensity score of 3.74, while respectable, lagged behind the more frequently used messaging platforms, reflecting a different pattern of interaction. This trend suggests that while Instagram remains a popular platform, its appeal may be more demographically segmented particularly among younger or urban users who are drawn to its visual and aesthetic nature.

TikTok presented an interesting usage pattern. Although its overall user base stood at 580, which was moderate compared to other platforms, its daily active users of 410 and high use intensity score of 4.47 point to a deeply engaged and loyal subset of users. This makes TikTok one of the most intensively used platforms among those who do adopt it.

At the same time, there is a notable portion of the population that does not seem interested in the platform, with 72 reporting they never used it and 51 indicating they did not use it at all. This divergence suggests that TikTok's popularity is concentrated within specific demographic groups, most likely those drawn to its short-form, entertainment-driven content and tailored feeds.

WeChat exhibited relatively low uptake and engagement within the broader user base, with only 373 users, 159 of whom used it daily, and a modest use intensity score of 3.62. What stood out more, however, was the high number of respondents who reported never using the platform (179) or who explicitly state they did not use it at all (151). This pattern strongly suggests that unlike more mainstream or locally embedded platforms, WeChat does not appear to have broad cross-demographic appeal in this context.

LinkedIn emerged as one of the least frequently used platforms in the dataset, with a small user base of only 124 and a low use intensity score of 2.77, tied with X (formerly Twitter) for the lowest overall engagement. This reflects LinkedIn's distinct positioning as a professional networking tool rather than a social or entertainment platform. Its usage is likely sporadic and purpose-driven, with users engaging during specific periods such as professional announcements rather than as part of their daily digital routine. The data suggests that while LinkedIn holds value within professional and career-focused contexts, it does not serve as a platform for continuous interaction, content sharing, or communication in the way other mainstream apps do.

X (formerly Twitter) and Snapchat appear to occupy smaller margins of the social media landscape in this context, with limited user bases and relatively low engagement levels. X recorded only 111 users, and was marked by an exceptionally high number of non-users, with 398 indicating they never used the platform. Its user intensity score of just 2.77 the lowest in the dataset further underscores its minimal relevance or utility for the majority of respondents.

Snapchat performs somewhat better, with a user base of 262 and a moderate intensity score of 3.64, suggesting more active engagement among its limited user pool. However, it too suffers from significant levels of non-usage, pointing to a lack of widespread appeal. Together, these figures suggest that both platforms are either in decline or never gained substantial traction among the surveyed population. Their low visibility and engagement may be attributed to the rise of newer, more immersive platforms like TikTok.

Recommendations

13.1 Utilise the widespread daily use of dominant social media and messaging platforms to drive public communication, service delivery, and community engagement. This includes leveraging their diverse capabilities for both broad information dissemination and direct, localized interaction, while continuously monitoring usage trends to adapt outreach strategies in real time.

13.2 Develop platform-specific content strategies, focusing on visual storytelling, short-form engagement, and on-demand viewing styles. This involves promoting local creators and cultural content tailored for each platform to amplify reach and visibility.

13.3 Develop inclusive outreach and education programmemes to ensure equitable access to social media across age groups, regions, and literacy levels, and promote responsible digital behaviour by raising awareness on privacy, safety, and misinformation tailored to the unique risks and features of each platform.

14. Expenditure on Media Subscriptions

Figure 23 Expenditure on Media

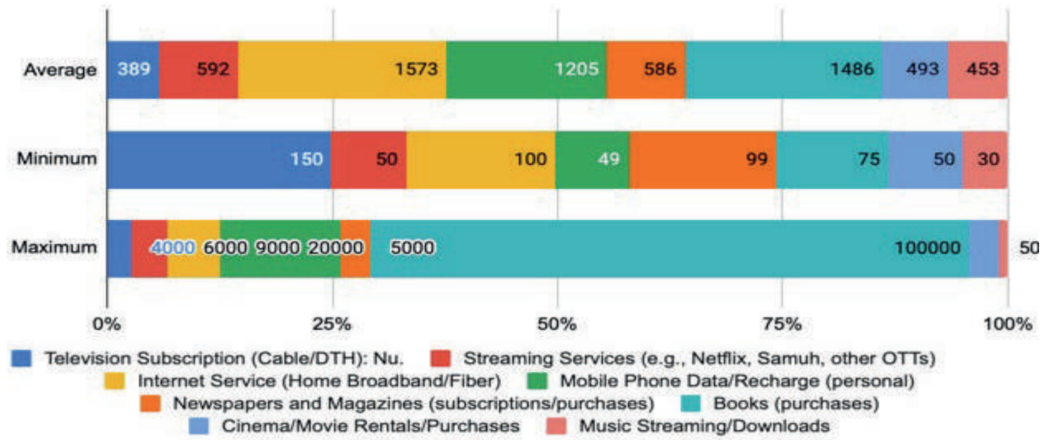


Table 25 Expenditure on Media

	Average	Minimum	Maximum
Television Subscription (Cable/DTH): Nu.	389	150	4,000
Streaming Services (e.g., Netflix, Samuh, other OTTs)	592	50	6,000
Internet Service (Home Broadband/Fiber)	1,573	100	9,000
Mobile Phone Data/Recharge (personal)	1,205	49	20,000
Newspapers and Magazines (subscriptions/purchases)	586	99	5,000
Books (purchases)	1,486	75	100,000
Cinema/Movie Rentals/Purchases	493	50	5,000
Music Streaming/Downloads	453	30	1,500

The data provides insight into the financial priorities and consumption habits of individuals across various forms of media and communication services. Overall, it suggests a digitally active lifestyle, with marked variation in expenditure across categories ranging from essential connectivity to discretionary entertainment. Internet service (home broadband/fibre) commands the highest average monthly spending at Nu. 1,573, closely followed by mobile phone data/recharge (Nu. 1,205). This reflects the significance of internet access in daily life, as it underpins communication, education, work-from-home arrangements, and access to other media platforms.

With an average monthly expenditure of Nu. 1,486, books emerged as a major cultural or educational investment higher than cinema, newspapers, or even television. The maximum reported expenditure of Nu. 100,000 by one respondent from urban Thimphu, is very high comparing to other expenses, likely reflecting either academic, religious, or professional purchases. This also has contributed to a raised average monthly expenditure which would otherwise have been much lower at Nu.878 and also closer to average expenditure.

Average spending on OTT platforms (Nu. 592) exceeds traditional television subscriptions (Nu. 389), indicating a gradual shift away from cable/DTH to on-demand digital content. However, the maximum OTT expenditure (Nu. 6,000) implies that some users subscribe to multiple platforms. This reinforces the idea of personalized, choice-based entertainment consumption, particularly among younger or tech-savvy groups.

Newspapers and magazines recorded a moderate average of Nu. 586, but with a maximum of Nu. 5,000, suggesting usage among institutions or enthusiastic readers rather than the general population. Cinema/movie rentals have a low average (Nu. 493) perhaps influenced by location access to cinemas or preference for digital movie purchases.

Spending on music streaming and downloads remained relatively low, with an average of Nu. 453, suggesting that many users may depend on free versions or access music through bundled services included with other digital subscriptions. Television subscriptions recorded the lowest average expenditure at Nu. 389, reinforcing the diminishing role of traditional broadcast media particularly among urban and younger audiences who are increasingly shifting toward on-demand and digital content platforms.

Recommendations

14.1 Promote and integrate digital media content directly through internet service and mobile data packages like encouraging affordable bundling of OTT subscriptions, digital news, and music streaming with existing data plans to boost accessibility and drive adoption of paid digital content, capitalizing on consumers' primary media expenditure.

14.2 Support in developing libraries, digital lending platforms and affordable book access initiatives to expand readership, and promote local publishing and translation to increase the availability of books in Dzongkha and regional languages. Further, partner with institutions to sustain Bhutan's strong cultural investment in reading and literacy.

14.3 OTT platforms may consider promoting the creation of local OTT content that reflects Bhutanese culture, language, and narratives.

15. Important Topics from Respondents for Bhutanese Media to Cover

Education & Learning (100 mentions)

Survey responses highlighted key topics that Bhutanese media should cover more extensively. These included education and learning, such as teaching for higher classes, career development, youth empowerment, online tutoring, information on scholarships, learning resources for children and awareness on online scams. Additional focus areas identified were general knowledge, educational videos, language and literature, school and teacher-related topics, opportunities for studying various subjects, and strengthening virtual learning platforms. Covering these topics can help raise awareness and support the development of a well-informed, skilled, and empowered citizenry.

News & Public Information (97 mentions)

Survey feedback indicated that Bhutanese media should focus more on news and public information covering topics such as parliament, information on development plans and programmemes, local and international news, more live broadcasts, and public announcements. Other areas included research, good practices, public opinions, and discussions on laws and current issues. Additional emphasis on transparency, investigative journalism, debates, and public engagement could enhance awareness and accountability. Covering these topics will help inform and involve the community effectively.

Politics & Governance (74 mentions)

Survey responses highlighted the need for media coverage on politics and governance, including topics like government function, reforms, public policies and public service delivery. Emphasis on democracy, parliament activities, national and local development, legal judgments and laws were identified as important. Coverage of issues like corruption, discrimination, transparency, accountability, and foreign relations can foster informed citizen participation. Highlighting government performance, national plans, and key political debates will strengthen public understanding of governance and national progress.

Health & Well-being (64 mentions)

Survey insights emphasised the importance of media coverage on health and well-being, including topics such as health services, wellness, and mental health. Highlighting issues related to diseases, non-communicable conditions, and health awareness could promote healthier lifestyles. Coverage of family planning, hygiene, health facilities, and fitness activities is vital for public health. Highlighting accidents as health concerns and sharing health talks can further enhance community awareness and encourage proactive health practices.

Social Issues & Community (66 mentions)

Survey feedback underscores the need for media focus on social issues, including poverty, gender equality, women and children's welfare, youth and parenting. Covering youth engagement, employment challenges, and development is crucial for community growth. Highlighting issues like substance abuse, cyber threats, social media safety, crime, sexual harassment, racism, and cyberbullying can raise awareness and promote safer, more inclusive societies. Tackling population dynamics, rural-urban migration, and village concerns provides a comprehensive view of societal change. Emphasizing mental health, social welfare, poverty alleviation, and human rights fosters societal wellbeing and encourages positive behavioural change, especially among youth and vulnerable groups.

Culture, Religion & Heritage (58 mentions)

Survey insights highlight the importance of media coverage on cultural and religious topics, including Bhutanese history, traditions, and spiritual practices. Media covering old entertainment forms like Tsangmo and Lozey, as well as cultural expressions such as art, architecture, and cuisine could contribute towards preserving national identity. Highlighting religious events, sacred places, and teachings like Driglam Namzha could reinforce cultural heritage and spiritual values. By showcasing Bhutanese folktales and cultural programmemes and highlighting Bhutan's geography as part of its cultural landscape and promoting awareness of Buddhist practices and etiquette could contribute to strengthening national identity and cultural continuity.

Economy & Development (58 mentions)

Survey feedback highlighted the need to actively showcase Bhutan's economic growth and development initiatives including entrepreneurship, creating job opportunities, and boosting youth employment to drive progress. Covering innovations in the digital economy, including cryptocurrency, efforts to expand agriculture, farming, and animal husbandry to strengthen rural livelihoods, and investment. Highlight processes for facilitation of land transaction, tax payment and loan processes to support business development. Showcase urban development projects, quality construction, and infrastructure improvements to demonstrate modernization. Encourage awareness of economic diversification strategies and promote opportunities within the job market. Overall, use media to inspire confidence, attract investment, and propel Bhutan's economic resilience and growth.

Entertainment & Sports (47 mentions)

Survey feedback urged promoting vibrant entertainment and sports sectors to engage and inspire audiences. Media could highlight Bhutanese movies, series, and music to celebrate local culture and talent. Promotion of live programmemes and broadcasts to foster real-time engagement and community participation by media could deepen public engagement. Provide platform for talent promotion initiatives to nurture emerging artists and performers. Emphasise the importance of producing short, high-quality dramas and documentaries to enrich entertainment options. By encouraging active participation in sports, eSports, and fitness activities, contribute to promote healthy lifestyles and teamwork. Use media to energize audiences, showcase diverse talents, and elevate Bhutan's entertainment and sports landscape.

Environment & Disaster Management (34 mentions)

Survey feedback emphasised the urgency of protecting Bhutan's environment and effectively managing disasters. Highlight initiatives addressing climate change, wildlife conservation, and preserving natural heritage to foster ecological balance. Promote waste management programmemes and sustainable resource use, including irrigation and water conservation in rural areas. Raise awareness about human-wildlife conflicts and strategies to mitigate them, ensuring harmonious coexistence. Showcase efforts to improve disaster preparedness and response to safeguard communities and natural resources. Use media to inspire environmental stewardship, educate on climate resilience, and reinforce Bhutan's commitment to sustainable development and ecological preservation.

Crime & Justice (22 mentions)

Survey feedback highlighted the importance of strengthening crime prevention and justice systems to ensure safety and fairness. Focus on addressing issues such as corruption, drug abuse, sexual harassment, and violence through effective enforcement and legal reforms. Promote awareness campaigns on social media safety, cyberbullying prevention, and responsible digital behaviour. Emphasise the need for accessible legal services and transparent justice processes to uphold citizens' rights. Encourage community involvement in crime prevention and foster a culture of safety. Use media to educate the public about crime risks, legal rights, and the importance of justice to build a secure and just society.

Rural & Agriculture (22 mentions)

Survey feedback highlighted the need for media to cover the vital role of rural development and agriculture in Bhutan's progress. Programmemes could focus on improving farming practices, supporting animal husbandry, and enhancing irrigation and water management to boost productivity. Media could advocate for village-specific issues and farmers' rights and needs to promote sustainable livelihoods, highlighting challenges faced in rural areas such as access to resources, infrastructure, and markets, and promote innovative solutions for rural empowerment. Use media to showcase success stories, promote agricultural techniques, and foster community participation, ensuring rural communities thrive and contribute to national development.

Youth Focus (18 mentions)

Survey feedback highlighted the importance of media's role in empowering youth by covering targeted initiatives that promote employment, education, and active engagement in society. Programmemes could emphasise expanding opportunities such as scholarships, vocational training, and skills development to prepare youth for the future. By highlighting issues faced by young people, including mental health, substance abuse, social participation and help create supportive environments. Media could also engage youth in sharing their opinions and stands related to community activities to foster leadership and responsibility. By doing so, media could help raise awareness about youth opportunities, success stories, and the importance of investing in youth development for a prosperous and inclusive society.

Technology & Innovation (9 mentions)

Survey feedback emphasised the significance of embracing technology and innovation to drive progress. Media could focus on expanding access to digital platforms, highlight the need to improve internet connectivity and reduced internet charges to enhance service delivery. It could also raise awareness and adoption of emerging technologies such as AI and digital tools to boost efficiency across sectors. Media could support the development of digital literacy and skills among all age groups. This could encourage innovative solutions to societal challenges. Media could showcase technological advancements, success stories in innovation, and the benefits of a digitally connected society, thereby help foster a culture of continuous technological growth.

Recommendations

15.1 Bring more focus on educational content including career development, scholarships, and online safety, alongside comprehensive news and public information on government functions, development plans, and policy reforms.

15.2 Expand reporting on social issues (poverty, gender equality, youth welfare, cyber threats, mental health), health and well-being (services, diseases, hygiene), and environmental concerns (climate change, waste management, disaster preparedness).

15.3 Increase coverage of Bhutanese history, traditions, and arts, alongside economic growth (entrepreneurship, job creation, digital economy) and rural/agricultural development. Simultaneously, integrate discussions on technology and innovation, showcasing advancements and promoting digital literacy, to inspire confidence, preserve heritage, and support sustainable national progress.

16. Satisfaction with the Bhutanese Media

Figure 24 Satisfaction with the Quality of Reporting by Bhutanese Media

Table 26 Satisfaction Rating on Quality of Reporting by Bhutanese Media

For the topics important to you, how satisfied are you with the quality of reporting by Bhutanese media?	
Issue	**Rating**
Social issues	3.53
Political issues	3.32
Environmental issues	3.67
Religious & Cultural issues	3.86
Economic issues	3.49
Governance issues	3.44
Health issues	3.82
Education issues	3.70

The data reflects moderate to positive satisfaction levels among respondents regarding how Bhutanese media covers issues that matter to them. Overall, the average ratings hovered between 3.32 and 3.86, indicating that while the media is generally viewed as performing adequately, there is room for improvement particularly on political and governance-related topics.

Religious and cultural issues received the highest average rating of 3.86, indicating that respondents felt most positively about how Bhutanese media reported on traditions, religious events, and cultural matters. This likely reflects the media's alignment with Bhutanese values and its strong coverage of festivals, rituals, and national identity themes. Health issues also scored high, with a rating of 3.82, suggesting that public health reporting has been effective and trusted. Education issues followed with a rating of 3.70, showing that the media is seen as performing fairly well in covering topics such as schooling, youth development, and education reform. Environmental issues, rated at 3.67, indicated relatively strong satisfaction.

This may be due to growing national and global attention to climate and conservation issues in Bhutan, and the media's consistent coverage of environmental sustainability.

Social issues, with a score of 3.53, fell in the mid-range, suggesting balanced but possibly inconsistent coverage. This includes reporting on inequality, gender, youth, and vulnerable populations, which may not always be deeply investigated or followed through. Economic issues, at 3.49, suggest respondents felt somewhat neutral. This could reflect concerns over limited depth, complexity, or critical perspectives in the coverage of inflation, unemployment, trade, and development topics.

Governance issues, with an average rating of 3.44 and political issues, with an average rating of 3.32 were the lowest-rated, indicating that respondents were either least satisfied with how Bhutanese media reported on government affairs, policy processes, and political dynamics. The relatively low scores may stem from perceived lack of investigative reporting, limited editorial independence, or cautious media behaviour in dealing with authority and public accountability.

Overall, respondents generally trust Bhutanese media to report on culturally sensitive and socially relevant issues, especially in areas like religion, health, education, and the environment. However, satisfaction dropped when it came to critical and accountability-focused reporting, particularly regarding politics and governance. This pattern reflects the current state of Bhutan's media ecosystem responsible and culturally rooted, but constrained when engaging in more probing or politically sensitive journalism.

17. Satisfaction Level Across Different Societal Sectors with Media Reporting

Figure 25 Satisfaction Level with Media Reporting Across Different Societal Sectors

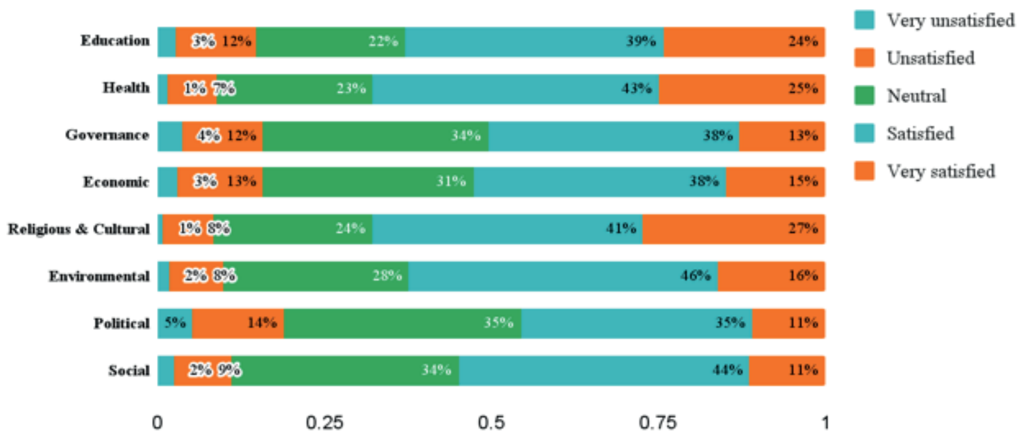


Table 27 Satisfaction with Media Reporting Across Different Societal Sectors

Satisfaction Level	Social	Political	Environmental	Religious & Cultural	Economic	Governance	Health	Education
Very unsatisfied	16 (2%)	34 (5%)	11 (2%)	5 (1%)	20 (3%)	24 (4%)	10 (1%)	19 (3%)
Unsatisfied	59 (9%)	89 (14%)	55 (8%)	52 (8%)	84 (13%)	81 (12%)	49 (7%)	81 (12%)
Neutral	228 (34%)	230 (35%)	189 (28%)	160 (24%)	207 (31%)	223 (34%)	158 (23%)	150 (22%)
Satisfied	293 (44%)	225 (35%)	313 (46%)	274 (41%)	249 (38%)	250 (38%)	288 (43%)	261 (39%)
Very satisfied	76 (11%)	71 (11%)	109 (16%)	184 (27%)	98 (15%)	85 (13%)	168 (25%)	164 (24%)
Don't Use/Don't follow issue	31	54	26	28	45	40	30	28
Total	**672**	**649**	**677**	**675**	**658**	**663**	**673**	**675**

The data provides a detailed look into how respondents evaluate the Bhutanese media's performance in covering a range of important national issues. While overall satisfaction is relatively high, a closer examination reveals variation in perceived quality, with some topics receiving stronger approval than others.

Religious & Cultural Issues stood out as the most positively rated, with 184 respondents (27%) very satisfied and 274 (41%) satisfied. Together, nearly 70% of respondents expressed positive views. This reflects the media's strong alignment with national values and effective coverage of religious ceremonies, festivals, and cultural traditions. Health Reporting is also highly rated, with 168 respondents (25%) very satisfied and 288 (43%) satisfied with a combined satisfaction level of 68%. This likely reflects strong health messaging during the pandemic and public trust in coverage of health-related issues.

Environmental Issues followed, with 313 respondents (46%) satisfied and 109 (16%) very satisfied, totalling over 62% positive responses. Given Bhutan's identity as an environmental leader, it is likely that media reporting has reflected public interest in conservation, climate, and biodiversity topics. Education Reporting shows strong satisfaction as well, with 261 (39%) satisfied and 164 (24%) very satisfied, adding up to 63% approval. This suggests that coverage of schools, youth, and education reforms is generally well-received.

Social Issues received 293 (44%) satisfied and 76 (11%) very satisfied responses, totalling 55% positive sentiment. However, 16 (2%) were very unsatisfied and 59 (9%) unsatisfied, indicating some dissatisfaction with the depth or frequency of coverage on issues like inequality, gender, and vulnerable groups. Economic Issues showed 249 (38%) satisfied and 98 (15%) very satisfied, with nearly 53% of respondents positive. However, a combined 104 (16%) expressed dissatisfaction. The relatively large neutral group (207) suggests that many felt the coverage is adequate but not particularly strong or in-depth.

Governance Issues received the lowest satisfaction ratings. For Governance, 250 (38%) were satisfied and only 85 (13%) very satisfied. Meanwhile, 24 (4%) were very unsatisfied and 81 (12%) unsatisfied, with 223 (34%) neutral. This points to lukewarm confidence in how the media handles reporting on public administration, accountability, and service delivery. Similarly, Political Issues also received the lowest overall satisfaction with only 34 (5%) very unsatisfied and 89 (14%) unsatisfied, while 225 (35%) were satisfied and 71 (11%) very satisfied. Nearly 230 respondents (35%) remained neutral, indicating possible discomfort or uncertainty in judging political reporting, perhaps due to perceived media self-censorship or limited independent analysis.

Cultural, health, and education issues were the strongest areas of media reporting in Bhutan, earning the highest satisfaction levels. Social, environmental, and economic topics received moderate approval, but with room for deeper, more inclusive coverage. Governance and political reporting were the least satisfactory, reflecting public concerns about the media's independence, depth, or freedom to report critically on power structures.

Recommendations

17.1 Invest in training journalists in investigative techniques, data analysis, and ethical reporting on sensitive topics. Foster an environment that encourages more probing and independent coverage of government functions, policy processes, and political dynamics, thereby addressing the lowest satisfaction ratings in these critical areas and enhancing accountability.

17.2 Develop specialized reporting capabilities for complex social and economic issues (e.g., poverty, gender equality, employment, inflation, trade). Promote in-depth analysis, multiple perspectives, and follow-up reporting to move beyond superficial coverage, thereby improving satisfaction and providing a more comprehensive understanding of these challenges.

17.3 Continue to prioritise and expand high-quality reporting on religious and cultural issues, health, education, and the environment, where satisfaction is already strong. Explore innovative storytelling formats (e.g., documentaries, interactive features) and community engagement initiatives in these areas to reinforce public trust and leverage existing strengths for broader societal benefit.

Non-users of Media

Table 28 Non-users of Media

Sl. No.	Don't Use/Don't follow issue	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Social	31	4.61%
2	Political	54	8.32%
3	Environmental	26	3.84%
4	Religious & Cultural	28	4.15%
5	Economic	45	6.84%
6	Governance	40	6.03%
7	Health	30	4.46%
8	Education	28	4.15%

The survey explored whether there were respondents who did not follow certain issues across various thematic areas. The highest proportion of 54 respondents (8%) indicated that they did not engage with political issues, suggesting a notable level of disengagement or disinterest in political discourse or activities. This was followed by economic issues with 45 respondents (about 7%) not following economic issues and 40 respondents (6.03%), not showing any interest in governance-related matters indicating that these topics may also face challenges in attracting public interest or trust. Social issues were not followed by 31 respondents (4.61%), while health and religious & cultural issues were each not followed by 30 respondents (4%) and 28 respondents (4%) respectively.

Environmental issues saw the lowest rate of disengagement with 26 respondents (4%), which could imply relatively higher awareness or concern for environmental matters among the population. Education, religious and cultural issues both had over 4% of respondents, who indicated disinterest, highlighting moderate levels of disengagement in these areas. Overall, political disengagement stood out as the most prominent among the respondents.

Recommendations

17.1 Transform how political, governance, and economic issues are presented, moving beyond dry reporting to more accessible, relatable, and human-centric storytelling. Utilise diverse formats (e.g., explainer videos, infographics, interactive Q&A sessions, debates) that clarify complex topics and demonstrate their direct impact on daily life, thereby reducing disinterest and fostering civic participation.

17.2 For all topics, including social, health, education, and religious/cultural issues, implement strategies that ensure content is easily discoverable and relevant to diverse demographics, particularly those currently disengaged. This includes exploring community-led reporting, simplifying language, and distributing content through various platforms (including local community channels) to bridge access gaps and cultivate broader interest.

18. Representation of Views of the Bhutanese People by the Media

Figure 28 Adequacy of Representation of Views of Bhutanese by Media

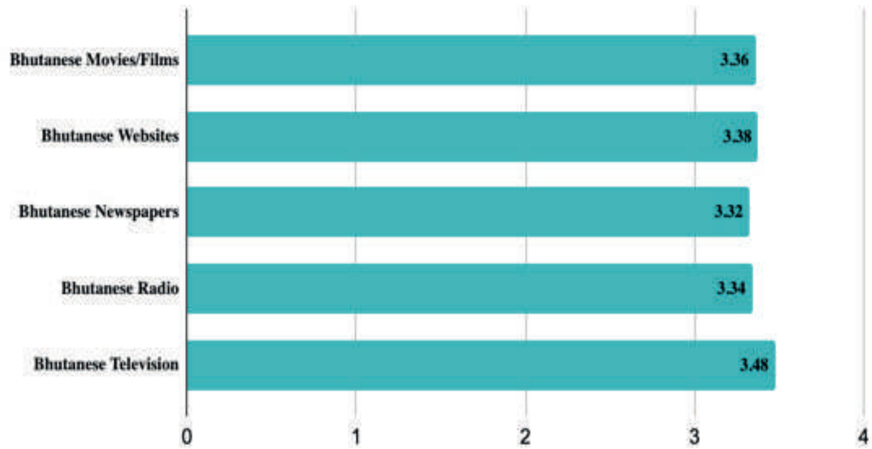


Figure 29 Adequacy Rating of Representation of Views of Bhutanese by Media

Sl. No.	Media	Rating
1	Bhutanese Television	3.48
2	Bhutanese Radio	3.34
3	Bhutanese Newspapers	3.32
4	Bhutanese Websites	3.38
5	Bhutanese Movies/Films	3.36

When asked to rate how well different forms of media represent the views of the Bhutanese people (on a scale likely ranging from 1 to 5), the responses revealed a moderate level of satisfaction across platforms, with no single medium emerging as a clear leader. Bhutanese television received the highest average rating at 3.48, indicating that it is perceived as the most effective among the major media types in reflecting public opinion. As a widely accessible and established medium, television continues to maintain relevance and trust, possibly due to its visual reach and coverage of national events and issues.

Bhutanese websites followed closely with a rating of 3.38, reflecting the growing role of digital platforms in capturing and amplifying diverse voices, especially among tech-savvy and younger audiences. This suggests that online media may be playing an increasingly important role in offering space for public discourse. Bhutanese films and movies received a 3.36, showing that even entertainment media is seen as a cultural mirror to some extent. While not explicitly journalistic, Bhutanese films may resonate with audiences by portraying social issues, values, and everyday realities.

Radio (3.34) and newspapers (3.32) had the lowest scores, though the differences are minimal. This could suggest that while these traditional formats still serve informational roles, they may be perceived as less reflective of the broader range of public opinions possibly due to editorial constraints, limited diversity in voices, or less interactive formats. Overall, the scores indicate moderate confidence in the media's ability to represent public sentiment, but they also highlight room for improvement particularly in increasing inclusivity, diversity of perspectives, and public engagement across all platforms.

Recommendation

18.1 Implement interactive features and feedback mechanisms across television, websites, radio, and newspapers to actively solicit and integrate diverse public opinions. This includes hosting more public forums, call-in shows, online polls, and citizen journalism initiatives to ensure a broader spectrum of voices is heard and reflected in media content.

Representation of People's Views by Bhutanese Television

Figure 30 Adequacy of Representation of Views of Bhutanese by Television

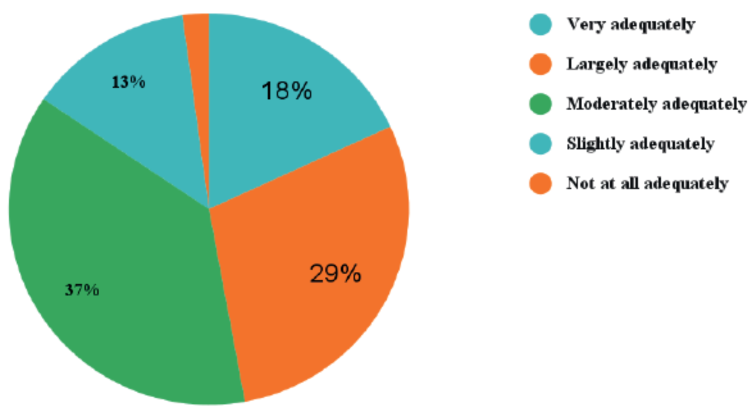


Table 31 Adequacy Rating of Representation of Views of Bhutanese by Television

Bhutanese Television	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very adequately	119	18%
Largely adequately	191	29%
Moderately adequately	246	37%
Slightly adequately	88	13%
Not at all adequately	14	2%

A total of 658 respondents shared their views on how well Bhutanese Television reflected the perspectives of ordinary citizens. The responses revealed a generally positive perception, with nearly half of the respondents indicating confidence in the broadcaster's representational role.

Specifically, 18% of respondents felt that Bhutanese Television "very adequately" represented the views of ordinary Bhutanese people, while another 29% believed it does so "largely adequately." Together, this means that 47% of the audience perceived the channel as performing well in capturing public sentiment and representing the broader population.

The largest proportion of respondents, however, selected "moderately adequately" (37%). This suggests a substantial segment of the population held a more cautious or reserved view acknowledging that while Bhutanese Television did represent ordinary voices to some extent, it may not fully capture the diversity or depth of public opinion.

On the other end of the spectrum, 13% of respondents said the broadcaster represented public views only "slightly adequately," and a small minority of 2% felt it "does not at all adequately" represent the views of ordinary Bhutanese people. Though relatively low, this combined 15% signals that a notable group may feel underrepresented or disconnected from the narratives presented on national television.

Overall, the findings point to a moderate level of trust and credibility in Bhutanese Television, with most respondents believing it does an adequate job of representing the people's voice. However, the high proportion of "moderate" and "slightly adequate" responses also indicates room for improvement particularly in ensuring broader inclusivity, diversity of perspectives, and deeper engagement with communities across the country.

Recommendations

18.2 Actively seek out and feature a broader spectrum of voices, including those from rural areas, minority groups, youth, and other underrepresented segments of the population. Train journalists to conduct more in-depth interviews and discussions that capture the nuances and complexities of public opinion, thereby addressing the feeling of being "slightly adequately" or "not at all adequately" represented.

18.3 Establish clear and accessible channels for public feedback on programmeming and content, such as dedicated hotlines, online portals, or regular public forums. Regularly communicate how this feedback is incorporated into programmeming decisions to build greater trust and demonstrate the broadcaster's commitment to truly representing the views of ordinary Bhutanese citizens.

Representation of People's Views by Bhutanese Radio

Figure 31 Adequacy of Representation of Views of Bhutanese by Radio

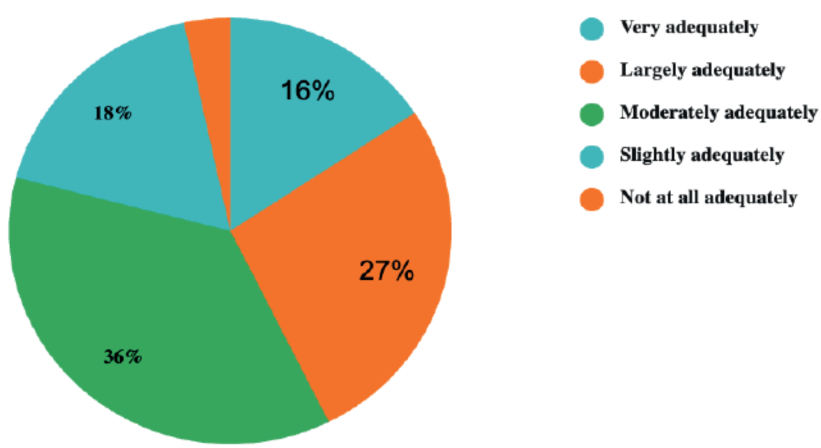


Table 32 Figure 31 Adequacy Rating of Representation of Views of Bhutanese by Radio

Bhutanese Radio	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very adequately	65	16%
Largely adequately	112	27%
Moderately adequately	151	36%
Slightly adequately	73	18%
Not at all adequately	14	3%

A total of 415 respondents provided feedback on their perception of Bhutanese Radio as a platform for public representation. The results showed a generally favourable outlook, although confidence appears somewhat lower than that for television.

About 16% of respondents believed that Bhutanese Radio “very adequately” represented the views of ordinary Bhutanese people, while 27% thought it does so “largely adequately.” Combined, 43% of respondents expressed a positive view of the radio’s role in amplifying public voices. A further 36% said Bhutanese Radio “moderately adequately” represented people’s views. This significant middle segment suggests that many listeners see the radio as doing a reasonable job, though not necessarily excelling in inclusivity or depth of representation.

Meanwhile, 18% of respondents felt the radio represented public views only “slightly adequately,” and 3% said it did “not at all adequately” represent the voices of the general public. Together, this 21% reflects a sizeable group who perceived the medium as insufficiently reflective of ordinary Bhutanese perspectives.

Recommendations

18.4 Implement more localized and interactive programmemes, such as live call-in shows, community forums, and mobile reporting from diverse regions. This will directly solicit and feature public input from various demographics, ensuring that local concerns and unique perspectives are regularly amplified on Bhutanese Radio, moving beyond a “moderately adequate” representation.

18.5 Explore new and interactive radio formats, such as short-form audio documentaries on local issues, dedicated segments for public grievances, or collaborative storytelling initiatives.

Representation of People’s Views by Bhutanese Newspapers

Figure 32 Adequacy of Representation of Views of Bhutanese by Newspapers

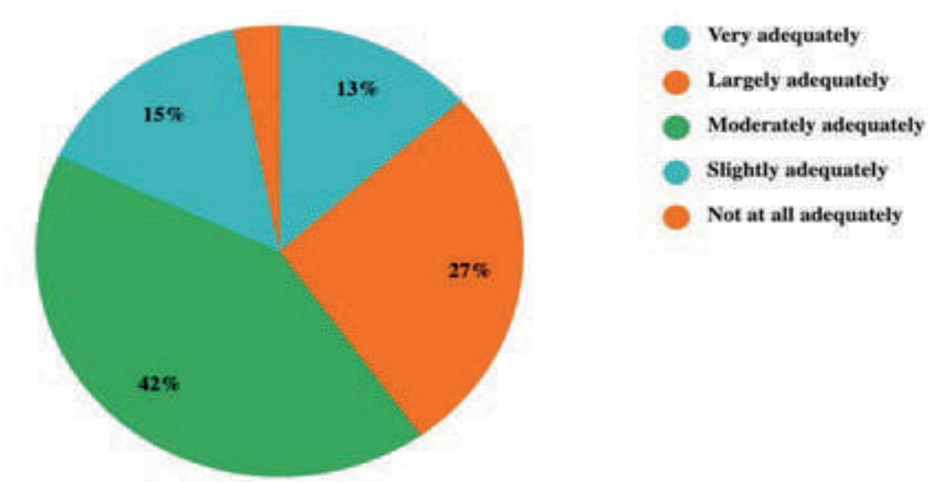


Table 33 Adequacy Rating of Representation of Views of Bhutanese by Newspapers

Bhutanese Newspapers	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very adequately	66	13%
Largely adequately	132	27%
Moderately adequately	206	42%
Slightly adequately	74	15%
Not at all adequately	15	3%

A total of 493 respondents shared their views on the representational role of Bhutanese newspapers. The findings revealed a mixed perception, with a leaning toward moderate confidence but with relatively few respondents expressing strong satisfaction. Only 13% of respondents felt that newspapers "very adequately" represented the views of ordinary Bhutanese people, while 27% believed they did so "largely adequately." Combined, this gives a total of 40% expressing a generally positive assessment of how newspapers reflect public opinion.

The largest group of 42% felt newspapers represented public views "moderately adequately." This suggests that many readers recognised some effort in representing citizen voices, but also sensed a lack of strong resonance or inclusivity in the coverage. On the less favourable side, 15% said newspapers represented views only "slightly adequately," and 3% felt they "do not at all adequately" reflect ordinary Bhutanese people's perspectives. This combined 18% indicates a notable segment that finds the print media disconnected or insufficiently representative of everyday concerns. To improve public perception, Bhutanese newspapers may benefit from greater community engagement, more inclusive reporting, and increased focus on rural, youth, and marginalized perspectives.

Recommendations

18.6 Implement proactive strategies to reach out to diverse communities, including rural areas, youth, and marginalized populations, to solicit their views and stories directly. This involves increasing on-the-ground reporting, hosting community forums, and developing participatory journalism initiatives to ensure their perspectives are regularly featured in newspapers.

18.7 Broaden the range of voices and perspectives featured in newspaper content by actively seeking out and publishing opinions, commentaries, and reports from a wider array of citizens, experts, and community leaders. Focus more on grassroots issues and everyday concerns that resonate with a larger segment of the population, thereby addressing the perception of being disconnected or insufficiently representative.

18.8 Leverage digital platforms associated with newspapers (e.g., websites, social media) to create accessible and interactive channels for public feedback, comments, and submissions. This will allow readers to engage directly with the content and express their views, helping newspapers to better reflect and respond to the public sentiment.

Representation of People's Views by Bhutanese Websites

Figure 33 Adequacy of Representation of Views of Bhutanese by Websites

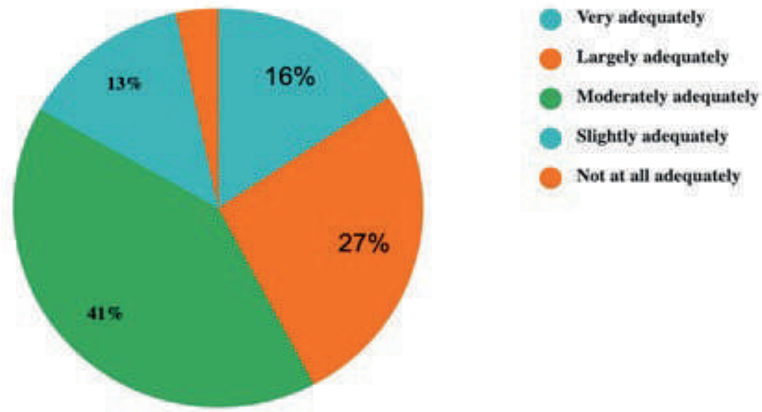


Table 34 Adequacy of Representation of Views of Bhutanese by Websites

Bhutanese Websites	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very adequately	84	16%
Largely adequately	143	27%
Moderately adequately	220	41%
Slightly adequately	72	13%
Not at all adequately	18	3%

A total of 537 respondents evaluated how well Bhutanese news websites represented the views of ordinary Bhutanese citizens. The responses reflected a generally moderate level of confidence, with relatively balanced sentiments across the spectrum though skewed slightly toward the middle. About 16% of respondents felt that Bhutanese websites "very adequately" represented public views, and another 27% said they did so "largely adequately." This means 43% of respondents have a positive perception of the representational role of online news platforms.

The largest share 41% believed that Bhutanese websites "moderately adequately" represented ordinary people. This suggests that while many users acknowledged efforts to represent diverse perspectives, they may also have perceived limitations in the breadth, depth, or authenticity of that representation. Meanwhile, 13% felt these websites represented views only "slightly adequately," and 3% said they "do not at all adequately" reflect the views of the Bhutanese public. Together, this 16% indicates a minority with concerns about underrepresentation or disconnect between digital media content and ordinary people's realities.

Recommendations

18.9 Bhutanese websites need to promote interactive and participatory features by integrating comment sections, reader polls, and Q&A forums that allow citizens to express their views and engage with news content. They should also host live chats or virtual town halls on key national issues to facilitate direct audience interaction and engagement.

18.10 Bhutanese websites need to increase transparency in editorial processes by openly sharing their editorial policies to build trust regarding story selection and voice inclusion. They should also publish behind-the-scenes “story diaries” or journalist reflections to demonstrate their commitment to fair and balanced reporting.

18.11 Bhutanese websites need to prioritise mobile-friendly and vernacular content by ensuring their sites are easily accessible on mobile devices, particularly for rural readers. They should also include content in Dzongkha and regional dialects to broaden reach and enhance relatability.

Representation of People’s Views by Bhutanese Movies/Films

Figure 34 Adequacy of Representation of Views of Bhutanese by Movies/Films

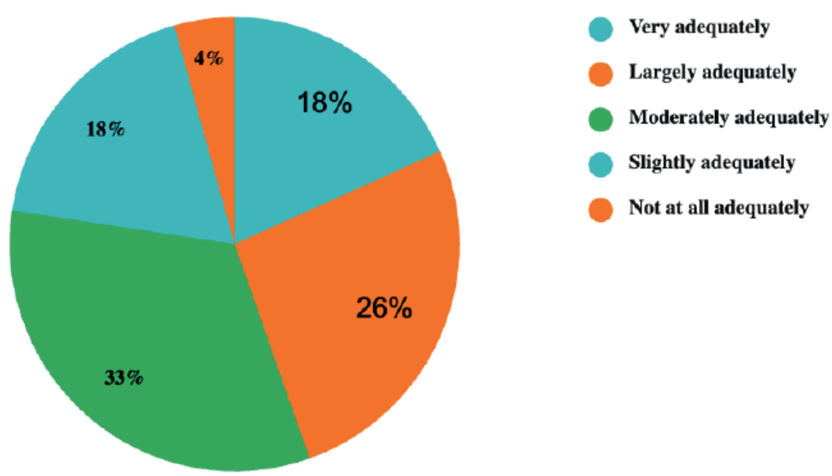


Table 35 Adequacy of Representation of Views of Bhutanese by Movies/Films

Bhutanese Movies/Films	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very adequately	110	18%
Largely adequately	158	26%
Moderately adequately	197	33%
Slightly adequately	110	18%
Not at all adequately	26	4%

A significant portion of respondents believed that Bhutanese films represented the views of ordinary people at least to a moderate extent. Among them, the largest group of 33% felt that the representation is “moderately adequately,” suggesting that while Bhutanese films captured some aspects of ordinary life, they may not fully be reflective of the broader range of public experiences or sentiments. Another 26% felt that Bhutanese films “largely adequately” represented public views, and 18% considered them to do so “very adequately,” indicating a level of appreciation for the effort filmmakers make to mirror societal realities. This reflects a fair level of trust in the cultural relevance and resonance of Bhutanese cinema.

However, not all responses were positive. A combined 22% of respondents felt that films “slightly adequately” represented or did “not at all” represent the views of ordinary Bhutanese people. This suggests that for some, Bhutanese cinema still fell short of capturing authentic, relatable, or diverse lived experiences. Overall, while Bhutanese films were seen by many as a medium that gave voice to ordinary people, the feedback indicated room for improvement particularly in ensuring more inclusive, grounded, and diverse storytelling that resonates more deeply with different segments of society.

Recommendations

17.12 Encourage Bhutanese films and movies to diversify storytelling themes by encouraging stories that reflect rural life, youth issues, marginalized communities, and everyday struggles, rather than focusing solely on traditional or romantic themes. They should also highlight social change, modern challenges, and intergenerational perspectives to connect with a broader audience.

17.13 Provide mentorship, funding, and platforms for emerging filmmakers to experiment with new genres and storytelling approaches that challenge conventional narratives and offer fresh perspectives. This includes exploring documentary filmmaking and shorter digital content formats to capture more niche or underrepresented views, thereby expanding the breadth of representation in Bhutanese cinema.

19. Media's Coverage of Diversity of Perspectives

Figure 35 Coverage of Perspectives

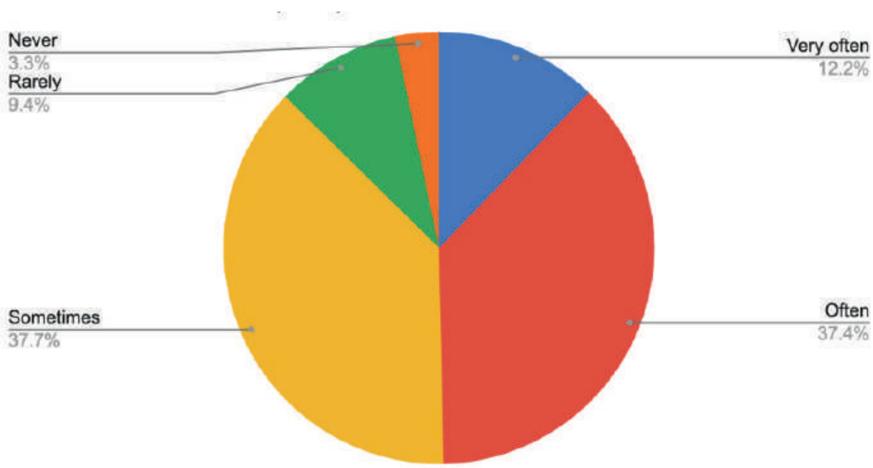


Table 36 Coverage of Perspectives

Do you feel that the media covers a diverse range of perspectives on issues?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very often	86	12%
Often	263	37%
Sometimes	265	38%
Rarely	66	9%
Never	23	3%

The public's perception of media diversity in Bhutan appeared to be moderately positive but with important reservations. From the total of 703 respondents, a majority of 38% believed that the media covered a diversity of perspectives at least "sometimes" followed by 37% who believed that they did so "often." This suggests that people do recognise efforts by Bhutanese media to present varied viewpoints, though the strength of that recognition varied.

The fact that the highest proportion of respondents selected "sometimes" points to a cautious or conditional approval where many felt that while media diversity existed, it was not consistent or comprehensive across all issues. Only a small minority of 12% believed the media "very often" covered a wide range of perspectives, indicating that a few saw the media as consistently inclusive or pluralistic.

Meanwhile, a combined 12% of respondents felt that diversity of perspectives was "rarely" or "never" reflected in the media. This signals a level of distrust or dissatisfaction, possibly pointing to a perception that certain voices such as those from marginalized communities, rural populations, or dissenting opinions may be underrepresented or overlooked.

Recommendations

19.1 Implement policies and provide training to ensure that journalists actively seek out and feature voices from all segments of Bhutanese society, including rural populations, minority groups, youth, and those with dissenting opinions.

19.2 Develop editorial guidelines that mandate the inclusion of multiple viewpoints across all news and public affairs reporting, not just "sometimes." Encourage balanced reporting that explores various sides of an issue, and invest in specialized beats that focus on topics relevant to a broader range of communities to ensure consistent and comprehensive diversity.

19.3 Establish clear, accessible channels (e.g., dedicated hotlines, online feedback forms, community outreach programmemes) for citizens to report on perceived gaps in representation or lack of diverse perspectives. Regularly publishing findings from audience feedback and demonstrating how media organisations are actively working to improve the breadth and depth of perspectives covered, could contribute to building greater trust and confidence in their commitment to pluralism.

20. Engagement with News Content

Figure 36 Media Engagement and Frequency

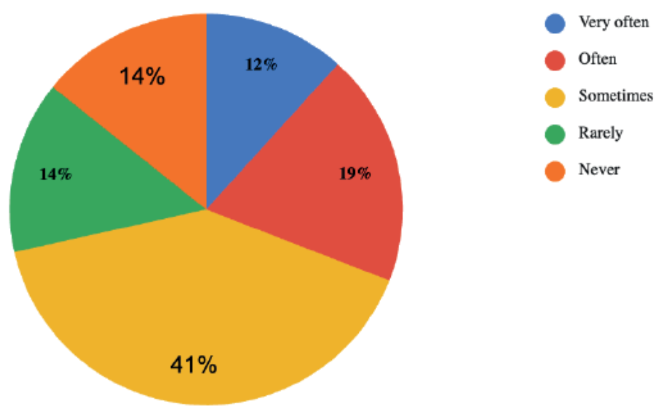


Table 37 Media Engagement and Frequency

How often do you engage with news content (comments, shares, discussion)?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very often	82	12%
Often	135	19%
Sometimes	285	41%
Rarely	100	14%
Never	100	14%

The data reveals that engagement with news content is moderate, with a significant portion of the population interacting with news in some form. Specifically, 12% of respondents reported engaging with news content "very often," while 19% said they engaged "often," and 41% indicated they engaged sometimes. However, the fact that the largest group engaged only "sometimes" suggests that while interaction exists, it tends to be irregular rather than consistent. News engagement may depend on the topic, platform, or perceived relevance, and may not yet be a regular habit for most respondents.

On the other hand, a combined 28% of respondents stated that they "rarely" or "never" engaged with news content. This reflects a considerable share of the population that remained largely passive in their consumption of news. Possible reasons could include limited trust in media, digital access barriers, or reluctance to express opinions in public spaces.

Trust in the News Reports from Various Media Sources

Figure 37 Trust in News from Different Media Sources

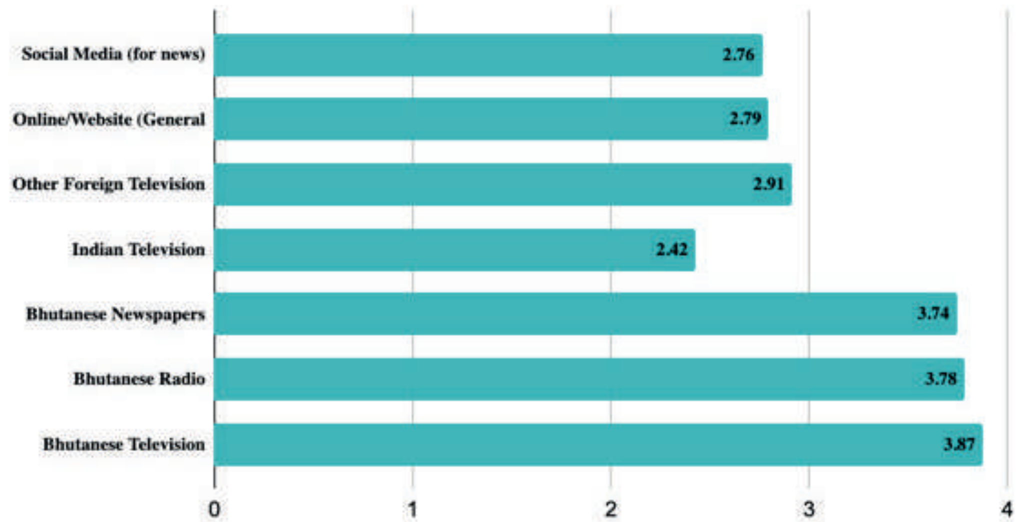


Table 38 Trust Rating on News from Different Media Sources

On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you trust the news reports from the following sources?	Rating
Bhutanese Television	3.87
Bhutanese Radio	3.78
Bhutanese Newspapers	3.74
Indian Television	2.42
Other Foreign Television	2.91
Online/Website (General	2.79
Social Media (for news)	2.76

The data shows a clear preference for domestic media when it comes to trust in news reporting. Bhutanese television received the highest trust rating at 3.87, followed closely by Bhutanese radio at 3.78 and newspapers at 3.74. This suggests that traditional Bhutanese media continue to enjoy relatively high levels of public confidence, likely due to their established presence, national relevance, and perceived accountability.

In contrast, foreign media sources were viewed with significantly more scepticism. Indian television scored just 2.42, the lowest among all options, indicating widespread distrust possibly due to perceived bias, sensationalism, less or virtually no coverage or misrepresentation of Bhutanese issues. Other foreign television outlets fared slightly better at 2.91, but still remained below the mid-point of the scale.

Online platforms, including general websites (2.79) and social media (2.76), also scored low in terms of trustworthiness. These results reflect global trends where digital platforms, though widely used, are often seen as unreliable due to misinformation, lack of editorial oversight, and algorithm-driven content. Despite their growing influence, such platforms are yet to gain the same level of public trust as traditional media in Bhutan.

Overall, the findings highlight a strong preference for Bhutanese sources of news and suggest that traditional media especially television and radio remain central to informing the public. However, the relatively low trust in online and foreign media points to the need for greater media literacy, fact-checking mechanisms, and responsible journalism across all platforms.

Recommendations

20.1 Support and strengthen the editorial independence, journalistic standards, and ethical practices of Bhutanese Television, Radio, and Newspapers. Promote their content as authoritative and reliable sources of national and local news to capitalise on their existing high trust, and explore cross-platform distribution to reach wider audiences, especially for critical public information.

20.2 Develop and implement robust fact-checking initiatives specifically targeting online and social media content. Collaborate with platform providers to address the spread of misinformation and educate the public on identifying unreliable sources. Encourage reputable Bhutanese news organisations to establish strong, verifiable online presences to counter distrust in general online news.

20.3 Launch nationwide media literacy campaigns to educate citizens across all demographics on how to critically evaluate news sources, discern credible information from misinformation, and understand the potential biases in foreign and digital media.

Trust in the News Reports from Bhutanese Television

Figure 38 Trust in News on Television

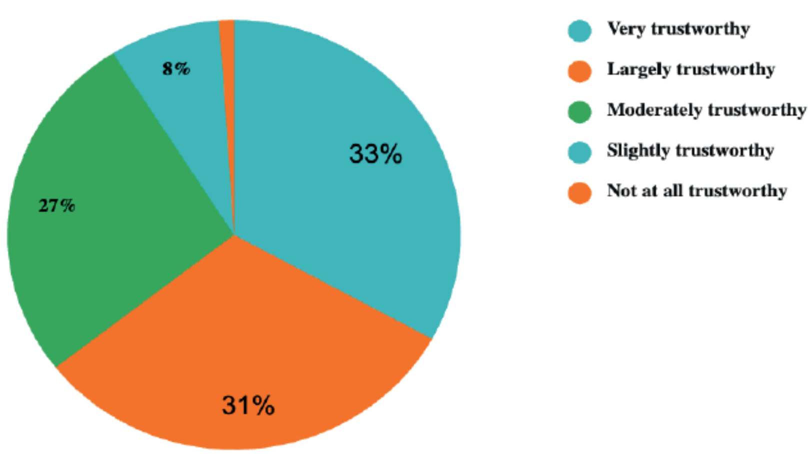


Table 39 Trust in News on Television

On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you trust the news reports from the Bhutanese Television?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very trustworthy	221	33%
Largely trustworthy	210	31%
Moderately trustworthy	178	27%
Slightly trustworthy	53	8%
Not at all trustworthy	7	1%

The findings reveal that a majority of respondents exhibited a generally high level of trust in Bhutanese Television news reports. Specifically, 33% of respondents (221 individuals) considered the reports to be “very trustworthy,” while another 31% (210 individuals) rated them as “largely trustworthy.” Combined, this means that nearly two-thirds of the respondents (64%) expressed a strong degree of trust in the national broadcaster.

A further 27% (178 individuals) found the reports to be “moderately trustworthy,” indicating a neutral or cautious trust, while 8% (53 individuals) regarded the news as only “slightly trustworthy.” A very small minority of just 1% (7 respondents) stated that television news reports were “not at all trustworthy.” Overall, these results suggest that Bhutanese Television enjoys a relatively high level of public trust, with only a small fraction expressing skepticism or distrust.

21. Cross Tabulation for Trust in Media

Education and Trust in Bhutanese Television

Figure 39 Education & Trust in Television

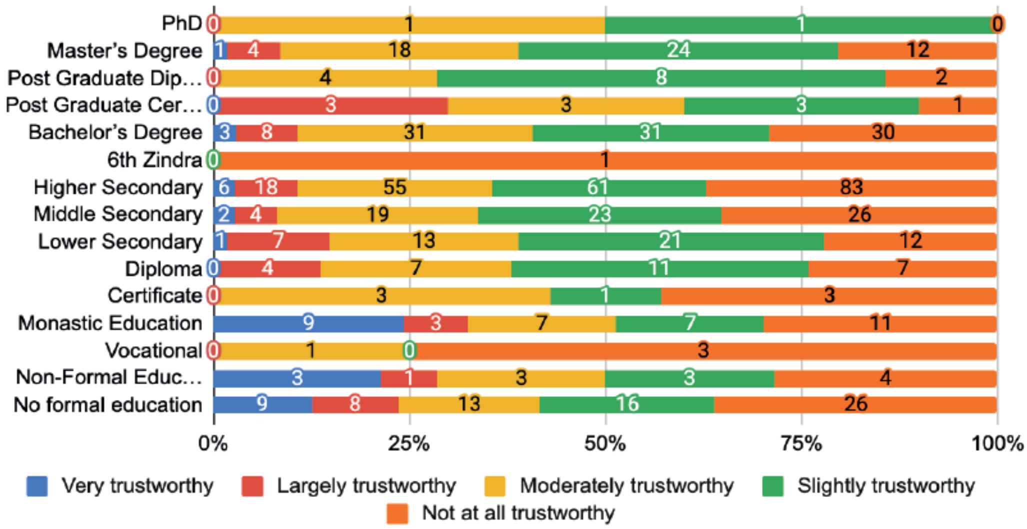


Table 40 Education & Trust in Television

	Not at all trustworthy	Slightly trustworthy	Moderately trustworthy	Largely trustworthy	Very trustworthy
PhD	0	0	1	1	0
Master's Degree	1	4	18	24	12
Post Graduate Diploma	0	0	4	8	2
Post Graduate Certificate	0	3	3	3	1
Bachelor's Degree	3	8	31	31	30
6th Zindra	0	0	0	0	1
Higher Secondary	6	18	55	61	83
Middle Secondary	2	4	19	23	26
Lower Secondary	1	7	13	21	12
Diploma	0	4	7	11	7
Certificate	0	0	3	1	3
Monastic Education	9	3	7	7	11
Vocational	0	0	1	0	3
Non-Formal Education (NFE)	3	1	3	3	4
No formal education	9	8	13	16	26

A Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted to examine if there is a statistically significant association between a respondent's level of education completed and their trust in Bhutanese Television news reports. The analysis revealed a highly statistically significant association ($\chi2=101.40$, df = 56, p = 0.0002). This finding indicates that the way people perceive trustworthiness is dependent on their education level.

Recommendations

21.1 Develop and implement media literacy initiatives that are customized for different educational attainment groups. For less formally educated audiences, focus on foundational skills for identifying credible information. For more educated audiences, provide tools for critical analysis of complex issues and understanding media biases, thereby empowering all citizens to evaluate news trustworthiness effectively.

21.2 Bridge the gap in trust by making Bhutanese Television content universally accessible and relevant. This includes investing in high-quality Dzongkha programmeming, providing clear and concise public service announcements, and ensuring that content addresses the practical concerns of all segments of society, regardless of their educational background, to foster a sense of ownership and reliability.

Trust in the News Reports from Bhutanese Radio

Figure 40 Trust in Radio

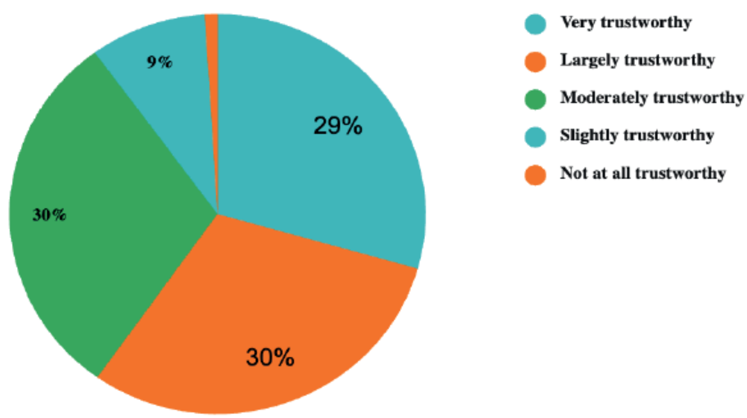


Table 41 Trust in Radio

On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you trust the news reports from the Bhutanese Radio?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very trustworthy	120	29%
Largely trustworthy	124	30%
Moderately trustworthy	123	30%
Slightly trustworthy	37	9%
Not at all trustworthy	4	1%

The survey results indicate a moderate to high level of public trust in Bhutanese Radio news reporting. About 29% of respondents (120 individuals) considered radio news to be "very trustworthy," and an additional 30% (124 individuals) rated it as "largely trustworthy." Together, this means that 59% of respondents expressed a strong level of trust in the radio news.

Interestingly, another 30% (123 respondents) rated radio news as "moderately trustworthy," suggesting that while they did not fully endorse the content, they still considered it reasonably reliable. On the lower end of the trust spectrum, 9% (37 individuals) viewed it as "slightly trustworthy," and only 1% (4 respondents) reported having "not at all trustworthy." Overall, Bhutanese Radio enjoys a generally positive trust rating from the public, with nearly 9 in 10 respondents expressing at least moderate confidence in the credibility of its news content.

22. Education and Trust in Bhutanese Radio

Figure 41 Education & Trust on Radio

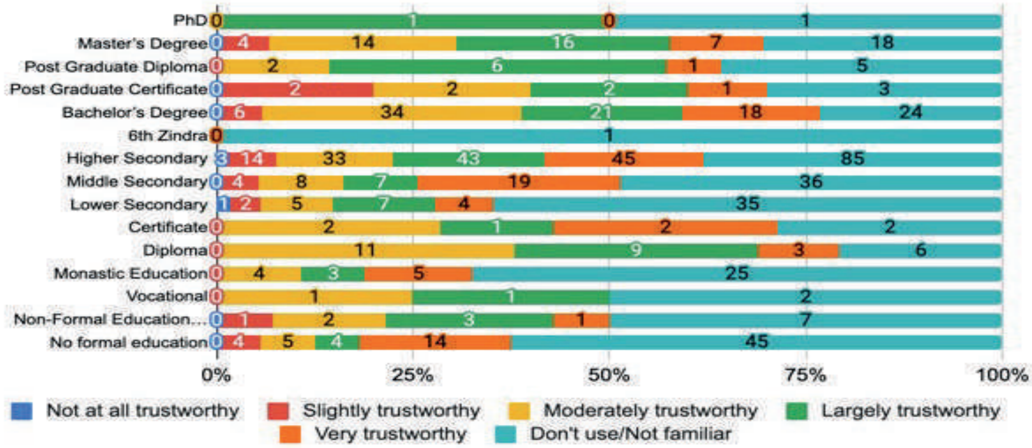


Table 42 Education & Trust on Radio

	Not at all trustworthy	Slightly trustworthy	Moderately trustworthy	Largely trustworthy	Very trustworthy	Don't use/Not familiar
PhD	0	0	0	1	0	1
Master's Degree	0	4	14	16	7	18
Post Graduate Diploma	0	0	2	6	1	5
Post Graduate Certificate	0	2	2	2	1	3
Bachelor's Degree	0	6	34	21	18	24
6th Zindra	0	0	0	0	0	1
Higher Secondary	3	14	33	43	45	85
Middle Secondary	0	4	8	7	19	36
Lower Secondary	1	2	5	7	4	35
Certificate	0	0	2	1	2	2
Diploma	0	0	11	9	3	6
Monastic Education	0	0	4	3	5	25
Vocational	0	0	1	1	0	2
Non-Formal Education (NFE)	0	1	2	3	1	7
No formal education	0	4	5	4	14	45

The Chi-Square Test of Independence revealed no statistically significant association between a respondent's education level and their trust in Bhutanese Radio ($\chi2=7.00$, df = 4, $p = 0.136$). This finding indicates that the observed differences in trust levels across various education groups are likely due to random chance. This implies that unlike for Bhutanese television, education level may not be a primary factor influencing trust in this media source; other factors might be more influential.

Recommendations

22.1 Enhance their engagement with communities to better represent diverse local issues and voices, thereby increasing their relevance and trustworthiness.

22.2 Increase transparency regarding their editorial decisions to foster public confidence in journalistic integrity, and implement interactive programmeming, such as call-ins and listener feedback, to encourage greater public involvement and responsiveness.

22.3 Enhance digital presence and accessibility to reach a broader audience, especially younger listeners who prefer consuming news online.

Trust in the News Reports from Bhutanese Newspaper

Figure 42 Trust in Newspapers

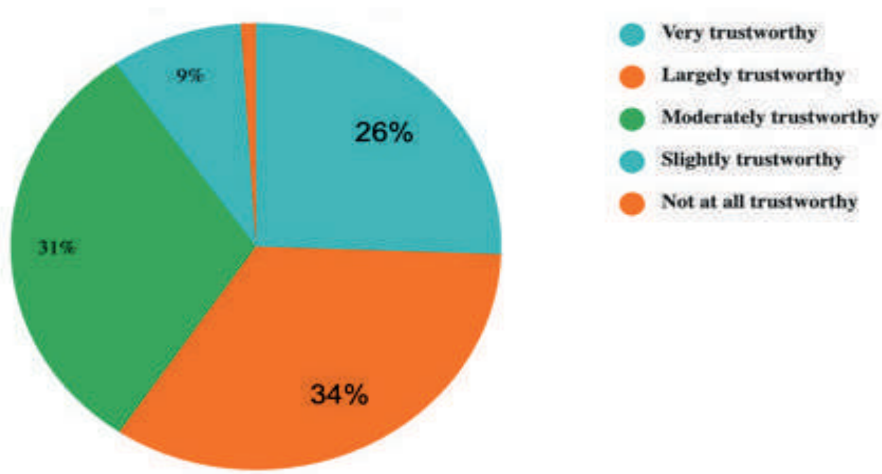


Table 43 Trust in Newspapers

On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you trust the news reports from the Bhutanese Newspapers?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very trustworthy	129	26%
Largely trustworthy	171	34%
Moderately trustworthy	156	31%
Slightly trustworthy	44	9%
Not at all trustworthy	5	1%

The data reflects a generally favourable perception of trust in Bhutanese newspaper reporting. A combined 60% of respondents expressed high trust, with 26% (129 individuals) rating the news as "very trustworthy" and another 34% (171 individuals) considering it "largely trustworthy."

Additionally, 31% (156 individuals) rated the newspaper reports as "moderately trustworthy," indicating a balanced but cautious confidence in print media. Only a small fraction expressed low levels of trust with 9% (44 individuals) indicating that the reports as "slightly trustworthy," and just 1% (5 respondents) stated that the news reports are "not at all trustworthy."

23. Education and Trust in Bhutanese Newspapers

Figure 43 Education & Trust in Newspapers

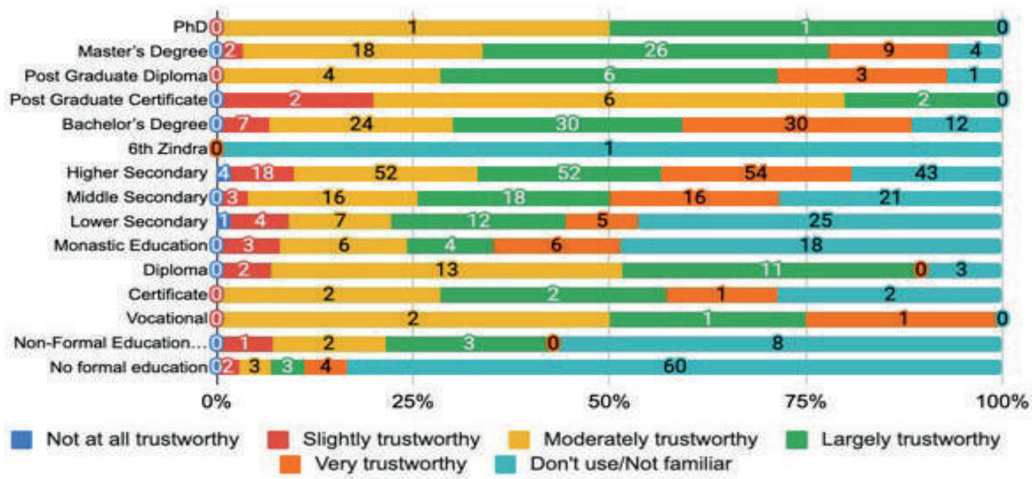


Table 44 Education & Trust in Newspapers

	Not at all trustworthy	Slightly trustworthy	Moderately trustworthy	Largely trustworthy	Very trustworthy	Don't use/ Not familiar
PhD	0	0	1	1	0	0
Master's Degree	0	2	18	26	9	4
Post Graduate Diploma	0	0	4	6	3	1
Post Graduate Certificate	0	2	6	2	0	0
Bachelor's Degree	0	7	24	30	30	12
6th Zindra	0	0	0	0	0	1
Higher Secondary	4	18	52	52	54	43
Middle Secondary	0	3	16	18	16	21
Lower Secondary	1	4	7	12	5	25
Monastic Education	0	3	6	4	6	18
Diploma	0	2	13	11	0	3
Certificate	0	0	2	2	1	2
Vocational	0	0	2	1	1	0
Non-Formal Education (NFE)	0	1	2	3	0	8
No formal education	0	2	3	3	4	60

The Chi-Square Test of Independence revealed a highly statistically significant association between a respondent's education level and their trust in Bhutanese Newspapers ($\chi2=245.54$, df = 75, p = < 0.001). This means that trust in Bhutanese Newspapers is not uniform across all educational backgrounds; rather, it is strongly influenced by educational attainment.

Recommendations

23.1 Accelerate the digital transformation of Bhutanese newspapers to complement print circulation. Develop user-friendly websites and mobile-responsive content that is accessible to a wider demographic, particularly younger and digitally-savvy audiences. Utilise online platforms for real-time updates and interactive content, which can help build trust by offering transparency and direct engagement, especially for those who are currently "not familiar" with newspapers in their traditional format.

23.2 Bhutanese newspapers need to invest in investigative journalism to enhance credibility and establish a reputation for thorough, accountable reporting, and be more transparent about their sources and editorial standards as openess in how stories are selected and verified helps reinforce public trust.

Trust in the News Reports from Indian Television

Figure 44 Trust in Indian Television

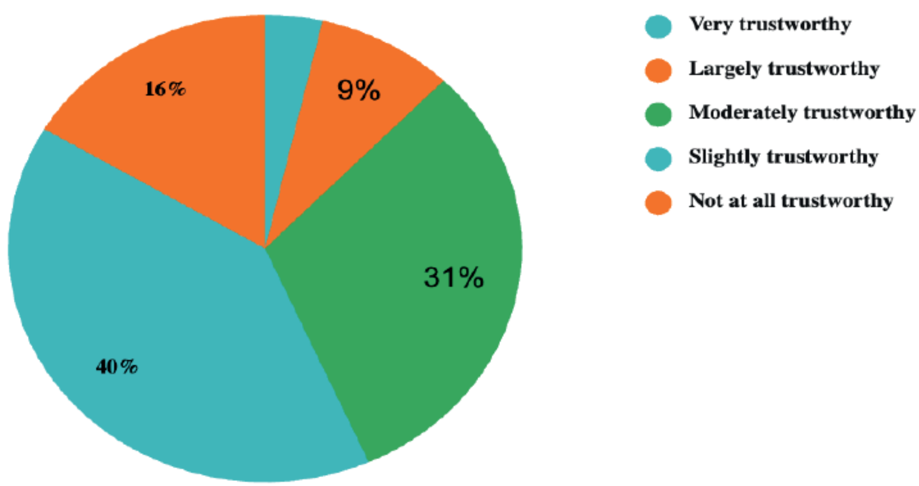


Table 45 Trust in Indian Television

How much do you trust the news reports from Indian Television?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very trustworthy	18	4%
Largely trustworthy	43	9%
Moderately trustworthy	155	31%
Slightly trustworthy	200	40%
Not at all trustworthy	82	16%

The survey reveals low levels of trust in Indian Television news among Bhutanese respondents. Only 4% (18 individuals) considered the news from Indian TV to be "very trustworthy" and just 9% (43 individuals) rated it as "largely trustworthy." Combined, it suggests that only 13% of respondents expressed a high level of trust in Indian Television news reports.

In contrast, a significant portion of 40% (200 respondents) expressed skepticism and rated Indian TV news as "slightly trustworthy" while 16% (82 individuals) rated Indian TV news reports as "not at all trustworthy." Furthermore, 31% (155 respondents) gave a neutral assessment, finding it "moderately trustworthy."

Overall, the results suggest that Indian Television is viewed with considerable caution or distrust by the respondents, with more than half of respondents (56%) expressing limited or no trust in its news coverage. This may be associated to minimal coverage of Bhutan and even in the few instances of coverage, perceived biases of the channels being seen as less representative of Bhutan.

Trust in the News Reports from Other Foreign Television

Figure 45 Trust in Other Foreign Television

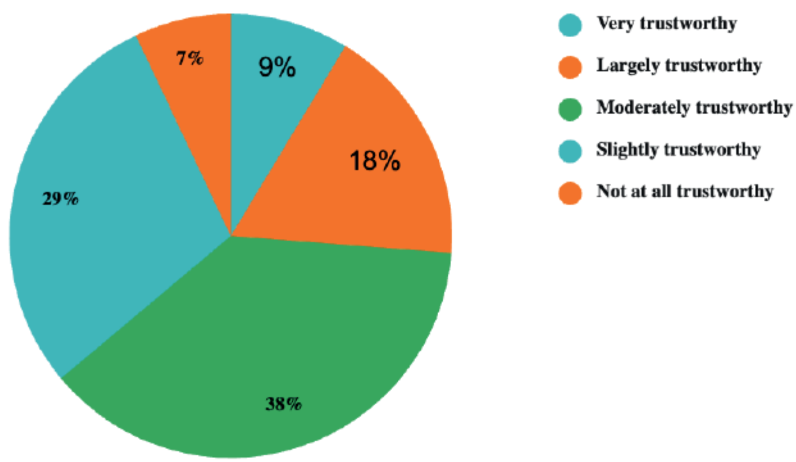


Table 46 Trust in Other Foreign Television

On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you trust the news reports from Other Foreign Television?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very trustworthy	43	9%
Largely trustworthy	87	18%
Moderately trustworthy	187	38%
Slightly trustworthy	144	29%
Not at all trustworthy	35	7%

The survey responses show a mixed level of trust in news reports from foreign television channels other than Indian TV. Only 9% of respondents (43 individuals) considered these sources "very trustworthy" and 18% (87 individuals) rated them as "largely trustworthy. Combined, 27% of respondents express a high degree of trust in foreign television news.

The largest segment of 38% (187 respondents) found these news sources to be "moderately trustworthy" indicating a cautious or balanced perception. Meanwhile, 29% (144 individuals) rated the trust level as "slightly trustworthy" and 7% (35 respondents) rated the news from foreign TV as "not at all trustworthy." These figures suggest that while foreign television (excluding Indian TV) is not broadly distrusted, it is not widely trusted either. Most respondents fell into the middle or lower trust categories, pointing to a generally lukewarm confidence in the credibility of such international news outlets.

Trust in the News Reports from Online/Website (General)

Figure 46 Trust in Online/Websites

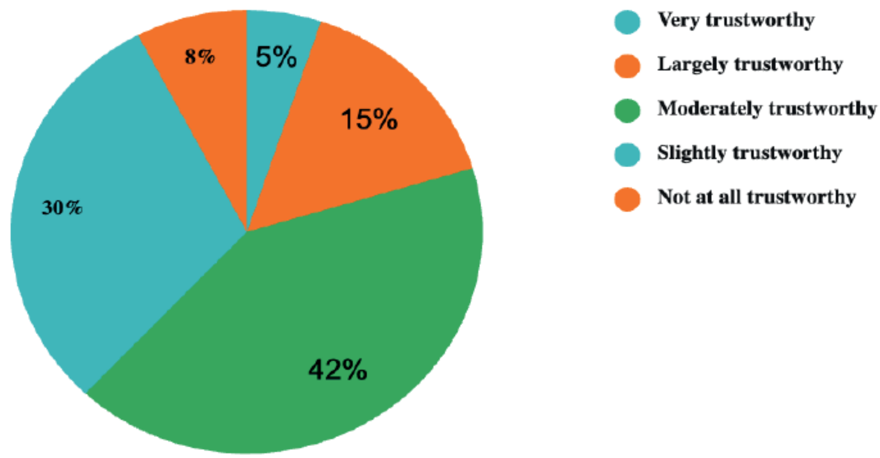


Table 47 Trust in Online/Websites

On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you trust the news reports from Online/Website (General)?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very trustworthy	**28**	**5%**
Largely trustworthy	**84**	**15%**
Moderately trustworthy	**229**	**42%**
Slightly trustworthy	**167**	**30%**
Not at all trustworthy	**42**	**8%**

The survey results indicate a moderate but cautious level of trust in general online or website-based news sources. Only a small proportion of respondents of 5% (28 individuals) considered such news to be "very trustworthy" and 15% (84 individuals) regarded it as "largely trustworthy." Together, this accounted for just 20% of respondents expressing high trust in online news websites.

A significant 42% (229 individuals), however, viewed online news as "moderately trustworthy" suggesting that many approached digital sources with measured skepticism. Additionally, 30% (167 respondents) rated these platforms as "slightly trustworthy" and 8% (42 individuals) reported the online news reports from online websites "not at all trustworthy." Overall, the data reveals that most respondents neither fully trusted nor completely dismissed online news sources, but tended to approach them with caution and critical awareness.

24. Education and Trust in the News Reports from Online/Website (General)

Figure 47 Education & Trust in Online News/Websites

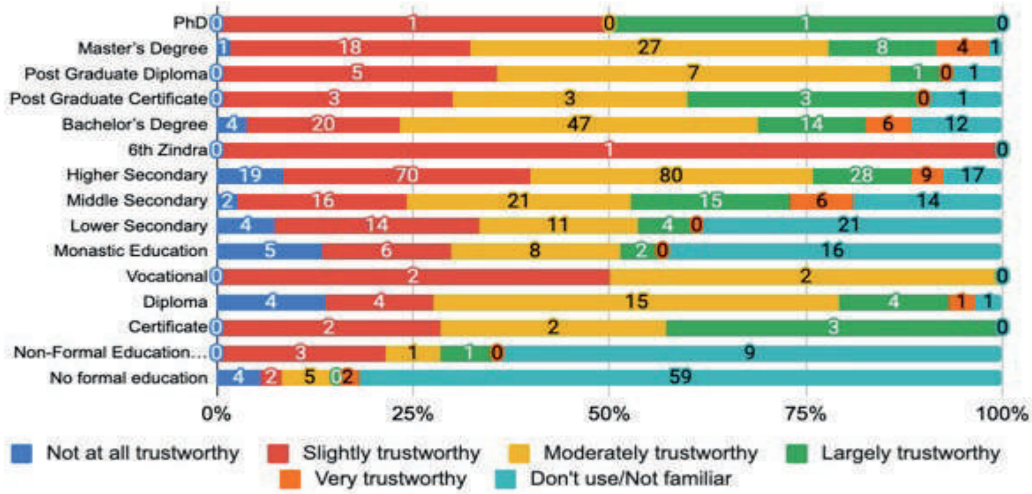


Table 48 Education & Trust in Online News/Websites

	Not at all trustworthy	Slightly trustworthy	Moderately trustworthy	Largely trustworthy	Very trustworthy	Don't use/ Not familiar
PhD	0	1	0	1	0	0
Master's Degree	1	18	27	8	4	1
Post Graduate Diploma	0	5	7	1	0	1
Post Graduate Certificate	0	3	3	3	0	1
Bachelor's Degree	4	20	47	14	6	12
6th Zindra	0	1	0	0	0	0
Higher Secondary	19	70	80	28	9	17
Middle Secondary	2	16	21	15	6	14
Lower Secondary	4	14	11	4	0	21
Monastic Education	5	6	8	2	0	16
Vocational	0	2	2	0	0	0
Diploma	4	4	15	4	1	1
Certificate	0	2	2	3	0	0
Non-Formal Education (NFE)	0	3	1	1	0	9
No formal education	4	2	5	0	2	59

The Chi-Square Test of Independence revealed a highly statistically significant association between a respondent's education level and their trust in Online/Website news reports ($\chi 2=120.31$, df = 70, p = < 0.001). This finding indicates that the observed differences in trust levels across various education groups are unlikely due to random chance. This implies that education level is a significant factor influencing trust in Online/Website for news, suggesting that different educational backgrounds are associated with distinct patterns of trust in this media source.

Recommendation

24.1 Encourage and support reputable Bhutanese news organisations to invest in robust, user-friendly, and fact-checked online platforms. Actively promote these verified sources through various channels to counter the general distrust in "online/website (general)" news. This involves clearly differentiating professional journalism from unverified content.

Trust in the News Reports from social media (for News)

Figure 48 Trust in Social Media for News

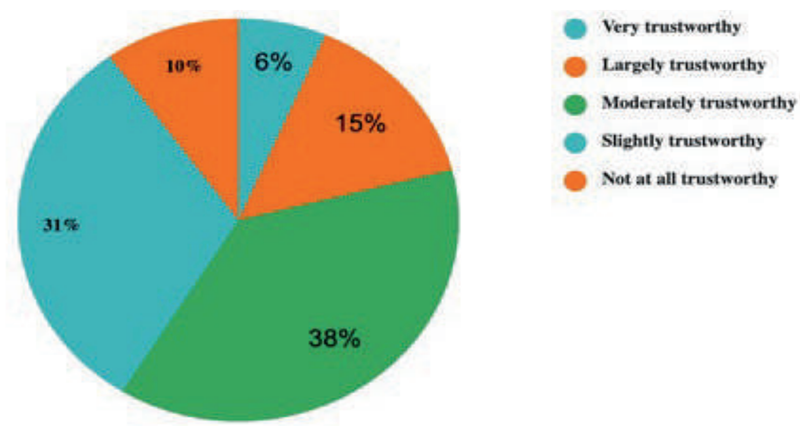


Table 50 Trust in Social Media for News

On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you trust the news reports from Social Media (for news)?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very trustworthy	41	6%
Largely trustworthy	92	15%
Moderately trustworthy	240	38%
Slightly trustworthy	198	31%
Not at all trustworthy	63	10%

The data indicates that trust in social media as a news source remains limited among respondents. Only 6% (41 individuals) considered news from social media to be "very trustworthy" and 15% (92 individuals) rated it as "largely trustworthy." This totals just 21% of respondents who placed a high level of trust in news disseminated via social platforms.

The largest share of 38% (240 individuals) described social media news as "moderately trustworthy" showing that while many did not outrightly reject it, they did not fully rely on it either. Meanwhile, 31% (198 respondents) considered it "slightly trustworthy" and 10% (63 individuals) rated the news from social media as "not at all trustworthy." These findings suggest that social media is viewed with considerable caution, and is generally perceived as a less credible source of news when compared to traditional media like radio, TV, and newspapers. The high percentage of respondents in the moderate to low trust categories reflects a growing awareness of misinformation risks associated with digital platforms.

25. Education and Trust in the News Reports from social media (for News)

Figure 49 Education & Trust in Social Media for News

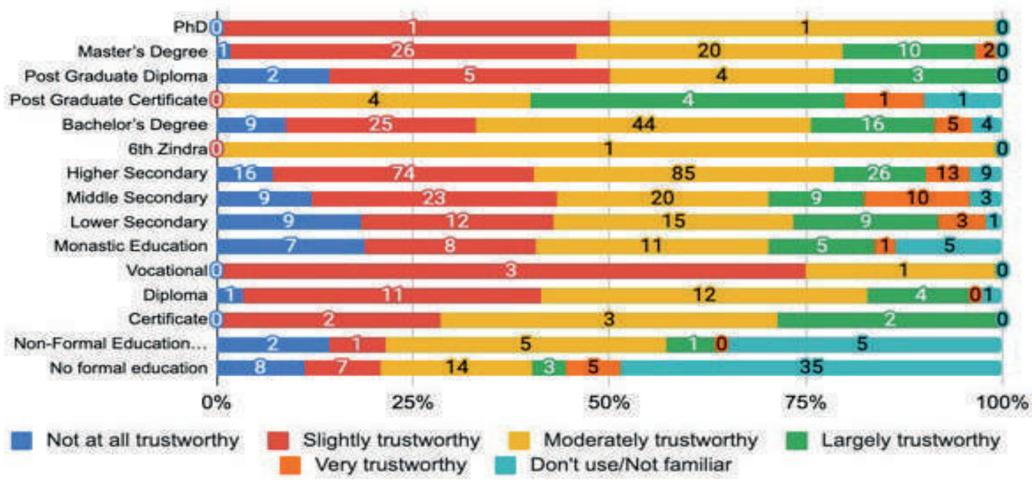


Table 51 Education & Trust in Social Media for News

	Not at all trustworthy	Slightly trustworthy	Moderately trustworthy	Largely trustworthy	Very trustworthy	Don't use/Not familiar
PhD	0	1	1	0	0	0
Master's Degree	1	26	20	10	2	0
Post Graduate Diploma	2	5	4	3	0	0
Post Graduate Certificate	0	0	4	4	1	1
Bachelor's Degree	9	25	44	16	5	4
6th Zindra	0	0	1	0	0	0
Higher Secondary	16	74	85	26	13	9
Middle Secondary	9	23	20	9	10	3
Lower Secondary	9	12	15	9	3	1
Monastic Education	7	8	11	5	1	5
Vocational	0	3	1	0	0	0
Diploma	1	11	12	4	0	1
Certificate	0	2	3	2	0	0
Non-Formal Education (NFE)	2	1	5	1	0	5
No formal education	8	7	14	3	5	35

The analysis revealed no statistically significant association ($\chi 2=36.93$, df = 56, p = 0.977). This finding indicates that the observed differences in trust levels across various education groups are likely due to random chance. This implies that education level may not be a primary factor influencing trust in social media (for news); other factors might be more influential in shaping how individuals perceive the trustworthiness of this media source.

Recommendations

25.1 Develop and implement broad-based media literacy programmemes that equip all citizens, regardless of their educational background, with skills to critically evaluate news content on social media. These programmemes should focus on identifying misinformation, recognizing propaganda, understanding algorithmic biases, and verifying sources, given the pervasive use but low trust in social media for news.

25.2 Promote public awareness campaigns that educate users on the importance of responsible sharing and fact-checking before disseminating news on social media. Collaborate with social media platforms and local influencers to disseminate accurate information and counter the spread of false narratives.

Trust in Other Media Sources

While the primary survey categories focused on formal media platforms such as television, radio, newspapers, websites, and social media, some respondents highlighted alternative, informal, or less conventional sources of news and information. These responses, though very fewer in number, offer important insights into how people also rely on community and interpersonal networks for staying informed.

One respondent indicated that they often learnt news through relatives and neighbours and rated "moderately trustworthy." This reflects the role of word-of-mouth communication and social circles as trusted conduits of information, especially in close-knit or rural communities where personal interaction may outweigh reliance on formal media.

Another respondent shared that they gained news by listening to or speaking with people, which they rated as "slightly trustworthy." This implies that while casual conversations in public or social spaces serve as a channel of information, there is less confidence in the accuracy or reliability of such unverified news. The third respondent mentioned receiving news through the daily mail, which was rated as "largely trustworthy."

Preferred Media Sources for News

Figure 50 Most Preferred Source for News

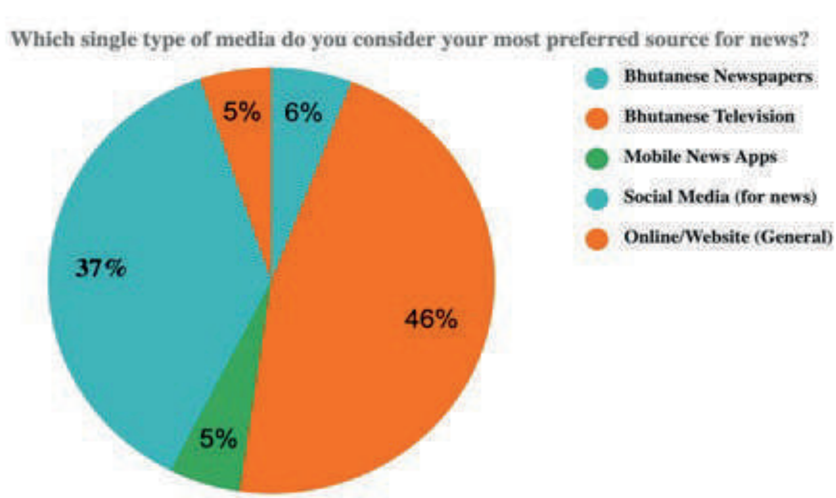


Table 52 Most Preferred Source for News

Media	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Bhutanese Newspapers	18	6%
Bhutanese Television	143	46%
Mobile News Apps	16	5%
Social Media (for news)	115	37%
Online/Website (General)	16	5%

The data clearly shows that Bhutanese Television is the most preferred source of news among respondents with 46% (143 individuals) selected it as their top choice, reflecting a strong preference for traditional broadcast media. This suggests that television continues to hold a central place in Bhutanese news consumption, likely due to its accessibility, familiarity, and perceived credibility.

Social Media is the second most preferred source, chosen by 37% (115 respondents). This indicates the rising importance of digital platforms, despite lower overall trust levels associated with them. The remaining sources received significantly lower preference with the Bhutanese Newspapers preferred by only 6% (18 respondents), pointing to a declining role of print media as a primary news source. Mobile news apps and general online websites each preferred by just 5% (16 respondents), showing that while these digital tools are available, they are not the preferred choice for most people when seeking news.

Recommendations

25.3 Bhutanese Television should continue delivering credible, balanced, and timely news to maintain the trust of its audience.

25.4 Bhutanese newspapers need to adapt to changing media habits by embracing a stronger digital presence by investing in digital editions and developing user-friendly websites or apps to attract wider and younger audiences.

Preferred Media Source for News and Perceived Biases

Figure 51 Most Preferred Source of News & Perceived Bias

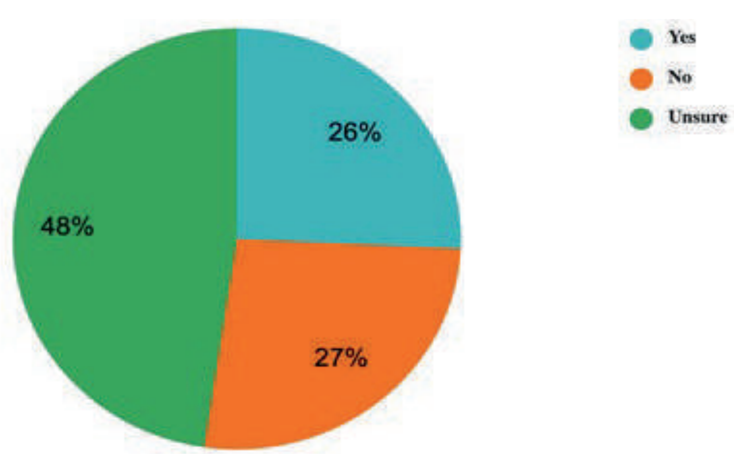


Table 53 Most Preferred Source of News & Perceived Bias

Do you believe that news coverage in your preferred media source is biased?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	181	26%
No	187	27%
Unsure	335	48%

The survey data reveal a high level of uncertainty among the public regarding the objectivity of their most preferred news source. Nearly half of all respondents (48%) or 335 individuals, reported being "unsure" whether the news coverage they consumed was biased. This suggests that many people may lack clarity or confidence in evaluating media objectivity, possibly due to limited media literacy.

Meanwhile, the responses were almost evenly split between those who believed there was bias and those who believed there was not. 26% (181 respondents) believed that their preferred news source was "biased" indicating a notable level of skepticism or awareness of potential partiality and 27% (187 respondents) believed their source was "not biased" reflecting a nearly equal segment of the population that saw their chosen outlet as fair and objective.

Recommendations

24.5 Invest in media literacy programmemes across communities, and further develop focused educational campaigns that guide individuals on how to critically evaluate news sources to address the growing concern around perceived media bias and and promote informed news consumption.

24.6 Increase transparency in media reporting by sharing their editorial policies and fact-checking procedures to build trust and provide clarity about their commitment to fairness, further, if any correction is necessary, it should be published prominently, and feedback from audiences should be encouraged to demonstrate accountability.

24.7 Strive to present multiple viewpoints on contentious issues to reduce perceived bias, and expert analyses and diverse community voices should be regularly included to enhance credibility and representation.

24.8 Actively invest in public engagement initiatives to strengthen their relationship with audiences and build long-term trust. This can be achieved by creating interactive platforms such as public forums or social media Q&A sessions, where audiences are encouraged to discuss news content, raise concerns about potential bias, and engage in open dialogue with journalists and editors.

26. Media Sources and Credibility

Figure 52 Media Sources & Credibility

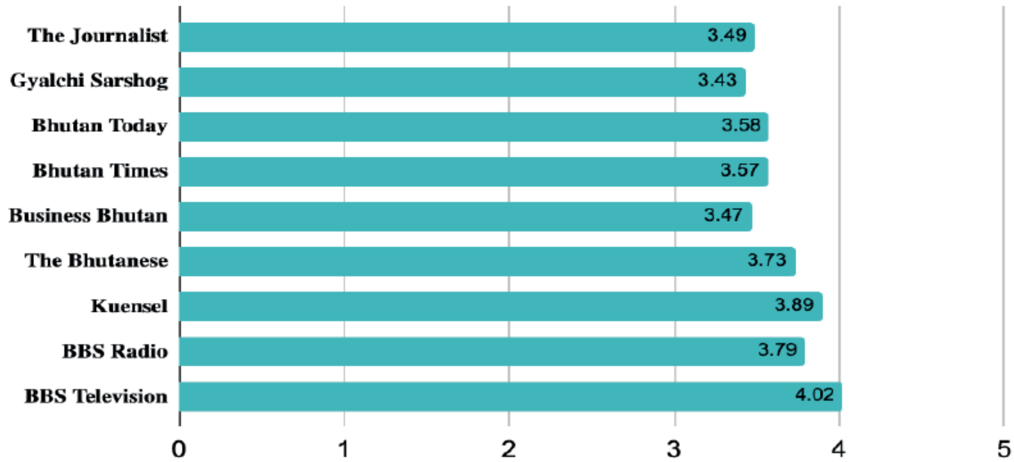


Table 54 Credibility Rating & Media Sources

Sl. No.	Media	Credibility Rating
1	BBS Television	4.02
2	BBS Radio	3.79
3	Kuensel	3.89
4	The Bhutanese	3.73
5	Business Bhutan	3.47
6	Bhutan Times	3.57
7	Bhutan Today	3.58
8	Gyalchi Sarshog	3.43
9	The Journalist	3.49

The media credibility ratings shared by respondents offer a clear picture of how various Bhutanese media outlets are perceived in terms of trustworthiness. Among the outlets evaluated, BBS Television received the highest credibility rating of 4.02, reflecting its continued role as the most trusted and authoritative source of news in the country. This aligns with earlier findings that showed BBS Television as both the most preferred and widely followed medium.

Kuensel followed with a credibility score of 3.89. As Bhutan's oldest newspaper, Kuensel continues to be seen as a reliable source of national news and information. BBS Radio also maintained a strong position with a rating of 3.79, reinforcing the role of public broadcasters in maintaining public trust.

The Bhutanese scored 3.73, indicating a respectable level of credibility. While slightly below the national outlets, it still reflects recognition for its independent editorial stance and in-depth reporting. Bhutan Today and Bhutan Times had very similar ratings of 3.58 and 3.57 respectively, suggesting moderate credibility in the eyes of the public. These scores indicate that while these outlets are viewed as generally trustworthy, they may not have the same national prominence or consistency as BBS or Kuensel.

The Journalist and Business Bhutan were rated at 3.49 and 3.47 respectively. These ratings reflect moderate to low credibility, perhaps due to lower visibility, niche audiences, or irregular publishing. Gyalchi Sarshog received the lowest credibility rating at 3.43. This suggests limited reach, public awareness, or trust, and could indicate a need for stronger engagement and content relevance.

Overall, the data reveals that traditional and well-established outlets such as BBS and Kuensel continue to command the highest levels of public trust, while smaller or less visible publications are seen as credible by fewer respondents. There is a noticeable gap in credibility between national broadcasters and the lower-rated print outlets, suggesting an opportunity for the latter to invest in improved journalism standards, consistency, and outreach.
Credibility of BBS Television

Figure 53 Credibility of BBS Television

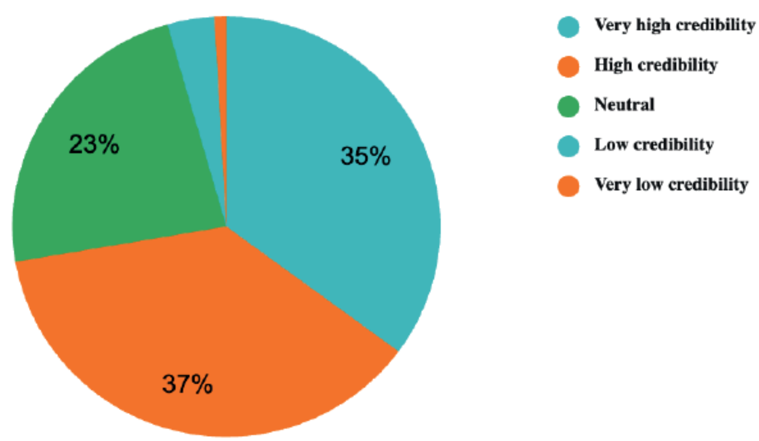


Table 55 Credibility of BBS Television

BBS Television	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very high credibility	236	35%
High credibility	250	37%
Neutral	156	23%
Low credibility	24	4%
Very low credibility	6	1%

The survey results show that BBS Television was widely regarded as a credible news source among the Bhutanese public. A combined 72% of respondents rated it positively, with 35% (236 individuals) describing its credibility as "very high and another 37% (250 respondents) rating it as "high" This strong endorsement reflects the national broadcaster's continued trust and relevance in Bhutan's media landscape.

However, 23% (156 respondents) held a "neutral" view of BBS Television's credibility. This suggests that while these individuals did not necessarily question its reliability, they may not fully endorse it either possibly pointing to a desire for more balanced content. Only a small minority of 4% (24 individuals) and 1% (6 individuals) rated BBS credibility as "low" and "very low" respectively. Overall, the data indicates that BBS Television enjoys strong public credibility, with very few questioning its reliability. The high levels of trust and perceived credibility align with earlier findings that also identified BBS as the most preferred and trusted media outlet in Bhutan.

Recommendations

26.1 Enhance and maintain content quality by providing accurate, timely, and balanced news coverage to sustain trust, and broaden their coverage to include diverse perspectives, particularly voices from underrepresented groups, to address concerns about neutrality.

26.2 Share editorial standards and fact-checking processes, reinforcing commitment to credibility to promote transparency.

26.3 Actively seek and feature a broader range of perspectives and voices from diverse communities and viewpoints. Introduce more in-depth analyses, debates, and investigative segments that offer nuanced understandings of complex issues, thereby encouraging the neutral audience to shift towards higher levels of trust and engagement.

Credibility of BBS Radio

Figure 54 Credibility of BBS Radio

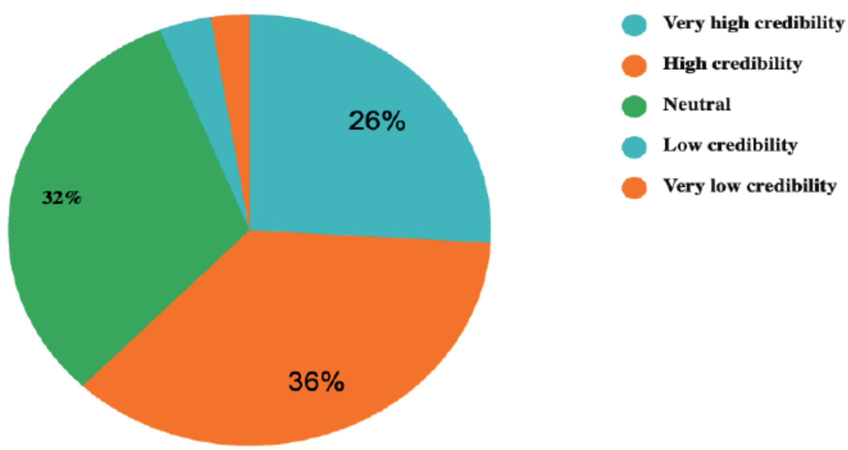


Table 56 Credibility of BBS Radio

BBS Radio	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very high credibility	111	26%
High credibility	155	36%
Neutral	136	32%
Low credibility	15	4%
Very low credibility	11	3%

The survey responses show that BBS Radio is generally perceived as a credible source of news, though with slightly more reserved confidence compared to BBS Television. A combined 62% of respondents rated its credibility as either "very high" (26% or 111 individuals) or "high" (36% or 155 individuals). This indicates a strong level of public confidence in BBS Radio as a trusted national broadcaster.

Meanwhile, 32% (136 respondents) held a "neutral stance" neither affirming nor questioning the credibility of BBS Radio. This relatively high neutral segment suggests that while the station is respected, a notable portion of the respondents remain uncertain or less engaged with its content. Only a small minority expressed negative views with 4% (15 respondents) rating its credibility as "low" and 3% (11 respondents) rating it "very low." Overall, BBS Radio maintains a favourable credibility profile, with a majority of the public viewing it positively. However, the higher neutrality rate compared to BBS Television may point to either lower visibility, less influence, or a more mixed perception of its programmeming and editorial stance.

Recommendations

26.4 BBS Radio should increase efforts to engage the 32% of neutral respondents through targeted content, outreach, and interactive programmeming. This will help convert passive audiences into active followers and enhance visibility by promoting key programmemes or successful reporting, ultimately closing the credibility gap with BBS Television.

26.5 Enhance editorial clarity and consistency to reduce perceptions of mixed messaging that could undermine trust among certain audience segments for BBS. Additionally, it could address the concerns of the small minority who rated BBS Radio's credibility as low or very low by inviting feedback and improving transparency in news gathering and reporting practices.

Credibility of Kuensel Newspaper

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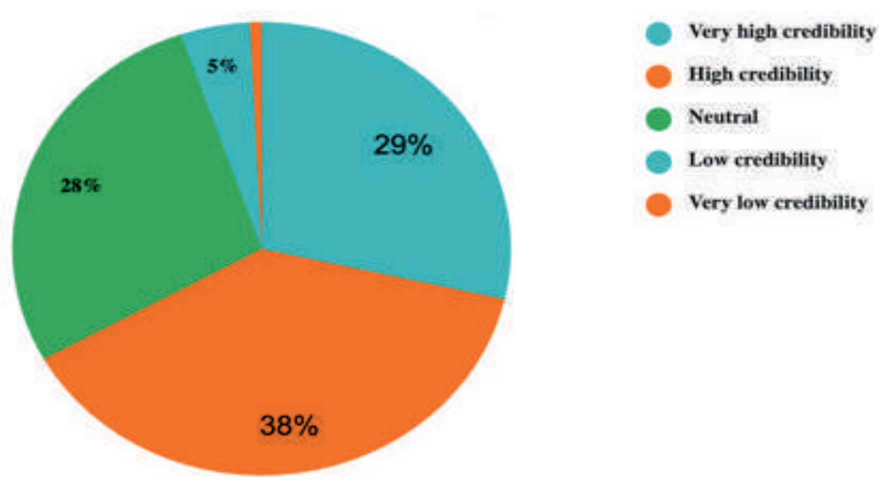

Table 57 Credibility of Kuensel Newspaper

Kuensel	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very high credibility	152	29%
High credibility	204	38%
Neutral	148	28%
Low credibility	24	5%
Very low credibility	4	1%

The survey results show that Kuensel is widely regarded as a credible and respected news source among respondents. A combined 67% of individuals rated its credibility as either "very

high" (29% or 152 respondents) or "high" (38% or 204 respondents). This reflects a strong trust in the newspaper's reporting and editorial standards.
However, 28% (148 respondents) expressed a "neutral" stance toward Kuensel's credibility suggesting that while they did not question its reliability, they may not strongly endorse it either. This neutral sentiment may reflect a cautious view, possibly due to perceived institutional alignment or limited investigative depth. Only a small proportion of respondents expressed negative views with 5% (24 individuals) rating it as "low" credibility and 1% (4 individuals) as "very low" credibility. Overall, Kuensel commands a solid reputation for credibility within Bhutan's media landscape, with over two-thirds of the public viewing it positively and only a marginal share expressing distrust. These findings affirm its role as a reliable source of national news and information.

Recommendations

26.6 By maintaining its strong editorial standards, Kuensel newspaper can preserve the high level of trust reported by most respondents. Additionally, it should engage the 28% of neutral respondents by enhancing investigative journalism, diversifying content, and addressing any perceptions of institutional alignment.

26.7 Increase transparency in its reporting practices and actively promotes its editorial independence for Kuensel to enhance its credibility.

26.8 Kuensel may like to monitor feedback from the small proportion of respondents who view it negatively, using their input to guide improvements and prevent future erosion of trust. Overall, sustaining a commitment to credible journalism and expanding investigative efforts can help solidify Kuensel's reputation as a trusted and respected news source in Bhutan.

Credibility of The Bhutanese Newspaper

Figure 56 Credibility of The Bhutanese Newspaper

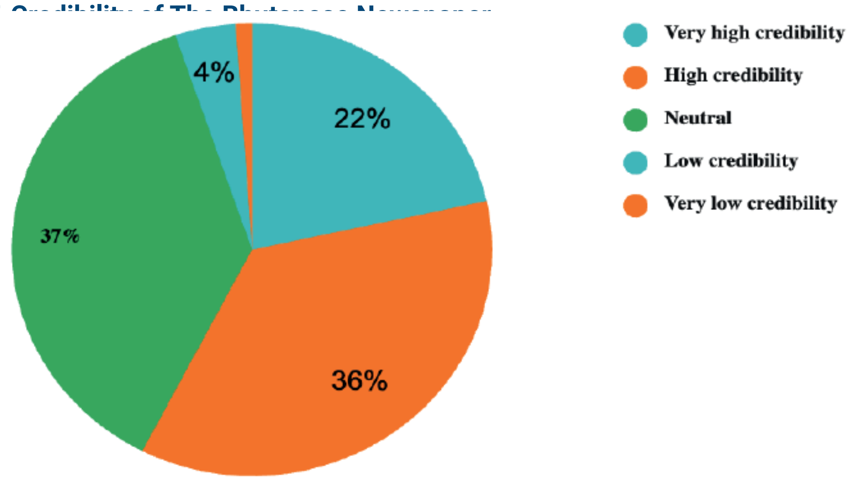

Table 58 Credibility of The Bhutanese Newspaper

The Bhutanese	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very high credibility	100	22%
High credibility	167	36%
Neutral	173	37%
Low credibility	19	4%
Very low credibility	5	1%

The data suggests that The Bhutanese enjoys a generally positive, though more cautiously balanced credibility rating among the respondents. A combined 58% of respondents rated its credibility as either "very high" (22% or 100 individuals) or "high" (36% or 167 individuals) indicating that over half of the surveyed population saw the paper as a reliable and trustworthy news source. However, a significant 37% (173 respondents) chose "neutral" suggests that a substantial portion of the public may either be unsure of its objectivity or see it as occasionally credible but not fully consistent.

A small minority of respondents expressed doubts with 4% (19 individuals) rating its credibility as "low" and 1% (5 individuals) as "very low." The Bhutanese is viewed as a credible but somewhat polarizing outlet, with more than one-third of the respondents reserving judgment. While its investigative reporting and independent editorial tone likely contribute to its credibility, the high neutrality score may reflect mixed perceptions about bias, tone, or editorial agenda.
Recommendations

26.9 The Bhutanese could benefit by building on its generally positive credibility by addressing the high neutrality rate of 37%. This can be achieved by clarifying its editorial stance, enhancing transparency in reporting, proactively addressing any perceived bias, and capitalizing on its strengths in investigative reporting.

26.10 By ensuring consistency in tone and objectivity, The Bhutanese could reduce mixed perceptions. Engaging the neutral audience through feedback mechanisms and outreach efforts may help convert cautious readers into more confident supporters.

Credibility of Business Bhutan Newspaper

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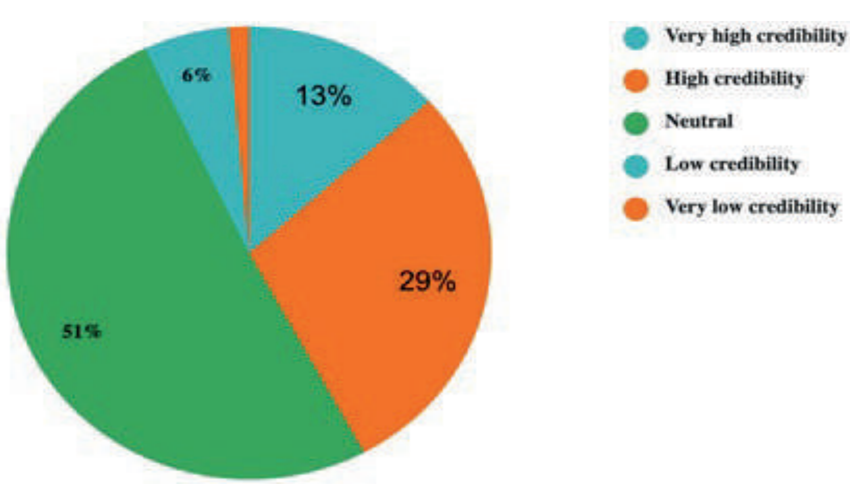

Table 59 Credibility of Business Bhutan Newspaper

Business Bhutan	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very high credibility	49	13%
High credibility	106	29%
Neutral	187	51%
Low credibility	21	6%
Very low credibility	5	1%

The survey results indicate that Business Bhutan is perceived with moderate credibility but a high degree of neutrality or uncertainty among the respondents. Only 13% of respondents (49 individuals) rated its credibility as "very high" and 29% (106 respondents) viewed it as "high" credibility. Together, 42% of respondents held a favourable view of the publication's credibility.

However, the most striking finding is that a majority 51% (187 respondents) rated Business Bhutan's credibility as "neutral." It suggests that a significant portion of the respondents were either unfamiliar with the paper or its reporting. Nonetheless, only a small minority viewed it negatively with 6% (21 respondents) rating it as "low" and 1% (5 respondents) rating it as "very low." Business Bhutan appears to be a less familiar for many respondents, with over half of respondents unable to definitively assess its credibility.

Recommendations

26.11 Business Bhutan would benefit by increasing its visibility and strengthen audience engagement to address the high neutrality rate of 51%, which suggests that many respondents are either unfamiliar with the publication or unsure about its credibility.

26.12 It may like to consider focusing on building a clearer editorial identity and consistently showcase the quality and relevance of its reporting. Efforts such as expanding distribution, improving digital presence, and conducting outreach campaigns could help increase familiarity.

Credibility of Bhutan Times Newspaper

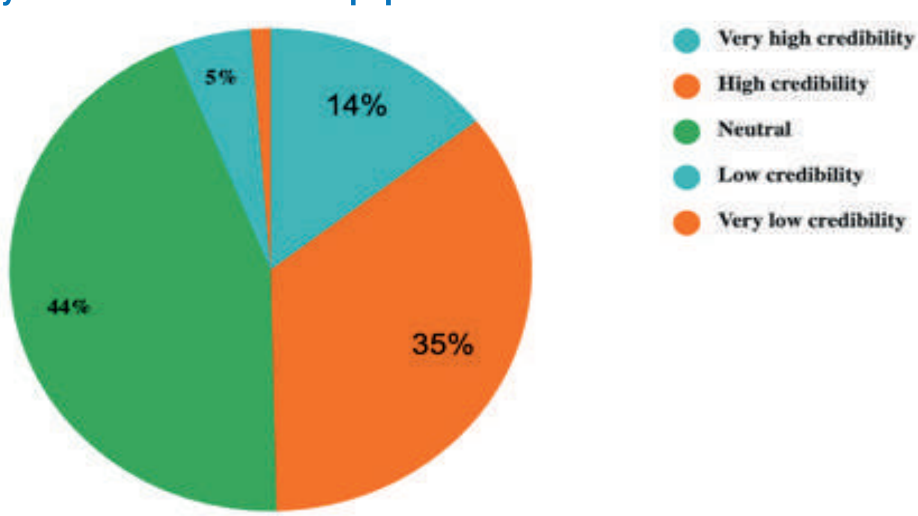

Table 60 Credibility of Bhutan Times Newspaper

Bhutan Times	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very high credibility	59	14%
High credibility	144	35%
Neutral	181	44%
Low credibility	20	5%
Very low credibility	5	1%

The survey results show that Bhutan Times is generally viewed positively, though with a significant portion of the respondents holding a neutral stance. A combined 49% of respondents rated its credibility as either "very high" (14% or 59 individuals) or "high" (35% or 144 individuals) suggesting that nearly half of the surveyed population had confidence in the publication's reporting standards.

However, 44% (181 respondents) rated the outlet's credibility as "neutral," while 5% (20 individuals) said it had "low" credibility and 1% (5 individuals) rating it "very low." Bhutan Times holds a moderate level of public credibility, with nearly half viewing it favourably. However, the high neutrality rating indicates that a large segment of the respondents remained ambivalent or uncertain, possibly pointing to issues around visibility, engagement, or public familiarity with its content.

Recommendations

26.13 Bhutan Times will need to enhance its public engagement and visibility to address the high neutrality rating of 44% as this large neutral segment suggests that many are either unfamiliar with its content or lack a strong impression of its credibility.

26.14 It needs to work on increasing its reach through improved distribution, a stronger digital presence, and consistent branding.

Credibility of Bhutan Today Newspaper

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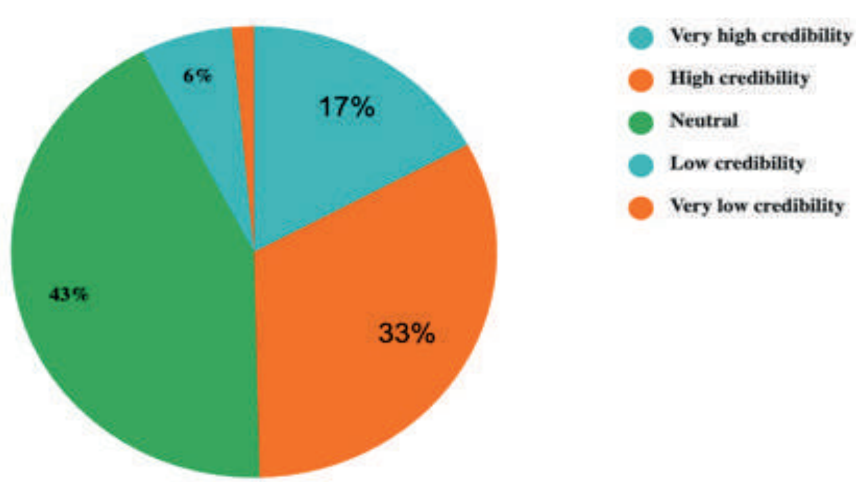

Table 61 Credibility of Bhutan Today Newspaper

Bhutan Today	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very high credibility	70	17%
High credibility	133	33%
Neutral	175	43%
Low credibility	25	6%
Very low credibility	6	1%

The survey findings indicate that Bhutan Today enjoys a moderate level of credibility among the Bhutanese public. A combined 50% of respondents rated its credibility as either "very high" (17% or 70 individuals) or "high" (33% or 133 individuals) showing that half of the respondents holds a favourable view of the publication's credibility.

At the same time, a substantial 43% (175 respondents) expressed a "neutral" opinion. This suggests that while many acknowledged Bhutan Today as a credible source, a large segment of the public either lacked strong engagement with its content or remained uncertain about its editorial standards. Only 7% of respondents expressed negative views with 6% (25 individuals) rating its credibility as "low" and 1% (6 individuals) rating it as "very low." Bhutan Today is perceived as a reasonably credible news outlet, comparable to its peers like Bhutan Times and Business Bhutan. However, the high neutrality rating underscores a pattern seen with many print outlets.

Recommendations

26.15 Bhutan Today would benefit by building on its moderate credibility by actively engaging the 43% of respondents who hold a neutral stance. This high level of neutrality indicates that a significant portion of the audience may be unfamiliar with its reporting or uncertain about its editorial consistency.

26.16 It should consider investing in clearer editorial positioning, improve outreach and distribution efforts, and showcase impactful journalism that reflects transparency and public interest to gain public trust, and enhance digital presence.

Credibility of Gyalchi Sarshog Newspaper

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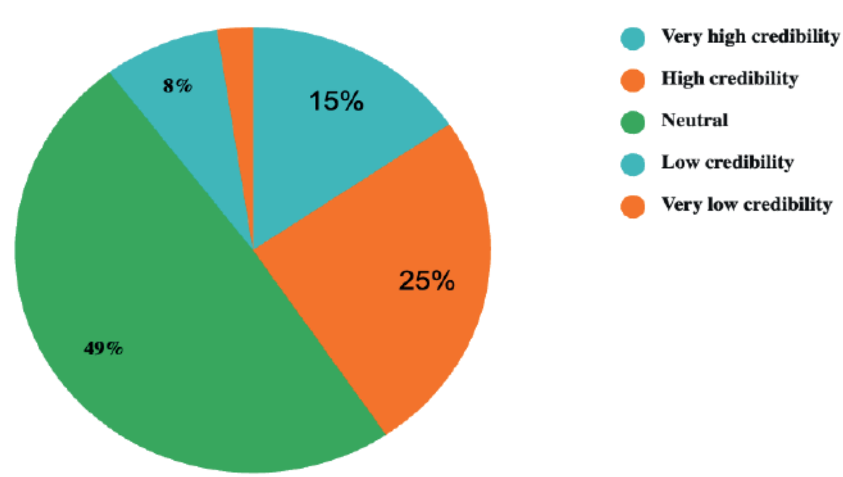

Table 62 Credibility of Gyalchi Sarshog Newspaper

Gyalchi Sarshog	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very high credibility	45	15%
High credibility	73	25%
Neutral	143	49%
Low credibility	23	8%
Very low credibility	7	2%

The survey responses suggest that Gyalchi Sarshog is perceived with moderate to limited credibility, and a high degree of public uncertainty. Only 15% of respondents (45 individuals) rated its credibility as "very high" and 25% (73 respondents) rated it as "high" totalling 40% with a favourable view. However, the most notable finding is that nearly half of the respondents 49% (143 individuals) selected "neutral." This indicates a significant level of uncertainty or limited exposure, possibly suggesting that the publication was less widely read, less consistent in visibility, or not seen as a strong influencer in the national media space.

A relatively higher proportion expressed negative views compared to other newspaper with 8% (23 respondents) rating its credibility as "low" and 2% (7 respondents) rating it as "very low." With nearly half rating it neutral and 10% expressing low trust, it appears to be a less prominent or less influential source in Bhutan's media landscape possibly requiring stronger engagement and reach.

Recommendations

26.17 Gyalchi Sarshog (Dzongkha Newspaper) needs to improve its visibility and public engagement to address the high neutrality rate of 49% and the relatively higher level of skepticism (10% negative ratings) as the low recognition and mixed perceptions suggest limited exposure or inconsistent presence in the national media landscape.

26.18 It may like to consider focussing on expanding its distribution, strengthening content quality, and clarifying its editorial direction, and target outreach and digital growth to build familiarity and trust among Dzongkha readers.

Credibility of The Journalist Newspaper

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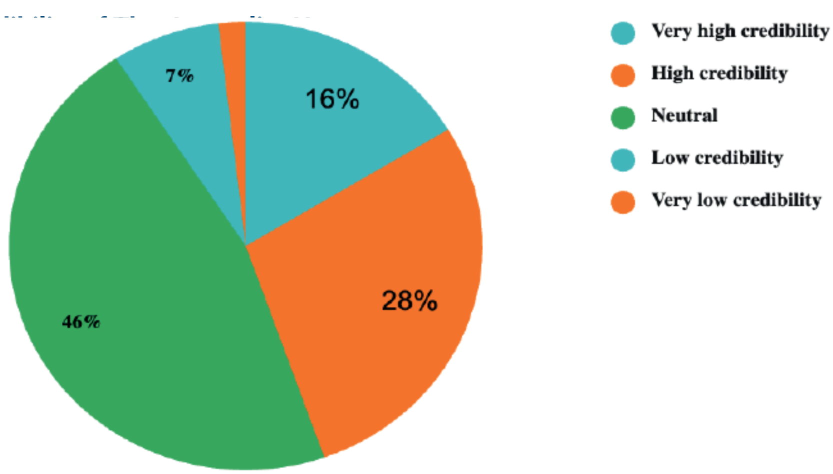


Table 63 Credibility of The Journalist Newspaper

The Journalist	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very high credibility	53	16%
High credibility	92	28%
Neutral	150	46%
Low credibility	24	7%
Very low credibility	6	2%

The data shows that akin to some of print media outlets discussed earlier, The Journalist is also regarded with moderate credibility by the respondents but gained with a notably high level of neutrality. Only 16% of respondents (53 individuals) rated its credibility as "very high" and 28% (92 individuals) as "high" amounting to a total of 44% expressing a favourable view.

However, nearly half of the respondents 46% (150 individuals) rated its credibility as "neutral" indicating that a significant portion of the respondents were either undecided, unfamiliar, or perceived it as neither particularly reliable nor unreliable or this could reflect limited reach. On the lower end, 9% of respondents expressed doubt in its credibility with 7% (24 respondents) rating it as "low" and 2% (6 respondents) rating it as "very low." With nearly half of the respondents remaining neutral, it shares a pattern seen across several private newspapers in Bhutan indicating modest public engagement and a need for stronger visibility or credibility-building efforts.

Recommendations

26.19 The Journalist needs to focus on increasing its reach and strengthening its editorial identity to address the high neutrality rating of 46%. With only 44% of respondents viewing it favourably and 9% expressing doubt, the paper appears to lack strong public engagement and widespread recognition.

26.20 It should also consider investing in more impactful reporting, clarify its editorial stance, build consistent communication with its audience, enhance its digital presence, increase distribution, and showcase journalistic successes. These steps will help shift neutral or undecided readers toward a more favourable view and raise the paper's overall influence in the media landscape.

27. Top Three Preferred Bhutanese Media

Table 64 Top Three Preferred Media

First	Respondents	Second	Respondents	Third	Respondents
BBS TV	526	BBS TV	60	BBS TV	25
Kuensel	58	Kuensel	261	Kuensel	88
The Bhutanese	29	The Bhutanese	55	The Bhutanese	94
The Journalist	2	The Journalist	4	The Journalist	9
Bhutan Times	4	Bhutan Times	15	Bhutan Times	26
Bhutan Today	5	Bhutan Today	15	Bhutan Today	33
Gyalchi Sarshog	1	Gyalchi Sarshog	0	Gyalchi Sarshog	6
BBS Radio	7	BBS Radio	32	BBS Radio	46

The results of the ranking question revealed a clear dominance of BBS TV as the most trusted and frequently consumed media outlet followed by Kuensel and The Bhutanese. BBS Television stands a clear frontrunner being ranked first by 526 respondents, second by 60 respondents and third by 25 respondents. With 611 total mentions, BBS TV stands out as the nation's most trusted and consumed news source by a wide margin. Its strong national reach, official status, and long-standing presence likely contribute to this leading position.

Ranked first by 58 respondents, second by 261 respondents and third by 88 respondents, and with 407 total mentions, Kuensel emerges as the second most trusted and consumed outlet, particularly strong in the second preference category. As Bhutan's oldest newspaper, its legacy and relatively balanced reporting likely earn it a high degree of credibility.

The Bhutanese with 178 total mentions ranks third, gaining prominence especially as a third-choice media source. It was ranked first by 29 respondents, second by 55 respondents and third by 94 respondents. This suggests it is well-regarded, particularly for investigative reporting and online presence.

With 85 total mentions, BBS Radio holds a modest but notable position in the national media landscape. It was ranked first by 7 respondents, second by 32 and third by 46 respondents. Although it trails far behind its television counterpart, its steady mention across all three ranks suggests a consistent secondary audience, likely among those who value traditional, audio-based news possibly older demographics or rural listeners.

Similarly, Bhutan Today received 53 total mentions, with the majority placing it as a third choice. It was ranked first by 5 respondents, second by 15 and third by 33 respondents. This indicates a limited but present readership, possibly among those who consume multiple media sources or prefer alternative voices beyond the above-mentioned top three outlets. With 45 mentions, Bhutan Times mirrors Bhutan Today's reach with 4 respondents ranking it in the first category, 15 in the second, and 26 respondents ranked it in third. It suggests that with little evidence of public loyalty or readership, Bhutan Times also struggles with reach either through online or print circulation.

The Journalist was mentioned only 15 times across all ranks, first by 2 respondents, second by 4 and third by 9 respondents suggesting minimal public engagement or recognition as a primary source. This reflects its relatively low profile in the Bhutanese media space and highlights the challenge of building a strong reader base. At the bottom of the list, Gyalchi Sarshog garnered just 7 mentions with 1 respondent ranking it in the first place, 0 in second, six respondents in third, making it the least cited media outlet in terms of trust and consumption. This could stem from low circulation, limited digital presence, or lack of perceived relevance to the broader public.

Overall, the data suggests a strong concentration of trust and consumption among the top three outlets, with others facing challenges in visibility, influence, and public engagement. The media landscape in Bhutan is heavily dominated by BBS Television, followed by Kuensel and The Bhutanese. These three outlets were clearly the most influential and trusted among the public. The remaining outlets, while playing supporting roles, had much lower audience loyalty and visibility, particularly in top preferences.

Recommendations

27.1 Invest further in modernizing BBS Television's infrastructure, content production quality, and digital distribution capabilities to reinforce its leading position. Prioritise comprehensive and unbiased national news coverage, public service announcements, and educational programmeming to maintain its high trust and broad reach across all demographics.

27.2 Help Kuensel, as the second most preferred outlet, adapt to evolving news consumption habits by strengthening its digital presence, developing engaging multimedia content, and exploring new subscription or revenue models. Encourage its continued focus on in-depth analysis and balanced reporting to retain its credibility and attract both traditional and younger audiences.

27.3 Support The Bhutanese in continuing its investigative reporting and independent editorial line, which appears to resonate with its audience. Promote its online presence and explore partnerships to expand its reach, allowing it to serve as a vital alternative voice and a key platform for critical public discourse, thereby solidifying its position as a preferred third choice.

27.4 For outlets like BBS Radio, Bhutan Today, Bhutan Times, The Journalist, and Gyalchi Sarshog, focus on developing niche content, hyper-local reporting, or innovative digital formats that cater to specific audiences or underserved communities. Implement targeted marketing and community engagement initiatives to increase their visibility, build unique identities, and cultivate stronger audience loyalty, thereby diversifying the overall media landscape.

Media Credibility and Independence from Political or Commercial Interests

Figure 62 Credibility & Independence from Political/Commercial Interests

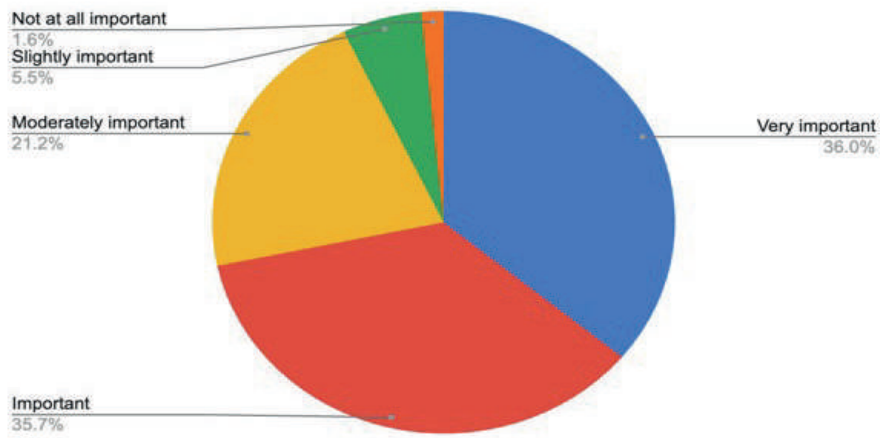


Table 65 Credibility & Independence from Political/Commercial Interests

In your opinion, how important is Independence from political or commercial interests for the credibility of the media?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very important	253	36%
Important	251	36%
Moderately important	149	21%
Slightly important	39	6%
Not at all important	11	2%

The data reveals a strong consensus among respondents that editorial independence specifically freedom from political or commercial influence is central to media credibility. A combined 72% (36% 'Very important' and 36% 'Important') believed independence was critical. This substantial majority suggests that the respondents place high value on media integrity and perceived external influence, whether political pressure or commercial bias as a potential threat to truthful reporting.

Interestingly, 21% considered it only "moderately important," which could point to a segment of the population that may either trust current media safeguards or prioritise other factors like professionalism or access over independence. Meanwhile, a small but notable group of 8% (6% "slightly important" and 2% "not at all important") showed skepticism or indifference toward the role of independence in establishing credibility. This may reflect the lack of awareness about how influence shapes content of the news reports.

While many respondents demanded strong independence, they may recognise that absolute separation from all influence is challenging in small media ecosystems, where state support, limited market size, and political proximity are structural realities. Overall, the findings suggest that media independence is a cornerstone of public trust, yet not universally prioritised. For policymakers and media organisations, this highlights the importance of transparent editorial policies and strong ethical standards to reinforce credibility, especially amid evolving digital and political landscapes.

Recommendations

27.5 Ensure clear, publicly accessible editorial standards are developed and that emphasise independence from political and commercial pressures. Regularly review and update these policies to adapt to emerging challenges and ensure accountability.

27.6 Train journalists and editors on ethical journalism practices, emphasizing the importance of independence and integrity.

27.7 Conduct awareness campaigns to educate the public about the significance of media independence in ensuring credible journalism.

27.8 Support the development of independent media regulatory bodies tasked with overseeing compliance with ethical standards and protecting editorial independence.

27.9 Ensure transparency in ownership structures and funding sources of media houses to build public trust and accountability.

27.10 Promote diverse revenue streams for media houses to reduce reliance on government or commercial entities that could threaten editorial independence.

27.11 Explore diversified funding like grants, memberships, and community-supported models that uphold editorial autonomy.

Media Credibility and Breaking News

Figure 63 Credibility & Breaking News

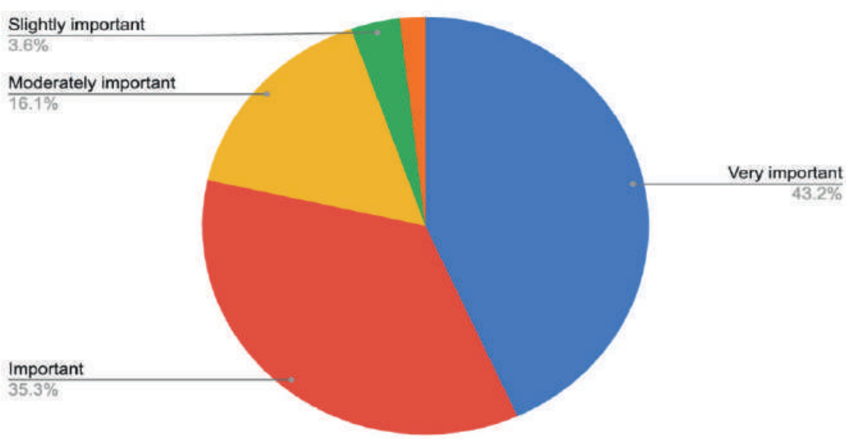


Table 66 Credibility & Breaking News

In your opinion, how important is Breaking news for the credibility of the media?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very important	304	43%
Important	248	35%
Moderately important	113	16%
Slightly important	25	4%
Not at all important	13	2%

The perception of "breaking news" as a factor in media credibility reveals a generally affirmative view. A combined 78% of respondents considered breaking news as either "Very important" (43%) or "Important" (35%) to a media outlet's credibility. This indicates that for the majority, timeliness and responsiveness are crucial markers of trust. In today's fast-paced information ecosystem, especially with the rise of social media being first to report, news access is not an issue, although reliability remains a question. While speed matters, it may not outweigh other journalistic values such as accuracy, depth, or balance. This is reinforced by the 16% who said it is only "moderately important", implying that a substantial minority prioritises other dimensions of journalism over immediacy.

A combined 6% (4% "slightly important," 2% "not at all important") who downplayed the importance of breaking news for credibility may reflect a critical group that has grown wary of sensationalism or race-to-report errors. In environments where breaking news can often precede fact-checking, some consumers associate speed with shallow reporting or misinformation.

Overall, this data suggests that while breaking news enhanced a media outlet's image as current and connected, it was not the sole or dominant factor driving public trust. For Bhutanese media, this underscores the need to balance timely reporting with responsible journalism. Audiences value outlets that are first but only when they are also right.

Recommendation

27.12 When reporting breaking news, clearly label initial, unconfirmed reports and update them promptly as more verified information becomes available. Utilise live blogs or rolling coverage that shows the evolution of a story, allowing audiences to understand the process of information gathering and reinforce transparency.

Media Credibility and Accuracy of Facts

Figure 64 Credibility & Accuracy of Facts

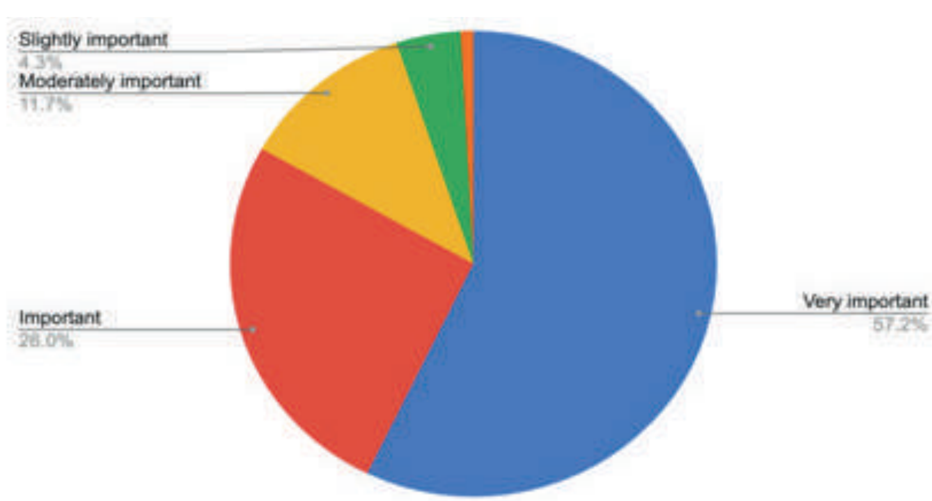


Table 67 Credibility & Accuracy of Facts

In your opinion, how important is Accuracy of facts for the credibility of media?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very important	402	57%
Important	183	26%
Moderately important	82	12%
Slightly important	30	4%
Not at all important	6	1%

The data presents a resounding endorsement of factual accuracy as the bedrock of media credibility. A clear majority of 83% respondents (57% "Very important" and 26% "Important") viewed accurate reporting as essential to building and maintaining public trust. This was the highest combined rating compared to other credibility factors such as breaking news or editorial independence, indicating that for most media consumers, truthfulness trumps speed, tone, or even independence.

The high proportion (57%) rating it as "Very important" suggests that precision and fact-checking are non-negotiable expectations. Audiences appeared to be highly sensitive to misinformation or distortion, and any deviation from factual accuracy likely caused significant reputational harm to media outlets. In contexts where public discourse is influenced by rumour or partisan narratives, there is a strong demand for factual integrity.

An additional 12% of respondents said it is "Moderately important", which reflects either a tolerance for minor reporting errors or a belief that other values such as context, analysis, or timeliness can occasionally compensate for small factual lapses. However, a combined 5% minority who deemed accuracy "Slightly important" or "Not at all important" was too small to significantly affect the trend, though it might point to either cynicism toward media in general or unfamiliarity with journalistic standards.

Critically, this data confirms that accuracy is not just one aspect of credibility, it formed the foundation upon which all other attributes rest. For Bhutanese media, the focus has to be on rigorous verification, careful sourcing, and correction mechanisms. In a time of rapid content creation and viral sharing, media houses that invest in credibility through accuracy are more likely to earn sustained public trust.

Recommendations

27.13 Establish and enforce a stringent, multi-layered fact-checking process for all news content before publication or broadcast. This should involve independent verification of facts, figures, names, and claims from multiple credible sources. Invest in training for journalists and editors specifically focused on advanced fact-checking techniques, source authentication, and the recognition of misinformation.

27.14 Explore the adoption of technological tools and AI-assisted programmemes for preliminary fact-checking, data verification, and identifying potential discrepancies in large datasets. While human oversight remains crucial, these tools can support journalists in increasing efficiency and accuracy. Additionally, utilise digital platforms to showcase the verification process, such as by linking to sources or providing methodology for complex data, to enhance transparency.

27.15 Embed the principle of "accuracy first" into the core values and daily practices of all media organisations. Encourage journalists to take the necessary time for verification, even under deadline pressure. Implement clear policies for prompt and transparent corrections of any factual errors, publicly acknowledging mistakes to build and restore trust.

Media Credibility and, Clear and Unbiased Language

Figure 65 Credibility & Clear/Unbiased Language

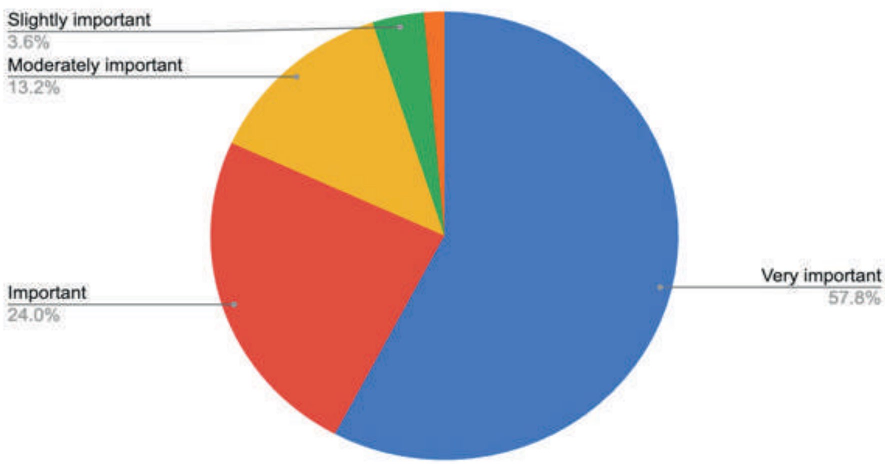


Table 68Credibility & Clear/Unbiased Language

In your opinion, how important is Clear and unbiased language for the credibility of the media?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very important	406	58%
Important	169	24%
Moderately important	93	13%
Slightly important	25	4%
Not at all important	10	1%

The data strongly affirms that the clarity and neutrality of language used in media reporting is perceived as crucial for establishing credibility. A significant majority of 82% respondents (58% "Very important" and 24% "Important") recognised this factor as key to trusting the media. This suggests that the public not only values what is reported, but also how it is communicated.

The fact that "Very important" received the highest single rating of 58% indicates that the respondents are especially alert to the risk of biased phrasing, emotionally loaded language, or complex jargon that may distort meaning or push agendas. This may reflect rising awareness around media literacy and sensitivity to manipulation, particularly in a small society, where political and social nuances can be amplified through language choices.

The 13% who found it "Moderately important" suggests tolerance to some subjectivity in tone, possibly valuing storytelling or persuasive elements in certain media formats. However, this group was relatively small compared to the dominant majority who expected objective, and impartial reporting. Meanwhile, a combined 5% who saw it as only “slightly important” and “not at all important” represents individuals who either consume media passively or are less concerned with journalistic standards.

Overall, this data reinforces that tone matters just as much as truth. Even factually accurate reporting can lose credibility if delivered with language that appears partial, inflammatory, or unclear. In practical terms, media organisations must invest in editorial training, style guidelines, and bias detection, especially as digital platforms amplify the impact of every word. In an era of growing political awareness and public scrutiny, credibility lies not only in the message, but in the messenger’s voice.

Recommendations

27.16 Develop comprehensive style guides that emphasise objective and impartial language, steering clear of emotionally charged or biased phrasing. These guidelines should be regularly updated to reflect changing language norms and societal sensitivities.

27.17 Implement internal processes for regularly reviewing published or broadcast content for language bias, tone, and clarity. This could involve peer reviews, editorial meetings dedicated to language analysis, or even utilizing language analysis software (if feasible) to identify and correct subtle or unconscious biases. Encourage a culture of constructive criticism among editorial staff regarding language use.

27.18 Invest in continuous professional development for journalists that focuses on the principles of objective reporting, the impact of language on perception, and techniques for de-biasing their writing. Training should include practical exercises in rephrasing biased statements, identifying manipulative language, and writing for diverse audiences with clarity and impartiality.

27.19 Launch public education campaigns that teach citizens how to critically analyse the language used in news reports. These campaigns should highlight how word choice, tone, and framing can influence understanding and perception, thereby empowering the public to identify and demand more unbiased communication from their news sources.

28. Bhutanese Media Influence on Public Opinion

Figure 66 Media Influence on Public Opinion

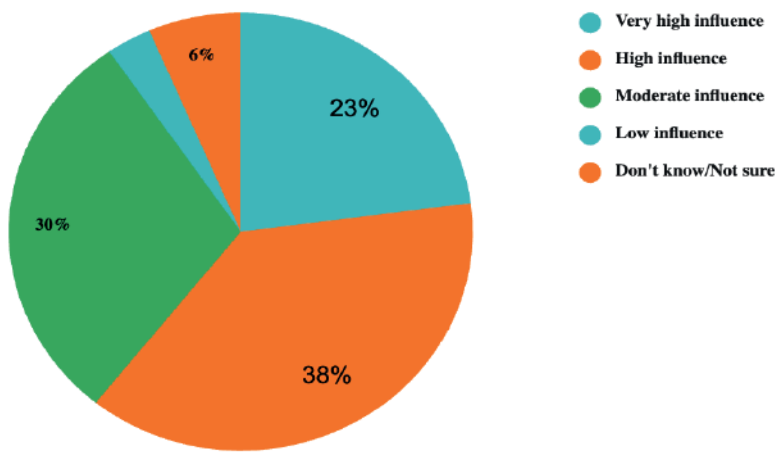


Table 69 Media Influence on Public Opinion

In your opinion, how much influence does the media in Bhutan have on the opinions of the general public?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very high influence	160	23%
High influence	264	38%
Moderate influence	207	30%
Low influence	22	3%
Don't know/Not sure	45	6%

The findings reveal that a strong majority of respondents believed that the media in Bhutan has at least a moderate influence on public opinion. Of the total, 23% described the media's influence as "Very high" and 38% as "High", making a combined 61% who viewed the media as a powerful shaper of societal perspectives. This perception points to a media landscape that, despite its small size and constraints, is seen as capable of guiding public discourse and shaping attitudes, whether on political, social, or cultural issues.

The 30% who considered media influence "Moderate" still acknowledged its presence, but suggested that its sway may be limited by competing forces such as family, religion, social networks, or traditional beliefs. Given Bhutan's unique socio-cultural fabric that is deeply rooted in values, belief systems, community leadership, etc., this moderate view may reflect a shared influence model, where media coexists with other trusted institutions.

The 3% who believed media has "Low influence" and the 6% who were "not sure" form a marginal group. Their views may reflect distrust, low engagement, or uncertainty about the media's role in shaping opinion. The "Don't know/Not sure" category also points to gaps in media literacy or exposure, particularly in rural areas or among less digitally connected respondents.

Overall, the perception of high media influence brings both opportunity and responsibility. On one hand, it confirms that media holds significant agenda-setting power, with the ability to inform, mobilise, and even reshape public thinking. On the other hand, it raises the stakes for ethical journalism as influence without accountability risks misinformation, bias, or manipulation.

Influences on Public Opinion as observed by Respondents

This analysis of the responses to the question reveals a multifaceted influence, encompassing significant positive contributions alongside notable concerns regarding its impact. A recurring and pivotal observation is the general public's profound trust in media, a factor that profoundly amplifies its overall influence within the nation.

i. Information Dissemination and Awareness: A Predominantly Positive Force

The most frequently cited and lauded role of media in Bhutan is its crucial function in disseminating information and fostering public awareness. Respondents consistently emphasised its indispensable contribution to keeping citizens informed across national and international spheres.

- **Current Affairs & Knowledge:** Media is widely regarded as the "main source of authentic Bhutanese news," providing vital updates on "what's happening in and around the globe," "politics," "laws," and the broader "country's situation." It serves as a repository of "knowledge and life skills." As one respondent articulated, "Media influences the public in regards to what is happening in and around the globe, how politics affect businesses and households. Most importantly people's adaptability with the laws." Another succinctly affirmed, "Media is the source of knowledge for the public."

- **Education & Awareness Campaigns:** A significant number of responses highlight media's proactive role in "spreading awareness" on critical topics such as "drug abuse," "new medical facilities," "education awareness," "health," "environment," and "cautions announcement and notifications for safety." This proactive stance is underscored by feedback like, "media influence has provided awareness to youth on drugs abuse, new medical facilities, etc...," and the practical observation of "Reminder for all the cautions announcement and notifications for safety."

- **Communication Bridge:** Beyond mere dissemination, media acts as a vital "Communication Bridge," proficiently translating information between "Dzongkha and English language," thereby enhancing accessibility. It functions as a fundamental "means of communication for everyone in the country."

- **Skill Development:** Some respondents acknowledged media as a platform for personal and professional growth, noting its role in "acquiring new skills and knowledge" and "honing skills." A technician, for instance, shared, "As a technician myself, I'm using media to hone my skills."

Media stands as an indispensable tool for public enlightenment and civic engagement in Bhutan. Its capacity to rapidly disseminate information across a population characterised by increasing smartphone penetration (as indicated by a respondent's observation that

"The news reaches them within fraction of seconds") is perceived as critically important for a developing nation.

ii. Behavioural, Lifestyle, and Cultural Changes: A Mixed Influence

This theme encapsulates the profound impact of media on daily lives, with a particular emphasis on its influence on Bhutanese youth, presenting both positive opportunities and significant challenges.

- **Negative Societal/Cultural Impact:** A notable segment of respondents expressed concern over the gradual erosion of traditional Bhutanese identity. Sentiments included worries about "gradually adopting the lifestyle of foreign countries," a diminishing interest in "our culture and identity," and observable "change in cultural identity" through "copying the culture and language of other countries." Specific anxieties arise from "changes in our people's way of dress ups, makeup and talking especially in youth," alongside a perceived degradation of "Family values," leading to less familial interaction. An illustrative comment laments, "I have seen our people gradually adopting the lifestyle of foreign countries... It seems like our people are no longer interested in our culture and identity which is scary." Another respondent observed, "Information portrayed in the media is highly influencing public opinion in Bhutan, especially the youth. I can see the change in the living lifestyles, the way of talking, notions and even the behaviour."

- **Negative Behavioural Impact:** Media's influence extends to concerning behavioural shifts. There's an apprehension that "Youth are always on the phone," potentially leading them to "forget their roles and responsibilities" and pick up "bad habits." Broader concerns included "addiction," the prevalence of "cyberbullying," and the emergence of "sexual harassment" and "inappropriate behaviour." A poignant remark highlighted, "This habit has made youth forget their roles and responsibilities. This shows that youth are influenced by the media in a negative way." The severe implications are underscored by a harrowing account: "Especially social media like Facebook and TikTok have high influences. People are now ok to go live on TikTok frequently present suicide of one student due to cyber bullying."

- **Positive Personal & Business Impact:** Conversely, media is recognised for its constructive contributions. It demonstrably "helps boost our business" (e.g., through platforms like TikTok) and "motivates people to do business." Beyond commerce, it can positively influence "thinking skills and attitude" and empowered individuals to become "self-conscious" about health. Many find it a valuable "source of learning." A farmer and business owner shared, "Being a farmer and business owner myself, I feel like if used correctly, media helps boost our business... I have seen many people running businesses and selling things through TikTok." Another noted the health awareness: "People become self-conscious after consuming media contents like health news changing people's food consumption habits."

Media, particularly social media, is undeniably a powerful driver of social change in Bhutan. While it presents opportunities for personal development and economic advancement, there is a distinct and palpable anxiety among respondents regarding the potential erosion of traditional Bhutanese culture and the adoption of foreign, sometimes detrimental lifestyles disproportionately affecting younger generations.

iii. Trust, Credibility, and Misinformation: A Significant Concern

A critical and recurring theme centres on the veracity of media content and the public's often uncritical acceptance of it, leading to significant societal implications.

- **Blind Trust:** A predominant sentiment among respondents is the public's inherent "Blind Trust" in media. Many explicitly state that "People believe in what they see and what they hear without verification," assuming "all those reports are true." This immediate acceptance is captured by observations such as, "People quickly believe in what is being shared and heard through the media." The inherent faith is strong: "Bhutanese people greatly trust the media, influencing them," often to the point where "People blindly believe the media." This is exemplified by comments like, "People believe in what they see and what they hear without verification whether the news is fact or false," and, "Bhutanese trust the media and with that trust, it can easily influence the public opinion."

- **Concerns about Accuracy/Bias:** Despite the high trust, there are clear "Concerns about Accuracy/Bias." Respondents questioned "How accurate the information," lament "not knowing the real story or news," and point out instances where "news is not true and when it is biased." Some suspected deeper issues, noting "less accuracy and biased media reports" and concerns that "reporting seems to be scripted and real news is hidden." These anxieties are encapsulated by the query, "Though the media influences the public opinion, the question is 'how accurate the information' especially when the reports on social media platforms," and the stark admission, "I think because of less accuracy and biased media reports, it is creating mis-trust hence affecting people's opinions."

- **Consequences of Misinformation:** The repercussions of misinformation are perceived as severe, leading to "disturbing the public mind," fostering "mis-trust" and "negative controversies." Tragically, it can escalate to "cyberbullying and suicides." The power of the media to distort reality is acknowledged, as it "can manipulate or mislead public opinion." One respondent vividly described a harrowing incident: "if a fake news of an individual's death is published, I personally saw this incident and the specific person has to go through platform to inform the public and the offence it caused to his/ her family members will be great, which leads to cyberbullying and suicides."

There is a pervasive perception that the Bhutanese public, in general, exhibits a limited degree of critical media literacy, leading to an often-unquestioning acceptance of media content as factual, irrespective of its source or authenticity. This vulnerability makes the population susceptible to misinformation and manipulation, which can result in significant societal harm and erode the public's trust in media outlets when inaccuracies are eventually exposed. Furthermore, the sentiment that "Media houses in Bhutan do not have full freedom. They should be independent" subtly suggests underlying concerns about potential external influences on journalistic integrity.

iv. Platform for Public Discourse and Participation: An Emerging Role

Beyond its traditional role as a news purveyor, media is increasingly recognised as a dynamic channel for public expression and engagement with governance, fostering a more interactive civic space.

- **Voice to the Public:** Media is evolving into a vital “Voice to the Public,” where “The public views will be heard by the policy makers.” Citizens are empowered to “share their views on the problems of the country,” positioning the media as “the only platform for people to raise issues.” This enables a more informed citizenry, as highlighted by a respondent: “People mostly update themselves in the way the country is running frequently. Also update themselves in what ways people in other parts are acting.”

- **Community Engagement:** Media platforms also facilitate “Community Engagement,” such as fostering collective identity where “People become more religious due to group chats created on media platforms.” Moreover, media supports democratic processes by emphasizing “People’s participation in planning developments in rural areas,” as noted through the reference to “HIT.” An anecdotal observation supports local influence: “Yes, they get information in groups in the Chiwog, and have to do whatever the gewog leader tells them to do.”

Evolving beyond a singular, one-way information conduit, media, particularly social media, is increasingly functioning as a reciprocal platform. This allows citizens to articulate opinions and potentially influence policy decisions, thereby contributing significantly to democratic processes and fostering community involvement.

v. Conditional and Individual Influence: A Nuanced Perspective

Many responses articulated a nuanced understanding that media’s influence is not monolithic or universally absolute, but rather contingent upon various factors and individual dispositions.

- **Variability of Influence:** Respondents frequently stated that influence “Depends upon a news or story,” is contingent on “the content we watch,” and “it depends on who is reporting.” The impact is recognised as context-dependent, with sentiments like “Depends upon the context” and “Influence depends on each individual.” This variability means “For some, it greatly impacts whereas for some, there would be nothing.” This perspective is clearly articulated by comments such as, “Depends on the content we watch,” and, “I think the influence depends on each individual since everyone has got their own likings and beliefs.”

- **Emerging Media Literacy:** A more optimistic view suggested a nascent awareness, where the public is “Moderately because now the public is aware of media news that it is not true to the real knowledge.” This indicates an evolving capacity for critical assessment, albeit one that subtly contradicts the more prevalent “blind trust” theme, suggesting a growing segment of discerning media consumers.

- **Disengagement/Lack of Opinion:** A significant cluster of responses fell into categories like “No opinion,” “Don’t know/Not sure,” “Prefer not to say,” or “No comment.” These indicate either genuine uncertainty, disinterest, or a reluctance to express an opinion, particularly among older demographics who report less engagement with modern media. This is vividly illustrated by an 86-year-old respondent who shared, “I am 86 years old; I do not know how much media is influential in the general public but for me since I am listening to only radio most of the time, only influence is my spiritual thoughts.” Similarly, another elderly person stated, “I am not sure, I am old and my family does not use much influential media at all, so I am not seeing any dramatic changes.”

While the overarching sentiment acknowledges the media’s substantial influence, respondents simultaneously recognised that its impact is not uniform. It is modulated by the nature of the content, the perceived credibility of the media outlet, and the pre-existing beliefs or media literacy levels of individual consumers. This perspective highlights that not every individual is influenced to the same degree or in the same manner.

To summarise, media influence in Bhutan reveals a complex duality. Media is seen as both a powerful tool for progress and a significant source of problems. It is a vital conduit for information, driving positive change and national development. However, it is also recognised as a catalyst for negative societal shifts, eroding cultural traditions, fostering troubling behaviours, and spreading misinformation. This duality is striking, given the high level of public trust in Bhutanese media. This finding highlights the crucial need for media literacy programmemes.

29. Media Influence on Language, Dress, Behaviour and Attitude

Figure 67 Media Influences on Language, Dress, Behaviour & Attitude

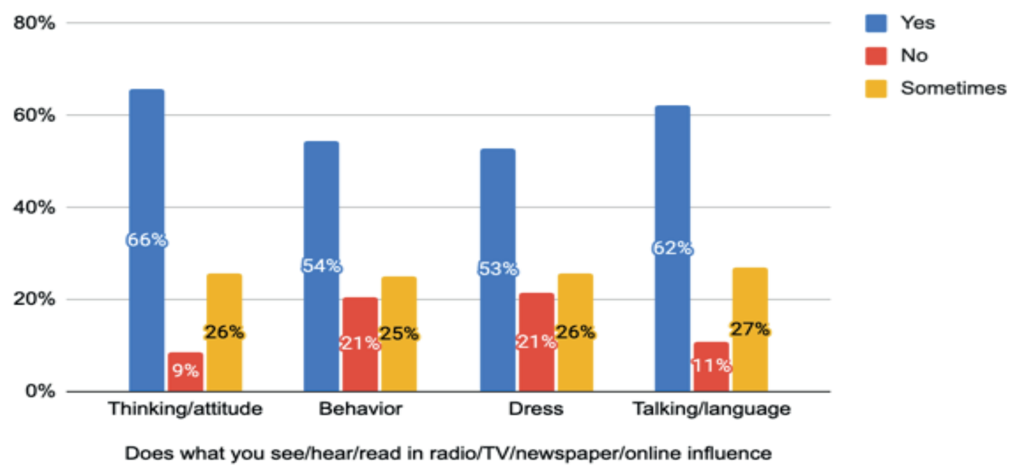


Table 70 Media Influences on Language, Dress, Behaviour & Attitude

Does what you see/hear/read in radio/ TV/newspaper/online influence	Talking/ language	Dress	Behaviour	Thinking/ attitude
Yes	412 (62%)	347 (53%)	352 (54%)	439 (66%)
No	72 (11%)	140 (21%)	133 (21%)	58 (9%)
Sometimes	179 (27%)	168 (26%)	162 (25%)	172 (26%)

The data clearly indicates that media whether through radio, television, newspapers, or online platforms had a notable impact on the way respondents speak, dress, behave, and think. Thinking and attitude are the most influenced areas, with 66% of respondents saying media has shaped their views and outlook as compared to 9% stating otherwise. This suggests that media plays a major role in shaping public opinion, perspectives on social issues, and even values. The high level of influence in this domain reflects the media's power not just to inform, but also to shape national and individual narratives.

Talking and language also showed a strong media influence, with 62% of respondents affirming its impact. This likely reflects the adoption of new terms, expressions, or even foreign phrases that are commonly used in media content, especially among younger audiences.

In terms of behaviour, 54% of respondents reported being influenced while a significant 21% said they were not. This influence may manifest in changes in social interactions, manners, or lifestyle habits influenced by role models, news stories, or entertainment media.

The area of dress showed slightly less but still significant influence, with 53% alluding to influence and 21% saying no. Media, particularly visual content like television and online platforms may shape fashion preferences, cultural expression, and trends, especially among youth exposed to global and regional influences.

Interestingly, across all four categories, a notable number of respondents chose "sometimes" (ranging from 25% to 27%), suggesting that media influence is not always constant but may depend on the context, type of content, or frequency of exposure.

Overall, the data confirms that media in Bhutan is more than just a channel for information but it actively shapes how people speak, think, behave, and present themselves. This underscores the importance of promoting responsible, culturally grounded, and positive media content, as its influence extends deeply into the social and cultural fabric of everyday life.

Media Influence on Language

Figure 68 Media Influence on Language

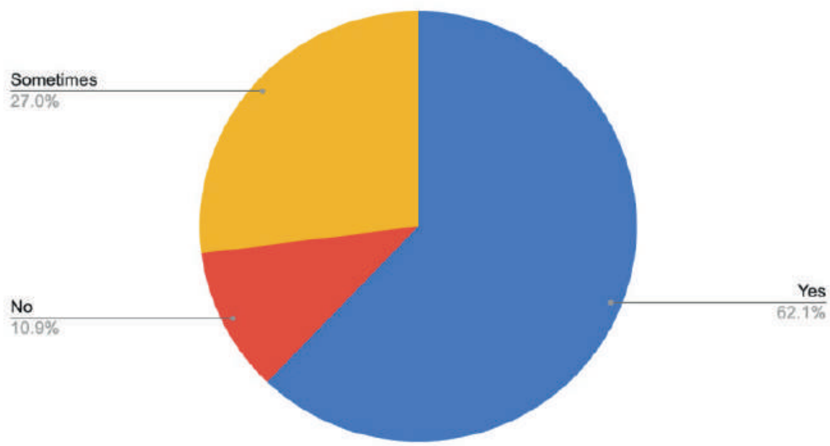


Table 71 Media Influence on Language

Does what you see/hear/read in radio/TV/newspaper/on-line influence your Talking/language?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	412	62%
No	72	11%
Sometimes	179	27%

The survey results show that a substantial majority of 62% respondents affirmed that media content influenced their speech and language. This finding underscores the powerful linguistic and cultural influence of radio, TV, newspapers, and online platforms. It suggests that media not only informs people's opinions, but actively shapes how they communicate, the phrases they adopt, and even the tones or expressions they internalise in everyday conversations.

The 27% who said "Sometimes" reflects a group with conditional or situational influence, perhaps depending on content type, language used (e.g., Dzongkha vs. English), or relevance to personal context. This indicates a fluid relationship between media and communication practices one that may vary by age group, literacy, or rural-urban exposure.

The 11% who denied any media influence on their language represent a relatively small group. This could include older demographics, people with stronger oral/traditional linguistic roots, or those with limited media access. It may also reflect self-perception bias, as individuals may underestimate how subtly media language permeates their vocabulary.

Overall, these findings carry important implications for Bhutan's media, education, and language policy landscapes. If media significantly influences public speech, then media language choices have real social consequences, from reinforcing linguistic norms to spreading slang, jargon, or even stereotypes. Media also becomes a vehicle for language learning, diffusion, and change, particularly among youth who are immersed in digital and audio-visual content. This highlights the need for conscious language use in media, with attention to both preservation of national languages and responsible linguistic innovation.

Recommendations

29.1 Encourage media outlets, especially national broadcasters like BBS TV and Radio, to prioritise the use of standard and clear Dzongkha (and other national languages as appropriate) in their news, educational, and entertainment programmeming. This will reinforce linguistic norms, preserve cultural heritage, and ensure that media serves as a model for correct and formal language use.

29.2 Establish and disseminate comprehensive guidelines for media professionals on responsible language use, including avoiding slang, jargon, and culturally inappropriate or biased terminology. These guidelines should encourage clarity, precision, and respect for linguistic diversity, recognizing media's role in shaping public discourse.

Media Influence on Dress

Figure 69 Media Influence on Dress

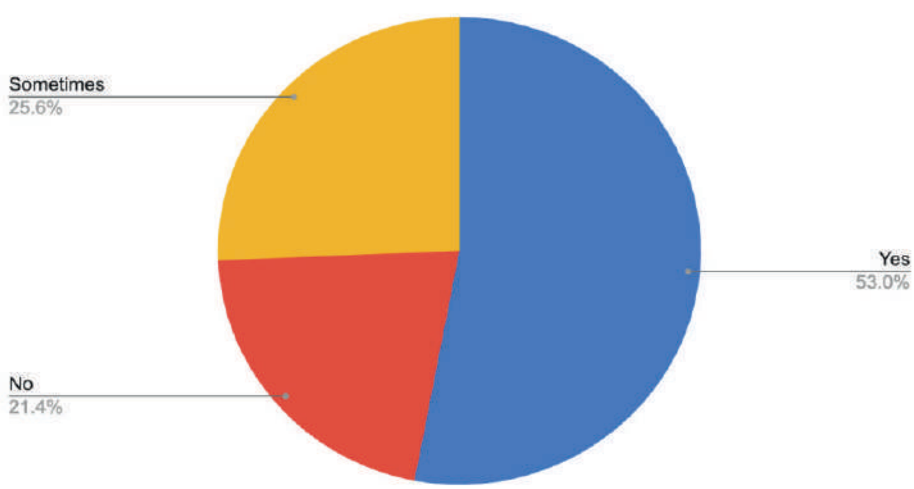


Table 72 Media Influence on Dress

Does what you see/hear/read in radio/TV/newspaper/ online influence your Dress?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	347	53%
No	140	21%
Sometimes	168	26%

The data shows that a majority 53% of respondents believed that media content influences their dress, suggesting that radio, TV, newspapers, and especially online media played a significant role in shaping clothing choices and fashion sensibilities in Bhutan. This reflects the increasing visibility and power of media-driven aesthetics, where exposure to certain images, celebrity styles, or international trends can subtly or overtly influence how people choose to present themselves.

The 26% who said “Sometimes” indicated a sizable group that may selectively incorporate media influences, possibly during festivals, social events, or when mimicking particular figures or global trends, while still maintaining traditional norms in everyday life. This group likely navigates a hybrid cultural space, balancing between media-modernity and cultural identity.

The 21% who responded “No” may represent individuals who are either strongly rooted in traditional attire norms, such as wearing the national dress (Gho and Kira) due to legal, institutional, or cultural expectations, or who are less influenced by visual content due to limited media exposure or generational preferences.

Visual media especially (TV, online platforms) can shape ideals of beauty, identity, and status. In Bhutan, where traditional dress holds deep national significance, the fact that over half reported media influence on dress raises important questions about the tension between cultural preservation and globalised fashion influence.

The influence on dress reflects a broader cultural soft power of media. Bhutanese youth, for example, may be adopting global styles seen on TikTok, K-pop, Bollywood, or Western influencers, integrating them into local styles or private settings even if national dress remains the norm in formal spaces.

Overall, the findings suggest that media is contributing to cultural change not necessarily eroding traditions, but evolving them. This creates an opportunity for media producers and fashion influencers to shape this evolution mindfully, promoting local creativity, sustainability, and identity alongside global trends.

Recommendations

29.3 Feature the Gho and Kira, along with other traditional Bhutanese textiles and attire, prominently and appealingly across all media platforms (TV, social media, print). Showcase how traditional dress can be worn with pride in modern contexts and collaborate with Bhutanese designers who blend traditional fabrics and motifs with contemporary styles to make traditional wear more appealing, especially to younger generations.

29.4 Feature local artisans, young designers, and traditional textile producers, linking modern style with heritage and encouraging youth to wear national dress in new and expressive ways, and use their cultural soft power to promote local fashion designers, sustainable practices, and Bhutanese creativity.

29.5 Media houses could help guide national conversations on dress and identity by promoting content that balances tradition with modern influences, and encourage dialogue, showcase culturally rooted yet innovative styles, and support local designers as this will help preserve Bhutanese identity while adapting to global fashion trends thoughtfully and inclusively.

Media Influence on Behaviour

Figure 70 Media Influence on Behaviour

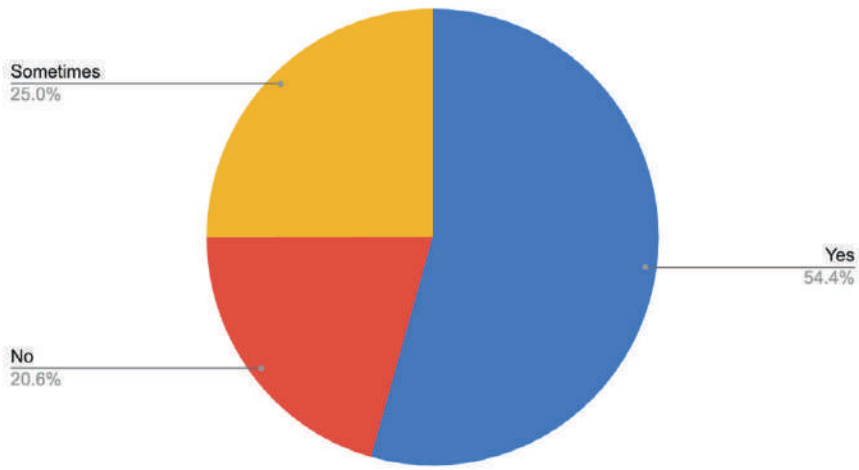


Table 73 Media Influence on Behaviour

Does what you see/hear/read in radio/TV/newspaper/ online influence your Behaviour?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	352	54%
No	133	21%
Sometimes	162	25%

The survey finding shows that a majority of 54% of respondents reported that media influences their behaviour, while another 25% said it influenced them "sometimes." Together, this suggests that 79% of people acknowledged at least some behavioural impact from media exposure, underscoring the formative and persuasive role of media in the society.

This influence can span a wide spectrum from attitudes and habits to lifestyle choices, consumption patterns, civic engagement, or social interactions. It shows that media is not just passively consumed but actively shapes how people act, think, and respond to their environment.

The 21% who reported no influence might view themselves as more discerning, less exposed to persuasive content, or anchored in strong cultural, religious, or community values that buffer external influence. Alternatively, this group may underreport media impact due to a lack of self-awareness about subtle or long-term behavioural shifts shaped by repeated exposure.

The 25% who said "sometimes" suggest conditional influence possibly shaped by context, content type, or emotional connections. For example, media may influence behaviour during national events, public health campaigns, or trending issues, but not in day-to-day decisions. The data illustrates that media, despite its small size is highly influential, especially as digital platforms expand reach and interactivity. This influence comes with social responsibility and accountability. If the media shapes behaviour, then it can also be a tool for public education, civic participation, environmental consciousness, and behavioural change campaigns.

However, it also raises concerns as behavioural influence can include negative outcomes as well such as imitation of harmful trends, adoption of divisive rhetoric, or changes in interpersonal communication styles influenced by external media models (e.g., sensationalism, individualism, consumerism). In this context, media regulation, content moderation, and media literacy education become critical to mitigate unintended consequences.

Recommendations

29.6 Prioritise content moderation policies and develop transparent frameworks for regulating misleading or harmful content while protecting freedom of expression, and promote media literacy education to help audiences critically engage with content, recognise bias, and make informed decisions.

29.7 Media platforms need to acknowledge their significant role in shaping public behaviour and take responsibility for the influence they exert across attitudes, habits, and lifestyle choices, and actively use their persuasive power to support public education, civic engagement, environmental awareness, and positive behavioural change initiatives.

29.8 Media platforms need to be aware that even audiences who believe they are unaffected may still experience subtle or long-term behavioural shifts, which calls for ethical content creation and sustained self-regulation, and ensure they do not propagate harmful trends, divisive rhetoric, or problematic communication styles, which could have unintended negative impacts on social cohesion and individual behaviour.

Media Influence to Thinking/Attitude

Figure 71 Media Influence on Attitude

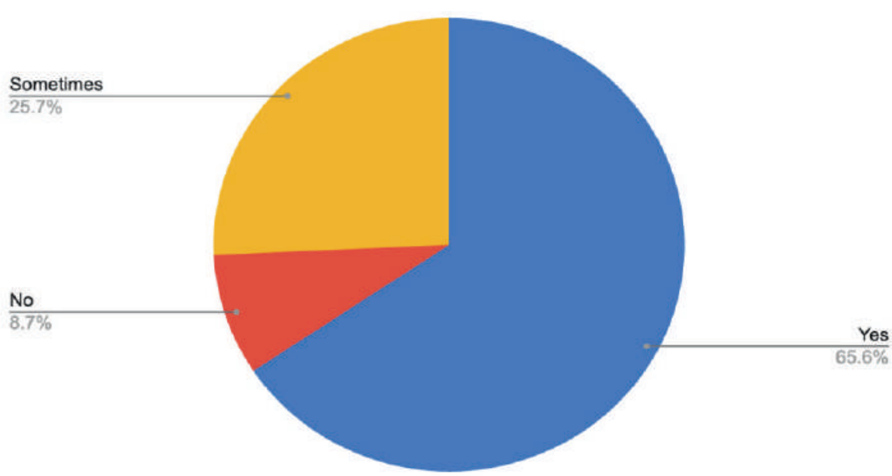


Table 74 Media Influence on Attitude

Does what you see/hear/read in radio/TV/newspaper/ online influence your Thinking/attitude?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	439	66%
No	58	9%
Sometimes	172	26%

The findings clearly demonstrate that media plays a substantial role in shaping public thought and attitude. A full 66% of respondents affirmed that media influenced how they thought and felt, while an additional 26% said it influenced them sometimes. In total, 92% of respondents acknowledged some degree of influence, signalling that the surveyed population were not only consuming media content but were internalizing it.

This suggests that radio, television, newspapers, and especially online platforms serve as important agents of cognitive and emotional framing. They did not just inform the public but they helped structure how people interpreted issues, formed judgments, and positioned themselves in social, political, or moral contexts. Essentially, overwhelming number of respondents recognised that media affected how they thought and what they believed.

The 9% who denied any influence likely reflect a small segment who either lacked regular media exposure, felt more anchored in non-media influences (e.g., religious teachings, family values), or who may not consciously recognise the media's shaping role. However, such self-assessments can be limited, as media influence often operates subconsciously, especially over time. The 26% who responded "Sometimes" likely represent those people who are selectively influenced depending on topic, platform, or source credibility. For instance, a respondent may be influenced by coverage on climate change or national issues but less affected by entertainment or gossip media.

Overall, this data reinforces that media holds soft power, not by forcing opinion, but by gradually framing what is seen as normal, desirable, or problematic. This is both a strength and a responsibility. Media outlets have the potential to foster civic-mindedness, tolerance, critical thinking, and national identity, but if unregulated or imbalanced, they can just as easily perpetuate division, bias, or misinformation.

Recommendations

29.9 Media platforms need to recognise their substantial role in shaping public thought and emotional responses, and use this influence to promote constructive, inclusive, and well-informed discourse, and frame content in ways that encourage critical thinking, civic responsibility, and a deeper understanding of complex social, political, and moral issues.

29.10 Media platforms need to take responsibility for their role in defining societal norms and values, ensuring they contribute positively to public attitudes and beliefs.

29.11 Media platforms need to be aware that even those who believe they are unaffected may be subconsciously influenced over time, which emphasises the need for ethical storytelling and balanced reporting, and tailor their content with attention to topic sensitivity and source credibility, especially since selective influence depends on these factors.

29.12 Media platforms need to actively guard against the risk of perpetuating division, misinformation, or bias, by implementing editorial standards that prioritise accuracy, fairness, and diversity of perspectives, and leverage their soft power to reinforce national identity, civic-mindedness, and social cohesion, especially in times of collective challenge or transformation.

30. Respondent and Children

Figure 72 Respondents with/without Children

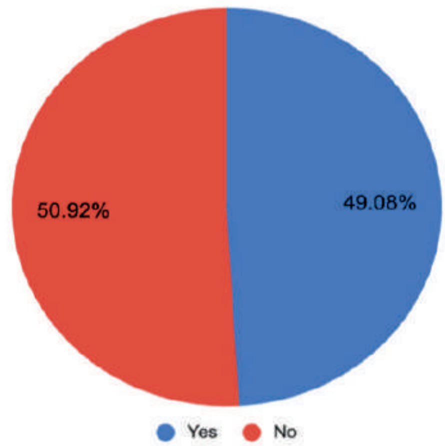


Table 75 Respondents with/without Children

Do you have children?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Have children	345	49.08%
Do not have children	358	50.92%

The survey data shows a nearly even split between respondents who have children making up a little over 49% and those who do not counting for nearly 51%. This balance suggests a diverse demographic mix in the survey sample regarding family status, which can be important for interpreting other findings related to media influence, lifestyle, or social attitudes.

This parity implies that insights derived from the survey reflect perspectives from both parents and non-parents, enabling more comprehensive understanding of how different family responsibilities and life stages might shape media consumption patterns, trust, or perceived influence. For example, parents might be more sensitive to media content concerning education, health, or cultural values, while non-parents who may be younger or single could prioritise entertainment or social issues differently.

Recommendations

30.1 Create targeted programmeming and content that addresses the interests and concerns of parents, such as education, child health, family welfare, and cultural values. At the same time, they should provide engaging content for non-parents, focusing on youth interests, social issues, career development, and entertainment.

30.2 Promote media literacy initiatives that empower parents to guide their children's media consumption, fostering critical thinking and safe online habits.

30.3 Develop educational resources or workshops for children to help them navigate media responsibly.

30.4 Explore children's media use more deeply to ensure that content is age-appropriate and culturally relevant.

Children and Access to Mobile Phone

Figure 73 Children of Respondents with Mobile Phone Access

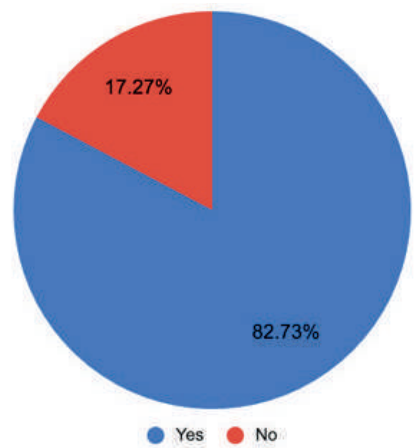


Table 76 Children of Respondents with Mobile Phone Access

Does your child have access to a mobile phone?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	297	82.73%
No	67	17.270%

Among respondents with children, a large majority of over 82% out of 364 respondents reported that their child had access to a mobile phone, while only a little over 17% said their child did not. This indicates that mobile phone access among children is widespread, reflecting the rapid penetration of mobile technology even among younger populations.

This prevalence of mobile phone access is significant because it suggests that children are increasingly exposed to digital media platforms, including social media, news apps, videos, and messaging services. This exposure can profoundly influence their language, behaviour, attitudes, and cultural consumption from an early age.

While this technological access offers valuable opportunities for education, connectivity, and digital literacy, it also raises important considerations about parental guidance, content regulation, and digital wellbeing. The high access rate signals a need for policies and programmemes that promote safe and responsible mobile use among children, to protect them from misinformation, inappropriate content, or excessive screen time. Overall, the data reflects a digital shift in Bhutanese childhood experience, positioning mobile phones as key gateways for media influence and socialisation. Understanding this dynamic is crucial for shaping future media literacy efforts and youth-targeted communication strategies.

Recommendations

30.5 Support parental guidance and monitoring by offering accessible resources and training that empower parents to manage their children's mobile phone use effectively, and encourage open communication within families about digital experiences and the challenges children may face online.

30.6 Encourage mobile service providers and app developers to adopt stronger child protection measures across their products and services to help them identify misinformation, protect their privacy, engage respectfully online, and manage their screen time in a balanced way. The Ministry of Education's adoption of the Education Technology Framework should be helpful.

30.7 Initiate efforts to balance technology access with offline activities by promoting awareness campaigns that encourage healthy lifestyles, emphasizing the importance of balancing screen time with physical activity, social interaction, and cultural traditions. They also need to support schools and communities in organizing programmemes that integrate digital skills with outdoor, artistic, or cultural engagements.

30.8 Research and monitor trends continuously by supporting ongoing studies that explore how mobile phone access affects children's development, socialisation, and wellbeing, particularly in contexts like Bhutan. They need to use this data to help refine policies and educational programmemes, ensuring these interventions stay relevant and responsive as technology and usage patterns evolve.

Children and Internet Access

Figure 74 Children of Respondents with Internet Access

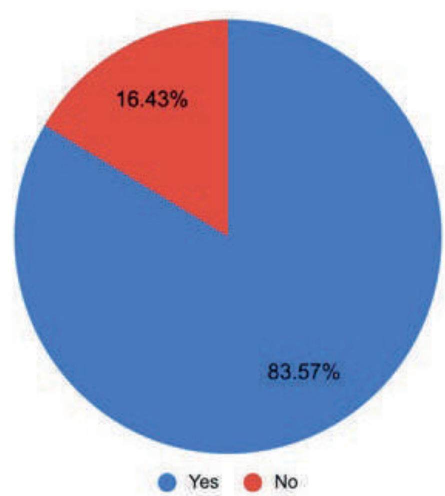


Table 77 Children of Respondents with Internet Access

Does your child/children have access to the internet (via phone, computer, etc.)?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	300	83.57%
No	59	16.43%

Among respondents with children, a clear majority of 83% out of 359 respondents reported that their child or children had access to the internet via devices such as phones, computers, or tablets, while only a little over 16% respondents indicated no internet access for their children. This high level of internet availability highlights the growing digital connectivity among youth and reflects significant progress in expanding internet infrastructure and digital device penetration across the country.

This widespread internet access opens up vast opportunities for children to engage with educational resources, social networks, entertainment platforms, and global information flows. It signifies a shift toward more interactive and self-directed media consumption, which can foster digital literacy and broaden horizons.

At the same time, the data raises critical concerns about online safety, content regulation, and parental monitoring. With easy access to the internet, children are potentially exposed to inappropriate content, misinformation, cyberbullying, and privacy risks. This underscores the need for comprehensive digital education programmemes, strong policy frameworks, and active parental involvement to ensure that internet use supports positive development.

Overall, this data confirms that Bhutanese children are increasingly part of a digitally connected generation. This transformation will shape their learning, communication styles, cultural influences, and future media habits, making responsible digital access and media literacy essential priorities for families, educators, and policymakers.

Recommendations

30.9 Enhance digital literacy education by integrating it into school curricula. This integration should emphasise safe internet use, critical thinking, misinformation identification, privacy protection, and respectful online communication. Additionally, they should offer or promote community workshops and online resources that equip both children and parents with the skills and awareness necessary for responsible digital engagement.

30.10 Improve parental support and awareness by creating programmemes and resources that provide parents with practical tools and knowledge to effectively monitor and guide their children's internet use. They must also encourage open family discussions about online experiences, potential risks, and overall digital well-being.

30.11 Implement child online safety policies by advocating for clear regulations that protect children from harmful content, including violence, adult material, misinformation, and cyberbullying. Collaboration with internet service providers and tech companies is essential to promote child-safe environments through parental control tools and effective reporting mechanisms.

30.12 Foster the development of child-friendly online content by encouraging the creation and dissemination of educational, culturally relevant, and engaging digital materials that support learning and positive social values. Relevant authorities must assist Bhutanese developers and media producers in building safe and enriching internet platforms tailored for children.

30.13 Promote balanced and healthy digital habits by raising awareness about screen time management and the importance of balancing online activities with offline learning, physical play, and cultural engagement for children. Schools and communities should offer programmemes that integrate digital skills with traditional cultural and outdoor activities.

29.14 Parents and authorities, particularly schools, need to monitor and study children's internet use by conducting regular research to track trends, benefits, and challenges associated with internet access among children in Bhutan. These findings should be used to continually update educational programmemes, parental guidance resources, and policy frameworks to keep pace with evolving technological changes.

Internet Use for Non-educational Purposes by Children

Figure 75 Daily Internet Use for Non-education Purposes by Children

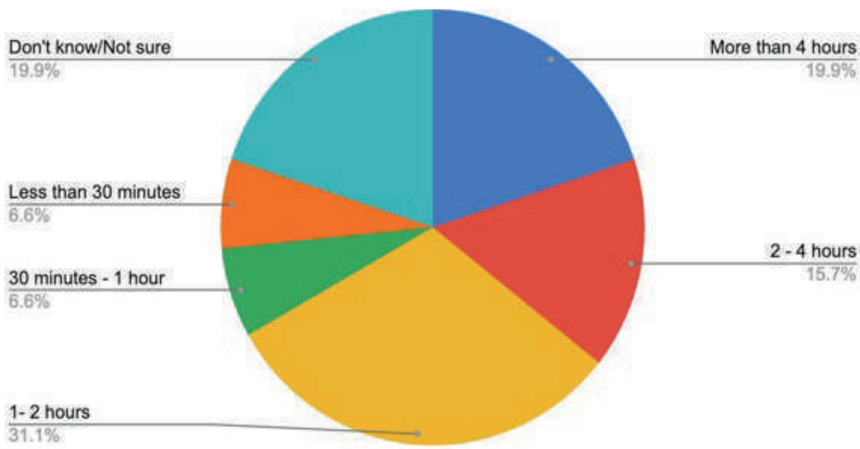


Table 78 Daily Internet Use for Non-education Purposes by Children

Duration of Internet Use	No. of Respondents	Percentage
More than 4 hours	57	19.93%
2 - 4 hours	45	15.73%
1- 2 hours	89	31.12%
30 minutes - 1 hour	19	6.64%
Less than 30 minutes	19	6.64%
Don't know/Not sure	57	19.93%

The data on internet use duration among respondents reveals a diverse range of engagement times, with significant variation in how long children spend online daily. The largest group of 31% (89 respondents), used the internet between 1 to 2 hours per day, suggesting moderate daily engagement typical of casual or routine internet users. A notable 20% (57 respondents) reported their children using the internet for more than 4 hours daily, indicating a substantial segment with high internet dependency or extensive online activity. This group of children likely includes heavy social media users, students, or digital content consumers.

Similarly, 16% (45 respondents) of the children spend 2 to 4 hours daily online, which complements the high-usage cohort, showing that over a third of the children of the respondents are engaged online. Conversely, a smaller portion spends less time with 7% (19 respondents) using it between 30 minutes to 1 hour, and another 7% (19 respondents) using it for less than 30 minutes, reflecting either limited access, more selective usage, or possibly less reliance on the internet.

Interestingly, a substantial 20% (57 respondents) are unsure or do not know how long their children use the internet, which may point to a lack of awareness or monitoring of their children's usage habits, a sign of habitual or unconscious internet engagement. The presence of nearly 20% unsure about their children's usage also signals the need for greater digital literacy and awareness campaigns to help parents manage their children's online time responsibly.

Overall, internet use varies widely, with a sizeable group of children at risk of excessive screen time and another that may be just beginning to explore digital resources. This has implications for designing targeted digital education, health promotion, and content regulation strategies.
Recommendations

30.15 Launch a massive Healthy Screen Time Guideline public awareness campaign using TV, radio, social media, and community events to widely disseminate and explain these guidelines. Emphasise that these are daily maximums and include "device-free" times, like during meals or before bed.

30.16 Offer practical training for parents, especially those unsure of their children's usage (the 20% in the survey), on how to set up parental controls on devices and home Wi-Fi. This includes demonstrating popular apps like Google Family Link or built-in phone features, how to block inappropriate content, set time limits, and understand their child's online activity reports through parental digital literacy.

30.17 Increase and promote opportunities for children to engage in non-digital activities. Through community and school programmemes.

30.18 Invest in creating high-quality, fun, and culturally relevant digital content for children in local languages like Dzongkha. This could include interactive stories, animated cartoons, educational games, and creative activities that subtly teach Bhutanese values and traditions, available on safe, curated platforms.

31. Negative Effects from Internet/Mobile Phone Use by Children

The analysis of responses about the negative effects of internet and mobile phone use on children reveals widespread concern among respondents, with several key issues consistently highlighted. First, the impact on health and physical well-being stands out prominently. The most frequently mentioned issue is damage to eyesight, cited 113 times, reflecting a significant worry about the physical consequences of prolonged screen exposure. This concern is often paired with reduced physical activity and social interaction, mentioned 92 times, suggesting that heavy device use leads to a more sedentary lifestyle that may hinder children's overall physical development. Parents also noted that children become inactive in other areas of life, reinforcing the perception that digital immersion displaces traditional active play and interpersonal engagement. These observations illustrate a clear tension between the benefits of digital connectivity and the potential costs to children's physical health.

Second, behavioural challenges and addiction form another major area of concern. "Inculcating negative behaviours" was mentioned 110 times, indicating that parents commonly observe undesirable conduct they associate with device use. Similarly, internet addiction was highlighted 109 times, with vivid accounts such as children refusing to eat without their phones, signalling how deeply dependent some children have become on digital devices. This cluster of concerns points to anxieties about the psychological and developmental effects of excessive screen time, as well as the disruption it causes within family dynamics.

Third, academic and cognitive impacts were also a dominant theme. The worry that internet and mobile phone use could lead to poor academic performance was cited 97 times. Parents perceive devices as potential distractions that may detract from learning and educational success. This reflects an ongoing struggle to balance the perceived benefits of digital tools with their risks, especially in managing children's time and focus.

Finally, exposure to inappropriate content and misinformation was raised 86 times. This concern reflects parents' awareness of the uncontrolled nature of online material and the challenges of protecting children from harmful or misleading information. It highlights the need for digital literacy, effective parental controls, and safer online environments.

In summary, parents express a deep and multifaceted anxiety over their children's use of internet and mobile phones. The dominant concerns eye strain, negative behavioural influences, and addiction are intertwined issues affecting physical health, mental well-being, social skills, and academic performance. The consistently high frequency of these concerns underscores that this is not a marginal worry but a widespread and deeply felt issue for many families.

The analysis of responses regarding the negative effects of internet/mobile phone use on children reveals a widespread concern among respondents, with specific issues being consistently highlighted.

i. Health and Physical Well-being

The most frequently cited negative effect is "Damage eye sights" (113 mentions), underscoring a significant concern for the physical health of children directly linked to prolonged screen time. This is often coupled with "Reduced physical activity/social interaction" (92 mentions), suggesting that increased screen use contributes to a more sedentary lifestyle, potentially impacting overall physical development and health. The mention of children being "Inactive for other works" further reinforces this.

Parents are highly aware of the direct physiological impacts of device use, particularly on vision, and lament the displacement of traditional active play and social engagement. This highlights a perceived trade-off between digital immersion and healthy physical development.

ii. Behavioural and Addiction Challenges

Another set of highly prevalent concerns revolves around behavioural changes and the addictive nature of internet and mobile phone use. "Inculcate negative behaviours" (110 mentions) is almost universally acknowledged, suggesting observations of undesirable conduct linked to device exposure. Closely related is "Internet addiction" (109 mentions), which parents clearly identify as a critical issue. Specific anecdotes like "Children avoid eating food without phone" vividly illustrate the pervasive nature of this addiction, where digital access becomes intertwined with even basic activities like eating.

This theme points to a deep apprehension among respondents regarding the psychological and developmental impact of excessive screen time. The high frequency of "Inculcate negative behaviours" suggests that parents witness tangible negative conduct, which they attribute to digital exposure, while "Internet addiction" is seen as a distinct and alarming condition impacting family dynamics and child independence.

iii. Academic and Cognitive Impact

The concern that internet/mobile phone use can "Lead to poor academic performance" (97 mentions) is a dominant theme. This indicates that respondents perceived a direct correlation between excessive screen time and a decline in educational outcomes.

Parents prioritise their children's academic success and recognise mobile phone use as a potential distraction or hindrance to learning. This suggests a struggle for parents to balance the perceived educational benefits or entertainment value of devices with the potential for academic decline.

iv. Content-Related Risks

The risk of "Exposure to inappropriate content/misinformation" (86 mentions) is also a frequently selected concern. While not the highest in count, its qualitative importance is high, as it pertains to safeguarding children from harmful or misleading information online.

Respondents are acutely aware of the uncontrolled nature of online content and the difficulty in shielding their children from material deemed unsuitable or deceptive. This concern speaks to issues of digital literacy, parental control, and the broader challenge of ensuring a safe online environment for minors.

In summary, most parents are deeply worried about their children's mobile phone and internet use. The overwhelming concern centres on a clear and troubling triad: eye strain, the rise of negative behaviours, and the potential for addiction. These aren't isolated problems, but interconnected issues impacting every aspect of a child's life. Parents are not just seeing one negative effect; they are witnessing a multifaceted problem, one that extends beyond the immediate, observable concerns to encompass physical health, mental well-being, social skills, and even academic performance. The sheer volume of responses, over 85 mentions for each negative effect, underscores the pervasive nature of this parental anxiety. This is not just a few worried parents; it is a widespread and deeply felt concern.

Recommendations

31.1 Develop accessible resources for parents and educators on identifying signs of internet addiction and managing compulsive device use. Establish/publicize support hotlines or counseling services for affected families. Media outlets should also responsibly portray healthy tech habits.

31.2 Schools should provide clear guidelines on device use during learning hours.

31.3 Raise awareness of the interconnected nature of issues by designing holistic public campaigns that highlight how physical health, behaviour, academics, and content exposure are all linked in digital usage. They also need to foster community discussions to share experiences and strategies for mitigating risks associated with excessive screen time and internet use.

32. Radio Listening in Bhutan

Figure 76 Radio Listening

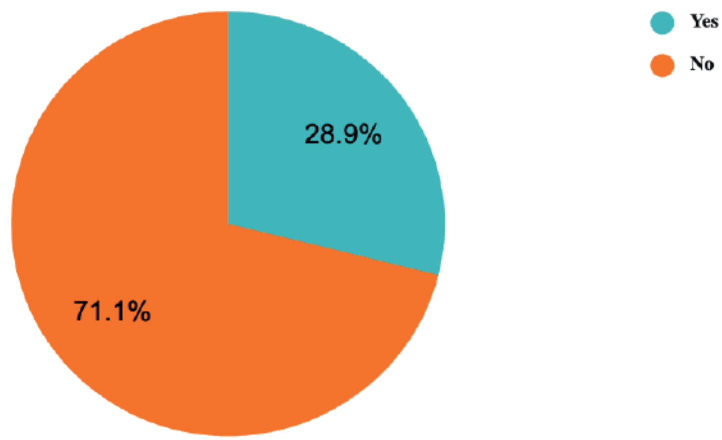


Table 79 Radio Listening

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	203	28.88%
No	500	71.12%

The data shows that only 29% of respondents reported that they listened to the radio, while a significant majority of 71% did not listen to radio. This indicates that radio, once a dominant medium, currently holds a limited reach or appeal among the surveyed population. Several factors such as the rise of television and internet-based platforms may have shifted audience preferences away from radio toward more visual and interactive media. Radio's limited programmeming variety, language options, or broadcast quality might contribute to its reduced consumption. Demographic factors such as age, urban-rural location, and education levels may also influence radio listenership patterns, with younger or urban populations possibly favouring digital alternatives.

Despite its diminished listenership, radio may still hold niche importance, especially in rural or remote areas where internet access is limited, or during times when other media are less accessible. Overall, this decline suggests that broadcasters and media planners in Bhutan need to rethink radio's role, possibly by integrating it with digital platforms, improving content relevance, or targeting underserved audiences to revitalize its impact.

Devices Used to Listen to Radio

Figure 77 Devices Used for Radio Listening

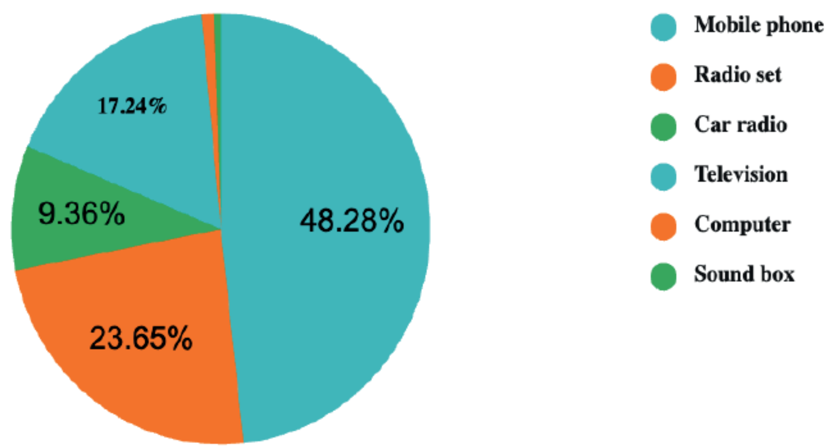


Table 80 Devices Used for Radio Listening

Device	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Mobile phone	98	48.28%
Radio set	48	23.65%
Car radio	19	9.36%
Television	35	17.24%
Computer	2	0.99%
Sound box	1	0.49%

The data on device ownership and usage highlights that mobile phones dominate as the primary medium for listening to radio with nearly half of respondents (48%) reported they used a mobile phone. This reflects the widespread penetration of mobile technology and its critical role as the gateway to radio, television, online news, and social media.

Following mobile phones, traditional devices like radio sets (24%) and televisions (17%) still maintain notable presence, though substantially less than mobile phones. The relatively high share for radio sets aligns with radio's continued importance in certain contexts, especially in rural or less digitally connected areas.

Car radios accounted for 9%, indicating that a segment of the population consumed media while traveling or commuting, albeit smaller than stationary home devices. Interestingly, computer ownership or usage as a medium to listen to radio was minimal (less than 1%), which may point to limited access to desktop or laptop devices among respondents. Lastly, the presence of sound boxes (less thasn 1%) likely portable speakers or audio devices was very marginal.

Overall, this device distribution underscores a rapid digital transition with mobile phones as the primary tool, shaping how media content is produced and delivered. Media providers must therefore prioritise mobile-friendly formats, apps, and platforms to effectively engage audiences.

Preferred Radio Stations

Figure 78 Preferred Radio Stations

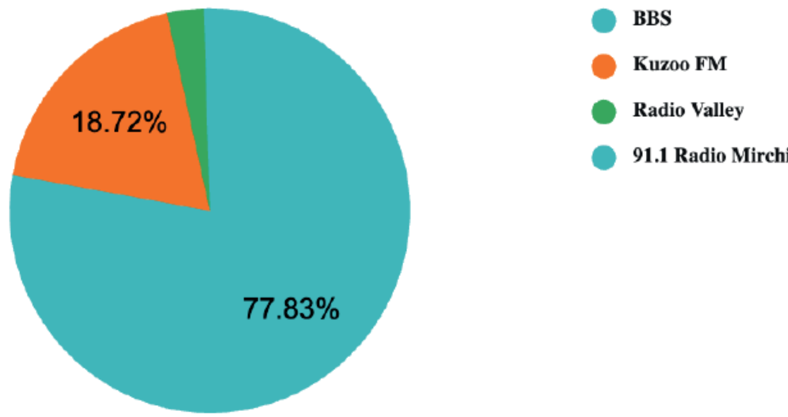


Table 81 Preferred Radio Stations

Sl. No.	Radio station	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	BBS	158	77.83%
2	Kuzoo FM	38	18.72%
3	Radio Valley	6	2.96%
4	91.1 Radio Mirchi	1	0.49%

The survey data shows a strong preference for BBS radio, with 78% of respondents who listened to the radio tuning into BBS. This overwhelming majority indicates that BBS holds a dominant position in Bhutan's radio landscape, likely due to its status as the national broadcaster, broad coverage, and trusted content.

Following BBS, Kuzoo FM captured a significant but much smaller share of 19% suggesting it served as an important alternative or complement to BBS, perhaps targeting younger or more entertainment-focused audiences. Other stations like Radio Valley (3%) and a foreign 91.1 Radio Mirchi (less than 1%) have minimal listenership, indicating a niche or limited reach in comparison.

Overall, the concentration of radio listenership around BBS highlights the broadcaster's central role in shaping public information and opinion through audio media. This dominance also points to limited competition within the radio sector, which can be both an advantage in terms of unified messaging and a challenge in fostering media plurality.

Recommendation

32.1 Media authorities like BICMA may like to consider encouraging media plurality and competition by supporting the development of new and diverse radio stations that offer alternative voices and cater to different audience interests and regions. They also need to facilitate licensing processes and reduce barriers for community and private radio stations to foster greater competition and innovation.

Preferred Location to Listen to Radio

Figure 79 Preferred Locations to Listen to Radio

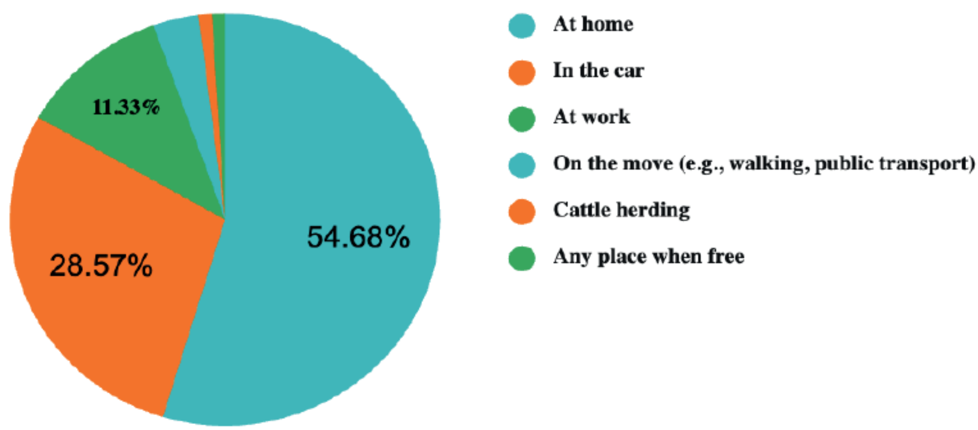


Table 82 Preferred Locations to Listen to Radio

Sl. No.	Location	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	At home	111	54.68%
2	In the car	58	28.57%
3	At work	23	11.33%
4	On the move (e.g., walking, public transport)	7	3.45%
5	Cattle herding	2	0.99%
6	Any place when free	2	0.99%

The survey findings reveal that the majority of radio listening occured at home, with 55% of respondents tuning in from their residences. This suggests that radio remains a key source of information and entertainment in the domestic environment, supporting its role in family or personal contexts where audiences can engage more fully.

A significant portion, 29%, listened to the radio in the car, highlighting radio's importance as a companion medium during travel or commuting. This reflects habits where audio media fills otherwise idle time and keeps listeners connected while on the move. Listening at work accounts for 11%, indicating that some workplaces either encouraged or accommodated radio listening, potentially for news, music, or background ambience. Smaller percentages listened on the move 4%), during cattle herding (less than 1%), or in any free moment (less than 1%), reflecting more occasional or situational engagement.

Overall, this distribution demonstrates that radio's strength lies in its versatility and accessibility, adapting to varied contexts from the home to transit, even in traditional activities like cattle herding. It also underscores the continued relevance of radio in both rural and urban lifestyles.

Influence of Radio on Lifestyle

Figure 80 Influence of Radio on Lifestyle

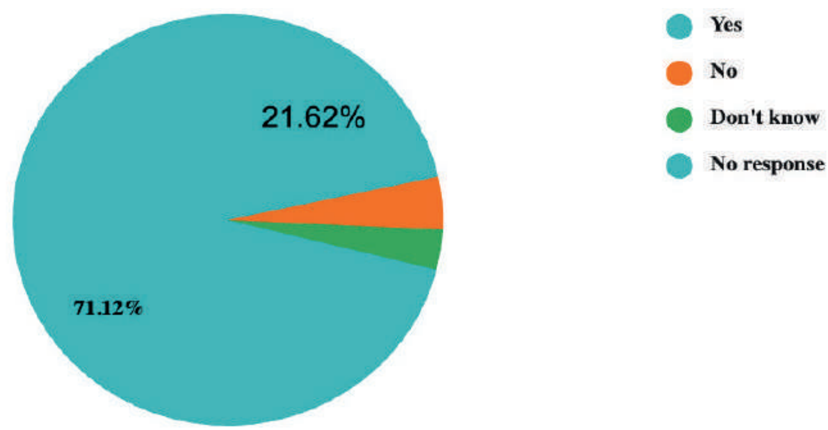


Table 83 Influence of Radio on Lifestyle

Did listening to the radio result in any changes in your life?	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	152	21.62%
No	29	4.13%
Don't know	22	3.13%
No response	500	71.12%

The data shows that only 22% of respondents reported that listening to the radio resulted in changes in their lives, while a small minority 4% said it did not, and 3% were unsure. However, a substantial 71% did not respond to this question, which suggests that the question may not have been applicable to many or that most respondents do not perceive or recall any significant impact from radio listening.

Among those who did respond, the fact that over one-fifth reported life changes indicating that radio did have a measurable influence on certain listeners potentially affecting knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, or decisions. These changes could be related to health awareness, education, social norms, or civic participation, reflecting radio's traditional strength as an accessible and community-focused medium.

The very high non-response rate could imply that radio's impact is limited to a specific subset of the population, or that many listeners consume radio passively without perceiving concrete personal effects. It could also reflect survey fatigue or ambiguity in the question's phrasing.

Overall, this suggests that while radio remains a valuable medium, its transformational potential may be underutilised or unevenly distributed among listeners. To increase its life-changing impact, radio programmeming could be enhanced with more interactive, practical, and locally relevant content designed to engage and motivate audiences toward positive action.

Radio as a Change Agent

For the 66 respondents who indicated that listening to the radio had brought changes to their lives, the impact was broad and meaningful, touching on informational, educational, social, and deeply personal dimensions. Many respondents described multiple ways in which radio had influenced them, demonstrating its continued relevance and reach in Bhutanese society.

The most frequently cited impact was gaining knowledge and skills, with 85% of respondents reporting that radio contributed to their learning and the development of practical abilities. This underscores the role of radio as an accessible educational platform, especially valuable in areas or situations where formal learning opportunities may be limited.

Closely following, 83% of respondents mentioned receiving timely news and information through radio broadcasts. This highlights radio's role as a reliable source of current events and essential updates, especially in communities where internet access may not be consistent or widely available.

For 70% of respondents, listening to the radio fostered a stronger connection to their community and nation. Radio content particularly in local languages appears to play a unifying role, reinforcing a shared sense of identity and belonging.

More than half (55%) said radio helped them better understand different perspectives, showing that it also functions as a platform for dialogue, social awareness, and exposure to a range of viewpoints. This can be particularly important in encouraging critical thinking and empathy.

Some listeners (18%) reported participating in live call-in shows or requesting music, reflecting radio's interactive dimension. This level of engagement indicates that listeners are not just passive consumers but active participants, using the platform to express themselves and connect with others.

In a deeply personal reflection, one respondent shared "Especially choeshay radio, it really touched my soul, because I am old, I cannot attend any preaching physically but I never miss radio." This highlights a powerful spiritual and emotional connection, where radio serves not only as a source of religious teachings but as a comforting and constant presence in listeners' lives especially for the elderly or those with limited mobility.

In summary, radio in Bhutan is far more than a medium for broadcasting. It is a dynamic, trusted, and deeply embedded part of daily life providing knowledge, connecting people, offering a platform for participation, and delivering spiritual comfort. Its impact, as described by listeners, affirms the value of preserving and strengthening this medium as part of Bhutan's evolving media landscape.

33. Overall Perception of Media in Bhutan

Figure 81 Overall Media Perception

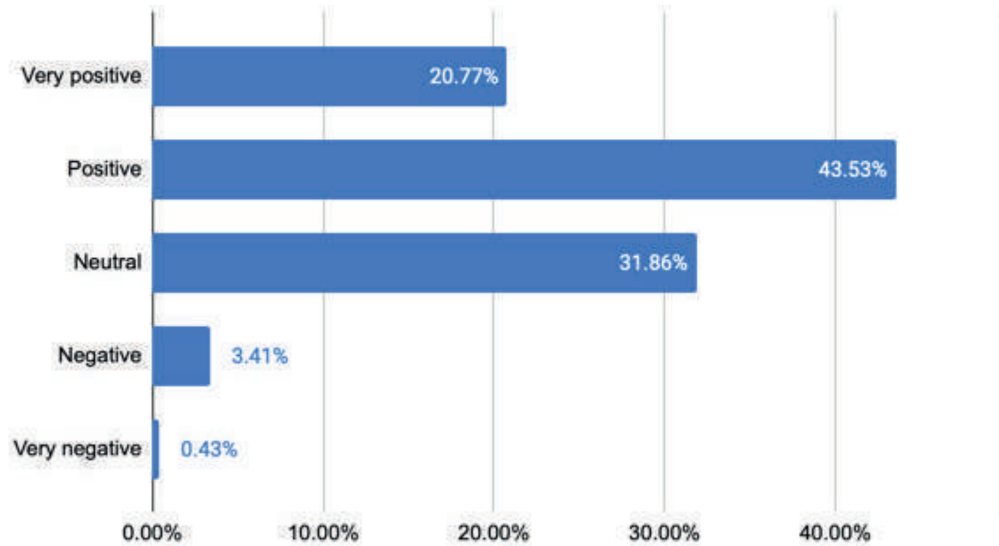


Table 84 Overall Media Perception

Rating	No. of Respondents	Percentage
5 (Very positive)	146	20.77%
4 (Positive)	306	43.53%
3 (Neutral)	224	31.86%
2 (Negative)	24	3.41%
1 (Very negative)	3	0.43%

Overall perception of media in Bhutan as an aggregate of responses stands at 3.81 (between a very high of 5 and very low of 1)

The data reveals a generally positive public perception of media in Bhutan. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 indicates a very high perception and 1 a very low one, the average rating stands at 3.81. This suggests that, overall, Bhutanese media is viewed as credible, relevant, and performing reasonably well in the eyes of the public.

The largest proportion of respondents (44%) rated the media a 4, reflecting a strong but not absolute level of approval. Another 21% gave the highest rating of 5, indicating very high satisfaction and trust among a significant segment of the population. Combined, these two categories account for nearly two-thirds of all responses (64%), underscoring a largely favourable impression of media performance.

Meanwhile, 32% of respondents gave a moderate rating of 3, suggesting a more neutral or mixed view. These individuals may acknowledge the media's efforts while also recognizing areas for improvement.

Only a small fraction of over 3% respondents expressed dissatisfaction rated the media a 2, and just less than 1% rated it the lowest at 1. This minimal negative feedback suggests that outright discontent with Bhutanese media is rare.

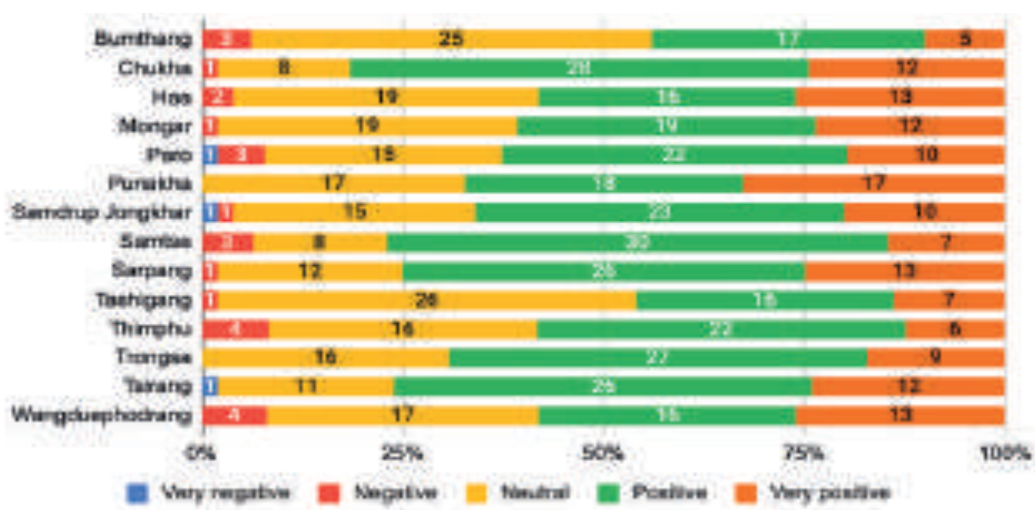
In summary, the overall score of 3.81 and the distribution of responses reflect a media landscape that is broadly respected and trusted, though there remains room for enhancement in areas such as diversity of coverage, inclusivity, and critical reporting. The generally positive sentiment presents a strong foundation on which Bhutanese media can continue to grow and evolve.

Overall Media Perception - Standard Deviation

The Standard Deviation for the "Overall Media Perception Score" is approximately 0.82. This value indicates a relatively low to moderate spread in the data, meaning most respondents' perceptions are fairly concentrated around the mean (3.81), suggesting a general consistency in overall media perception.

Dzongkhags and Media Perception

Figure 82 Dzongkhags & Media Perception



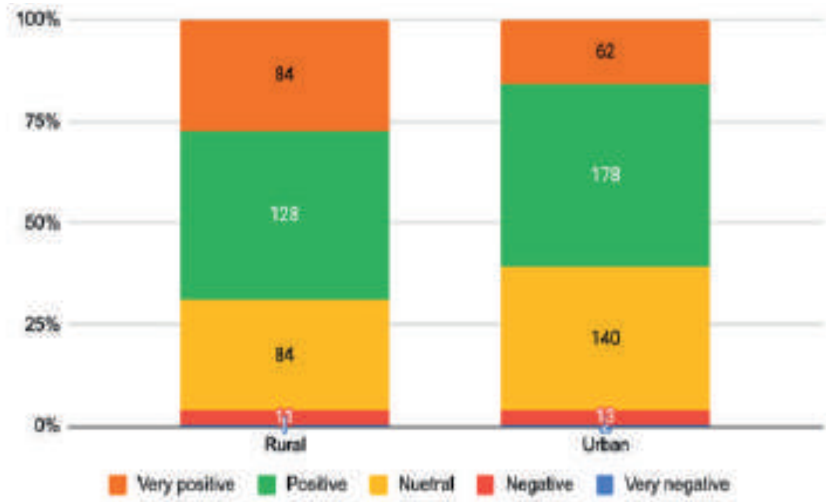
The Chi-Square Test of Independence revealed a statistically significant association between a respondent's Dzongkhag (location of survey) and their overall perception of media in Bhutan ($\chi 2=79.37$, df = 52, p = 0.009). This finding indicates that the observed differences in media perception across various Dzongkhags are unlikely to be due to random chance. This means that the specific location where someone lives in Bhutan plays a significant role in shaping how they perceive the media.

Recommendation

33.1 Improve media literacy among the public by launching nationwide campaigns to help citizens critically evaluate news sources, understand biases, and recognise misinformation. They also need to equip audiences with tools to engage responsibly with media, especially digital and social platforms.

Urban/Rural Respondents and Media Perception

Figure 83 Urban/Rural Setting & Media Perception



The Chi-Square Test of Independence revealed a statistically significant association between a respondent's area of residence (rural or urban) and their overall perception of media in Bhutan ($\chi2=15.45$, df = 4, p = 0.004). This finding indicates that the observed differences in media perception between rural and urban populations are unlikely to be due to random chance, and that a person's area of residence likely plays a significant role in shaping their perception of the media in Bhutan.

Gender and Media Perception

Figure 84 Gender & Media Perception

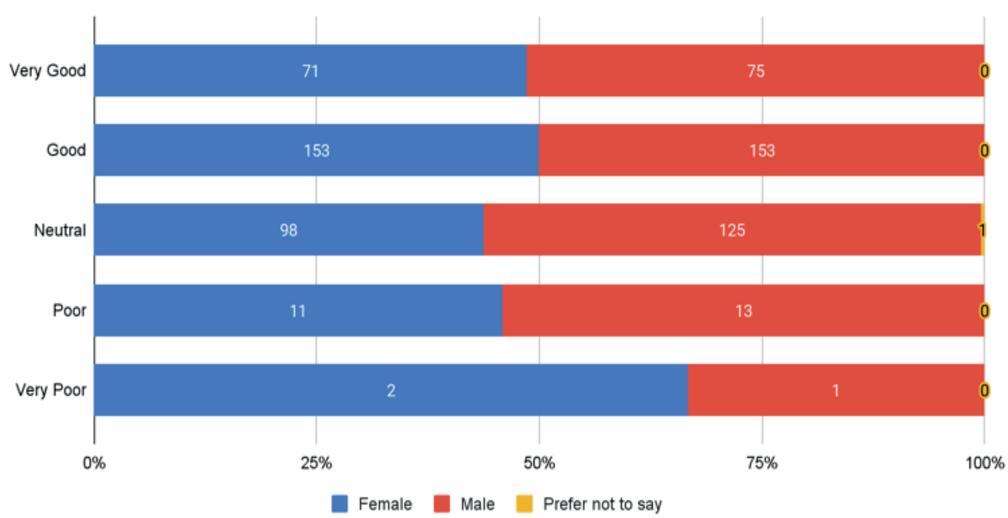


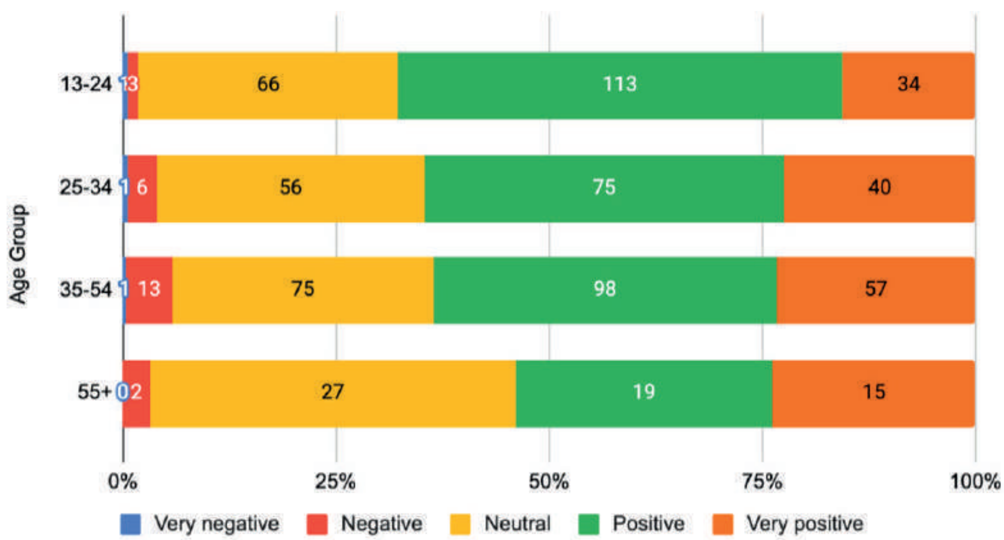
Table 85 Gender & Media Perception

Gender	1	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Female	2	11	98	153	71	335
Male	1	13	125	153	75	367
Prefer not to say			1			1
Grand Total	**3**	**24**	**224**	**306**	**146**	**703**

The Chi-Square Test of Independence revealed a highly statistically significant association between a respondent's gender and their overall perception of media in Bhutan ($\chi2=294.24$, df = 8, $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that a person's gender plays a highly significant role in shaping how they perceive the media in Bhutan.

Age and Media Perception

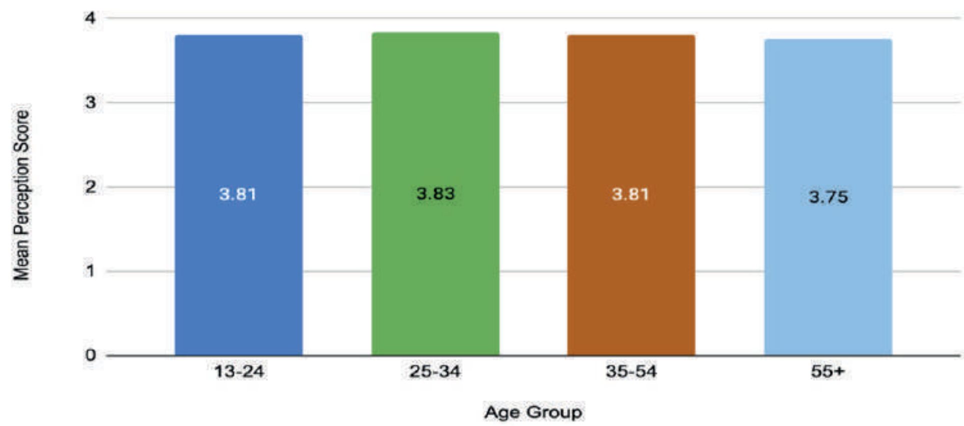
Figure 85 Age & Media Perception



The Chi-Square Test of Independence revealed no statistically significant association between a respondent's age group and their overall perception of media in Bhutan ($\chi2=19.22$, df = 12, $p = 0.083$). Although some differences in how various age groups perceived the media were observed, these variations are likely just due to random chance and do not represent a real pattern related to age ($p=0.083$). This suggests that other demographic or personal experiences, rather than age itself, may play a more important role in shaping how individuals perceive media in Bhutan.

The One-Way ANOVA test was conducted to examine if there is a statistically significant difference in the mean overall media perception scores across different age groups. The analysis revealed no statistically significant difference in mean media perception scores among the age groups ($F(3, 698) = 0.15$, $p = 0.930$). This finding indicates that any observed variations in average media perception across the age categories are likely due to random sampling variability and do not represent true differences in the population.

Figure 86 Age & Mean Perception Scores



The mean perception scores for each group were very similar: 13-24 (3.81), 25-34 (3.83), 35-54 (3.81), and 55+ (3.75). This reinforces the conclusion that age, when categorized into these broader groups, does not appear to be a significant factor in determining the overall perception of media in Bhutan. This aligns with the previous Chi-Square test result for age, which also found no significant association. Therefore, other factors are likely more influential in shaping media perception irrespective of age.
Marital Status and Media Perception

Figure 87 Marital Status & Media Perception

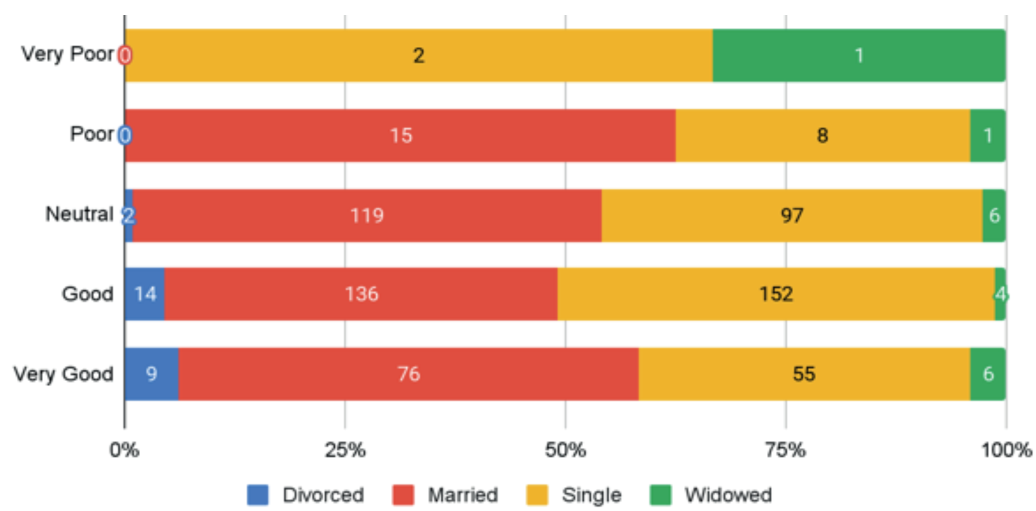


Table 86 Marital Status & Media Perception

Marital status	1	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Divorced			2	14	9	25
Married		15	119	136	76	346
Single	2	8	97	152	55	314
Widowed	1	1	6	4	6	18
Grand Total	**3**	**24**	**224**	**306**	**146**	**703**

The Chi-Square Test of Independence revealed a statistically significant association between a respondent's marital status and their overall perception of media in Bhutan ($\chi 2=32.82$, df = 12, p = 0.001). This suggests that a person's marital status plays a significant role in shaping how they perceive the media in Bhutan.

Education and Media Perception

Figure 88 Education & Media Perception

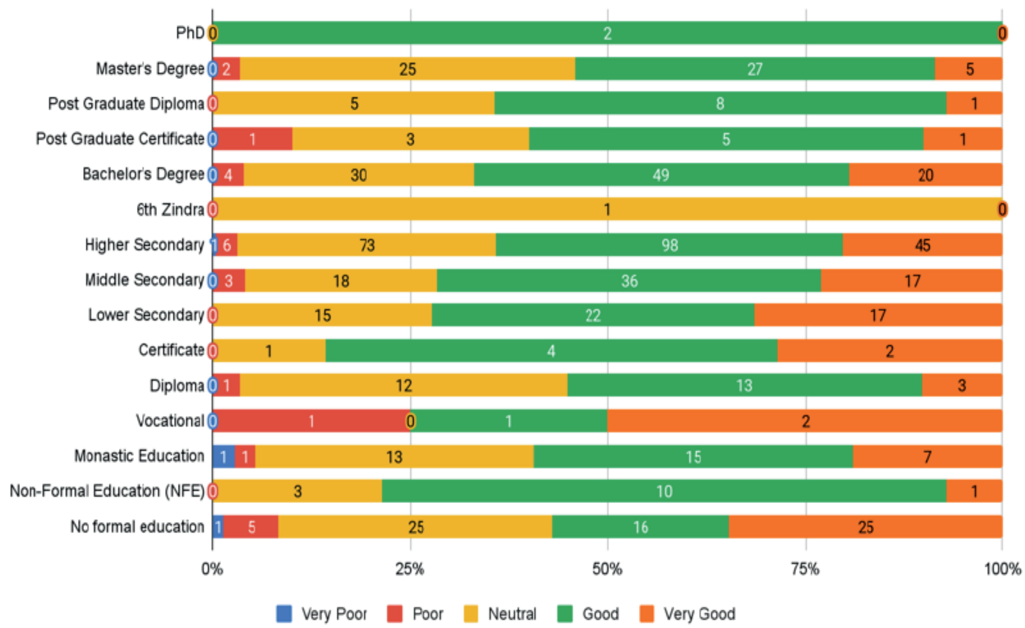


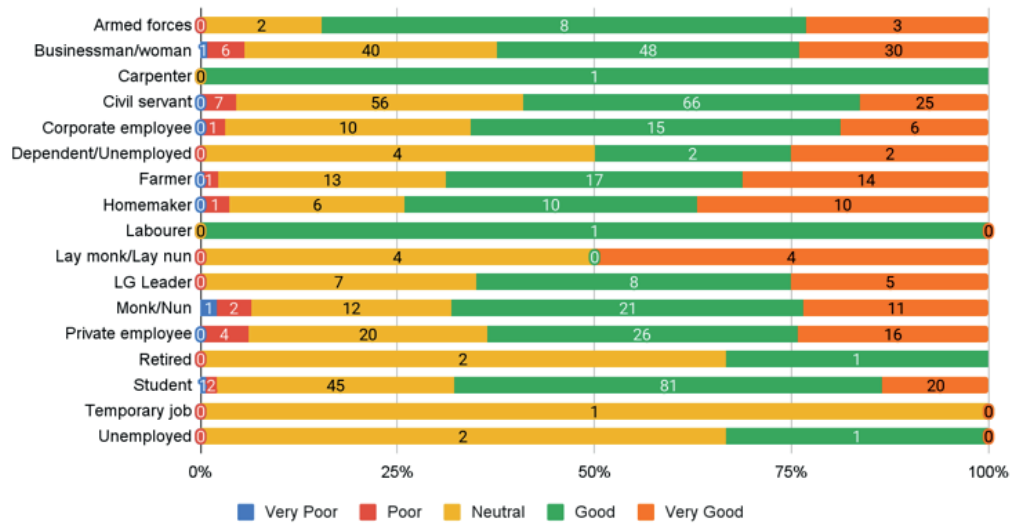
Table 87 Education & Media Perception

Education Level	1	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
PhD	0	0	0	2	0	2
Master's Degree	0	2	25	27	5	59
Post Graduate Diploma	0	0	5	8	1	14
Post Graduate Certificate	0	1	3	5	1	10
Bachelor's Degree	0	4	30	49	20	103
Higher Secondary	1	6	73	98	45	223
Middle Secondary	0	3	18	36	17	74
Lower Secondary	0	0	15	22	17	54
Diploma	0	1	12	13	3	29
Certificate	0	0	1	4	2	7
6th Zindra	0	0	1	0	0	1
Monastic Education	1	1	13	15	7	37
Vocational	0	1	0	1	2	4
Non-Formal Education (NFE)	0	0	3	10	1	14
No formal education	1	5	25	16	25	72
Grand Total	**3**	**24**	**224**	**306**	**146**	**703**

The Chi-Square Test of Independence revealed a highly statistically significant association between a respondent's education level and their overall perception of media in Bhutan ($\chi2=225.66$, df = 56, $p < 0.001$). This means that a person's education level plays a highly significant role in shaping how they perceive the media in Bhutan.

Occupation and Media Perception

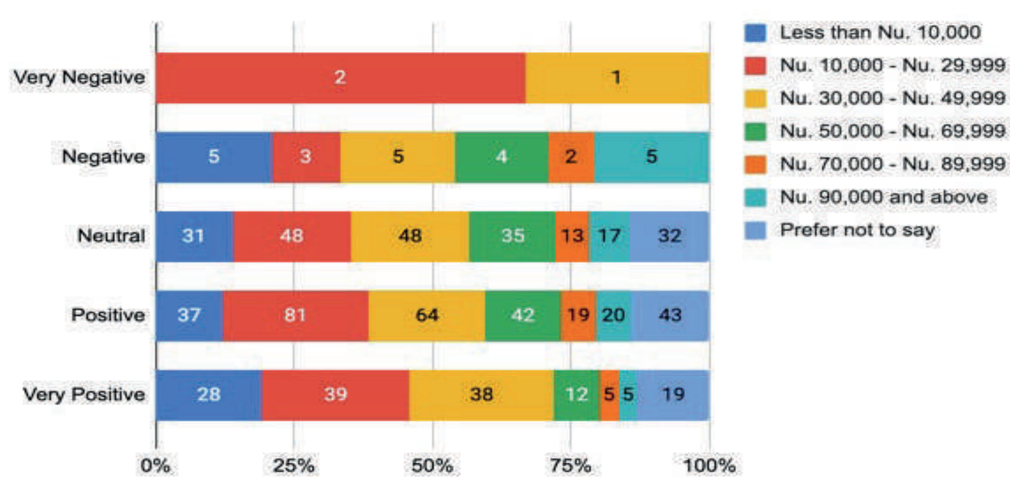
Figure 89 Occupation & Media Perception



The Chi-Square Test of Independence revealed no statistically significant association between a respondent's occupation and their overall perception of media in Bhutan ($\chi2=64.60$, df = 64, p = 0.456). Although we observed some differences in how various occupations perceive media, our statistical analysis indicates these variations are not strong enough to conclude that a person's job significantly influences their overall view of media in Bhutan. This means that, based on our sample, there is not a clear statistical link between someone's occupation and their media perception, suggesting other factors likely play a more prominent role.

Family Income and Media Perception

Figure 90 Family Income & Media Perception

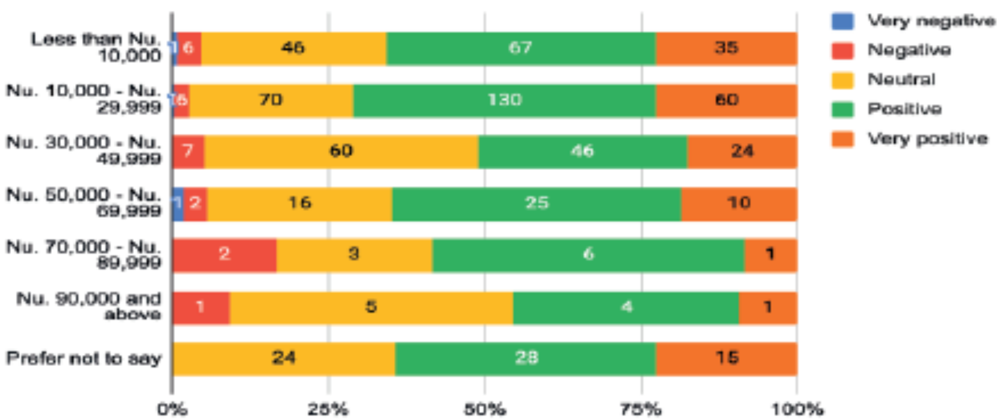


The Chi-Square Test of Independence revealed no statistically significant association between a respondent's total monthly family income and their overall perception of media in Bhutan ($\chi2=31.50$, df = 24, p = 0.140). This finding indicates that the observed differences in media perception across various income brackets are likely due to random chance and do not represent a systematic relationship.

Despite some variations in observed counts across different income levels and perception scores, the statistical test suggests that these differences are not significant enough to conclude that family income influences one's overall media perception in this sample. This implies that other demographic or experiential factors may play a more prominent role in shaping how individuals perceive media in Bhutan, irrespective of their household income.

Family Expenditure and Media Perception

Figure 91 Family Expenditure & Media Perception



The Chi-Square Test of Independence revealed no statistically significant association between a respondent's total monthly family expenditure and their overall perception of media in Bhutan ($\chi2=34.10$, df = 24, p = 0.083).

Similar to the earlier finding on family income, our statistical analysis did not reveal a significant association between a respondent's family expenditure level and their overall perception of media in Bhutan. While some variations were noted in media perception across different expenditure brackets, these differences were not statistically strong enough to conclude that household spending directly influences media perception in this sample. This implies that factors other than family expenditure may play a more prominent role in shaping how individuals perceive media in Bhutan, irrespective of their household spending.

34. Way Forward for Bhutanese Media

The responses regarding desired changes in Bhutanese media reveal a collective yearning for a more dynamic, credible, and comprehensive media landscape. While a segment of the population expresses satisfaction with the current offerings, the majority articulated specific areas for significant improvement, spanning accuracy, independence, content diversity, and engagement.

An examination of the responses highlights several key aspirations for the future of media in Bhutan, with a strong emphasis on journalistic integrity, broader content, and enhanced public engagement.

i. Demand for Enhanced Accuracy, Credibility, and Depth

The most prominent and frequently voiced desire is for greater accuracy, truth, and credibility in reporting, often coupled with a call for more in-depth and unbiased analysis. Over 70 unique responses directly or indirectly mentioned this critical need. Respondents want "Correct and accurate information" and the "full story or news" rather than superficial headlines. There is a clear demand for "Quality reporting" where "Truth First" is the paramount principle, ensuring information is "supported by evidence" and "factual."

Many expressed concerns about the spread of misinformation, stating, "I feel like some news provided by our media cannot be trusted, no matter the situations, our media should be "Truth First"." The need for "unbiased news and up to date information" and "in-depth information, accuracy of facts and analysis-based articles" was consistently highlighted. Some directly called for the media to "expose corruption and go deeper investigation," indicating a desire for robust investigative journalism that reports "without fear."

ii. Call for Media Independence and Autonomy

A significant portion of respondents (around 20) expressed a strong desire for Bhutanese media to operate independently from political and governmental influence. There is a clear aspiration for journalists and media houses to be given "absolute right" and for "no need of higher authorities to get in between."

Respondents envisioned a media that can "act independently from the politics" and provide "uncensored, clear and precise news." One poignant remark emphasised, "it is a time for our media to act independently from the government," highlighting a perceived lack of autonomy. This sentiment is further reinforced by calls for "Independent Media" outlets where "Government should not over rule the media houses and allow access of information."

iii. Expansion and Diversification of Content & Channels

There is a widespread appetite for a broader range of content and a more diverse media landscape, mentioned by over 50 unique responses. This includes a desire for more entertainment, educational content, programmemes on hobbies, health, environment, and traditional Bhutanese culture. Many also wish for more channels and a wider international scope.

Many respondents desired a media that could be "more dynamic with a number of TV channels that cover a wide range of coverage like entertainment, educational, hobbies, health, environmental, etc…" There is a specific yearning for "more of old traditional entertainment programmemes such as Lozey, Tsangmo and Driglam Namzha programmeme" to preserve cultural heritage. Furthermore, the call for "more Dzongkha language news to be uploaded on their Facebook pages" indicates a desire for content in local languages across various platforms.

iv. Improved Engagement, Modernization, and Timeliness

Respondents desired a more dynamic, engaging, and timely media, with approximately 25 mentions. This includes a push for "breaking news" and "live coverage in almost all the Dzongkhags," alongside improved "consistency in reporting" and promptness. There is also an interest in the modernization of media formats and better utilization of digital platforms.

The perceived lag in reporting is a concern, with one respondent noting, "for my 42 years of living, I have never seen our official media outlets like BBS covering spot breaking news like people do through Facebook and TikTok." There is a wish for "Truth and quick service" and for news to be delivered "timely."

v. Greater Focus on Local and Rural Issues

A distinct theme emerging from approximately 15 responses is the desire for media to expand its coverage to include more local and rural issues. Many felt that news from remote areas is often neglected or published late.

Respondents explicitly asked for "rural news that are mostly left in uncovered, and are often late to publish." There is a strong desire for the media to "cover every corner of our country" and to focus on the "rural issues" more comparatively to urban ones, ensuring all communities feel represented.

vi. Enhanced Professionalism and Regulation

About 20 responses touched upon the need for enhanced professionalism within the media industry and better regulation of media content. This includes calls for higher standards in journalism, ethical reporting, and a clear regulatory framework.

Concerns about "misinformation creating chaos and unrest" lead to calls for social media platforms like TikTok and Facebook to be "regulating with our laws." There is also a subtle desire for professionalism in presentation, with one respondent suggesting that "all the TV media can have a dress code (proper dress with wonju and full kira if possible)," reflecting a blend of cultural pride and professionalism. Other comments expressed the need for "good norms for media" and for "transparency" in reporting to avoid bias.

vii. Satisfaction with Current Media/No Changes

Despite the widespread calls for change, a notable segment of the respondents (over 30) expressed satisfaction with the current state of Bhutanese media or offered no specific suggestions for change. These responses included "Nothing," "No opinion," "Do not have opinion," "I am satisfied with what I am receiving right now," or "No need for any changes."

This indicates that while many desire reforms, a substantial portion of the audience feels adequately served by the existing media landscape.

Essentially, the analysis highlights a public that is increasingly discerning and engaged with media, reflecting a maturing media environment in Bhutan. The dominant themes point towards a desire for a media that not only informs accurately and deeply but also acts as an independent, diverse, and responsive platform for national discourse. While traditional cultural preservation remains important, there is a strong call for modernization and broader engagement, particularly through digital means and a focus on previously underserved rural communities. The significant number of satisfied respondents suggests that Bhutanese media is already fulfilling fundamental information needs for a segment of the population, but significant opportunities for growth and improvement exist in meeting the evolving demands for transparency, independence, and diverse content.

Recommendations for the Future of Bhutanese Media

34.1 For the future media development, it was recommended by the respondents that media platforms need to prioritise accuracy, credibility, and in-depth reporting by establishing and enforcing strict journalistic standards that emphasise factual accuracy, evidence-based reporting, and impartial analysis. They also need to promote investigative journalism initiatives that explore corruption, governance issues, and social concerns to foster transparency and accountability, while developing fact-checking mechanisms to combat misinformation and build public trust.

34.2 It was also recommended that media outlets need to strengthen media independence and autonomy by advocating for legal and institutional frameworks that safeguard media from political and governmental interference. They also need to support the creation of independent media outlets with operational autonomy, free from undue influence, to ensure unbiased reporting, and encourage policies that protect journalists and media organisations from censorship or undue pressure.

34.3 Further, it was suggested that media outlets need to expand and diversify content and platforms by broadening content offerings to include entertainment, educational programmemes, health, environment, and cultural preservation, ensuring they cater to the diverse interests of the audience. They also need to increase the production of content in local languages, particularly Dzongkha, across various media platforms such as social media, television, and radio. Additionally, it was asserted that media houses should develop more channels and digital platforms that allow for a wider range of programmeming, including traditional entertainment like Lozey, Tsangmo, and cultural programmemes, to better reflect Bhutan’s rich heritage and evolving audience preferences.

34.4 Similarly, it was recommended that media houses need to increase focus on local and rural issues by dedicating resources to covering rural and remote areas, ensuring that local concerns receive timely and comprehensive coverage. They also need to establish community reporting initiatives that empower local voices and foster inclusive national discourse. Further, they should highlight success stories and challenges from rural communities to promote balanced and equitable national development.

34.5 At the same time, it was recommended that media platforms need to enhance professionalism and regulatory frameworks by implementing comprehensive codes of ethics and conduct for journalists and media personnel, emphasizing professionalism, cultural sensitivity, and integrity. They also need to strengthen regulatory mechanisms to monitor and address misinformation, hate speech, and inappropriate content, particularly on social media platforms. Moreover, they should promote media literacy programmemes to educate the public on identifying credible sources and understanding media biases, helping to create a more informed and discerning audience.

34.6 It was also recommended that media outlets need to maintain and build upon existing strengths by recognizing the segments of the population that are satisfied with current media offerings and ensuring the ongoing quality and accessibility of content. They also need to foster a culture of continuous improvement, innovation, and cultural preservation within the media landscape, ensuring that Bhutanese media evolves while staying connected to its roots.

In summary, it was recommended that Bhutanese media should strive to become a more credible, independent, and inclusive platform that balances tradition with modernization. By implementing these recommendations, Bhutan can nurture a vibrant media ecosystem that informs accurately, engages actively, and fosters national cohesion and development.

Conclusion

The Media Perception Index survey conducted by JAB, encompassing 703 respondents across 14 dzongkhags, offers a comprehensive and timely overview of public attitudes toward Bhutanese media. The findings highlight a landscape of both continuity and change: traditional media outlets such as BBS Television and BBS Radio continue to enjoy high levels of trust and preference, yet digital platforms are rapidly reshaping the information environment.

Notably, social media has emerged as the dominant source of information, surpassing traditional print and broadcast media. While this shift caters to the demand for instant, accessible, and interactive content, it also reveals a significant trust gap, many users remain skeptical about the neutrality and reliability of social media content, exposing a critical challenge for credible information dissemination.

Print media consumption shows mixed trends. Kuensel and The Bhutanese remain the most read newspapers, though Kuensel's paywall has impacted its reach, whereas The Bhutanese benefits from a more loyal readership. Other publications, Business Bhutan, Bhutan Times, Bhutan Today, Gyalchi Sarshog, and The Journalist, face visibility and relevance challenges, highlighting the need for strategic reforms to expand their accessibility and engagement.

The survey also brings attention to concerns surrounding children's use of digital devices. While mobile phones and the internet offer educational and social benefits, parents express worries about health risks, behavioural impacts, academic distractions, and exposure to harmful content. These issues underscore the urgent need for comprehensive digital literacy programmemes, parental guidance, and content regulation.

Language patterns further illustrate a complex media landscape. English dominates digital and print spaces, especially among urban and literate populations, while Dzongkha remains prevalent in traditional radio and television. There remains an opportunity to develop more inclusive, regionally diverse media content that reflects Bhutan's linguistic and cultural richness.

With an average perception score of 3.81 out of 5, Bhutanese media is generally regarded positively. However, nearly half of respondents expressed uncertainty about bias and impartiality, emphasizing the need to strengthen media literacy and critical engagement across society.

In conclusion, the Media Perception Index reveals a media ecosystem in transition, balancing public trust in legacy institutions with the disruptive influence of digital platforms.

Moving forward, it is important to reinforce journalistic integrity, promote media pluralism, and invest in digital and media literacy initiatives. Such efforts will enable citizens, especially youth, to navigate the increasingly complex information landscape with discernment, confidence, and safety, ultimately fostering a resilient, inclusive, and well-informed society in the digital age.

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Annexures

Annexure 1. Field Survey Questionnaire

Media Perception Index: Citizen Survey 2025
The survey aims to develop a media perception index that assessed and measured public perceptions, opinions, and attitudes toward the media. This involved evaluating trust, reliability, and performance through face-to-face interviews, survey questionnaires, and engagements with educational institutions, government offices, and business entities. It is also to understand the impact of access to information and media on Bhutanese society, economy, and governance

Media Perception Index: Citizen Survey 2025

Introduction for Interviewer (Guidance)

Kuzuzangpola!

My name is [Name of interviewer]. I am representing the Journalists' Association of Bhutan (JAB).

We are carrying out the Public's Media Perception Survey throughout the country to understand the impact of access to information and media on Bhutanese society, economy, and governance. We aim to use the data to provide better information and media services.

We assure you that we will take appropriate measures to keep all information confidential. Your information will be valuable to achieve the objectives of the study. The interview will take approximately 30 - 45 minutes

* Indicates a required question

Section 2: Interview Logistics & Demographic

1. **Dzongkhag Name (permanent address)** * *Mark only one oval.*

- ◯ Thimphu
- ◯ Haa
- ◯ Paro
- ◯ Punakha
- ◯ Wangduephodrang
- ◯ Samtse
- ◯ Chukha
- ◯ Trongsa
- ◯ Bumthang
- ◯ Mongar
- ◯ Lhuentse
- ◯ Trashigang
- ◯ Tashiyangtse
- ◯ Samdrup Jongkhar
- ◯ Pemagatshel
- ◯ Zhemgang
- ◯ Gasa
- ◯ Dagana
- ◯ Tsirang
- ◯ Sarpang

2. **Gewog/Town Name** *

3. **Chiwog Name** *

4. Household Serial No. *

5. Dzongkhag Name (present address) * *Mark only one oval.*

- Thimphu
- Paro
- Haa
- Chukha
- Samtse
- Punakha
- Wangduephodrang
- Tsirang
- Sarpang
- Trongsa
- Bumthang
- Mongar
- Trashigang
- Samdrup Jongkhar

6. Gewog Name / Enumeration Area (present address) *

7. Area of Residence: * *Mark only one oval.*

- Rural
- Urban

8. Household Size (Number of members) *

9. Number of Individuals Above 16 Years in Household *

10. Interviewer's Name *

11. Date of Interview *

Example: 7 January 2019

12. Supervisor's Name *

13. Data Entry Person's Name *

INITIAL SCREENING

14. Do you use any of the media available in Bhutan (Radio, TV, Newspapers, Internet, Mobile)? * *Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

CONSENT

15. Is it fine if we start the interview? * *Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

16. What is your age (in completed years)? *

17. Please specify your gender. * *Mark only one oval.*

- Female
- Prefer not to say
- Male
- Other:____________________

18. What is your current marital status? * *Mark only one oval.*

- Single
- Divorced
- Married
- Widowed

19. What is the highest level of education you have completed? * *Mark only one oval.*

- No formal education
- Higher Secondary
- Non-Formal Education (NFE)
- Diploma
- Primary School
- Certificate
- Lower Secondary
- Vocational
- Middle Secondary
- Monastic Education (Please specify level if applicable)

Bachelor's Degree

Master's Degree

Post Graduate Certificate

PhD

Post Graduate Diploma

Other ____________________

20. What is your current occupation? * *Mark only one oval.*

Civil servant

Corporate employee

Private employee

Student

Farmer

Armed forces

Businessman/woman (Self-employed)

Other: ____________________

Monk/Nun

Lay monk/Lay nun

Dependent/Unemployed

Homemaker (Taking care of the house)

Retired

FAMILY INCOME

21. What is your estimated total monthly family expenditure? * *Mark only one oval.*

Less than Nu. 10,000

Nu. 10,000 - Nu. 29,999

Nu. 30,000 - Nu. 49,999

Nu. 50,000 - Nu. 69,999

Nu. 70,000 - Nu. 89,999

Nu. 90,000 and above

Prefer not to say

22. What is your total monthly family income? * *Mark only one oval.*

Less than Nu. 10,000

Nu. 10,000 - Nu. 29,999

Nu. 30,000 - Nu. 49,999

Nu. 50,000 - Nu. 69,999

Nu. 70,000 - Nu. 89,999

Nu. 90,000 and above

Prefer not to say

Internet access

23. Do you have access to your own mobile phone? * *Mark only one oval.*

◯ Yes ◯ No

24. Do you have access to Internet on your phone / at home? * *Mark only one oval.*

◯ Yes ◯ No

MEDIA CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

25. How often do you consume news from the following sources? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Daily	Several times a week	Weekly	Occasionally (1- 3 times a month)	Rarely (less than once a month)	Never
Television Bhutanese	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Bhutanese Newspapers	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
International Newspapers (print)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
International Television	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
International Radio	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Online News Websites (Bhutanese)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Online News Websites (International)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Social Media Platforms (for news)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Mobile News Apps	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Newsletters (email/digital)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Magazines (print/digital)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Community Information Centre	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

26. Are there any other news sources you use that were not listed above? If yes, please specify one

27. How often do you consume news from the 'Other' source you just mentioned? *Mark only one oval.*

- Daily
- Several times a week
- Weekly
- Occasionally (1-3 times a month)
- Rarely (less than once a month)
- Not applicable (I didn't list another source)
- Never

28. In which language/dialect do you typically listen to, view, or read the following sources? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Dzongkha	English	Tshanglakha	Lhotsham-kha	Dzongkha and English
Television Bhutanese					
Bhutanese Radio					
Bhutanese Newspaper					
Online News Websites					
Social Media					

29. Is there any other language/dialect in which you listen, view or read news besides the ones already listed - Dzongkha, English, Tshanglakha and Lhotshamkha?

30. Which sources do you primarily use for entertainment? (Tick up to three that you use most often)

Tick all that apply.

- Television
- Streaming Services (e.g., Netflix, Samuh, other OTTs)
- Social Media (e.g., YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, Instagram)
- Radio
- Other:
- Online Gaming
- Videos/Films (e.g., DVDs, local film downloads)
- Music/Drama/Live shows
- Podcasts

31. Are there any other entertainment sources you use that were not listed above? If yes, please specify one.

32. What are your primary reasons for using media? (Tick all that apply) *

Tick all that apply.

- News
- Learning about issues
- Entertainment
- Communication
- Advertising/Shopping
- Following specific interests/hobbies

33. Are there any other reasons you use media for not listed above? If yes, please specify one.

34. If you use a mobile phone, what type of phone do you use? * *Mark only one oval.*

- Smartphone
- Feature Phone
- Other: ______________________
- Not applicable (I don't use a mobile phone)

FREQUENCY OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE

35. How often do you use the following social media platforms? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Daily	Several times a week	Weekly	Occasionally (1 - 3 times a month)	Rarely (less than once a month)	Don't Use	Never
Telegram							
WeChat							
WhatsApp							
Facebook							
Messenger							
Instagram							

YouTube							
LinkedIn							
TikTok							
X (formerly Twitter)							
Snapchat							

Other Social Media platform

36. Do you use any other social media platforms not listed above? * *Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No *Skip to question 38*

Other Social Media platform frequency

37. How often do you use it? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Daily	Several times a week	Weekly	Occasionally (1- 3 times a month)	Rarely (less than once a month)	Don't Use	Never
Row 1							

Family expenditure: How much does your family/household spend on each of the following media every month (in Nu.)?

38. Television Subscription (Cable/DTH): Nu. *

39. Streaming Services (e.g., Netflix, Samuh, other OTTs) *

40. Internet Service (Home Broadband/Fiber) *

41. **Mobile Phone Data/Recharge** (personal) *

42. **Newspapers and Magazines** (subscriptions/purchases) *

43. **Books** (purchases) *

44. **Cinema/Movie Rentals/Purchases ***

45. **Music Streaming/Downloads** *

46. **Others** (Specify) *

Information and Media Coverage

47. **Please indicate the three (3) most important topics you would like to see covered more in Bhutanese media (in order of importance, 1 being most importance)**

48. For the topics important to you, how satisfied are you with the quality of reporting by Bhutanese media?

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 = Very unsatisfied	2 = Unsatisfied	3 = Neutral	4 = Satisfied	5 = Very satisfied,	Not applicable/Don't follow this topic
Social Issues	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Political Issues	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Environmental Issues	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Religious and Cultural Issues	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Economic Issues	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Governance Issues	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Frequency of media use

49. How many times did you read the following print media in the past one week or so? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Multiple times a day	Daily	Several times a week	Once or twice a week	Rarely	Not available/ Don't use/Don't know	Never
Kuensel	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The Bhutanese	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Business Bhutan	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Bhutan Times	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Bhutan Today	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The Journalist	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Gyalchi Sarshog	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

50. How many times did you listen to or view the following broadcast media in the past one-week o so?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Multiple times a day	Daily	Several times a week	Once or twice a week	Not available/ Don't use/Don't know	Never
BBS Television Channel 1	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
BBS Television Channel 2	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
BBS Radio	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Samuh (OTT)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Local Cable Television	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Kuzoo FM Radio	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Radio Valley	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Centennial Radio	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Community Radio (Specify in text box below if selected: _____)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

REPRESENTATION OF VIEWS

51. To what extent do you feel the following Bhutanese media adequately represent the views of ordinary Bhutanese people?

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 = Not at all adequately	2 = Slightly adequately	3 = Moderately adequately	4 = Largely adequately	5 = Very adequately	Don't use this media
Bhutanese Television	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Bhutanese Radio	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Bhutanese Newspapers	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Bhutanese Websites	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Bhutanese Movies/Films	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

52. Do you feel that the media covers a diverse range of perspectives on issues? * *Mark only one oval.*

- Very often
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

53. How often do you engage with news content (comments, shares, discussions)? * *Mark only one oval.*

- Very often
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

MEDIA CREDIBILITY AND INFLUENCE

54. On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you trust the news reports from the following sources? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 = Not at all trustworthy	2 = Slightly trustworthy	3 = Moderately trustworthy	4 = Largely trustworthy	5 = Very trustworthy	Don't use/Not familiar
Bhutanese Television						
Bhutanese Radio						
Bhutanese Newspapers						
Indian Television						
Other Foreign Television						
Online/Website (General)						
Social Media (for news)						

55. Is there any other source that was not reflected above? Please specify.

56. On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you trust news reports from this source?

	1 = Not at all trustworthy	2 = Slightly trustworthy	3 = Moderately trustworthy	4 = Largely trustworthy	5 = Very trustworthy	Don't use/Not familiar
Row 1	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

57. Which single type of media do you consider your most preferred source for news? *
Mark only one oval.

- ⬭ Bhutanese Television *Skip to question 59*
- ⬭ Bhutanese Radio *Skip to question 59*
- ⬭ Bhutanese Newspapers *Skip to question 59*
- ⬭ International Newspapers *Skip to question 59*
- ⬭ International Television *Skip to question 59*
- ⬭ International Radio *Skip to question 59*
- ⬭ Online/Website (General) *Skip to question 59*
- ⬭ Mobile News Apps *Skip to question 59*
- ⬭ Social Media (for news) *Skip to question 59*
- ⬭ Others (Specify) preferred news source

58. Is there any other type of media not listed above that you consider your most preferred source news?

MEDIA BIAS QUESTION

59. Do you believe that news coverage in your preferred media source is biased? * *Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- Unsure
- No

60. How do you rate the credibility of the following media sources? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 = Very low credibility	2 = Low credibility	3 = Neutral	4 = High credibility	5 = Very high credibility	Not familiar/Don' use
BBSTelevision						
BBS Radio						
Kuensel						
The Bhutanese						
Business Bhutan						
Bhutan Times						
Bhutan Today						
Gyalchi Sarshog						
The Journalist						

61. From the list of Bhutanese media outlets mentioned above (e.g., BBS TV, Kuensel, The Bhutanese), please name the top 3 you trust and consume the most, in order of preference (1 being most trusted/consumed)

62. In your opinion, how important are the following factors for the credibility of media? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 = Not at all important	2 = Slightly important	3 = Moderately important	4 = Important	5 = Very importan
In-depth information					
Analysis-based articles					
Critical news coverage					
Independence from political or commercial interests					
Breaking news					
Accuracy of facts					
Clear and unbiased language					

63. In your opinion, how much influence does the media in Bhutan have on the opinions of the general public?

Mark only one oval.

- Very high influence
- High influence
- Moderate influence
- Low influence
- Very low influence
- Don't know/Not sure

64. Please explain how you think the media influences public opinion in Bhutan.

65. Does what you see/hear/read in radio/TV/newspaper/online influence your... *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Yes	No	Sometimes	Don't know	Don't use
Talking/language?	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
Dress?	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
Behaviour?	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
Thinking/attitude?	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

Children and Internet/Mobile access

66. Do you have children? * *Mark only one oval.*

⬭ Yes ⬭ No

67. Do your child/children have access to a mobile phone? * *Mark only one oval.*

⬭ Yes ⬭ No

68. Do your child/children have access to the internet (via phone, computer, etc.)? *
Mark only one oval.

⬭ Yes ⬭ No *Skip to question 70*

69. If "Yes" to either of the above, on average, how much time per day does your child/children access the internet or use a mobile phone for non-educational purposes?

Mark only one oval.

⬭ Less than 30 minutes
⬭ 30 minutes - 1 hour
⬭ 1-2 hours
⬭ 2-4 hours
⬭ More than 4 hours
⬭ Don't know/Not sure

Children, Internet/mobile use and its effects

70. What negative effects from internet/mobile phone use by your children do you think apply? (Select all that apply)

Tick all that apply.

- Inculcate negative behaviours
- Lead to poor academic performance
- Damage eye sights
- Internet addiction
- Exposure to inappropriate content/misinformation
- Reduced physical activity/social interaction
- Don't know
- Other:

Radio Specifics

71. Do you listen to the radio? * *Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No *Skip to question 77*

72. What do you mainly use for listening to the radio? * *Mark only one oval.*

- Radio set
- Television
- Mobile phone
- Other:
- Computer

73. Which radio station do you mostly listen to? * *Mark only one oval.*

- BBS
- Community Radio
- Kuzoo FM
- Don't listen
- Radio Valley
- Other:
- Centennial Radio

74. Where do you listen to the radio most? * *Mark only one oval.*

- At home
- At work
- On the move (e.g., walking, public transport)
- In the car
- Other:

75. Did listening to the radio result in any changes in your life? * *Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No *Skip to question 77*
- Don't know *Skip to question 77*

76. If yes, in what ways did listening to the radio change your life? (Select all that apply) *

- Tick all that apply.
- Gained knowledge and skills
- Received timely news and information
- Felt more connected to my community/nation
- Participated in live call-in shows/requested music
- Improved my understanding of different perspectives
- Other:

Final Assessment

77. On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate your overall perception of the media in Bhutan? * (1 = Very negative to 5 = Very positive)

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○

78. What changes would you like to see in Bhutanese media? *

Annexure II: Letter to the Department of Local Governance and Disaster Management from DoMCIIP

Royal Government of Bhutan
Ministry of Industry, Commerce & Employment
Department of Media, Creative Industry & Intellectual Property

MoICE/DoMCIIP/2024-25/D3/**1444**

May 26, 2025

The Director General
Department of Local Governance and Disaster Management
Ministry of Home Affairs
Thimphu

Subject: ***Request to Facilitate the Conduct of Interviews for Media Perception Index to be Conducted by Journalists' Association of Bhutan***

Dear sir,

The Department of Media, Creative Industry and Intellectual Property (DoMCIIP) under the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment (MoICE) is currently in the process of developing a *Media Perception Index 2025* in collaboration with the Journalists' Association of Bhutan(JAB).

Based on the survey methodology and clearance received from the National Statistics Bureau (NSB), the Department would like to request facilitation from the DoLG& DM for the purpose of developing the *Media Perception Index 2025*, specifically in 14 Dzongkhags (Bumthang, Chukha/Phuntsholing, Haa, Mongar, Paro, Wangduephodrang, Punakha, Sarpang/Gelephu, Samtse, Samdrupjongkhar, Tashigang, Tsirang, Thimphu, and Trongsa). We are aiming to survey approximately 50 respondents from each of these Dzongkhags.

This facilitation by the agencies at local government will help our enumerators conduct the survey at the faster pace, receiving better survey response, and ultimately contribute to a clear and holistic *Media Perception Index*. As you may be aware, the recent press freedom ranking of Bhutan by the Reporters Without Freedom (RSF) ranked Bhutan at 152 out of 180 ranks. Bhutan does not have an alternative reference or media perception measurement, though we have recently published a rapid assessment of the media landscape measuring feedback and media landscape of our media industry.

The *Media Perception Index* initiative has been conceptualized to systematically assess the Bhutanese public's perception of media credibility, access, bias, usage, and impact across different demographics and regions. It also aims to establish baseline data to inform media policy, advocacy, and targeted interventions to strengthen Bhutan's media ecosystem.

Therefore, we would like to request your Department to consider the facilitation of this survey through the local government offices. For your kind information, copies of NSB

P.O Box # 1036
Thongsel Lam, Lower Motithang

Royal Government of Bhutan
Ministry of Industry, Commerce & Employment
Department of Media, Creative Industry & Intellectual Property

Therefore, we would like to request your Department to consider the facilitation of this survey through the District Education Offices. For your kind information, copies of NSB clearance and survey Questionnaires are attached for necessary reference. For details and any clarifications required, you may contact Mr. Sangay Tenzin(Focal Officer) at 17337221, or via email at sangaytenzin1@moice.gov.bt or Mr. Rinzin Wangchuk (Executive Director), JAB at 17602609 or via email at wangchuk.rinzin11@gmail.com

Thanking you for the consideration and necessary facilitation

Yours Sincerely

(Sonam Penjor)
Director

Copy to:

1. PA to Hon'ble Secretary, MoICE for kind information

P.O Box # 1036
Thongsel Lam, Lower Motithang

Annexure III: Letter to the Department of Education from DoMCIIP

Royal Government of Bhutan
Ministry of Industry, Commerce & Employment
Department of Media, Creative Industry & Intellectual Property

MoICE/DoMCIIP/2024-25/D3/1445 May 26, 2025

The Director
Department of School Education
Ministry of Education and Skills Development
Thimphu

Subject: <u>Request to Facilitate the Conduct of Interviews for Media Perception Index to be Conducted by Journalists' Association of Bhutan</u>

Dear sir,

The Department of Media, Creative Industry and Intellectual Property (DoMCIIP) under the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment (MoICE) is currently in the process of developing a *Media Perception Index 2025* in collaboration with the Journalists' Association of Bhutan(JAB).

Based on the survey methodology and clearance received from the National Statistics Bureau (NSB), the Department would like to request facilitation from the DoLG& DM for the purpose of developing the *Media Perception Index 2025*, specifically in 14 Dzongkhags (Bumthang, Chukha/Phuntsholing, Haa, Mongar, Paro, Wangduephodrang, Punakha, Sarpang/Gelephu, Samtse, Samdrupjongkhar, Tashigang, Tsirang, Thimphu, and Trongsa). We are aiming to survey approximately 50 respondents from each of these Dzongkhags. We have requested for facilitation by the Department of Local Governance and Disaster management. In addition, we request to interview a few students of High Schools and Middle Secondary Schools proximate to the 14 Dzongkhags.

This facilitation by the nearby HSS and MSS of these 14 Dzongkhags will help our enumerators conduct the survey at the faster pace, receiving inclusive survey response, and ultimately contribute to a clear and holistic *Media Perception Index*. As you may be aware, the recent press freedom ranking of Bhutan by the Reporters Without Freedom (RSF) ranked Bhutan at 152 out of 180 ranks. Bhutan does not have an alternative reference or media perception measurement, though we have recently published a rapid assessment of the media landscape measuring feedback and media landscape of our media industry.

The *Media Perception Index* initiative has been conceptualized to systematically assess the Bhutanese public's perception of media credibility, access, bias, usage, and impact across different demographics and regions. It also aims to establish baseline data to inform media policy, advocacy, and targeted interventions to strengthen Bhutan's media ecosystem.

P.O Box # 1036
Thongsel Lam, Lower Motithang

Royal Government of Bhutan
Ministry of Industry, Commerce & Employment
Department of Media, Creative Industry & Intellectual Property

clearance and survey Questionnaires are attached for necessary reference. For details and any clarifications required, you may contact Mr. Sangay Tenzin(Focal Officer) at 17337221, or via email at sangaytenzin1@moice.gov.bt or Mr. Rinzin Wangchuk (Executive Director), JAB at 17602609 or via email at wangchuk.rinzin11@gmail.com

Thanking you for the consideration and necessary facilitation

Yours Sincerely

(Sonam Penjor)
Director

Copy to:

1. PA to Hon'ble Secretary, MoICE for kind information

Annexure IV: MPI Survey Clearance letter from National Statistics Bureau

དཔལ་ལྡན་འབྲུག་གཞུང་།
རྒྱལ་ཡོངས་རྩིས་དཔྱད་འགོ་འཛིན།

NATIONAL STATISTICS BUREAU
ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN

NSB/SDPD-02/2024-25/1379 30th April, 2025

Survey Clearance

This has reference to the survey clearance application (revised) dated 30th April, 2025, submitted by the Journalists' Association of Bhutan to conduct study titled 'Media Perception Index' in 14 dzongkhags.

The National Statistics Bureau has reviewed the survey protocols *(survey methodology and related documents),* and is hereby pleased to issue the clearance to go ahead with the survey. However, you are requested to kindly adhere to the following conditions:

1. The Applicant(s) must always follow the approved methodology without deviation;
2. The Applicant(s) must share the final draft findings with NSB to ensure compliance with approved survey methodology, including domain-level analysis, and obtain NSB's final approval to use the findings in any official statistics release or publication;
3. The Applicant(s) must submit the Public User File (PUF) to the NSB; and
4. The Applicant(s) must obtain site administrative approval for conducting the study, whenever required.

Failure to comply with any of the above condition(s) by the applicant shall result in withdrawal of the survey clearance by NSB.

Chief
Survey & Data Processing Division
National Statistics Bureau, Thimphu

ROYAL GOVT. OF BHUTAN ★ NATIONAL STATISTICS BUREAU ★

CC:

1. Hon'ble Director General, NSB for kind information.
2. Office Copy.

PABX : +975-2-333296 / 334264 **Website** : www.nsb.gov.bt
PA to Director Tel.: +975-2-325402 **Fax** : +975-2-323069 **Email** : info@nsb.gov.bt

Annexure V: Letter to the Dzongdags of 14 Dzongkhags from DLG

ས་གནས་གཞུང་སྐྱོང་དང་རྐྱེན་ངན་འཛིན་སྐྱོང་ལས་ཁུངས།
ནང་སྲིད་ལྷན་ཁག།

Department of Local Governance & Disaster Management
Ministry of Home Affairs

MoHA/DLGDM/LGD-05/1301

May 28, 2025

Dasho Dzongdags
Dzongkhag Administrations
Bumthang, Chhukha, Haa, Mongar, Paro, Wangdue, Punakha,
Sarpang, Samtse, Samdruojongkhar, Trashigang, Tsirang, Thimphu and Trongsa

Subject: Facilitation for media perception survey

Dear Dashos,

As you are aware, the Department of Media, Creative Industry and Intellectual Property (DoMCIIP) has noted that Reporters Without Freedom (RSF) has ranked Bhutan at 152 out of 180 countries in a recent press freedom ranking.

As part of review, the DoMCIIP is conducting a media perception survey in the Dzongkhag, in collaboration with the Journalists' Association of Bhutan (JAB), to develop the *Media Perception Index 2025.*

In this regard, it would be appreciated if the Dzongkhags could extend necessary support to the survey team/enumerators, enabling them to conduct the surveys smoothly in your respective Dzongkhags.

Thank you for continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Karma Galay
Director General

Copy to:
1. Hon`ble Nangsid Lyonpo for kind information
2. Hon`ble Home Secretary for kind information

PABX: +975-2-334944/338981, Director: 338986, Disaster Prevention & Mitigation Division: 321004, Disaster Preparedness & Response Division: 327319, Local Governance Division: 338988/338981, Community Participation Division: 335575/334512

Annexure VI: Letter to the Schools of 14 Dzongkhags from the Department of Education

དཔལ་ལྡན་འབྲུག་གཞུང་། ཤེས་རིག་དང་རིག་རྩལ་གོང་འཕེལ་ལྷན་ཁག།

ཤེས་རིག

Royal Government of Bhutan
Ministry of Education & Skills Development
Department of School Education
School Liaison and Coordination Division

MoESD/DSE/SLCD/05/2024-25/ 2675 **May 29, 2025**

Dasho Dzongdags/ Thrompoens
Bumthang, Chukha, Gelephu Thromde, Haa, Monggar, Paro, Punakha, Samdrup Jongkhar, Samdrup Jongkhar Thromde, Samtse, Sarpang, Tashigang, Thimphu Thromde, Trongsa, Tsirang, and Wangduephodrang.

Subject: Approval to conduct the survey for Media Perception Index.

Dear Dasho,

The Department of School Education grants approval to the Department of Media, Creative Industry and Intellectual Property (DoMCIIP) under the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment to carry out interviews for the Media Perception Index. This initiative, being carried out in collaboration with the Journalists' Association of Bhutan, aims to establish the *Media Perception Index 2025*.

The initiative aims to address how the media is perceived by the public in Bhutan and to emphasize the existing gap in data and references related to media perception. The findings will help generate baseline data to support media-related policies, advocacy efforts, and targeted strategies to strengthen Bhutan's media environment.

The survey will be conducted in 29 schools (as per the attached list), engaging five teachers and five students from each school, with a focus on students in grades XI and XII. The tentative schedule for the survey is from June 1 to 15, 2025.

In this regard, Dasho is kindly requested to direct the Dzongkhag/ Thromde Education Officers to facilitate the smooth conduct of the survey, ensuring that permissions are obtained from schools in advance and that the activity does not interfere with regular classes or with the upcoming midterm examinations.

Yours sincerely,

(Tashi Namgyal)
Director

Copy to:

1. Department of Media, Creative Industry and Intellectual Property, MoICE, for information and necessary action.
2. Journalists' Association of Bhutan, for information and necessary action.
3. Principals of schools (list attached), for information and necessary action.
4. Chief Programme Officer, SLCD, for information.
5. Office copy.

Above Lhengye Densa, Upper Motithang, Thimphu, Bhutan, Tel: PA: +975 2 325325, www.education.gov.bt

དཔལ་ལྡན་འབྲུག་གཞུང་། ཤེས་རིག་དང་རིག་རྩལ་གོང་འཕེལ་ལྷན་ཁག།

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List of schools:

Sr No.	Dzongkhag/ Thromde	School
1	Bumthang	1. Chumey CS 2. Jakar HSS
2	Chukha	1. Chukha CS
3	Haa	1. Gongzim UD HSS
4	Mongar	1. Mongar HSS 2. Yadi CS 3. Gyelpozhing HSS
5	Paro	1. Drugyel HSS 2. Shari HSS
6	Wangduephodrang	1. Bajo HSS
7	Punakha	1. Ugyen Academy 2. Punakha CS
8	Sarpang	1. Sarpang CS
9	Gelephu Thromde	1. Gelephu HSS
10	Samtse	1. Samtse HSS 2. Dorokha CS
11	Samdrup Jongkhar Thromde	1. Samdrup Jongkhar HSS
12	Samdrup Jongkhar	1. Karmaling MSS
13	Tashigang	1. Tashigang MSS 2. Rangjung CS 3. Jigme Sherubling CS 4. Tashitse HSS
14	Tsirang	1. Damphu CS 2. Mendrelgang CS
15	Thimphu Thromde	1. Yangchenphug HSS 2. Motithang HSS
16	Trongsa	1. Sherubling HSS 2. Tshangkha CS

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Towards Building a vibrant journalism community Bhutan

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