

BBC Asian Network

1 May 2009

Mix Together Org

London

Dear Mr Chisholm

Thank you for our letter dated the 14th April. Hopefully you will have received my holding reply of the 27th April.

I have now had the opportunity to carefully consider and discuss your proposal with other senior colleagues.

As background I'd like to explain that what the Asian Network aims to do is to make our whole network attractive to people of totally South Asian backgrounds as well as those of mixed race and indeed those non-Asian people who have an interest in South Asian culture and affairs.

For example our daytime music mixes Western, British Asian and South Asian music. Our interview and discussion programmes combine items and discussions that are specifically Asian and those that are more generalist. Our news shows bring together National and International news with news about British Asian people. We also have a language programme in Hindi/Urdu that aims to be accessible to people with all levels of language ability. We have presenters and staff who are mixed race and encourage them to have an input into the network.

We do recognise the growing trend of mixed relationships and families within the Asian diasporas and we are mindful that, if the Asian Network is going to continue to be relevant and reach out to the Asian communities, then it needs to have its finger on the pulse and reflect the multitude of trends and issues facing the Asian communities and the realities of their lives throughout our output. We have in the past and will continue to have an interest in the specific needs of mixed race people which is why we have asked you to feature on the network on occasion. Our aim has always been to help the whole Asian Network audience understand the issues facing mixed race families rather than just broadcast to the mixed-race group.

As we reflect on the changing demographics in some of the major UK cities where by 2010 – it is estimated that the majority population will be non white, we do see why it might seem appropriate to have a specific programme for mixed race people.

But, after reflection, we believe it is critical that the Network avoids the niche programming approach where we place the many different kinds of Asians into separate boxes based on ethnicity, religion or language. Instead we want to continue striving to make programmes that include all and reflect all the important issues in the lives of the Asian communities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for considering this issue and putting together a well thought out proposal. Equally, I hope you can understand our belief that the way forward has to be integrated programming to explore these very important issues across our schedule rather than the route of creating a separate programme.

Thank you once again for your interest.

Kind regards
Yours sincerely


pp Vijay Sharma
Head, BBC Asian Network

