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COUNTRY PAPER

FOR

ASIAN MEDIA INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION CENTRE

"TV ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMMES: OPPORTUNITIES & LIMITATIONS"

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COUNTRY PAPER

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TV ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMMES:
OPPORTUNITIES AND LIMITATIONS

Introduction

Television is a relatively new medium having been introduced only in July 1975 while Radio had been for 28 years prior to this. Brunei itself is a new nation having gained independence in 1984 and is seeking to develop in its citizens a sense of national consciousness and identity.

Television entertainment in Brunei Darussalam is experiencing a volatile direction. Its early days was construed as normal and free from any improvisations, but slowly the constraints begin to surface. Television took over the staging of entertainment performances which was mostly heard in the Radio. 1975 saw the first colour transmission of locally produced programmes, among them is entertainment which has grown leaps and bounds. The amount of programmes produced since has increased in numbers and variety. The early days witness the annual singing competition namely RTB's Star or locally known as Bintang RTB, the children singing contest, and other cultural performances. Television in Brunei Darussalam is a government institution. The approach and presentations must be based on the agenda which is basically to promote nation building, development, prosperity and harmony of the nation as well as portraying a good and positive image of the government and the country in the international Arena. Television entertainment in Brunei Darussalam must in that respect shows the identity of its people, and culture based on the concept of Malay Islamic Monarchy which is a priority. The Malay Islamic Monarchy concept can be defined as Malay, the inhabitants which is well known for its politeness while Islamic Denotes the Religion which is practised largely by the population and the Monarchy, a symbol of unity and patriach. In every entertainment shows or performances this concept must be taken into account.
OPPORTUNITIES.

Television entertainment which staged the local talents is received well in the country as well as in the neighbouring states of Malaysia in Sabah and Miri in Sarawak. The station received letters of commendation from Miri for the Entertainment shows featuring singers and musical players from the sixties. The title of the show is Bingkisan Dari Bintang Ke Bintang, or in other words, Memory from Stars to Stars, this programme is telecast on Monday night. Radio Television Brunei in its daily Presentations scheduling, allocated the transmission of entertainment programmes in the Following manner;

Monday............ 11.00pm .... Entertainment shows for the senior audience or cultural performances. Duration is 45 to 50 minutes.

Tuesday............. 5.10pm ..... Recorded Tx Jambangan Muzik, dur 30'

Wednesday...........

Thursday.............

Friday.................

Saturday.............. 1.33pm...Bingkisan dari Bintang Bintang rpt Tx 8.30pm...... Dimensi Musik dur 50 ' .... Live Tx or this slot may be taken by RTB’s major project for example, The Final of Songs Compositions contest known locally as Komposer 98. Prior to the final of every major project, the preceding week will be taken up by the semi-finals programmes normally four to five programmes. This slot also catered for the MOU Yearly Joint project with Malaysia titled Senandung Muhibbah, with Singapore titled Sukmalrama and with Indonesia titled Jalinan Nada. This shows will be telecast live from both stations. The performances is of high quality especially from neighbouring countries and Brunei ideally would benefit greatly through this exposition and participation. The orchestrations is also able to learn besides performing their skills and creativity. The shows itself is a grand scale and the attracted audiences from both countries.
This particular shows Perhaps should be extended to other stations in this region considering the benefits of introducing individual participating countries cultures and national performances. Asean Festival of songs also featured in this slot, held on rotational basis among Asean Countries every two years. Brunei was honoured to host the show in 1986. Pack with variety of performances and cultural dances captivates the audiences wholly. This particular shows perhaps should be extended to other non participating countries where they can introduce their local talents and cultural performances besides promoting interactive opportunities within the broadcasters and artistes alike.

Sunday 2.30pm Jambangan Muzik for younger audience (interactive shows which includes greetings, counselling and discussion) This is a very popular shows but the duration is limited to 30 minutes.

Television at home does help promote local talents either in singing or dancing. Children at the age of 10 upwards have their own singing contest held yearly. The objective of the station is to give these talents opportunities to perform on stage and the winners can be groomed to learn and acquire skills in vocals and showmanships. This programmes since its inception has produced several talented singers and dancers. The singing contest is Organised yearly in stages. Television entertainment project will begin with Bintang Kecil or Kids Star, age ranges from 10 to 14 years old, followed by Youth Star or popularly known as Bintang Remaja, age ranges from 15 to 18 years old and RTB’s Star or Bintang RTB age ranges from 18 to 35 years old. There is also the Bintang Aslirama or Traditional RTB’s Star, this show is open to age from 18 and above. The progression of the song contest can be seen as a stepping stone for those with aspiring talents to compete and perform continuously.
Other opportunities available for the established singers and dancers are to perform in the neighbouring stations through joint entertainment co-production and also various official functions organised by the government and private institutions. There are a few local singers ventured into recording but the market for them is minimal. They might make an impact initially brought by Radio but the demise is abrupt. One local talent in Dangdut, succeeded in recording her debut album in Indonesia but alas the following is very dismal. The picture of commercial opportunities for local talents in Brunei Darussalam is very discouraging indeed, there is no commercial recording studios yet to cater for these aspiring talents.

**LIMITATIONS**

Television entertainment in Brunei Darussalam is unfortunately facing a downturn. Entertainment in general is being curtailed. The outlets for karaoke in the business Institutions is restrained and clubs and hotels are devoid of entertainment performances. The scenario for entertainment in Brunei Darussalam is indeed sad and hopefully television is not heavily affected. This downturn is brought about by the current move or drive to push the teaching of Islam in every aspect of daily life, the current issue at present is the introduction of Fatwa or Islamic ruling issued by the Chief Muslim Clerics in the country known in Islam as Mufti declaring that certain forms of entertainment is prohibited in Islam. That goes with some musical instruments, for instance the drum, saxophone, and others of western nature. However we in the broadcasting institutions has not received any follow up of the decree, but we are treating the matter solemnly. In this respect television entertainment must be produced accordingly and must not offend the Islamic teaching. The question is where to draw the line. Television entertainment without instrumentations or dancers is probably unheard of and yet Bruneians are exposed to the free satellite transmissions of MTV and V Channels daily. Constraints of religious nature has indeed stifle the development of Television entertainment. Local and foreign performers are affected by this constraints. Let it be known that when a foreign performers appeared in Radio Television Brunei, he or she must adhere to rules and regulations stipulated by the stations and the censorship committee on entertainment.
CONCLUSION

Despite of the constraints and limitations imposed on television entertainment in Brunei Darussalam. The desire to compete and participate with the outside world is indeed a prerequisite to our survival. Brunei cannot isolate itself against the globalisation of television entertainment, especially now with the intrusion of various methods of entertainment available to the market and the audience. Perhaps our inclusion in the joint co-production with other Asean countries and South Pacific may pave the way for our television entertainment to be accepted and acknowledged. Television entertainment in Brunei Darussalam can be developed along the line of cultural, traditional and national perspective. Although there are some similarities of our traditional dances within this region yet there are avenues to adapt and modify accordingly. There is indeed a feeling of pride to be able to identify the nations with their national heritage, either in cultural performance in television entertainment or theatrical performances.