

THOUGHTS**Film censorship: Challenges for the upcoming decades**

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By:

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Film, also called movie or motion picture, is very much known to us. When we talk about film, the words 'film censorship' come automatically because approval from the Film Censorship Board (LPF) shall be obtained prior to the distribution or public viewing of all local and foreign films.

In order to protect the Malaysian society from any possible negative and immoral influences by watching films, the film censorship board came up with some basic principles to prevent exhibition of anti-government films or films offensive towards Islamic or ASEAN countries.

Furthermore, the censorship board ensures prevention of the exhibition of films which insult any religion; promote false teaching and deviations; disturb racial harmony and are liable to destroy the reputation of individuals or organisations.

Four aspects of film censorship

There are four main aspects, namely Security and Public Order; Religion; Socio-culture, and Decorum and Morality by which the members of the film censorship board examine films.

Nowadays, the film censorship board faces a threat to its effectiveness because of massive online broadcasting of motion pictures. These online broadcasting services are spread over the Internet and are also easily accessible.

Social networks, search engines, amateur video aggregation sites, etc. are some of the examples for online broadcasting medium. The best-known services for online broadcasting are Netflix, Iflix Pandora, Amazon Prime Video, Hotstar, Hulu and Prime Video.

These services ensure that users can access their sites directly from any place through Internet broadband connection. These services are broadcasting original programmes regardless of any form of censorship. In Malaysia, customers are viewing all such content although many of them are not worth watching.

Need for legal framework

The Chairman of the Malaysian Film Censorship Board, Mohd Zamberi Abdul Aziz, was questioned about it and he mentioned that according to Section 2(3) of the Film Censorship Act 2002, it is not in its jurisdiction because this section says this Act shall not be construed as permitting the censorship of any film published, displayed, circulated, exhibited, distributed or transmitted over the Internet.

Meanwhile without any proper regulatory framework, these online broadcasting services are increasing sporadically and posing a threat to Malaysians. The formulation of a legal framework in order to regulate online broadcasting services is the time demand in Malaysia.

-- BERNAMA

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(The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of BERNAMA)

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