



Recommendations of

Annual South Asia Media Summit – 2008

***“Globalisation/ Commercialisation of Media in South Asia:
Time for a Reality Check”***

Organised by

Media Information and Communication Centre of India (MICCI)

and

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES),

In collaboration with

The International Centre, Goa (ICG)

Venue

Taj Holiday Village, Sinquerim, Bardez, Goa

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The Goa Recommendations

The participants from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka at the fifth Annual South Asia Media Summit – 2008 on “Globalisation / Commercialisation of Media in South Asia: Time for a Reality Check” jointly organised by the Media Information and Communication Centre of India (MICCI) and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES-India) in collaboration with the International Centre Goa (ICG) at Goa, India from November 21-23, 2008 being convinced of the need for a reality check on the various aspects of commercialisation and globalisation of media, recommend the following for consideration by the media, civil society and other interested parties:

Session I: Globalisation / Commercialisation of Media Industry and Possible Threat to Cultural Diversity

- Encourage local cultural studies on impact of Bollywood/Hollywood/MTV/entertainment media on Indian sub-continent/ South Asia
- Promote diversity (e.g. gender, ethnic, religious) in the workforce of the newsrooms to enable them to better understand issues.
- Promote journalistic exchange programmes within south Asia to ensure cultural sensitisation.
- Find ways to promote socially relevant content on media platforms specially television.
- Promote media literacy among media users. (readers, viewers and listeners)
- Globalisation is not harmful to public/private broadcasting. It is commercialisation which is having lots of adverse effects. Therefore some methodology be evolved to safe guard, language, indigenous industries of individual countries and societies. To achieve this objective professional autonomy and professional accountability is necessary for both, public as well as private broadcaster.
- Government owned broadcasting should focus more on public service content in its programming.

Session II: Globalised Media and Terrorism: Impact of New Technologies

- Journalists should evolve strategies to consider the blocking of information by the state.
- Even when alleged terrorists are caught, media should give them a fair hearing. In particular, basic professional norms like use of the word

- “alleged”, proper identification of sources are essential. Custodial confession leaks should be handled with due professional caution.
- While reporting terrorism, media should regularly highlight suffering of civilians, whether caused by actors of state or non state actors.
 - If conditions permit, media practitioners should investigate the claims made by State/Non-State combatants so that the facts are brought before the public.
 - More editorial space should be given to root cause of terrorism.
 - Security laws should not hamper the discharge of journalists work.
 - Stringent punishment for malicious prosecutors by state under guise of national security.
 - MICCI should promote discussion and awareness about safety of journalists covering terrorism & conflict- with special focus on responsibility of parties to conflict, media owners and insurances companies.
 - Organize a cross-border research institution of journalists to study reporting of terrorism/sharing of analysis/information/ resources.
 - Promote capacity building & training for journalists covering terrorism/conflict.
 - Organize future seminars where journalists interact with law enforcement agencies, security analysts, human rights activist, lawyers and cultural activist.

Session III: Globalised Media and Terrorism: Impact of New Technologies

- Keeping in mind the constraints of time journalists should extensively use RTI especially section 4(where inspection of files is possible at short notice)
- Constructive and responsible partnership between media professionals and institution on one side and genuine civil society initiatives on the other, may be formed.
- The government may develop a policy and legal architecture to facilitate socially responsible journalism.
- Issues of social concern must get sustained coverage. For this interactive journalism may be pursued more effectively.
- In the light of increasing crime media should be more mindful of people's right to privacy.
- The concept of social responsibility and sensitivity must be built into mass communication training programmes.

Session IV: Concentration of Media Industry/ Dominance of Capital in some sectors

- Journalist organizations in South Asia should unite and make every effort to set-up or support watchdog bodies comprising of respected public personalities to ensure that the public interest is protected and promoted in the media which may otherwise suffer due to the vested interest of government or private media owners and commercial interests.
- The existing laws in countries of South Asia on media cross-ownership should be debated and retained in case these laws are in the public interest and then strictly implemented.
- The state should liberalize ownership of the media and permit a level playing field and provide equal opportunity to private media. The issue of public community radio licenses should be released from government control and the needs of local communities served and with utmost urgency. In both instances the overriding factor will be the public interest.

Session V: Effect of globalisation/ Commercialisation on Public/Private Broadcasting

- Government owned broadcasting should be given more autonomy to clear pressures of commercialization and serve public.
- To check the misuse of media for commercial purposes there should be a clear cut demarcation between news and entertainment and a certain portion should be laid down for the broadcasting both in public and private sector.
- The state and private owners should set guidelines and clear the policy that would uphold the watchdog role of media, while achieving their ultimate objective profit making.
- Globalization is not harmful either to public or private broadcasting. It is the commercialization which has lots of adverse effect. There should be restriction on advertisements which are harmful.
- Therefore some methodology be evolved to safeguard culture, language, indigenous industries of individual countries and societies.
- To achieve thin objective professional autonomy and professional accountability is necessary for both, public as well as private broadcaster
- The government should review the license of those private broadcasters who indulge in entertainment business in the name of news. There should be set of guidelines defining the news segment and entertainment.
