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ABOUT THE JOURNAL

Launched in 1965, Communicator is a peer reviewed journal of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) that publishes original research on communications. The flagship journal of the IIMC endeavours to publish the best literature available in the field of communications and its related branches for the greater benefit of scholars, practitioners and policy-makers. The main aim of Communicator Journal is to focus on communication theory, research, policy and practice. This UGC-CARE listed Journal is published on quarterly basis. Communicator is now being indexed in the Indian Citation Index.

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From the Chief Editor's Desk



Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi
Director General,
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Mass Communication

In order to commemorate the hundred years of media education in India, the Department of Publications at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication planned to brought a special of issue of *Communicator*, the flagship research journal of the Institute.

We received a large number of research papers from media experts, communicators, academics, and scholars in response to the *Call for Papers* on a wide range of subthemes, which include media education in regional languages, policymaking in media education, digital learning, multidisciplinary approach, and uniformity in media curriculum, to name a few. To ensure that no important topics are overlooked, it was decided to publish two issues.

In the Special Issue-I (July-September 2021), the journal covered a wide range of topics related to the history, development, advancement, and current trends in media education in India. The history of media education in India and the establishment of the first institutions solely dedicated to the discipline of journalism and media studies are among the topics covered in the previous issue.

Papers from various media education perspectives have been included in this Special Issue-II as well. The first paper of this issue stressed on the need for a nuanced approach and newer pedagogical tools to meet the challenge and makes a case for reviewing the course curricula at a faster speed and shorter intervals given the effervescent and dynamic nature of the discipline, unlike other social science subjects.

To represent the media literacy aspect of the North Eastern India, a paper on media literacy and social engagement among the youths of Manipur evaluated the media literacy state of Manipuri youths and their civic and political engagement. Another paper on Media Habits of College Students and the Need for Critical Media Literacy in India's Higher Education Institutions, measures the need for CML as part of the higher framework for all students from all disciplines. Similarly, two more papers from the north eastern state are included. A paper documents the arduous journey, challenges, and uphill tasks of



visionaries who dared to dream and contributed to the advancement of media studies in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya. Another paper recognizes the potential of media education as a platform to further the possibility of tapping media industry to its full potentials in Mizoram state.

It is a well-known fact that Community Radio has proved as a major agent of media education due to its localised nature, accordingly, a paper included on this topic discusses the Indian government's gesture toward the concept and practice of Community Media which came embedded with strong ties to educational institutions. It also discusses the symbiotic relationship of Community Radio with journalism.

The outbreak of COVID-19 has transformed the information landscape and knowledge sharing in media education. The drastically changing situation of major sectors, including education, has become a source of concern for the entire world. A paper on Virtual Learning in Media Education and Online Examination addresses this issue by examining the challenges faced by media educators and students as a result of the shift in the online learning system during the pandemic.

Papers on Journalism Education in Jammu and Kashmir, Media Education through Open and Distance Learning in Odisha and Media Education in Haryana also got space in the issue.

Without any doubt, this issue is a bouquet of varied research papers catering to the demand for knowledge expansion in the realm of development and establishment of mass communication and journalism institutions across the nation. All the papers included in this issue are packed with vast knowledge about the journey of 100 years of media education in India.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to our editorial team, the entire editorial board, and the reviewers for their support. Comments, suggestions, and suggestions for special issues are always welcomed.

Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi



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Changing Paradigms in Media Practices: A Case for Nuanced Approach and Newer Pedagogical Tools in Media Schools

JAISHRI JETHWANEY¹

ABSTRACT

Journalism education in India has completed 100 years, but despite that there is an unending debate on an ideal course curriculum. There are many reasons ascribed to the phenomenon, the foremost being a huge change in the media ecosystem in the last few decades, propelled by technology on the one hand, and the corporatization of media on the other. The paper argues on the need for a nuanced approach and newer pedagogical tools to meet the challenge and makes a case for reviewing the course curricula at a faster speed and shorter intervals given the effervescent and dynamic nature of the discipline, unlike other social science subjects.

Keywords: Journalism, Curricula, Mass communication, Media sociology, Newsroom, Pedagogy

Introduction

There are over 650 universities, about 35,000 colleges, and over 13,000 standalone institutions in India out of which over 300 universities and institutions in both public and private domains teach journalism and mass communication courses and prepare over 20,000 students each year for the industry. At undergrad and postgraduate levels, there are several courses in journalism, mass communication, digital media, corporate communication and public relations in various combinations and permutations offered to students each year. The proliferation of schools of mass communication and media coincided with the liberalization of the Indian economy in the 1990s, around which time satellite television had also started making inroads into the Indian homes. Great potential was seen by academia and the private entrepreneurs who set up standalone schools to cater to the growing demand for manpower in the television industry. The public-funded and private universities also did not lag behind. The Indian Institute of Mass Communication also added a Post-Graduate Diploma (PGD) Course in Radio and TV Journalism, looking at the market potential of the Course.

If we look at the Indian context, the growth in the number of news channels has been phenomenal from the beginning of the new millennium. Today, there are more than 400 news channels in various languages in the country. When we look at the absolute terms, the

access of all the news channels put together is less than 10 per cent, but in critical times, the viewership surges by many notches, as we have seen during the 9/11 terrorist attack in the USA, the 26/11 terrorist attack in Mumbai, and more recently in the COVID-19 times. With hundreds of news channels looking for trained professionals, it has not been uncommon to see the HR teams of these channels lining up for campus recruitments at the premier schools.

The private universities, in general, saw the television sector boom as a business opportunity, thus earning huge revenue from running such courses. Conversely, however, there seemed no serious effort on the part of the new entrants in mass communication teaching to seriously debate and discuss the syllabus content and develop an industry-oriented skill-set required for preparing the students. For most, it was a 'cut and paste' job from the syllabi of well-known institutions. Getting the right faculty was another critical factor. While the industry's demand was met largely, a growing debate on the poor quality of education and training in most of the schools continues even after almost a quarter-century of starting such courses. When one looks at the syllabi of schools run by well-known media empires, one finds less emphasis on the theory and concept learning and more on hands-on skills. The central, state and private universities have failed to formulate a common core curriculum to keep pace with the fast-changing media

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industry. “Media education continues to suffer from poorly designed courses, lack of rigorous contents, in theory, practice and research” (Murthy, 2011). Rakow (2004) has found that the existing journalism curricula reflected the ‘status quo’ in its content and composition. He has argued that making the journalism curriculum gender-inclusive will solve the problems faced by women students, teachers, media content creators, and audiences. Reforming the curriculum would have the ultimate effect of changing our systems of communication and eventually, society (Geertsema-Sligh, 2014).

Muppidi (2008) argues that, in general, there is no training to develop analytical thinking in the journalism classrooms in India. The students may learn the craft of writing, discuss news stories, and be encouraged to read newspapers, but a few institutions “encourage questioning the points of view as described in the story”.

Digital media is slowly but definitely eating into the share of the classic media like print and electronic in terms of access to news, especially to the viewing habits of the younger generation. While on the one hand, the circulation of print and viewership of news channels has not seen many spurts, the digital platforms are going from strength to strength. There are empirical studies that suggest that the primary source of news access for the youth is mobile phone/i-pad/laptop. The news style, therefore, has to take into account this important factor, which should address the way content is dealt with and the average time span of consuming news. It is common to get messages through influencers on social media platforms, exhorting receivers of messages to download a certain App to “Save time. Read news in 60 seconds.”

As per the University Grants Commission’s (UGC) mandate, all schools and departments recognized by it have to have the Boards of Studies (BoS) for clearing the syllabi periodically. The members of the BoS generally are drawn from among academics of repute and at times professionals from the industry. The UGC also decides on the student-faculty ratio, subject credits among other things. It is disheartening to know that in the last two decades, UGC has reviewed the syllabi only a couple of times, while the media scene has taken a 360-degree turn.

It is often heard in the industry circles that students coming from media schools have to do a lot of “unlearning” to survive in the real world of media. At media schools, students often learn the normative of journalism, the concepts of public interest, ethics, media’s watchdog role, and the like. Public relations is taught as a top-management

discipline and a source of news for the news media. Advertising is dealt with as a brand-building art and science that allows consumers to make informed choices among a plethora of “Me Too” products. The reality often is not the same. Public relations is seen as manipulative and lacking in ethics while advertising is seen as a smart way of sneaking into consumer minds sublimely to hoodwink them into believing what may not necessarily be true. The media industry, on the other hand, is criticized for many things including shallowness of debates, loud anchors, ideological agenda, open bias, studio-based news against field reporting, among other things. The digital news is castigated for lack of editing filter and lacking in accountability unless coming from well-known media houses that also run newspaper or news channels. The print media interestingly, in general, has innovated itself to meet the growing challenges coming from the “Live” news from the electronic and digital media formats by being more investigative and scholarly in its narrative, thus retaining its loyal readers largely. The increase in the literacy rates has also seen a surge in the circulation, especially of the Hindi and regional language newspapers.

It is important for media schools to introduce to the students both the ideal and the real world so that they are prepared to meet the challenges, when they enter the industry. The media narrative is dependent on many factors; therefore, it is important to sensitize them to the dynamics and undercurrents in the media both at the structural and content levels as well as introduce them to many newer concepts and practices to help them in developing their critical thinking abilities.

Any academic course for a profession that is so effervescent and dynamic, requires changes at a faster speed and shorter interval than what is required in other social science fields if it were to remain relevant.

Why there is a need for a nuanced approach and newer pedagogical tools?

Why do mass communication syllabi need a nuanced approach and newer pedagogical tools, we have to look at briefly what really has changed in the last quarter-century or so to require newer approaches.

We shall briefly look at the changes witnessed in three areas in mass communication, viz. journalism, public relations, and advertising and suggest the way forward in the teaching approaches and pedagogy.

Journalism

News media, an inherent part of a person's life, is vibrant and dynamic. An average person makes sense of the world around him/her through media stimuli which come in myriad forms. The practice of news media, however, has undergone tremendous change over time, owing to many factors. On the practical front, a profession that for long was seen as "public service" and for its role as a watchdog has overtly turned commercial and is driven by TRPs and circulation. The role and practice of news media have come for discussion at various fora, not necessarily for good reasons. The media has to be understood in terms of its "own conventions, philosophies, professional codes, traditions, ethics and aesthetics" (Wyatt, 2007; Marzolf, 1991).

Current Trends

Newsroom centrality

In the current times, newsroom centrality has become an important part of news delivery in electronic media. News bulletins now are packaged as campaigns with a definitive theme and agenda-setting. Field reporting that was the mainstay of news bulletins is passé, in other words unfashionable. There is a tremendous use of infographics in news bulletins, making news bulletins look like packaged information.

The print media though has innovated itself to meet the challenges coming from the faster modes of communication, viz., the electronic and digital media, but, critics believe that language has been one of the casualties in the Hindi and other language newspapers.

Journalism that began as a crusade, a public interest profession, is now largely driven by many factors including business interests, competition, ideology etc.

Craft-based approach to teaching

Coming to scholastics, teaching and training in journalism, in general, is craft-based, and not necessarily knowledge-driven. Students may learn editing, anchoring, reporting, sub-editing but the critical thinking ability that defines and characterizes a journalist, in general, is missing from the classroom discourse. It is also imperative that the tools and technology savviness need to be accompanied by informed critical analysis.

Inadequacy in imparting domain knowledge

Cross-cutting themes such as politics, governance, gender, environment, agrarian issues,

insurgency, wars, caste and religion remain a distant goal in the journalism course curricula in general. Those that have one or more of these themes in the written document may not necessarily be taken to the classroom discourse.

Need for familiarization with data journalism

The other area that needs to be included keeping in view the current media scenario is building familiarity of students with data journalism. Most schools of journalism do not teach data journalism and for those who do, it is not enough, as a research study by Columbia University found out. The study, however, said that the redeeming factor was the inclination of many to include courses in data journalism at the preliminary and higher levels (Infogram, 2016).

Need for knowledge-based journalism

The media legend of the last century, Walter Lippmann (1920) said, "It does not matter that the news is not susceptible of a mathematical statement. In fact, just because news is complex and slippery, good reporting requires the exercise of the highest scientific virtues" (p.56). Celebrated author of the book *Informing the News*, Thomas Patterson (2013) posits that there is no reason to question a reporter's determination to deliver "truth" and it is not uncommon to find examples of accurate reporting. Yet he says that reporters often fall short of delivering "truth." He further argues that if the news is indeed true, one gets to see two versions of the truth as reflected in newspapers and television channels. Accuracy in content is not a journalist's virtue, but a given, that needs to be imbibed in reporting assignments of students.

Seth (2013) argues on the need of imparting education to students in media structuralism, which would include how the media system operates, the "economic realities of media such as the role of advertising, profit orientations and ownership issues." Besides that, the schools of journalism need to lay stress on teaching content formats and frames, and media routines that influence the message construction process. Impact of media and messages is another area for consideration. Students need to not only be sensitized but also introduced to media representations and reality through a process of robust research.

Pedagogical Tools

While classroom engagement to build critical ability remains normative, technology has changed the way news is gathered and reported by the media outlets

and accessed by news consumers. As expectations from journalists have changed, media schools also have to orient themselves in imparting teaching and training to match the industry expectations. Mobile journalism or MOJO as it is called is much in demand. Today reporters are expected to be multi-taskers in news gathering, editing, and reporting from the field. The pedagogy needs to include the “how” of using various mobile apps, social media platforms, and analytics dashboards. Internet has become the newer source of information for journalists. Students need to be introduced to navigating sources in a professional manner, keeping in view the legal and ethical considerations.

The pedagogy must also include the development of analytical skills and ways to find “fake” news and “paid” news.

Pedagogical Newsroom

Jaakkola (2018), based on a systematic study of a few newsroom set-ups in communication schools which were typically driven by academics with journalistic background called “hackademics,” argues that despite the fact that practitioners, traditionally, have gained less attention and appreciation within the academia, they can play a great role in running a Pedagogical Newsroom (PN). Suggesting the need for PN, Jaakkola (2018) posits that ‘PNs differ from professional newsrooms in a way that they are meant for the adoption of journalistic work rather than the realization of saleable products and services, so their primary outcomes are the results of learning. PNs have been established with the underlying idea of the simulation of work.’ She further defines a PN as a Meso-level concept that “settles between the macro-level models of journalism education and the micro-level didactics in the classroom. A PN includes: a) the pedagogical objectives for learning, b) a platform for publishing the outcome (website), c) an organization for carrying out the tasks, and d) a system for evaluating the learning outcomes. (p.184)”

One finds a few references of such newsrooms in some media schools in India also when students bring out newspapers and news bulletins on a real-time basis, but how these are run and with what success rate, there seems to be no study at least in the public domain.

Public Relations

Public Relations (PR), probably one of the most debatable and polemic management disciplines, has a history of over 100 years, but its recognition as an

important part of management’s strategic thinking and planning is of recent origin.

There are varying views on when and where PR began to be taught as an academic discipline. There are two claimants, the US and the UK. According to historian Goldman (1948), by the 1940s, public relations was being taught at universities and was a professional occupation relied on upon in a similar way as lawyers and doctors. However, it failed to obtain complete recognition as a profession due in part to a history of deceit. Edelman and Burson-Marsteller, two of the largest Public Relations firms were founded in 1952 and 1953 respectively (Sriramesh & Vercic, 2009). There was no stopping the growth of the public relations industry since then.

Public relations, traditionally, has been taught as a subset of various journalism courses in most parts of the world including India and also as an exclusive course both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels in some universities. This has ensured that PR is not seen as just a set of skills, but as an independent academic discipline that is gaining its importance in its own right. Having said that, it is, however, important to underscore the point that the teaching of PR needs revisiting the course curricula in a serious manner. For a full graduate or postgraduate course in PR, the inclusion of various sets and subsets of subjects that should ideally include organizational communication, integrated marketing communication, management, research rigour, and skill-sets to encompass writing, production, event management etc. have to be carefully designed and incorporated.

There is another interesting debate about the discipline. The PR professionals have often debated on the questions of whether PR should be a subset of communication and journalism courses or of business management. While there still seems no agreement, one does find that in some universities in the US as also in India, Corporate Communication (considered the new *Avatar* of PR) has moved to business school curricula.

In a well-researched paper (Kyrychok, 2016), the state of PR education in various countries has been studied to bring in some interesting insights. The paper reflects that in many institutions of higher education, the number of graduates is increasing, despite the fact that there are not as many jobs in the market to absorb all of them. On the one hand, the study refers to the quality of PR education going down, but on the other hand, it talks about the increasing class size and, in general, a lack of appropriate faculty who have a higher level of qualifications at the doctoral level to teach PR.

In a study by the International Association of Business Communicators (IBAC), the majority of the respondents revealed that they had none or very little orientation or academic training in the classroom on ethics studies (Bowen, 2007). The research pointed out that 70 per cent of professionals were ill-prepared to face any ethical dilemma, in case they have had no professional experience with ethics to show them the way. In the same study, the professionals said that whatever they learnt of ethics or lack of it was through their professional experience.

Teaching PR in media schools, at least in India, rests on two lines of thinking: one, PR as a source of news for the news media, and two, PR as the art of reputation management. Both these expectations from the profession are fraught with the possibilities of manoeuvring and manipulation to achieve the goal of “positive news” in case of the former line of thinking, and “reputation at any cost” for the latter. It would also mean that news media works in collusion with PR managers to keep some organizations, people, and decisions in a positive light in a *quid pro quo* scheme of things. Why would media do it, is an expected question. Here we shall have to go into the sociology of the media and its business interests. The media’s sustenance to a large extent comes from the advertising revenue. The PR angle is often latent but not difficult to decipher. It is common knowledge that media charges companies for favourable news appearing on certain pages, often named as “Business page.” There have also been unsavoury stories of PR being used for “paid news.” During election times, some newspapers have packages on sale! The Election Commission of India in some cases has dealt with the menace of “paid news.”

The good news, however, is that securing media mileage is only one part of the PR profession. The role of PR has been recognized in many other areas, the foremost being relationship building, advocacy and outreach. Organizations often have many stakeholders, both internal (employees and shareholders) and external (consumers, vendors, opinion makers, special interest groups, and bureaucracy). This is where PR’s role has been seen as a part of the strategic management that includes conflict resolution, crisis management, and media relations management to present the organization’s perspective. To this end, PR managers employ various tools and media that include employee magazines, brainstorming sessions, open houses, idea boxes, and congregations for internal audiences. For external audiences, PR’s expertise is solicited by the marketing vertical in brand building, by the human

resource vertical in industrial relations management and media interactions, in case of industrial unrest, and of course, by the C-Suite or the top management in aiding and advising them on communication *per se* on short-term and long-term plans, besides day to day advises, if they care to trust their PR advisors!

Need for introducing organizational and management concepts

As discussed above, the students graduating in PR need to be exposed to the management concepts, organizational behaviour, and of course the theory and concepts of PR and corporate communication to understand the dynamics of organizations, news media, and markets. Research has to be made a very important part of any course in PR. In the craft’s approach in PR, students have to learn writing skills, editing, and reporting as journalism students do because a PR professional is also like a reporter for one’s organization, albeit a paid one. Above all, one has to have an avid understanding of the media ecosystem, including structures and how media functions.

Pedagogy

The pedagogy for a PR course begins with giving scholars a very firm footing in the PR theory so that they understand the positioning of PR in the overall organizational ecosystem. Research is an important part of PR teaching, which must go hand in hand with classroom discourse. As for the skill set, which will come from doing research, it would include media tracking to look at the media content, including possible slants and biases in the news stories in competitive newspapers and channels/platforms on issues through a theoretical construct; issue-tracking, especially from the corporate sector on crisis resolution and how these were resolved or not, to draw lessons from faculty-led discussions, group simulation, presentations and peer-led discussions, live case studies on various areas such as employee communication to draw insights on reach, efficacy and credibility, on CSR to find how lives are affected or not; media writing, event management through simulations etc. This may also include mock drills of press conferences and events. A course in PR also needs to expose the students to publishing techniques, photography, video production, exhibitions so as to provide them with at least a working knowledge in these areas to be able to get work done from the agencies and experts when they join the profession. In short, any course in PR must aim at developing among students an incisive and perceptive intellect,

critical thinking ability, and sharp reflexes on taking communication decisions.

Advertising

Advertising, a part of marketing, is a mediated commercial communication sent through various mass media in an attempt to excite and enthuse the potential customers into buying the advertised product, service, or idea. A multi-billion industry, advertising moves both the minds and the markets. With over Rs. 80,000 crore worth of business in a year in India, the various media depend a great deal on the ad revenue for their sustenance. There are, however, many issues for which advertising is vehemently criticized, such as exaggerated claims, puffery, use of children in advertising, surrogate advertising and its insensitive and retrograde gender narrative. How the ad narrative objectifies a woman's body has become the most critical issue among various areas of criticism against the industry. An ICSSR study undertaken in 2018-19 deconstructing the course curricula in advertising found that, in general, the course curricula were not gendered and inclusive across public and private universities and institutions of higher learning in India (Jethwaney, 2019).

Advertising generally finds a module in Journalism syllabi, in the general courses in mass communication and also in Business Management courses as a part of the Marketing paper. There are also exclusive courses in advertising at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels at a number of universities. The mass communication courses are available in major-metros, mini metros, and various districts where both central and state universities and private institutions are located. Advertising attracts many young minds who are attracted to the perceived glamour and creativity.

Structural and conceptual changes in the ad business

When we look at the practice of advertising, two major trends have been witnessed in the last couple of decades at the structural level. One, a major activity in the ad agencies, the revenue earner, the media buying has been pulled away from ad agencies since the mid-1990s. There are now independent media buying agencies that negotiate with the media. This means that the 15 per cent commission that the ad agencies received from the media houses for booking ads are no more in their domain. Interestingly, a number of media buying agencies have added creative verticals to provide full agency solutions to clients. Two, advertising now is not seen as a standalone

activity but is a part of the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) that also includes public relations and promotion. Brand managers who some three decades ago would look at advertising, public relations, and promotion separately now look at a 360-degree communication perspective on brand building. Therefore, this calls for a reorientation in the advertising and PR syllabi and more importantly in the approach to teaching these two disciplines.

The challenge to an academic course in advertising is seen as a general paucity of time, resources, technology and most importantly the faculty (Mishra, 2017). The courses, it is argued, are not typically organized to allow for creative space. In other words, there is so much to be taught, but there is often not enough time at hand to reflect on it in a creative manner to do justice to the subject of learning.

Analysts believe that students coming after degrees in marketing or advertising are behind the curve as there is no learning of digital marketing and advertising at the university level. The digital space, driven by technology, is changing so fast that the rules change every now and then. The teaching institutes, in general, have not assimilated the rapid pace of transformation in the digital domain which obviously is at the cost of students who look for jobs in the arena.

In the two surveys conducted by the Association of American Colleges & Universities, most students believed that their education had armed them with the requisite skills required for the job market, but the employers disagreed. On a range of 20 skills, the students rated themselves higher than the employers did. For instance, 57 per cent of the students felt they were creative and innovative, but only 25 per cent of employers agreed (Selingo, 2015).

MBA is a gateway to a higher paying job in various sectors including the ad industry. As per a media report, the latest *India Skill Report* has said that just an MBA degree is no longer a key to landing a job in India. Despite MBA being ranked as the second most employable course, it is just about 47 per cent with the MBA degree holder who has sufficient skills to land jobs. Analysts believe that there has been a huge drop in the quality of education, and hence employability; therefore, there is an urgent need for a complete overhaul of the curriculum (Kalra, 2021).

Pedagogy

A course in advertising has to have a nuanced approach that would include a robust theoretical base coupled with multi-skilling opportunities for students who may have varying aspirations like

becoming creative writers, visualizers, business executives (account executives), and media planning executives in the various advertising stream. Therefore, the pedagogy would require imparting of a robust theoretical base, research rigour, soft skills and learning of digital tools, and requisite software, especially for media planning.

Ideation is an important skill that students need to be exposed to in a simulated environment. A continuous deconstruction of brand communication, ad campaigns, and learning from them is required to be included in the skill set. Advertising is all about teamwork, therefore students have to be encouraged to work in teams representing all the acquired and aspirational skills like business development, creative writing, art and production, besides public relations, to be able to work on campaigns in an integrated communication mode.

Here one would need both well-grounded academics in the theory of communication and advertising and practitioners from the advertising industry, representing various verticals, like creativity, business management and media planning, who can expose the students to the latest thinking, techniques and software. Bringing live client briefs on popular brands would provide the students with an opportunity to participate in the ideation sessions and create campaigns in real-world situations.

It is important to include courses in advertising and related laws that impact advertising like the consumer protection law, the laws of defamation, copyright and invasion to privacy, besides Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, other legislation on protecting the rights of women, Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression, besides, ASCI's Professional Code of Ethics.

Cross-cutting themes, like gender, child protection and environment also need to be included in the classroom discourse.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be posited that as there have been humongous changes in the world of media at various levels, viz., structural, sociology, access, expectation, and content, it is therefore imperative that a continuous effort is undertaken at media schools and by academics to keep their eyes and ears on the media industry trends. Until recently, Indian students were exposed to case studies from the West, but now there is a growing quantum of literature and research studies undertaken by Indian scholars, which need to be introduced in the classroom discourse. Students must also be exposed

to the gender narrative to sensitize them to the need for a gender-sensitive narrative in the media per se. This will come in handy to them when they join the profession. A close connection with the news media, advertising and PR industry is also recommended for doing collaborative projects and research studies with them to help the faculty and students in being in touch with the latest trends in the field. This will also to an extent bridge the gap between academia and industry and help prepare the students for the real world.

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Media Literacy and Social Engagement among the Youths of Manipur: A Study

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ABSTRACT

This scholarly undertaking explores the media literacy state of Manipuri youths and their relative social engagement activities: civic as well as political. One thousand and five hundred youths are surveyed from various districts of Manipur. The evaluation continuum is divided into categories viz. highly media literate, moderately media literate, and lowly media literate. The evaluations of around thirty-five questions based on media literacy aspects of cognition, philosophy, aesthetics, and hands-on knowledge, it is found that a maximum of youths (around 88%) are moderately media literate. The remaining 8.4% and 3.3% are highly and lowly media literate, respectively. Regarding the study of the relevance of level of social engagement and media literacy state, it is found that most of the youths, irrespective of their media literacy state, indulge very low in social activity. In civic engagement, around 64% of youths indulge low in it; and 82% in political engagement. On the other hand, only 1.5 % and another 1.2% of youths highly engage in civic and political activities, respectively.

Keywords: Media literacy, Manipuri youths, Civic engagement, Political engagement, Media education

Introduction

Media literacy or media competency is a multi-dimensional perspective upon which we perceive, interpret, assimilate ourselves, or affect others with its messages. They are knowledge structures (Potter, 2010) that are built upon our skills. These skills act as tools with raw materials like information derived from media and the real world. A media literate person, when actively use media, is constantly aware of the messages and are consciously interacting with them to give proper meaning. People having low-level media literacy have limited skill in interpreting media texts, their knowledge structures being superficial and less developed. In democratic state machinery, the role of media in building a strong society is normatively implied.

The “National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy” convention, 1992, brought out the definition of media literacy as the ability to access, evaluate, analyze and produce messages on many platforms (Aufderheide, 1993). Further, Potter (2004) provides a theoretical scheme based on a set of seven specific skills (analysis, evaluation, grouping, induction, deduction, synthesis, and abstraction) and five sets of knowledge structures: media effects, media content, media industries, real-world, and the self. This relative knowledge structure decides an individual’s media competency towards practical skill and media criticism: ideological, philosophical, and aesthetics.

Many scholars opine that the objective of media literacy is to be about the empowerment

and emancipation of citizens. The media’s role in a democratic country for a progressive society cannot be ruled out. Unless people are media literate, they will be hardly able to justify the government’s policy and programs to a large extent. Awareness about socio-political happening largely stems from media consumption. Citizen’s willingness to participate, engage in social activities, be it civic or political accounts for a progressive democratic state, and may relate to their knowledge structures and psyche. However, these engagements may not relate to the height of their knowledge structure of media. Civil society on the move for a civilization calls for constant social engagements from its citizens – deliberations and practical actions for an efficient socio-political system. Media, online and offline can foster many democratically desirable actions and can only be effective to a large extent when citizens are highly media literate.

With new imaginations, new choices, and contradictions, today’s media profusion generates a critical condition for reflexivity and engages people every day as a resource for learning self, culture, and society in a new light. Moreover, media culture creates new connections, desires, and threats, besides people’s identities being reworked at an individual, regional, national and global level.

There is no denying that the nature of ubiquity and inconspicuousness of media has overwhelmed present-day youths. The effect is too prominent that it overshadows their every living moment and

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new experiences are derived henceforth. Therefore, it is heartening to see the broad picture of media consumption, media literacy level, and the implied self-driven social engagement-civic and political activism to view the living picture of democracy.

Literature review

In the present changing media landscape, the importance of media literacy cannot be overemphasized. Cultural studies and critical pedagogy teach to understand the ubiquity of media culture in present-day society, the significance of multicultural education, and media literacy that addresses the issue of multicultural and social differences (Cortes, 2000). There is a growing understanding that media representations construct images and create an understanding of the world. It is only education and sensitization on media literacy that can challenge the perception of reality. Furthermore, the public could be educated about the inequalities and injustices of a society based on gender, race, class inequalities and discrimination (Douglas & Jeff, 2005).

Feminist theory and standpoint epistemologies provide significant contributions to the field of critical media literacy. For example, combined cultural and feminist studies allow for an epistemological standpoint that acknowledges difference(s) of identity, the cultural contractedness of 'Theory,' 'History,' and 'Truth,' and the cultural dynamics of our labour as academic researchers and teachers (Luke, 1994). In a study, Bakardjieva (2009) stated that constant exposure to the media may lead these youth to be attracted to the dominant mainstream culture, which bears the face of universal youth culture derived from the media images found in movies, advertisements and other print or multimedia text, and they may eventually strive to acculturate to carve their identities in a new cultural and linguistic context.

The so-called "Net Generation" youth, their engagement with social issues and knowledge of civic literacy begins with informal experiences around participatory media (Jenkins, 2006). Further, Dahlgren (2009) and others like Bakardjieva (2012), Castells (2012), Lievrouw (2012) speak of the emerging (and more informal) modes of civic participation, discussing the role of the new media in changing political culture as democratic participation goes more than media access and interactivity. Regarding the theory of structuration, Giddens (1984) tries to understand how individuals operating within a media environment correlates with how people engage in social activity.

Ingleheart (1997) says that the young generation

leads to the value change toward post-materialism in advanced societies. Similarly, Putnam (2000) finds the decline in civic participation and social capital as a generation change. Sinnott and Lyons (2003) identify age as an indicator of generational mobilization or demobilization. It further stretches to Roker and Eden (2002) in developing a concept of constructive social participation. When young people remain disengaged from social activity, they have often interpreted as youth "disenfranchisement." (Adsett, 2003), "depoliticization" (Vrcan, 2002), "marginalization" (Svynarenko, 2001), and "anomie" (Adnanes, 2000). The socialization theories of Eisenstadt (1956), Coleman (1961) and Parsons (1952) conceptualize the participation of young people as being their integration into the structure of society through internalizing dominant social norms. This can be an implication of their media consumption habit and the depth of their media literacy which in turn bear the image of a true citizen. The present study examines how today's youths, despite the association of technology in their hands, fare outside their personal lives and engages in social activities. Hence, these youths must have a standard level of media literacy to approve or challenge the media message. It all affects their aftermath social engagement level.

Objectives of the study

The main aim of the study is to find the state of media literacy and social engagement among the youths of Manipur. Course of steps to be followed are:

- To find out the state of media literacy using various constructs of media literacy.
- To find the relevance of state of media literacy and level of civic and political engagement.

Scope and methodology

A sample of 1500 youths is randomly selected from all districts of Manipur: 6 valley districts and 10 hill districts. As per Census 2011, Manipur, a northeastern state of India has a population of 28.56 Lakhs. Sample consists of 895 males, 596 females, and 9 trans genders. The age group belongs to 18-35. Variables like marital status, employment status, educational qualification and age groups have also been taken into consideration in the study.

Design of Questionnaire and Data Collection

Respondents were self-administered with a structured questionnaire having 35 closed-ended questions based on the broader media literacy spectrum of cognition, aesthetics, philosophy, and hands-on knowledge. Questions on social engagement

activity comprise of many civic and political activities happening around the society from time to time.

Tools and Techniques

Thirty-five (35) constructs have been used to evaluate the level of media literacy. Three points Likert scale has been used to assess the level of media literacy among respondents. Options “to a large extent”, “to some extent,” and “not at all” have been framed to represent “High (3)”, “Moderate (2)” and “Low (1)” respectively. In some cases, four-point scale: Always, Most of the time, Sometimes, and Never have been used. Further, the level of reliability is checked by using Cronbach’s Alpha (α), and it is found to be 0.792. Sample mathematical techniques have been employed in data analysis such as calculation of percentages, etc. Statistical tests like χ^2 -Test and Somer’s D have been performed to assess the influence of demographic variables on media literacy and the relevance of media literacy on different civic and political engagement activities. Data have been presented through tables.

Data analysis and interpretation

Sample Characteristics

As mentioned above, a total of 1500 youths of the state have been covered in the study. Table 1 below shows that 70.47% of the total youths are in the age group of 18-25 years, while the rest are from 26-35 years of age.

Table 1 Profile of Youths under study n=1500

Parameter	Number	Percentage
Age		
18-25	1057	70.47
26-35	443	29.53
Marital Status		
Married	202	13.47
Unmarried	1298	86.53
Employment status		
Employed	251	16.73
Unemployed	1249	83.27
Educational Qualification		
Undergraduate	867	57.8
Graduate	456	30.40
Post graduate	177	11.80
Gender		
Male	895	59.67
Female	456	39.73
Other	9	0.60
Total	1500	100

Representation of unmarried youths (86.53%) is higher than the married counterpart. Among them

there 16.73% employed youths also. Again, as per their educational qualifications, majority is under graduate (57.80%). In terms of the gender of the youths the male component (59.67%) dominates the female group (39.73%) and Transgender (0.60%).

State of Media Literacy of Youths

Since there are 35 constructs for assessing media literacy level, the possible maximum score obtained by an individual respondent is 105, and the minimum score is 35. A higher score indicates a higher level of media literacy. Scores are divided into three levels i.e., 35-58 score as low, 59-82 score as moderate, and 83-105 score as high. The following Table 2 indicates the score of the three-point scales on these media literacy constructs of the youths of Manipur.

Table 2 Score on media literacy constructs n=1500

Media literacy constructs	Low	Moderate	High	Total
1.Ability to analyze entertainment content in TV soap operas	185	956	359	1500
2.Ability to analyze the type of character in Soap operas	155	926	419	1500
3.Ability to analyze the theme in Soap Operas	170	893	437	1500
4. Level of Knowledge of classification of genre of media messages like comedy, drama, romance	140	922	438	1500
5.Ability to identify key points of information in the newspaper	123	976	401	1500
6.Ability to evaluate if the story presents a balanced way of presentation of news events in case there are two conflicting parties	369	201	930	1500
7.Ability to analyze the mode of presentation of the same story from two or more newspapers	339	445	716	1500
8.Ability to evaluate if a particular newspaper has a biased approach	327	434	739	1500
9.Acceptance of the stereotypical image/ characters...	327	904	269	1500
10.Own Judgment that media stereotypes are good	370	479	651	1500
11.State of own media exposure state	271	1063	166	1500
12.Paying attention to media exposure	1064	211	225	1500
13.Idea that media is influential in socialization activity	195	353	952	1500

Media literacy constructs	Low	Moderate	High	Total
14.Ability to find out the differences in advertising approaches	476	160	864	1500
15.Level of Knowledge of various brand names existing in the market	276	960	264	1500
16.Level of Knowledge of various brand ambassadors	373	884	243	1500
17.Idea of enjoying watching advertisements	190	897	413	1500
18.Perception that advertisement is a nuisance in the flow of watching a program	236	875	389	1500
19.Ability to analyse creativity in ads	261	943	296	1500
20.Ability to guess whether the content is exaggerated or not	494	810	196	1500
21.Perception that there are too many advertisements in the media	190	305	1005	1500
22.Perception that advertisements are manipulative to our conscience	276	427	797	1500
23.Knowledge about ethical advertising	432	809	259	1500
24.Knowledge of ethical responsibilities of journalists	350	364	786	1500
25. Knowledge of soft story, hard story	251	984	265	1500
26.Awareness of the concept of advertorials	438	882	180	1500
27.Awareness of the concept of fake news	227	912	361	1500
28.Level of knowledge on public relations activities	298	1048	154	1500
29.Level of knowledge of advertising world	340	954	206	1500
30.Perception that Cinema has a role in changing the culture of a society	109	355	1036	1500
31.Idea of favourite journalist	781	288	431	1500
32.Usage of social media like uploading photograph and updating status	194	1087	219	1500
33.Knowledge of handling a DSLR camera	475	869	156	1500
34.Knowledge of Hands - on skill of Film editing	760	571	169	1500
35.Knowledge of Hands - on skill of editing photograph	369	780	351	1500
Total	11,492	24,927	15,742	52500

Level of literacy Rate

The levels of media literacy among the youths understudy on the assumed point scales are different as the Table-3 shows. As understood from Table-2 above, it is observed that the maximum score (24927)

comes in the moderate state of media literacy. It has a direct relationship with the Table 3 below.

Table 3 Level of media literacy n=1500

Media Literacy Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	49	3.3
Moderate	1325	88.3
High	126	8.4
Total	1500	100.0

It is clear from the table that, the maximum of the youths (88.3%) are moderately media literate thereby implying the fact that most of the youths of the state are moderately media literate in different aspects. On the other hand, the rate of high and low media literacy rates is comparatively very low.

Influence of demographic variables on media literacy

The demographic variables of the youths demonstrate certain key issues on their media literacy perspectives. In order to understand the variations according to the demographic profiles of the youths, through χ^2 -Test, the following Table 4 indicates many clues on the same.

As evident from the Table 4, the calculated values of the statistic χ^2 are smaller than that of their table values at 5% level of significance for the concerned degrees of freedom for the variables such as: age, educational qualifications, employment status and marital status. As such, there is no difference in the level of media literacy as per these variables as far as the youths of the state are concerned. However, in the case of influence of gender as a factor, a significant difference in the media literacy level of the youths is observed. χ^2 test performed in this context indicates the scenario.

Media Literacy and its relevance on civic engagement activities

The civic engagement activities taken into account for the study comprises activities such as: (1). Participation as a volunteering team for raising social causes online as well as offline, (2). Participation in public rallies for a social cause, (3). Discussion about women issues, (4). Discussion/voicing against the issue of corruption, (5). Discussion about ethnic conflict and, (6). Participation in community programs like cleanliness drive, blood donation camps, tree plantation, etc. The engagement level has been divided into four-point scale: Always, Most of the time, Sometimes, and Never. It is further categorized into scores: Low = 6-12, Moderate =13-18 and High = 19-24. The Somer's D values indicate many perspectives on this as observed from Table 5.

Table 4 Media literacy state among various demographic variables n=1500

	Low (%)	Moderate (%)	High (%)	Total (%)	χ^2 (P-value)
Age group					3.29(0.193)
18-25	34(3.22)	943(89.21)	80(7.57)	1057(70.47)	
26-35	15(3.39)	382(86.23)	46(10.38)	443(29.53)	
Marital Status					1.16(0.56)
Married	9(4.46)	175(86.63)	18(8.91)	202(13.47)	
Unmarried	40(3.08)	1150(88.60)	108(8.32)	1298(86.53)	
Educational Qualification					6.99(0.14)
Undergraduate	32(3.69)	772(89.04)	63(7.27)	867(57.80)	
Graduate	14(3.07)	401(87.94)	41(8.99)	456(30.40)	
Post- graduate	3(1.69)	152(85.88)	22(12.43)	177(11.80)	
Employment Status					2.376(0.31)
Employed	5(1.99)	221(88.05)	25(9.96)	251(16.73)	
Unemployed	44(3.52)	1104(88.39)	101(8.09)	1249(83.27)	
Gender					10.98(0.03)
Male	27(3.02)	793(88.60)	75(8.38)	895(59.67)	
Female	20(3.36)	525(88.09)	51(8.56)	596(39.73)	
Other	2(22.22)	7(77.78)	-	9(0.60)	

Table 5 Relevance of Media literacy on civic engagement n=1500

Media Literacy State		Civic engagement			Somers' d value (P-value)
		Moderate %	High %		
Low (%)	Low (49)	41(83.67%)	7(14.29%)	1(2.04%)	0.163 (<0.001)
	Moderate (1325)	864(65.21%)	44(33.74%)	14(1.06%)	
	High (126)	65(51.59%)	54(42.86%)	7(5.56%)	
Total 1500		970(64.67%)	508(33.87%)	22(1.47%)	

It is seen that 2% of low state media literate youths, 1% of moderately media literate youths, and 5% of highly media literate youths are found to be engaged actively in civic activities. A maximum of youths (64.67%) is found to engage in civic activities lowly. Again, the Somers' d value says that there is a variation in civic engagement level among different categories of media literate youths.

Media Literacy and its Relevance on Political engagement activities

The political engagement activities taken into account for the study comprise activities such as: (1). Participation in political rallies, (2). Voicing for/ against political parties, political figures, public authority, and (4). Discussion of policy programs of political parties online or offline. Engagement level has been divided into four-point scale: Always, Most

of the time, Sometimes and Never. Categorisation of level is measured on scores as follows: Low = 3-6, Medium = 7-9, High =10-12. Here, also the Somers' d values reveal different aspects as understood from Table 5.

As understood from the above table, 2% of low-level media literate youths, 1% of moderately media literate youths, and 4% of high-level media literate youths are actively engaged in political activities of the society. Maximum of the youths, around 80% have low-level political engagement. Further, Somers' d value also shows that there is variation in political engagement among different categories of media literate youths.

Findings and discussion

Youths are the pillar of the nation. They are required to be empowered with different innovative

Table 6 Relevance of Media literacy on Political engagement n=1500

Media Literacy State Low (%)		Political engagement			Somers' d value (P- value)
		Moderate %	High %		
	Low (49)	47(95.92%)	1(2.04%)	1(2.04%)	0.123 (<0.001)
	Moderate (1325)	1094(82.57%)	218(16.45%)	13(0.98%)	
	High (126)	90(71.43%)	31(24.60%)	5(3.97%)	
Total 1500		1231(82.07%)	250(16.67%)	19(1.27%)	

ingredients to play a dynamic social and moral responsibility in the contemporary complex society. In this ICT driven knowledge society, media seems to control the world. Media literacy on various dimensions has become of utmost importance to make individuals competent enough to survive in this competitive world. The communication structure of daily life unavoidably rests on media technology: the instant connection, the messages we are bombarded on from media have a huge impact on our personal as well as social life. However, it is the level of media literacy that makes help people presume the perception of reality and the ability to check media effects. Assessment of youths on their level of media literacy and their involvement in different social, political, economic, etc. aspects of the society can contribute a lot towards bringing transformational change in the society. In this context, the present study has categorically analysed the scenario in the state of Manipur covering 1500 youths. As the findings of the study show, youths having different demographic backgrounds have varied levels of literacy rates of media. It is found that most of the youths (88%) are moderately media literate. Though the remaining 8.4% and 3.3% are highly and lowly media literate, respectively, 7-12% of all demographic variables have high-state media literacy. Another 77-89% and 1-3% of all demographic variables show moderate and low-state media literacy, respectively. The findings also have established the fact that there is no variation of media literacy state among the sub-demographic variables except in the case of gender. Assessing the relevance of level of social engagement and media literacy state, the study has shown that most of the youths, irrespective of their media literacy state, indulge very low in social activity. In the case of civic engagement, around 64% of youths indulge low in it whereas it is 82% in the case of political engagement. Only 1.5 % and another 1.2% of youths are found to be highly engaged in civic and political

activities, respectively. Of the highly media literate youths, only 5.5% and another 4% are engaged highly in civic and political activities, respectively. Also, there is variation in the social engagement activities as per different categories of media literacy state. The level of their social engagement is not a good indication of a functional, robust democratic society. The youths of the state need to empower themselves with new emerging media to enable them to play a substantive role in transforming society.

Conclusion

There is no denying that youths consume huge media these days. It can be for a number of purposes ranging from personal gratification to public connection and social engagement. An advanced society or developing society has its quintessential power over the youth. A well-informed and media literate youth is able to engage in a sound judgment and action in many developmental activities, be it personal or social. We live in a technology-driven information society. A standard level of media literacy empowers people to ward off the negative effects of media and enables access to a myriad of opportunities offered by media and technology. The study has highlighted the state of media literacy of youths of Manipur and their relevant step on social engagement. However, it is evident that their mark of media literacy doesn't ensure connectedness with actual involvement in public issues and social activity. Only a few are oriented towards social activity.

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Encountering the 'Public': Community Radio and the Shaping of Media Education in India

RINKU PEGU¹

ABSTRACT

The launch of Community Radio (CR) in 2002 by the Government of India as a gesture toward the concept and practice of Community Media came embedded with strong ties to educational institutions. Policy guidelines on community radio reserved licences exclusively for educational organizations, be it universities and public institutions. Since then, it's been nearly two decades, a period good enough to assess the implications of the study and practice of community radio on media education. Introduction of Community Radio was a welcome step to further the cause of making information accessible to people. Under the universal declaration of Human Rights, communication is considered as one of the fundamental human rights (UN, 1948). More importantly, it mandates such communication to take place free from government and commercial interests. The realisation of community radio in India was preceded by the Supreme Court ruling in 1995 that defined air waves as public property. AMARC, the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters has defined the primary task of community radio to inform by giving space to all ideas through debate. It conceives community radio as a space for diverse opinions as opposed to cultural homogeneity. Arrival of community radio added a third dimension to the radio broadcast scenario in India. The other two were public broadcasters, the All-India Radio (AIR) and private FM channels. However, like the private FM channels, Community Radio too operates on frequency modulation waves within a range of ten to fifteen kilometres. According to latest available figures from the government, out of total 290 community radio stations in the country, 130 are assigned to educational institutions both public and private. NGO's have the largest number of licences at 143.

Keywords: Community radio, Media education, Public, FM, AIR

Introduction

To give a broader perspective, community radio has been adopted by several countries from both the Global North and Global South spanning continents. In fact, the practice of community radio has become a marker of the state of democracy in a given country (Goldstein, 2004).

Interestingly, reflective of their specific histories, in different countries this medium of communication is known by various local names. In Latin America, CR is known as miners' radio and peasants' radio. Australia terms it as aboriginal radio, while in Africa it is commonly referred to as rural radio. It goes by the names of associative and free radio in Europe.

Introduction of Community Radio in India marks a clear departure from the past in terms of the broadcast policy. All India Radio was officially adopted in 1936 by the British colonial government, which regarded the medium as a means to subordinate the colonial subjects. Post-independence, it was renamed as *Akashvani*, (Voice from the Air) public radio was prioritised as a means for fostering national identity in the service of the newly created nation-state (Das, 2008).

Such a departure was ingrained in the distinctive nature of this community medium. One that it differs fundamentally from mainstream broadcasting, for the first-time citizens were freed up to own and decide for themselves what kind of content would be broadcast (United Nations, 1948). Another distinguishing feature of community radio is that the community is uniquely placed to be both producer and listener (Berrigan, 1977).

The salience of community radio lies in entrusting the common citizenry, ownership of operating its own media. Both in terms of administering and content creation, barring a few government guidelines, the community collectively is fully empowered. A major change from top-down approach in which the state decided what was worthy of listening for its citizens. From this follows a crucial feature of community radio highlighted by media experts as the ability to secure volunteers and equip them with quality training (Vuuren, 2002). Indeed, community radio in India has been made a distinct possibility due to a concerted movement waged by cross sections of Indian society (Pavrala & Malik, 2007).

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Objectives

The reason why this research needs attention is that although several studies have been conducted evaluating the educational potential of community radio, none has focussed exclusively on the relationship engendered between community radio practice and media education.

Extant scholarship in India so far has explored the role of community radio in advancing the cause of both formal and non-formal education. These have dwelt on how radio-enabled educational technologies of learning like the Interactive Radio Instruction (IRS) have facilitated long-distance learning by combining radio broadcast with active learning (Kapoor, 2019). The UN-based Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) commissioned a paper on educational radio that traces the contribution of community radio in Asia to informal learning and social transformation (Berman, 2008).

This paper seeks to cast focussed attention on the relationship that has been fostered through the study and practice of community radio within media educational institutions. It will trace the pedagogy for community radio syllabus. The orientation and objective of Community Radio practice and how it is geared towards the practice of journalism and communication.

Taking into consideration the fast-changing media landscape driven by innovation in communication technologies, this paper will attempt to unearth the changes brought in its wake in terms of production, circulation and reception.

There have been several studies that interrogates what constitutes 'community' within the frame of community radio. More pertinently, few have questioned whether students constitute a 'community' in the traditional sense (Ali, 2019). In this backdrop, this study will try and engage with the issue of whether students can be idealized as a 'community' within the frame of community media.

There are limitations to this research study, as it focuses exclusively on community radio stations operated by public educational organizations, be it universities or media institutions. Private educational institutions that have been granted CR licences have not been considered within the ambit of this study. Another limitation is that it is urban-centric, as the educational organizations under scrutiny are based in metro cities of Chennai, New Delhi and Pune.

Methodology

This research paper is based on case studies of three educational organizations. These include

Anna University, which was granted the first licence for operating a Community Radio (CR) station. Called Anna CR 90.4 MHz, this is the country's oldest Community Radio station operational since 2004 from Chennai. It operates under the aegis of the Department of Media Sciences within Anna University. Second in focus is Community Radio Jamia 90.4 FM, operational since 2005 by the AJK Mass Communication Research Centre (MCRC) of New Delhi based Jamia Millia Islamia. MCRC is the country's pioneering centre for film studies as well in the field of distance education. The third organization in focus is Pune based Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), which began operating its CR station titled Radio FTII, 90.4 MHz from 2007.

It needs mentioning that in the initial period they all began with an hour or two of daily programming. Gradually, they have ratcheted it up, with an average of eight hours daily. In all three case studies customized questionnaires have been administered with basic common questions. These have been backed up by interviews and references to documents like syllabus and websites. Accordingly, a qualitative research method has been adopted to analyse the responses both textual and verbal.

In addition to these case studies, an attempt has been made to elicit an overview of the role of community media in journalism courses through the perspective of a former student of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), New Delhi. Unlike the three aforementioned case studies, an in-depth interview has been adopted of an IIMCIAN graduate, who has been placed uniquely in pursuing a career in community radio while also returning to alma mater as a resource person for community media and in operating Apna Radio of IIMC.

While these are public institutions, it needs to be highlighted these courses in media education offer different duration and degrees. The universities offer from basic two-year Master's degree to Doctorate. FTII offers a four-year diploma, while on other hand, IIMC provides a nine-month post-graduate diploma. Between them, these institutions cover a gamut of subjects ranging from journalism, broadcasting media like Film and Television, Development Communication and broad term of Media Sciences.

There are limitations to this research study, as it focuses exclusively on community radio stations operated by public educational organizations, be it universities or media institutions. Private educational institutions that have been granted CR licences are not considered within the ambit of this study. Another limitation stems from the fact that the institutions in

focus are all based in the metro towns of Chennai, New Delhi and Pune.

Community radio and its practice: An overview

Certain commonalities have emerged from the study and practice of community radio in the three aforementioned institutions. Programming thoroughly their respective CR stations clock on an average of five to eight hours daily. The student community is actively involved in programming, right from ideation, to content creation to anchoring. In terms of curricula, with the exception of FTII, community radio forms an integral part of the course curricula. The course module consists of a mix of both theory and practical.

While adhering to broad parameters, the educational organizations under scrutiny, each have customized their approaches according to their needs. For instance, Anna University operates Anna CR 90.4 through a combination of students and volunteers, while Radio Jamia operates primarily through the student community.

The curricula in both Anna University and MCRC are broadly based on three tropes. One is a general introduction to the medium of radio, second is the specificities of community radio in terms of orientation and particularly its role in promoting social change. Third is the production aspect with emphasis on sound, editing, scripting including the various formats of production and studio set up.

An additional feature is an encouragement given to developing soft skills. Here attention is given to how to communicate with local community comprising of people from various classes, backgrounds and age groups. The Department of Media Sciences (DMS) at Anna university has a compulsory paper on Radio Programme Production for both its two-year and five-year Masters courses in Electronic Media. MCRC has incorporated a dedicated module on Community Radio for both of its courses, Masters in Mass Communication and Masters in Development Communication. Students are encouraged to take up both individual and group assignments. In terms of practice, both Anna University and Jamia Millia Islamia give equal emphasis to the creative aspect and technical production aspects.

Within these shared commonalities there are variations. For instance, in terms of evaluation while Anna University offers equal weightage to both theory and practical. MCRC operating Radio Jamia gives more weightage to theory in terms of evaluation on the premise since students are engaged actively in practical aspects, it is important to develop conceptual

theory regarding such practice.

In contrast, Radio FTII is dependent solely on student volunteers for steering its programmes. Unlike the two universities, Film and Television students of FTII are not mandated to audit either a paper or module on Community Radio as part of their curriculum. However, non-inclusion in the curriculum does not mean absence of student participation in Radio FTII. Just as members of the larger community participate as volunteers, students too are expected to follow the same.

Students of FTII who volunteer does so by making time out from their busy routine course work. Student volunteers are involved in all aspects of the CR station, right from ideation to production. Being interested, an added advantage from volunteer students is they are quick to pick up practical aspects and production techniques. New volunteers are given an in-depth briefing by the CR team at FTII regarding the dos and don'ts of Community Radio. Volunteers within FTII also include faculty and other members. Community participation is encouraged, wherein members of the public are allowed to communicate through mail regarding their contribution etc.

All in one: Information, education and entertainment

Programming content is decided largely by the students keeping in mind the extended community that CR stations cater to. Given the specific nature of community radio where listeners have to double up as producers, programs are largely created and designed within the three genres of information, education and entertainment.

Various forms of communicative expressions are deployed for running the CR stations of two universities like music, spoken words and conversations. Radio Jamia adheres to the three formats of interview, panel discussion and debates that have been classified according to the number of participants involved from the public. These form the staple of Anna Radio with the addition of feature programs, called magazines.

There is reciprocity in the making of these programs. Students do not merely visit the various localities for producing programmes through Vox Pop or on-site interviews, community members are encouraged to visit the studios for discussions and to raise issues if any, concerning the community. Open forum meetings are a favourite route for discussing issues of the locality as well as the station. Despite the captive involvement of students, CR stations are required to train and engage volunteers within the community.

Such reciprocity encouraged within the CR mandate acquaints the students with samples of the country's intangible heritage (UNESCO, 2003). Prominent among them are folk songs of various communities and states. Both Anna Radio and Radio Jamia encourage folk songs as part of their entertainment repertoire. Interestingly, this encounter through live recordings with people from the larger locality serves as a repository of knowledge and heritage. For instance, Radio Jamia gets migrant women workers to lend their vocal talents in their own language. Anna Radio too seeks out folk songs of local women inhabiting the nearby slum. Going a notch further, Anna Radio includes folk literature as part of its program repertoire executed through narration. Such programmes designed as entertainment transform itself into an educational note for the student community, by and large untutored and unexposed to such diverse heritage.

In such a scenario, the lines between education and entertainment tend to blend easily into the other infusing these programmes with double significance. Awareness programmes such as on environment, child nutrition are composed creatively using a blend of the entertainment mode to connect with the audiences. Radio FTII which caters to a community of around 5 Lakhs and is dependent on student volunteers actively resorts to the entertainment model for raising awareness.

Given the professional background of the FTII students some awareness programs are dramatized for effective communication. Special attention is paid to scripting and use of sound. Despite the prevalence of smartphone-enabled recording and editing tools, students are encouraged to use the CR studio for high-quality production. In other words, for students at FTII who volunteer for Radio FTII, the process can serve as a Launchpad for their technical ideas and experimentation.

Citizen participation and public interface

The concept of informed citizenry that underlines the objective of community radio stations is generated through the practice of free speech, wherein minority ideas find space for expression. Scholars such as Hilary Goldstein have suggested that active citizenship which draws upon information forms the bedrock of meaningful democracy (Goldstein, 2004). Freedoms associated with community radio have been attested to in terms of programmes and language flexibility, a third aspect is being unconcerned with a person's status.

Our Policy guidelines on CR mandates that half

of all community radio content should be generated through active participation of the community. Adhering to this dictum, CR stations under scrutiny have devised various strategies to collaborate with the people. A common approach is taking up local issues affecting specific groups. For instance, students of Radio Jamia through debate and discussion among various community elders, including women were able to activate their moribund local health centre at Jamia Nagar.

The interaction and interface bring the student face to face with lived realities other than their own immediate space. This exposure provides them with a learning opportunity through practice. The ability to communicate publicly and interact with people with ease are skills that enhances the professional qualities of a media person. Media practitioners associated with operating these CR stations aver that such social skills are specific to the practice of Community Radio as students are required to create community-relevant programs.

The process of facilitating community participation through collaboration serves as a vehicle for self-discovery for the students. Some of them hone their radio-friendly voices, others are gifted with composing poetry and still, others showcase their latent musical talents. In other words, the medium nurtures talent and creativity which otherwise would have remained untapped. All these works to instil confidence among the students, as they have to resort to on-the-spot improvisation, thinking on their feet while conducting live programmes. These public interactions in various capacities enable the students to articulate their social skills. Be it overcoming hesitancy or shyness, facilitating conversations and even organizing. The department of Media Sciences at Anna university emphasises on developing the soft skills of the students engaged with radio Anna.

The Rhetoric and Practice of development: CR Stations as Praxis

It is no coincidence that students stand to gain from the development orientation in the practice of community radio. Policy guidelines mandate CR stations to focus on the immediate needs of the community. Be it access to basic amenities and access to livelihood. Both Anna Radio and Radio Jamia have adhered to this prescription in letter and spirit.

This practice which promotes the concept of 'informed citizenry' among the radio audience works for the students as well. It transpires that mass media students who are tutored in development journalism within the syllabus get an opportunity to apply that

learning through the medium of community radio practical.

Many studies conducted both prior to the 2006 modification to the policy guidelines on CR and post have clearly documented the critical role essayed by CR stations in furthering the development discourse and ideals (Pavarala, 2003). The new guidelines expanded the scope to include non-profit organizations like NGO's, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) as eligible for community radio licences.

The World Association for Community Broadcasters (AMARC) has emphasized the gendered dimension embedded within the concept of community radio by acknowledging that it offers women a comprehensive stake in communication process beyond the mere lending of a voice.

Accordingly, within the examined educational institutions, women form a much-courted group for collaboration by their respective CR stations. Radio Anna with the help of women dwelling in the slums jointly run programmes aimed at increasing their literacy capacities and also toward generating self-employment opportunities. The experience of Radio Jamia too suggests that women are keen to participate in generating programmes. Getting migrant women working in the garment factory at Okhla to participate in multiple ways as part of discussion groups, awareness initiatives etc., makes both the universities conform to this critical norm.

The diverse people within which the CR station operates forms a microcosm of the larger world with which the media students have to engage in their professional pursuit. In this sense, CR stations operated by media educational organizations offer the student an effective platform for hands-on experience in the practice of their craft like ideating, scripting and presenting. Additionally, students are also exposed to concept of studio management procedures.

Journalism and community radio: A symbiotic relationship

A fourth case study was to secure a journalism student's perspective placed uniquely for having chosen a career in community radio both in operating a CR station as well as teaching and training.

The former student has delineated clearly the symbiotic relationship that journalism shares with the practice of community radio. One of them is through the ideal of journalism ethics, taught as part of the curricula to help navigate the practice of community radio. Ethical practices take on a prominent role as CR stations have to engage the community not just as passive listeners but also as producers. In addition, the

craft of reporting, writing including ideation which constitute the core thrust of the journalism curriculum help in delivering contextualized programs in a relevant manner. Indeed, the former student reiterates that no other media would afford the level of freedom to a practicing journalist than Community Radio station unencumbered either by state direction or commercial considerations. It stems from the concept of media owned and operated by the people falling within the range of CR broadcast.

There is also an intersecting convergence between the orientation and objectives of community radio and the pursuit of journalism. This is the democratic ideal of enhancing the voice of the marginalized. The critical role of news media and journalism in shaping democracy has already been well documented by the label fourth estate. Media scholars have averred that community radio to shoulders the responsibility of making democracy meaningful by creating a relationship between free speech and communication (Goldstein, 2004).

Both these universities encourage doctoral research in the field of community radio. To cite an example, a Ph.D. research scrutinized Anna Radio's initiative on communicating scientific information to its women listeners titled, Science for Women on Anna Community Radio. At a broader academic level, the departments which operate Community Radio have become centres for hosting international students and academic programs on this platform.

Student as 'Community'

Borrowing from the sociological definition of community as 'cognitive and performed constructs', students could qualify as a distinct community. A research paper that interrogated what was constitutive of community in the realm of community radio, stating community to be of a dynamic character, arrived at three possible definitions (Bailur, 2012). The one relevant for this paper is the definition that states community as something that is constituted in the mind in the way relationships are construed. Going by this definition, characterizing community as dynamic and contingent upon individual cognitive maps suggests a possible reading of 'students' as a community with distinct interests, networks and association.

It needs to be underlined that student cannot be viewed as a homogenous group. They come from different socio-cultural backgrounds. Located in the metros, these educational organizations tend to attract students from various provincial states, as well as its own inhabitants. Consequently, diverse students

come with multi-farious artistic talents that are readily showcased through the CR platform and thus create an avenue for identification. Just as all communities within any given radius of 15 kilometers are diverse so is the student community.

The concept of 'community' was visible among the students during COVID19 pandemic. All concerned CR stations tasked themselves with disseminating pandemic related information. These involved not only a routine airing of information of dos and don'ts but it also involved direct phone conversation with various experts like doctors, psychologists and nutritionists.

The concept of informed citizenry that underlines the objective of community radio stations is generated through the practice of free speech, where minority ideas are accommodated.

Challenges

From the preceding details, it can be inferred that students in media institutions where engagement with community radio is not curriculum mandated stand to lose out. Students who do not volunteer for various compelling reasons miss out on a learning opportunity offered right at their doorstep. To avoid such a scenario, it is required to devise strategies for bringing concerned students into the fold of community radio.

To give a holistic experience of operating and managing community radio, it is desirable that educational organizations institutionalize the aspect of studio management in their curriculum. While some efforts exist toward inculcating students with people skills, it has to be articulated in a pronounced manner through the curriculum. Also on the practical side, emphasis on developing feedback mechanisms critical for people-centric media should be made more robust. The aim in media educational institutions should be toward enabling students to chart a professional career in community media.

Interaction of students with CR practitioners in the field and on-site visits to CR stations in rural areas should form part of the learning process. Toward this, the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) is considered as the country's leading institute in Journalism and mass communication, apart from its regular courses, it also serves as a training Academy for the Indian Information Service officers recruited through the civil service examination.

Given the specificities and importance of community radio in reaching the last mile person, both the above-mentioned elements have been incorporated into their module on Community media as part of

the IIS Officer training curriculum. It gives them an opportunity to appreciate the critical importance of low-cost effective mediums like community radio in the task of information dissemination.

Conclusion

This paper attempts to make few postulations. One, the study and practice of community radio within media education enhances democratic ideals both for the students and the larger community within which the CR station operates. Secondly, the practice of community radio affords the students a first-hand experience on the job training.

The practical based community radio course work tied with issues related to the everyday life of the people offers them a ready site to test out their journalistic skills of ideation, reporting and producing. This intimacy with contemporary issues gives them insights into governance and the current status of the country. Additionally, it brings the student closer to the intangible heritage of the country. Not to mention, the acquiring of soft skills associated with working with the community for the community. This process of learning through inclusion and collaboration helps students develop social skills that would help them in their professional careers.

This reciprocity of two-way learning embedded in the process of operating community radio puts a question mark on the neat demarcation between educational radio and community radio. Current parlance reserves the former for formal education while associating the latter with the domain of informal education.

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Perceived Virtual Learning in Media Education and Online Examination: Mediation by Social Media and Emerging Learning Technologies

RUHI LAL THAKUR¹

ABSTRACT

COVID-19 outbreak has transformed the information environment and knowledge sharing in media education. It has become a concern for the world for the drastically changing situation of major sectors, including education. The education system turned from brick and mortar to virtual classes with the help of platforms like Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google classrooms, Cisco Webex, Moodle, Gomeetings, and many more for academic continuity. In media education, online learning platforms such as YouTube videos, Nptel, Udemy, Edureka Live sessions, and MOOC courses were available still the transformation was inevitable. The challenges for media educators and the perception of students towards the changing trends of media education were analysed through virtual platforms. Focus group interviews of 30 media students and five faculty members of Amity University, Noida were taken into consideration for understanding the perceived learning as an input variable and explored the role of social media and emerging technologies as mediating variables in imparting knowledge for the media students and their performance in the online examination through the platform 'Mettl' as outcome variable. For virtual learning, technology, ease of use, perceived usefulness, content, knowledge, adaptability, flexibility, acceptance of new environment are other areas of concern in media education that were explored in this research study. The study will provide the direction to understand the challenges of students in virtual classes and will help in academic planning and assessment for implementation of virtual learning..

Keywords: Virtual learning, Perception of students, Role of Social Media, Online Examination, Emerging technologies.

Introduction

Innovation in Media Education

In the digital age, innovations have become vital for the progress of sustainable knowledge societies (Ngonso *et al.*, 2018). Everything around us has transformed in recent decades with the spread of digital technological intervention. People of different ages are forced to accept the new system willingly or unwillingly. Technology to some extent counteracts the race for a change. Technology affects all spheres of society such as education, communication, lifestyle, medicine, entertainment, food, shopping, business, and more. In the recent decade, due to technological development, the spread and access of information around the world have become easier. The availability of the web and the adaptability of online courses have made online training a necessary piece of advanced education (Li & Irby, 2008; Luyt, 2013; Lyons, 2004). E-learning is a natural development of distance education that has always influenced the newest tools for structured learning (Sangra *et al.*, 2012). Online media

education has become a practical and energizing strategy as an instructional and guidance method in the worldwide media industry business that sudden spikes in demand for an all-day since it furnishes alternate with extraordinary adaptability (Stewart *et al.*, 2011). Web-based learning offers instructors a chance to arrive at an alternate mode of teaching for those who will be unable to take on a conventional study and it supports the students who need to deal with their timetable and at their speed. (Johnson & Henry, 2007).

Objectives

1. To understand the challenges faced by media educators and learners due to the shift in the online learning system during the pandemic.
2. To understand the students' perception of virtual classes at 'Microsoft Team' and online examination system through the online platform 'Mettl'.
3. To identify the new emerging media educational platform for media-related skill enhancement.

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4. To find out the role of social media in online education during the pandemic situation.

Review of literature

Online learning and examination system and perception of students

Internet learning includes courses offered by postsecondary foundations that are 100% virtual, barring greatly open online courses (MOOCs) (Lieblein, 2000). Web-based learning or virtual classes offered over the web is diverged from customary courses taken in a physical school building. It is the most current improvement in distance training that started during the 1990s with the spread of the web and the World Wide Web (WWW). The student experience is normally nonconcurrent, however may likewise join simultaneous components (Kaplan, 2017). Online learning is of two types, synchronous and asynchronous (Cantoni, 2004). Synchronous learning uses a learning model that initiates a meeting using a classroom course, lecture, or internet technologies. In contemporary practice, dialogue is direct; for this, all participants must be available at the same time. Asynchronous learning is described as a web-based version of computer-based training (CBT), usually provided on CD-ROM or the organization's local area network. The learner can opt for the program at his / her own pace (Takalani, 2008). "The vast majority of the terms (internet learning, open learning, online learning, PC intervened learning, mixed learning, m-learning) share the capacity to utilize a PC associated with an organization, that offers the probability to gain information from any place, whenever, with any signifies" (Cojocariu *et al.*, 2014). Students with a "traditional" mentality find it difficult to adapt; however, they must accept new learning situations with an open mind and heart. Understanding the benefits of e-learning and discussing it with peers can also change this mindset and prepare students better for online classes.

With the two elements of "time distance" and "number of members", one can order online distance courses into four groups (Kaplan, 2017)

- MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses): limitless in the number of members, empowering them to adapt no concurrently at their speed.
- SMOCs (Synchronous Massive Online Courses): limitless in the number of members, which students can take simultaneously and continuously.
- SPOCs (Small Private Online Courses) number

of students are restricted; learning happens in a nonconcurrent way.

- SSOCS (Synchronous Private Online Courses) number of students are limited, requires members to follow the exercises progressively.

The student experience is normally nonconcurrent, however, may likewise join simultaneous components. Most of the organizations started shifting to online mode through 'Learning Management System' (LMS) for the conduct of online courses. The new online system with platforms like Microsoft Team, Google classrooms, Zoom, and other similar platforms suddenly came into action when the students and facilitator were forced to stay at home due to the global pandemic COVID-19. Media education accepted the challenge of learning through online mode through the help of the PC and internet innovation, where it is named e-learning or electronic learning.

Effectiveness of social media for virtual learning in media education

Social networking is also a relatively new phenomenon. The development of the web has seen a rise of user-driven web technologies such as blogs, social networks, and media networking sites over the last decade. These innovations, collectively known as social media, have allowed the growth of user-generated content, a global community, and the publication of customer opinions (Smith, 2009). This trend has now taken over how we use the internet, giving rise to social networking sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter, where people communicate, create, and share content and use it productively in education. The potential of social media as a platform for formal and informal education and future direction was discussed by the researcher (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016). The students are utilizing different online platforms to accommodate various necessities. Online media and instruction go inseparably in the cutting-edge world (Dutta, 2020).

In online learning conditions, students can be at any place (independent) to learn and connect with teachers (Singh & Thurman, 2019). It is a learning framework that depends on organized instruction yet with the assistance of electronic assets. Fast improvements in innovation have made distance instruction simple (McBrien *et al.*, 2009). Educating and learning can be inside or outside the homerooms, however, the major parts of web-based learning are web and PC. Online projects ought to be planned so that they are inventive, intuitive,

appropriate, and focused (Partlow & Gibbs, 2003). It additionally encourages the move of abilities and information, and the conveyance of training through the electronic organizations to an enormous number of students at the equivalent or unique times. Internet learning supplements even now and again supplement customary learning. During this difficult stretch, the worry is not about whether internet learning strategies can give quality training, it is how scholarly foundations will want to receive web-based learning in a particularly gigantic way (Carey, 2020). Fast improvement in innovation and the progression in learning frameworks have the scope as the unlimited resources of niche subjects and the experts of mass communication can be accessible for the students.

Social media as a tool for teaching-learning can help the students for filling the gap in learning with the instructive methodologies (Moghavvemi *et al.*, 2018). Communication and collaboration is the greatest benefit of online media (Delerue & Vuori, 2012). Media education can use social media effectively for sharing good content available on social media and discuss in the virtual class for better learning. A student can interact with any teacher at any point of time through social media, video calling with the help of their cell phone, tablet, or PC (Blaschke, 2014), whereas a hesitant behaviour of students was seen toward the online learning platforms in a research study due to the interrupted power supply, poor internet connectivity, lack of technical knowledge about the online tools, and poor and slowed down two-way communication between the teacher and the student due to the internet and other technical glitches (Singh & Arya, 2020). The Pandemic situation forced education to fight the challenges of changing the pedagogical, epistemological consequences of a shift without training and education (Xuedong *et al.*, 2020).

Role of social media in the online examination related activities

In the learning process, social media is playing a collaborative role among students, media professionals, and researchers (Al-Rahmi *et al.*, 2015). The personal learning environment is created and facilitated by the social media by self-regulation with task strategies and defining goals of learning with self-monitoring (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2013). In higher education, the involvement of social media is visible for promoting learning as the instructors use technology with social media to encourage students for active teaching (Tess, 2013). In recent years,

the emphasis has shifted towards student-centered pedagogy and technology is playing a very important role in teaching-learning. With mobile phones and internet, the interacting learning with social media is helping the students to grow, evolve and boost their learning experiences (Dunn, 2013). Social media enhances the technical skills and enhances the networking skills which are mandatory for any course and the performance of students also dependent on their technical skills and computer operating skills (Zhenming *et al.*, 2003). In the case of online examinations, the students require the technical skills to appear and execute the process to perform well in the exam. The software solution to conduct examinations through online mode i.e., an online examination is fast, efficient, and not only reduces the resources but vital part of the education system (Kotwal *et al.*, 2016). With developing societies there is a need for online examination to cater to the need of education and provide all facilities online like security, question paper, announcement, the conduct of test, evaluation, and checking progress online (Yong-Sheng *et al.*, 2015). The mobile phone is another tool used in the examination system and a case study was explored as a mobile phone which provides the infrastructure for conducting and appearing in the examination as a multitasking tool (Aye & Thwin, 2008).

New emerging virtual platforms for media education

COVID-19 outbreak has brought new shifts in education. It has changed how students and media professionals around the world are getting educated.

This global pandemic is not necessarily a good time to brush up on skills as many are working in essential business, working from home, trying to get new clients, or simply taking care of their loved ones.

There is a newly emerging online learning platform for media education for the students as well as media professionals which increased in numbers and could create the influence among their target audience. The online learning media platforms are discussed here.

Coursera

It is a popular online education platform that offers courses from top education providers around the world. Over the years, the company has grown rapidly and provides the world's best standards of education through MOOCs.

Skillshare

Skillshare is an online education platform that

is beneficial for both students and teachers. The website offers thousands of courses related to design, business, marketing, technology, photography, film, fashion, music, gaming, cooking, writing, DIY crafts, and more.

Lynda.com (now LinkedIn Learning)

Lynda.com, now part of LinkedIn Learning is a MOOC website that covers a wide variety of creative, technology, and business courses.

Udacity

Udacity, Inc. is a for-profit MOOC platform that gives importance to job training. It also offers a micro-credential called Nanodegree that focuses on in-demand technology skills.

Udemy

Udemy is a popular online learning platform that gives people a chance to develop their careers and explore a wide variety of hobbies. From web development to public speaking, they offer a broad range of courses.

edX

edX is a MOOC platform that offers university-level online courses. It has over 120 institutional partners like Harvard, MIT, Berkeley, Delft, RWTH, Sorbonne, and more.

Theoretical Framework

The study is based on social constructivism theory by Vygotsky (1978) to analyse the knowledge construction through human activity. Social media interactions and digital activities (Virtual classes) are taken into consideration to understand the learning process.

In the study, the researcher applied the Bem's self-perception theory (1972) to understand the attitude, beliefs, and perceptions of students towards the digital transformation in education. Four constructs technology, pedagogy, content and knowledge was taken, and the perceptions were checked. The study also explored the Davis Technology Acceptance Model (1989) that how students were forced to accept the technology during pandemic. Technology as a construct was explored and the behavioural intentions were also examined based on perceived usefulness and ease of use. The study also revolves around the theory of reasoned action given by Fishbein and Ajzen (1967, 1980 & 1985). The pre-existing attitude and behavioural intentions were checked in the research study.

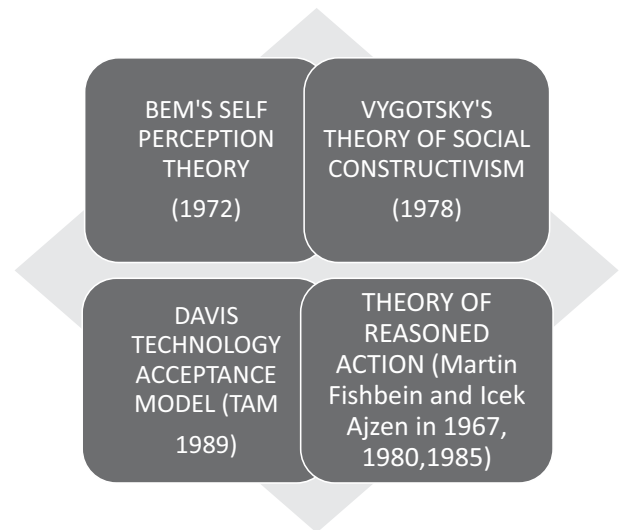


Fig. 1

Research methodology

The research study is based on a holistic and humanistic perspective on human lived experiences on their education and learning. The study focuses on the perception of students towards the changing learning platform from brick and mortar to virtual and the online examination system for media education. The study is qualitative to know the perception and understand the challenges faced by the teacher and the student and consequences of the change in educational platform. The research approach is qualitative, exploratory - descriptive, and contextual as the researcher aims to understand the behaviour, perceptions, experiences, and feelings of students and the teachers to emphasize the understanding of these elements in this study.

Conceptual Framework

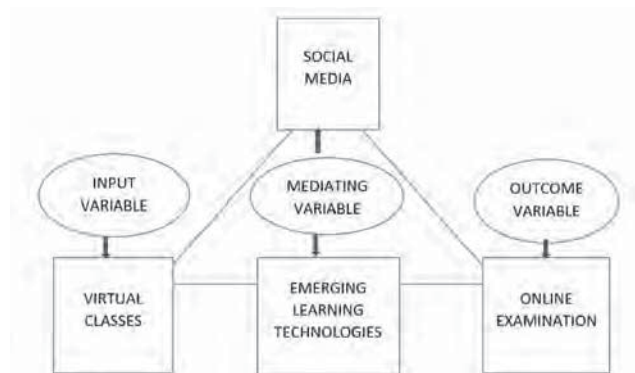


Fig. 2 Conceptual framework

Research Phase

In three phases, the study was completed involving the conceptual phase, the narrative phase, and the interpretative phase (Morse & Field, 1996).

Conceptual phase: At this stage of the conceptual phase, formulation of research questions, objectives, and the review of the literature was done to familiarize

with the concept, content, and preconceived idea about the research to understand the perception of respondents about the virtual learning and online examination.

Narrative phase: The planning of research design and instrument development and sampling technique were part of the narrative phase. The semi-structured interview was planned with the help of a Focus Group discussion with the students of media studies and the teachers.

Interpretative phase: The data collection phase was qualitative information gathering, analysis, interpretation.

Context: The study was carried out in India. In qualitative research, the context is significant. The participants in this research are students of Journalism and Mass Communication from Amity School of Communication, Amity University, Noida, and the media educators – the teaching faculty members of the same institution. The setting was Microsoft Teams virtual platform, students who are in their hometown in India due to global pandemic situation.

Reflexivity of the research: In the research study, the researcher self-monitored the preconceived values, notions, feelings, assumptions, and conflicts to increase objectivity and to prevent biasness while selecting the respondents and data for the credibility of the research.

Intuiting of the study

In this study, the researcher tried to understand the participant's perspective by totally immersed in the study. The researcher's main attention was only on the phenomenon described by the students from their point of view. The challenges for the delivery of content through a virtual platform, sharing of knowledge through social media, examination conducted on an online platform – 'Mettl' was noted and examined deeply to understand. The study used open-ended questions through focus group discussion and interview process and the researcher herself acted as an "instrument" during the interview process as a tool for data collection by receiving data, recording, transcribing, and reviewing.

Sample size: The sample was selected from the Amity School of Communication – Journalism and Mass Communication Department of Amity University, Noida, and the teaching faculty members of the same department. The total number of respondents selected was 40 in conjunction with 30 media students of 19-24 years of age group, male and female, and 5 teaching faculty members based on their involvement in the virtual teaching and online

examination system. The research study was well explained before starting the study to the prospective participants and was shortlisted based on their interest to be part of the study and those who met the criteria. Each eligible teacher was asked to refer the other colleague who had the similar experience required for the study.

Sampling technique: For the research study, the sampling technique is Non-probability and Purposive sampling.

Time frame: Three months from March 2021 to May 2021.

Qualitative data analysis technique: The qualitative data analysis technique of the research study is interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) to understand the personal experience of the students and teachers while shifting from traditional mode of teaching to online live classes. The study is subject-centred, and coding of the interview data were done by identifying the commonalities and differences. The themes were identified, analysed, and concluded. Self-awareness was important aspect of the research so that personal biasness can be ignored.

Focus Group Interview

The researcher applied focus group interviews as a method for the research with more than one participant at a time. To facilitate and eliciting information with open-mindedness and skills, the interaction took place at Microsoft Teams for the collection of data of common experience, ideas, thought, and perceptions towards the researcher's area of interest. "Focus group discussion is a cheaper and quicker way for the valuable data and more comfortable to keep opinion and point of view in front of others to support or react for disagreement on any topic" (Parahoo, 2014).

The students were invited to three settings (10 students in each setting) for the interview and discussion. The participants were guided to speak one by one and not to dominate the discussion. Equal time and opportunity were given to everyone to speak and were guided to address one another with respect during the interview process. The whole process was recorded at the Microsoft Teams in April dated 16th, 18th, and 20th April 2021. The study took three months from February 2021 to May 2021 to complete.

Questions were semi-structured from general to specific deductively. The discussion was confidential. The discussion was based on a grand tour as well as mini-tour questions from general to specific to get elicit information.

Table 1 Focus Group interview

1.	Focus Group and Semi-structured Interview Technique. Interview – Semi-structured Questions	i) Probing – Verbal & Non-Verbal ii) Exploring iii) Silence iv) Prompting v) Summarizing
2.	Questions	Grand tour and Mini-tour questions
3.	Analysis of data	i) Comprehending ii) Synthesizing iii) Theorizing

The instrument designed for collecting information comprised of two major sections, the biographical data and the qualitative data based on their perception towards virtual learning platforms and online examination systems. The researcher also checked the effectiveness of social media as a learning platform for understanding the role of social media.

The researcher was the facilitator in the focus group interview process and the colleagues were advised to take observational notes. The discussion was recorded. Every participant was strictly told to keep the camera on during the discussion to note their verbal and nonverbal reactions. The participants consented to follow the guidelines.

Data analysis

The data were analysed to understand the different perspectives on virtual classes and online examinations. The focus group discussion and an interview were dialogues, so the researcher could clarify the doubts and observe verbal and non-verbal communication by preventing the biasness without preconceived notions and ideas with the help of the Microsoft Teams as a platform for focus group discussion. In the analysis reflexivity, bracketing and intuiting were done to avoid the preconceived notions of the researcher. The responses received were coded in keywords as open codes.

The data sets were examined and analyses in a structured way and coding of data were done with a concept-driven approach by looking at the data for concepts and ideas.

Table 2 Analysis of data

1.	Data Coding Approach	Concept Driven
2.	Data Analysis Technique	Content Analysis of Focus Group and Semi-Structured Interview.
3.	Data Analysis Plan	Objective Oriented
4.	Data Types	Transcription and observational notes.

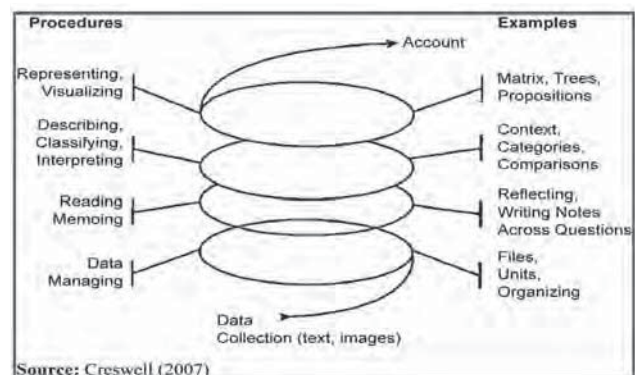
5.	Data Analysis Process	Data Cleaning Data immersion Memoing Data Chunking Data Clustering Data Interpretation and Presentation
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The researcher comprehends the data till saturation is achieved for learning the phenomenon through the experience of the media students. For shifting the data and putting the pieces of information together to make sense of the data, synthesizing was done by the researcher. The researcher sorted the data systematically for theorizing. For the correlation of data, alternative explanations were developed by the researcher.

Qualitative data analysis procedure

To provide an empirical backbone to the qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews, the study focused on a coding scheme. To label, compile and organize qualitative analysis, data coding is done in the research as a base with the help of data summarizing and synthesizing.

The reason for the study is the narrative and analytical string that joins together and coordinates the significant subjects of the assessment. In this way, the study found the basic structure of the coding scheme.

Fig. 3 Qualitative Data Analysis Procedure

Source: Creswell (2007)

Table 3 Role of social media in virtual learning – Open codes

SI No	Open Codes	Properties	Examples of Participating Codes
1	Social Media	Bridge the traditional and virtual learning	Communication, sharing, collaborating, interacting, managing, publishing, subject to internet access.
2	User-generated contents, Newsfeeds,	Media sharing services	Comments, recommendations, interconnections, embedding video, resource sharing, encouraging participation, critical thinking.
3	Social media	Pedagogy and content	Skill development, intellectual development, cultural development.
4	Perceived learning through Social Media	Impact on education	Social, emotional, cognitive, positive, distractive for learning, less willing to use for learning, largely for socializing, non-academic- little seriousness for learning.

Table 4 Perceived Virtual Learning in Media Studies – Open codes

SI No	Open Codes	Properties	Examples of Participating Codes
1.	Perception towards Virtual Learning	Perceived usefulness	Promising, beneficial, lifelong learning, mode of training, complementary to classroom teaching, more dynamic, anytime anywhere at own pace.
2.	Perception towards Virtual Learning	Personal behavioural intentions	Feeling of isolation, cannot replace traditional mode, eye contact missing, exhausting and unengaging, less interactive

Table 5 Online Learning Platform – Open codes

SI No	Open Codes	Properties	Examples of Participating Codes
1.	Microsoft Teams	Ease of use	Easy to connect, timesaver, well-integrated teaching-learning space, offering a lot of features, possibility to upload the course videos and other course contents, learner–content interaction high, computer-based multimedia, reading interactive texts, instructional materials through technology, versatile applications, improved learning freedoms.
2.	Microsoft Teams	Difficulty in knowledge sharing	Lacking enough interactions, Lack of interactivity and personalization, real-time teacher-student interaction not possible, learner-learner interaction missing, difficulty in group activity and group projects, summative and formative assessments, require high motivation and instant feedback, eye contact missing, absence of flexibility.
3.	Microsoft Teams	Technology	Login issues, issues with sound and video, lack instant response, a direct reaction not possible.

Table 6 Online Examination System – Open codes

SI No	Open Codes	Properties	Examples of Participating Codes
1.	Online Examination System	Efficacy	Effective solution, good for objective questions, supervised remote monitoring, video check of candidate's surrounding environment, liveliness check, digital platform for accuracy, take exam anytime and anywhere, real-time results, online invigilation and proctoring, save human efforts, resources, time and logistic, reduces the stress of students.
2.	Online Examination System	Drawbacks	Highly restrictive, constrain the candidates, problem in uploading answer sheet, the system gets freeze, submission of answer sheet link disables, poor internet system, inadequate supply of electricity in some area and affect internet connections.
3.	Online Examination System for faculty members	Positive and negative aspects	Save time, resources, efforts, ensures the reliabilities and accuracy, centralize the examination system, less stressful, more chances for cheating for students,

Table 7 Role of social media in virtual learning – Open codes

Open Code	Axial Code	Selective Code
Communication ad Sharing	Positive	Role of Social Media in learning
User-generated content		
Language and spread of cultural value		
Non-Academic	Negative	
Less serious		
Distractive		
Social	Dimensions of growth	
Intellectual		
Cultural		
Psychological		
Cognitive		
Promising, beneficial for lifelong learning, more dynamic	Microsoft Teams –Usage	Perception of virtual learning of media studies
Complementary to classroom teaching,		
Anytime anywhere at own pace		
Login issues	Technology issues	
Issues with sound and video		
Lack instant response		
Difficulty in direct reaction		
Eye contact missing	Personal	
Feeling of Isolation		
Unengaging		
Exhausting		
Less interactive		
Save time, resources, efforts	The positive and negative perception of teachers	Efficacy of online examination system
Ensures the reliabilities and accuracy		
More chances for cheating for students		
The problem in uploading answer sheet	The positive and negative perception of Students	
Highly restrictive, constrain the candidates		
The system gets to freeze		
Poor internet system		
Inadequate supply of electricity in some area		
Submission of answer sheet link disables		

Table 8 Emerging learning technologies – Open codes

SI No	Open Codes	Properties	Examples of Participating Codes
1.	Online Emerging tools	Ease of use	Uploaded course materials and lectures, Automated , well-integrated learning, offering a lot of courses, innovative technologies, Artificial Intelligence, versatile applications, improved learning freedoms
2.	Technologies	Efficacy	Personalized learning, course material based on interest, doubt solving through chatting , real-time suggestions, report and monitor the performance
3.	Media skill enhancement	Skill development	Digital skills, media competencies, communication and presentation, creative thinking, and visualization, reading and writing skills.

Deductive coding of qualitative data technique

Coding is possible in any number of ways; however, it is done by allotting a word, expression, number to each coding classification to all the textual information received from the students to express their experience and perception towards the virtual learning, online examination platform, and social media for knowledge sharing and new emerging tools for media education. The thoughts, ideas, and themes are coded to fit the classifications to conclude.

The study found while analysing in-depth interviews that virtual learning and social media are effective tools for learning in mass communication. The online learning platform Microsoft Teams and online examination system Mettl is the solution at the time of pandemic but cannot replace the traditional mode of teaching and traditional way of the examination system. It can be complementary to it. The expressions and responses were analysed and changed into the codes. All the responses were converted into initial codes as open codes and further, after cleaning and clustering it is converted into axial codes and after further funnelling down the selective codes were identified and presented in tabular form.

The new emerging online media platforms have transformed media education in skill development and learning from home. The new technologies and personalized learning have improved the learning capabilities by changing the learning environment.

Findings and discussion

The researcher did the frequency test of the respondents invited for the focus group interview to analyse the perception.

In this research study, it is found that three major platforms were liked by the respondents for online classes, webinars, guest lectures as suggested by the faculty members and attended by them. The top three online learning platforms are Microsoft Teams, Zoom and Google Meet preferred for online learning; 38% of the respondents found Zoom as a better media platform for online classes, 52% of the respondents prefer MS-Teams as their virtual learning site for online classes, 10% of the respondents prefer Google Meet as their online site for online classes.

The satisfaction level of an individual regarding online education. 58% of students were satisfied with online education, 23% of students were neutral with online education whereas 19% of the respondents feel dissatisfied with online education.

It was found out that 70.5% of respondents perceived that virtual learning has a positive impact on their online examination whereas 20% of respondents perceived virtual learning creates a negative impact on their overall performance in the online examination.

9.5% of the respondents perceived virtual learning has a neutral impact on online examination.

Regarding the interaction level in online education, 32% of respondents perceived the classes are interactive with online education, 28% of the respondents feel neutral whereas 40% of the respondents perceived the classes are dull with online education.

In the study, 72% of respondents perceived that new emerging technologies could bring change in media education 22% of respondents are neutral and 6% perceived that the newly emerging online learning platform will play no role in media education.

The perception towards social media as a tool for learning content, enhancing knowledge and skills 64% of respondents were positive, 22% of respondents were neutral and 14% felt that it is non-serious, non-academic, and highly distracting platform.

To judge the perception related to the online examination system conducted through 'Mettl' 66% of respondents were satisfied, 30% were neutral and 4% were dissatisfied with the online examination system and perceived that it is not accurate for measuring the performance of students.

Summary and conclusion

In this research study, the researcher found that through the new medium, the students got a chance to continue with their studies and save their academic year during these tough times.

(a) The challenges faced by the students while shifting from traditional mode of teaching to virtual learning are mostly technical issues. The login issues, internet connection to their hometown in rural areas were major concerns. The students missed the eye contact and face to face interactions for better connectivity and understanding. The students and teachers reported feeling of isolation, less interactive sessions while conducting online classes. The other concerns were lack of personalization where real-time teacher-student interaction is lacking, learner-learner interaction is missing. It is difficult to conduct group activity and group projects during online classes. According to teachers the summative and formative assessments are difficult. It requires high motivation and instant feedback which is difficult due to absence of flexibility. The challenges faced by the students during this pandemic were different crises related to depression, nervousness, poor internet connection, and a bad study environment at home. From the remote areas, the students of low segments mainly face a lot of difficulties to study during this pandemic. This test recommends an

Sl No	Item	Response	Response	Response
1.	Most Preferred online learning platform	52% prefer MS-Teams	48% Zoom	10% Google Classrooms
2.	Satisfaction level of an individual regarding online education	58% Satisfied	23% Neutral	19% Dissatisfied
3.	Impact of virtual learning on online examination	70.5% Perceived Positive	9.5 Neutral	20% Negative
4.	Interaction level in virtual classes	32% High	28% Neutral	40% Low
5.	New emerging technologies could bring change in media education	72% Yes	22% Neutral	6% No
6.	Social Media can help in enhancing knowledge and skills in Media Education	64% Yes	22 % Neural	14 % No
7.	Perception related to the online examination system conducted through 'Mettl' as a Platform.	66% Satisfied	30% Neutral	4% dissatisfied

intermediate focus to create a positive space to focus between understandings from weaker sections of society. Numerous students and teachers additionally deal with mental issues during a pandemic. Online education led to pressure, dread, uneasiness, gloom, and sleep deprivation that leads to an absence of center and fixation. Catastrophes make devastation in the existence of individuals (Di Pietro, 2017). The researcher found that the students felt detached and separated in online courses (McInnery & Roberts, 2004), which may influence learning. Association with the local area of learning impacts students' feelings of personality and learning (Koole, 2014). Especially from a social constructionist viewpoint, students furthermore, the local area inside which they interface socially co-create their characters. In this way, it is basic to assist students with building up a common feeling of having a place, reason, and standards (Koole, 2014; Lapadat, 2007). A solid feeling of character alongside having a place with the information local area as an esteemed part plays a basic part in viable information building (Goodyear & Zenios, 2007).

- (b) The perceived experiences of the respondents were mostly positive towards virtual learning through the software Microsoft Teams but not very encouraging for the online examination system. The primary clear benefit of online classes is the sheer comfort factor. The respondents could look for the study material, recorded lectures they may have missed, and look upon class some other time. As everything comes with pros and cons; similarly, online education shares the same. The students perceived that switching from a traditional classroom and tackling

teaching training to computer-based training in a virtual classroom can completely detract from the learning experience for students. Their resistance to change does not allow them to adapt to the online learning environment, it cannot replace the traditional teaching method, but it does take time for them to adapt to Curriculum Management Systems (CMS) and computer-based learning methods in the future. The media educators as well as the learner perceived that the virtual learning is easy to connect, timesaver and provides well-integrated teaching-learning space. It offers a lot of features and there is a possibility to upload the course videos and other course contents. The learner-content interaction is high in comparison to traditional mode of learning. The virtual learning offers to access computer-based multimedia easily for better understanding. It is easy to provide the reading interactive texts, instructional materials through technology and versatile applications. It brings improved learning freedoms for media students. For online examination system through Mettl as a platform the students and educators were not satisfied much. They found it highly restrictive and constrain the candidates. There was problem in uploading answer sheet as the system gets freeze many times during the conduct of examination. The submission of answer sheet link disabled which caused stress to the students. The poor internet system, inadequate supply of electricity in some area were reasons for additional stress to the students during the examination. The students perceived that online examination through virtual platforms was nerve-wracking, tests are a critical method to test the learning. Establishments may decide to permit students to finish their tests on

their very own personal computer, in the location based on their personal preference. There were mixed reactions to the online examination system as many issues were reported at the online examination platform 'Mettl' while uploading answer sheets after converting them into PDF files, submitting and ending the exam, receiving instructions

- (c) In this research study it was found that there are many emerging platforms for providing skills for the learners and media professional such as Udemy, Courseera, Skillshare, Udacity, Lynda, Edx etc. The Digital skills, communication and presentation, creative thinking, and visualization can be improved by emerging tools available for enhancing the media related reading and writing skills.
- (d) The study also concluded that social media plays an important role in the learning of students by sharing online resources such as eBooks; Journals; Videos. The recorded lectures; quizzes; discussions live Q&A meetings; and interviews are possible effectively with the help of social media. It was found that web-based learning in addition to social media offers instructors a productive method to convey exercises to students. Web-based learning has various instruments like recordings, PDFs, webcasts, and instructors can utilize every component of their exercise plan. The openness of time and place is another benefit of online learning as it permits students to go to classes from any area and additionally permits them to connect with students, rather than being limited by geological limits. Also, online lectures can be recorded, documented, and shared with the help of social media for future reference. The Facebook and what's app groups have become integral part of online learning. This permits the student to get to the learning material during a period of their solace. Similar findings were received by a researcher in the study (Kumar, 2010). Hence, internet learning offers students the openness of time and spot in instruction. Internet learning has decreased monetary expenses and transportation costs. Through social media all the course or study materials are accessible on the web, consequently establishing a paperless learning climate that is more moderate as found in another study (Versteijlen *et al.*, 2017). The teaching faculty found that attendance increased in virtual classes but interaction decreased.

Implication

In the changing educational environment, the

study holds educational implications in understanding the student's perspective towards virtual learning. The study analysed the challenges faced by them. The study also explored the mediation of social media platforms and emerging learning technologies that can boost up the performance of students in their online exam.

Limitation and future directions

The research study is done through qualitative analysis and limited to four constructs. The study may be replicated with quantitative analysis with survey method. Case studies or analyses or content analyses of articles or interviews available at magazine can identify other dynamics. Virtual learning is taken as an input variable and online examination is outcome variable, the mediation role can be checked with other constructs. Future research can be done by taking other constructs to assess the mediating role.

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Media Habits of College Students and the Need for Critical Media Literacy in India's Higher Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT

Students in today's context are engaged with one or more forms of media, predominantly on day-to-day basis. In many households, parents are not so proficient with the functioning and content of modern media platforms. Many times, students' media usage does not take place in the purview of parents or teachers and most commonly it happens with peer groups. However, the peer groups too lack knowledge or skills towards assessing the content and its influence on their attitudes and opinion on social relations and issues. Educational institutions also do not have a mechanism to guide or enable learning towards critically evaluating the media content and its influences, be it the traditional media, new media or any other forms. It is a serious concern from many quarters since nowhere do they get education on how to handle the media in a media-saturated and globalized world. Irrespective of gender, age, the discipline of study, the observations on the media usage patterns of students in higher educational institutions urge a need for Critical Media Literacy (CML) in India. This study measures the need for CML as part of the higher framework for all students from all disciplines. An assessment of the media habits of students and their influence on their understanding of the society and socialization process is done towards identifying the need for CML in higher education institutions in India.

Keywords: Critical Media Literacy, Students, Media influence, Higher educational institution, Media habit

Introduction

The need for inclusion of Critical Media Literacy (CML) in all disciplines of higher education framework in India is discussed in this paper in the light of increasing media saturation and convergence and its influence on students. Mass media outlets, like film, television, newspapers, new media platforms are found to be an integral part of human lives that exercise certain levels of influence on their viewers or users. Access to some form of mass media by many households has increased consumption among all age groups. According to Kamerer (2013), "Despite our daily need to work, sleep and eat, media use dominates how we spend our days. The three main categories of media use today are television, computers, and mobile devices". Young minds are controlled and directed by mass media discourse towards the formation of opinions or attitudes on important social issues like gender, caste, class, religion, and so on. Fan club cultures, hero-worship, imitation of favorite stars, dressing, food habits, mannerisms are results of mass media consumption that are common among the younger generation, especially students. It can strengthen the stereotypes and prejudices promoting adverse principles and skills that can lead to deviations hampering the development of good and informed citizens.

Among youth, basic life skills like self-awareness, self-esteem, empathy, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision making, effective communication, stress management, interpersonal communication and creative thinking can be influenced by mass media mediation in this context. However, research on mass media has proved it as a powerful instrument for social control and change (Demir, 2006; Kotaman & Avcı, 2006; Recepoglu, 2015). Thus, in the given scenario CML needs to be part of the higher education framework irrespective of the disciplines. According to Das (2009), in a media-saturated scenario beyond formal education, people must be equipped to handle the vast amount of knowledge that circulated in this media-rich environment. CML could be one mode of education that enables transformative learning towards developing skills towards critically analyzing the media messages and their influence on the individuals as well as the society. This paper assesses the media habits of college students and their influence on their social understanding stressing the need for Critical Media Literacy to be part of the higher education framework for students from all disciplines.

Mass media access and reach

The usage of mass media varies in several dimensions based on users, content, form, and

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medium. In a country like India, more than print medium the reach of the audio and audio-visual medium, like that of radio, film, and television was very quick and influential. This could be due to the fact of the literacy levels of the people at the grassroots since listening to a radio or viewing a film or television did not demand literacy skills. At the initial stages of innovation, the radio or film technologies were not for all but when it was accessible by many, it became the platform for mass communication. Especially, when the films were filled with narratives or stories reflecting the world around them by telling or reflecting their everyday lives it had an overwhelming reception by the masses. It was like magic for people to see people moving on screens and doing things aspired by a common person to an extent of taking people to unimaginable or imaginable worlds a 'cinema of attractions, as stated by the film theorist Tom Gunning (2000). Thus, as this medium grew, it had its influence on the very basic life of the people; right from food, language, way of dressing, talking, and overall, the way of life. This enabled mass media to act as agents of socialization where social learning took place by transmitting information, values, and norms essential for life from one generation to another.

Review of literature

Mass media as a social learning institution

Traditionally, social learning in society takes place through the primary social institutions such as family, education system, religion, tradition, and so on. Social learning determines a society's values, beliefs and shapes the attitudes of an individual and society about the world around a person. Arnett (1995) explains the theory of broad and narrow socialization describing seven principal sources of socialization as family, peers, school, community, the media, the legal system, and the cultural belief system. As stated by Bandura (2010), much social learning occurs either designedly or unintentionally from models in one's immediate environment, and a vast amount of information about human values, styles of thinking, and behaviour patterns are gained from the mass media. Over the years mass media platforms have evolved as one of the major forms of the secondary social institution through which observational learning takes place. Even the non-users or light users of mass media learn through observing the users of mass media. Thus Bandura (2010) observes that people who have had no exposure to the media are influenced by adopters who have had the exposure and they, themselves,

become the transmitters of the new ways. Within these different patterns of social influence, the media can serve as originating, as well as reinforcing, influences. As stated by Chandler (1995), "the mass media cultivate attitudes and values which are already present in a culture: the media maintain and propagate these values amongst members of a culture, thus binding it together" (Johnston, 2010).

Researches on media influence have been increasing over the years and multidimensional. Specifically, theories on limited effects of media like that of agenda-setting theory, two-step flow theory have identified the role of media in influencing public opinion on important issues. Earlier media studies claimed powerful effects of media on society but later studies showed mass media had limited effects or influence directly or indirectly. Modern studies including media priming, cultivation theory, social cognitive theory, and the differential effects model posit indirect effects of mass media (Payne & DalCin, 2015). Gerbner & Gross (1976) highlighted how frequent viewing of television influenced the understanding of the world and perceptions of people. Thus, the Cultivation Theory put forth by Gerbner, stated that media presented an image of the world that did not reflect reality and their distorted image of the world contributed to how people perceived social reality. Today there exists a vast number of studies exploring the linkages between the mass media with attitudes and behaviours of children, youth, and students.

Media habits of students and related consequences

Mass media usage does have both its positive as well as negative influence on young minds. Social learning from media by children and youth especially students, is a serious concern among parents, teachers, educationists and media researchers. Fan club cultures, hero-worship, imitation of favorite stars, dressing, food habits, mannerisms are results of mass media consumption. Studies find that a college student uses any form of media on an average for a minimum of 2 hours to a maximum of four hours per day. According to Potter (2004, p. 24), "Youth may develop misunderstandings and misperceptions about their world. Media is leaving young people to faulty beliefs; either they will accept the beliefs presented to them in the media or they will construct their own beliefs which may be faulty" (Prasad & Balraj, 2013). An extensive review of literature on media influence studies reveals the relationship between media exposure to smoking

habits of youngsters (Hanewinkel & Sargent, 2008), initiation of drinking by adolescents (Dalton *et al.*, 2006, Hanewinkel *et al.*, 2008), perception of reproductive and sexual health matters (Singh *et al.*, 1999). According to Vasan (2010) research on the sexuality and sexual behaviour of young people has highlighted the media as a significant source of information on reproductive and sexual health matters, and an important influence in young people's lives, particularly concerning their interaction with the opposite sex.

The use of smartphones and other new media gadgets has made it very easy for students to access any form of mass media content. Film and television-related content like songs, comedy shows, interviews of celebrities, reality shows and soaps have increased their media consumption. A report on student's media habits by Yadav (2011) states that students like programs in the four main categories adventure, cartoon shows reality shows, and soap operas. In addition, easy access to video games, porn sites, and age-inappropriate content can also influence some students. Das (2016) in an article on media-influenced crimes, states that crimes are influenced by movies and they have the power to manipulate the minds of the audience. One of the cases cited by Das (2016) is that a 24-year-old girl – a Snapdeal employee – was stalked and later kidnapped by a man. The man with the intention of “*marrying*” her confessed later on to the inspiration of Khan in *Darr* (1993) when interrogated by the police. According to the news reports of News18 (2012), a 12-year-old died imitating a television serial suicide and a 15-year-old had stabbed his teacher to death and was reportedly being influenced by watching the revenge drama *Agneepath*. Such occurrences do not comprise isolated cases, similar incidents are commonly reported from different parts of the country.

The growth of new media technologies and access to smartphones by youth have increased their use of social media platforms. Baglari *et al.* (2020) states that adolescents are more prone to involve in social media for their identity and social interaction, which in contrast limiting the communication between friends, family members, and other significant others. Internet addiction and problematic use of the internet among students are due to the absence of digital media literacy in education. Secondary source research of reported cases shows students' problematic use of video games like *Blue Whale*, *Pub G*, use of *Tik-Tok* videos across India. Based on a fictional horror website character Slender Man, two teenage girls stabbed

their class-mate believing to honour the fictional character (Maddox, 2018). Media connections with the crime are revealed in several cases globally and India. Research shows that apart from influencing the daily habits mass media influences aspects like crime, violence, gender sensitiveness, social values, and norms.

Owing to the nature of media habits of students several researchers at the global level and in India, suggest media literacy as a solution to address the issue. Cases of murder or acid-attacks on women for not accepting love proposals, sexual violence, cybercrimes like stalking, trolling, are some of the crime patterns existing among the younger generation. Exposure to toxic content can affect younger minds significantly in terms of their social understandings, relationships, values, and norms. This emphasizes the need for students to analyze the role of media in their lives choosing what is essential for them towards their well-being. The education curriculum in India has, however, failed to address this issue, even though younger people are using more media in their day-to-day lives.

Media literacy towards addressing media influence

Aufderheide (1993), defines media literacy as the basic ability to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a variety of forms. Initially, mass media was understood to be more powerful in terms of its influence over the people. So media literacy was aimed to protect users from its powerful effects considering them as passive receivers. However, there were newer insights that were getting added to this perception resulting in varied approaches to media education. Kellner and Share (2007) elaborate on four major approaches to media education, the first as the *protectionist approach*, considering media audiences as passive victims of media that influences their attitudes and values. The second approach being *media arts education* that teaches knowledge and skills essential towards the expression of art and media. This is the approach that is predominantly found in several institutions both at school and higher education levels in India. In the third approach, the authors discuss the *media literacy* approach which was more of knowing things employing access, analysis, evaluation, and communication. Yet the fourth approach they discuss is the *Critical Media Literacy approach* that includes aspects of the three approaches such as embracing ideology critique and the politics of representation, incorporating alternative media production and

expanding the textual analysis to include issues of social context and control.

Critical media literacy

Pathak-Shelat (2014) states that “literacy has traditionally been described as the ability to read, write, and compute, but today we need multiple literacies, including competencies that allow critical and creative engagement with information and media” which is seen to be very crucial towards ensuring the well-being of children and younger generation. Media literacy is understanding the value of news and information, the power of media messages, and the role of citizens in setting the public agenda. Media literacy programs teach critical analysis and media literate citizens defend the media’s watchdog role, promote civil society, and demand higher standards from media professionals United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Media literacy programs incorporating human rights components like critical thinking could empower the younger generation to understand the functions of media, critically evaluate their content, and make informed decisions as users of media content. An understanding of media in the right sense, understanding its effects, uses, and impact on the younger generation is very much important in a media-saturated world. This could in turn empower a person beyond any boundaries and barriers to ensure one’s human rights like the right to information, privacy, life and dignity.

Need for CML in educational curriculum

According to Schmidt (2012), in the last two decades, there has been a dramatic growth of scholarly research regarding media literacy education at the K-12 level. It has been designed to help primary and secondary students to analyze media content, advertisements, media constructions on body image, crime, and violence. Media literacy is part of the education in most of the developed countries (Heins & Cho 2003; Thoman & Jolls 2004) and educators recognize the need for media literacy education to continue into higher education. (Bordac 2009; Christ 2004; Mihailidis & Hiebert, 2005; Hallaq, 2016). The student community as predominant media users should be able to analyze and understand how media content can influence them in different ways. Based on the media habits of students, irrespective of their discipline of study, it is vital to impart media literacy for all students. Media literacy has been part of the educational curriculum in countries like the UK, Canada,

France, Australia, and some of the Nordic countries (Pathak-Shelat, 2014). Media Information Literacy (MIL) has been part of the agenda of UNESCO among teachers as well as students. Media literacy has also been part of informal education by different means like cultural programs, training, campaigns, and so on. However, in India, to evaluate and analyze media messages employing media literacy in education institutions has not yet materialized as required.

Critical media literacy in India’s educational institutions

Media education as a discipline is offered under different nomenclatures in institutions of higher education in India. Media courses include components of theory, practice, research, and media management with a holistic approach. They are specialized courses offered to students who aspire to build their careers in media houses or engage in mass media teaching and research. However, when it comes to critically engaging student communities who are prominent media users, there has been a huge lacuna. According to Das (2009), in India, few higher education institutions have introduced media education as part of their undergraduate curriculum as in the case of Jamia Millia Islamia and University of Delhi. It is not serious, however, “despite years of advocacy, media education and literacy is not yet an integral part of the education system in India” (Kumar, 2007, p. 20; Kamerer, 2013).

Few components concerning media are inbuilt into the syllabus of schools and colleges, which teach the mass media history, its functions, importance, production and content types. States like Kerala and Karnataka have media education as part of the school curriculum in higher secondary levels. The National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) had introduced training on media education to school children in a phased manner (Jayachanran, 2018). However, most media courses address the needs of professional development in media houses and concentrate on knowledge and skill development. When this is required at one front, as mass media consumers, all students of different disciplines require a critical engagement with media content, production, and reception, which has been ignored for too long. Its high time that the curriculum of mainstream higher education includes Critical Media Literacy.

Research objectives

This paper tries to find out the media habits of

students in higher educational institutions and their influence on the students' understanding of society and everyday lives. It also aims to assess the need for critical media literacy in higher education irrespective of the discipline of study, gender, age, region, and other demographic attributes of the students. The research questions deal with the nature of mass media usage in a media-saturated and convergence era, the levels of influence of mass media on everyday life activities like the way of dressing, talking, understanding of the society, social relations, family relations, peer relations etc. The research also tries to know if there existed an association between mass media influence on everyday lives and their gender, age, religion, caste, region, discipline, and year of study.

Methodology

Respondents

Undergraduate students studying in five different arts and science colleges were the sample of the study from Tirunelveli district, Tamil Nadu as a means of purposive sampling. With the approval of the institution heads the study was conducted by drawing samples from Government College for Men, Government College for women, Government Aided College, Self-Financed College, and a Constituent college of the university in the district. Students using any form of mass media platform formed the sample of the study. A survey questionnaire on mass media usage patterns and purpose of use was used to collect data from a total of 388 students.

Research tool

A survey questionnaire was administered to the respondents and the questionnaire consisted of questions of the demographic details in the first section, the second section consisted of questions on mass media usage patterns and the third section consisted of a scale on mass media influence on everyday lives of the students. It was measured using 7 items on media influence on dressing, hairstyle, everyday conversations, gender relations, family relations, social relations, and vital concepts of life. Cronbach's alpha test was used to find out the reliability of the scale and was found to have a good internal consistency greater than 0.7. The reliability of the scale was found to be 0.809 which is high reliability.

Findings and discussions

As per the definitions of the World Health Organisation, individuals in the age group of 10-19 years come under the category of 'Adolescents' and 'Youth' as the 15-24-year age group. It was found

that 83% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 17 to 20 years and 17% to the age group of 20 to 25 years old. Thus, this study on college students concerns mostly with the adolescents and youth of the society. The study finds that the usage of online media platforms is relatively high, such that 75.77% of respondents reported using them for more than one hour per day and active in social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram. A similar study on patterns of social media use among youth by Baglari, *et al.* (2020), in a study among 300 subjects in the age group of 18-25 from an academic institution in Karnataka find that the maximum time spent was 120 minutes and the minimum was 25 minutes for Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram. A study by Sachdeva and Tripathi (2019) describes the positives of social media engagement of youth in terms of development in their educational aspects, social benefits, job opportunities, socio-political engagement. The study also speaks on the flip side of social media, like, concerns on privacy issues, physical and emotional withdrawal, misuse of networking platforms through fake news, phishing, cyberbullying, cyberstalking, etc. The authors stress the need for media literacy to educate people to address fake news and promote media awareness.

In the current scenario, the youth are into a phase of convergence culture, able to access both traditional and new media platforms via single or multiple gadgets. The study observes that not only new media usage but also use of traditional media are also high. Usage of television and film-related content is more than one hour per day among 70.10% of the respondents. However, only 25.52% spend more than one hour per day on print media content. The study finds that there is no significant difference in terms of gender since both male and female students' mass media usage patterns are similar. The youth today have access to both film and television-related content through single or different platforms. Beyond the role of consumers, convergence has paved way for newer ways of engagement and participation as producers of content. As stated by Chanda (2017) there is a need to understand the significance of critical and twenty-first-century literacy instructions in media literacy pedagogies.

Media is an integral part of youth lives that contributes towards their socialization. The study finds that the majority of the respondents believe that mass media has an influence on social understanding with 66.7% rating high influence, 24.2% rating as a medium influence, and 10.1% rating as low level of influence. The study finds that there is no significant

difference in terms of gender and discipline of study since all students believe that mass media influences their social understanding. In terms of the role of socializing, the majority 44.85% of respondents state that understandings of society are got from exposure to mass media content. The study also finds that educational institutions, families, and friends are next to mass media in terms of playing the socializing role among students. Specifically, 16.24% of the respondents state education, 17.78% state family, and 21.13% state friends as major sources of socialization that help them understand society. Arnett (2015) states that "media differ from socializing agents such as family, school, community and the legal system in that adolescents have greater control over their media choices than they do over their socialization from these other sources". The results show that though women students prioritize mass media as a major socializing agent, the family stands next to them whereas male student's friends are next to mass media.

In cultures where media are available, media can provide materials that adolescents use toward the construction of identity (Swidler, 1986; Arnett, 2015). It was found that a majority, 64.9% of the students had the opinion that media influence on their everyday lives was found to be medium, with 17.5% stating a high level of influence and 17.5% stating a low level of influence on their everyday lives. A study by Paul and Ukey (2017) on media influence on the lifestyle of the youth, states that there exists an impact of media influence on the dressing style of youth in Madhya Pradesh, India. The research findings show that there was no significant difference among the attitudes of both male and female students in terms of mass media influence in their everyday lives since the p-value was greater than 0.05.

The findings of this study on the media habits of the students show students active engagement with new media as well as traditional media platforms. Moreover, the study finds that there is more agreement from students on media influence in their day-to-day lives. Therefore, it is essential to recall the cultivation theory (Gerbner *et al*, 1984) which puts forth that people who use television more often are more likely to be influenced by television messages. It put forth that people who spend more time with media are at greater risks of perceiving the realities constructed by mass media outlets. This is well applicable to students' media habits identified in this study.

Conclusion

The above findings demonstrate the mass media

usage patterns of students in higher education and their influence on their everyday lives and understanding of society. Irrespective of the disciplines, age, gender, caste, religion, region, and so on there exist similar patterns of media influence on the students. Especially in a situation of a globalized, media-saturated world, the access to global culture, varied media forms, sources, content are putting forth newer and broader requirements in imparting media literacy to the present-day youth. Media literacy is identified as an important tool in the making of informed citizens towards upholding democracy. It is vital to understand the point stated by Das (2009), that "when dealing with media education, the issue is not about how to apply media but on how to apply critical learning about the media to issues of democracy, civic participation, particularly important in the case of democratic countries like India where vast inequalities exist alongside opportunities". Kellner & Share (2007) put forth that CML should run through all curricular areas since it deals with communication and society. Educationists need to understand the need for media literacy for students of all disciplines making it part of the curriculum not as a mere skill but as an essential life skill required towards informed citizens.

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Media Education Stalwarts in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya

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ABSTRACT

The journey of media education in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya dates back in 1995 when the first course Mass Communication and Video Production (MCVP) was pioneered by the Salesian Fathers of Don Bosco (SDB) at St. Anthony's College. It is the first of its kind in the country. Five years later, the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL) introduced the Post Graduate Diploma in Mass Communication (PGDMC) and later, when it became the English and Foreign Languages (EFL) University in 2007, a Five-Year Integrated (3+2) course in Journalism and Mass Communication was launched. EFL University became the first Central University to offer a Post-Graduation in this subject. In 2014, the North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) followed suit and launched an MA Programme in Mass Communication and a PhD in Mass Communication in 2019. Catering to the young minds from the region as well as from outside, over time, these institutions have emerged as premier media institutes to have successfully trained young media professionals in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya. Using the historical method through personal observations, discussions and personal interviews, this paper documents the arduous journey, challenges and uphill tasks of the visionaries who dare to dream and contributed to the advancement of media studies in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya.

Keywords: Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Mass Communication, St. Anthony's, EFLU, NEHU, Stalwarts.

Introduction

In order to understand and appreciate the advancement of education among the indigenous tribes of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya, it is important to note the steps taken by the foreign missionaries to introduce western education in the Hills. In fact, tracing the history of formal education in the Khasi Hills is to track the educational footprints of the foreign missionaries. Their determined efforts and colossal contributions to education, over the centuries, place Shillong as the hub of education in India's northeast. The social and educational interventions in the Hills brought about phenomenal changes to the lives of people permanently.

The Khasi and Jaintia Hills and their people

Tuck in the north-eastern part of the country, the home of the three major tribes, the Khasi, the Jaintia (often clubbed as Khasi-Jaintia) and the Garo indigenous people in Meghalaya, the state often known as the "*abode of clouds*". Meghalaya was a part of Assam until its statehood on 21st January 1972. Surrounded by Assam in the North and East and Bangladesh in the South and West, Meghalaya spreads over an area of 22,429 sq. km. The population of the state stands at approximately 30 lakhs, as per the last Indian census. While English is the official language

of the state, the Khasi and the Garo are the associated official languages. Besides having its own traditional religion (*Ka Niam Khasi*) and others, Christians form the major part of the population at approximately 75 per cent (Census, 2011).

Meghalaya is predominantly a tribal state following a matrilineal society where lineage is traced through the mother. Though the origin of the adoption of the matrilineal system is difficult to determine, scholars believe that the Khasi may have adopted this system during their migration to their current homes and that their high regard for matriline and its essence convinces them to be unique and also differentiates them from the rest of the human race¹(Maliekal, 2005). Prior to the arrival of Christianity, the Khasi and Jaintia people practiced their own religion. Bareh (1964) notes that the people of the Hills practice *Ka Niam Khasi* along with its customary rituals and practices of animal sacrifices, often roosters, goats, or pigs². Besides the constant visits of the sick in their own homes in the remote villages, the healthcare centres and dispensaries established by the Christian missionaries in urban and rural areas saved a number of lives. In addition to the Catholic Church's medical interventions among the tribes, Burman (1998) writes that "the Church deserved more credit in their efforts to extend medical facilities to remote and interior

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places³ and that it was the “lone pioneer to develop a modern system of health care in the entire region”⁴ (Khonglah, 1996).

Besides modern scientific healthcare, the foreign missionaries made indelible footprints in the educational history of the people of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. Primary schools were started as early as the 1900s. The 20th century saw the rise of numerous educational institutions. Burman (1998) writes that “the introduction of the western education...had a profound effect on the lifestyle and consumption patterns”⁵ of the people of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills while explaining the educational impacts that missionaries had on the tribes.

Towards the latter part of the 20th century, more professional and specialized courses were launched attracting students from distant places within the region as well as those from outside it. Shillong, the “Scotland of the East” became the educational hub of the entire region⁶. Commenting on the educational efforts made by the missionaries Snaitang (1998) expresses those far-reaching consequences as having the capacity to “shape the destiny of the people as a whole”⁷.

Media Studies in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills

Towards the close of the twentieth century, for the first time in the region mass media course was launched by the Salesian Fathers of Don Bosco (SDB) at St. Anthony’s College, Shillong in 1995. The course offered is Mass Communication and Video Production (MCVP) under the Mass Media Department. Five years later, in 2000, the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL), Shillong, introduced the Post Graduate Diploma in Mass Communication (PGDMC). Later in 2007, when CIEFL became the English and Foreign Languages (EFL) University, the diploma course was converted to a Five-Year Integrated (3+2) course in Journalism and Mass Communication. The EFL University becomes the first Central University to offer a Post-Graduation in the subject. In 2014, the North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) launched an MA Programme in Mass Communication and a PhD in Mass Communication in 2019.

From its birth till today, the narrative of media studies in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills is a success story through the courageous, challenging and heroic strides of the few visionaries’ unwavering faith to accomplish the task of providing access to young minds from the region, as well from outside. Over the years, these institutions have emerged as premier media institutes to have successfully trained young

media professionals, many of whom are untapped talents that are financially not fortunate to be trained outside the region.

Fr. John D. Jayakumar, founder of the Mass Media Department in St. Anthony’s College, along with the pioneering work of (Dr.) Fr. Stephen Mavely as Principal of the College, and Prof. Kailash C. Baral, former Director of the English and Foreign Languages (EFL) University, Shillong Campus, are names that will live on in the history of media education in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. Though not exclusive in itself, this paper tries to chronicle their arduous journey of laying the foundations of media studies in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya and admirably raises it to the impressive position that it has attained today.

Review of Literature

Brief history of formal education in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills

To comprehend the progression and advancement of the Hills’ specialized and professional courses, it is pertinent to understand how modern western education took roots among the tribes. Before the arrival of the missionary from Wales, Kharakor (1998) and Dkhar (1993) notes that there is no record of formal education of the indigenous people. She also disagrees with the view that formal education began with Alexander B. Lish, a Baptist missionary who opened three schools in 1832 but ceased to operate abruptly in 1838. However, these schools were reopened in 1842 by Thomas Jones⁸. Tracing back the history Kharakor (1998) further notes that dates the history of primary education in the hills back to 1832 in Shella much before Alexander B. Lish or Thomas Jones⁹. She further mentions that children of well to do families were sent to the citadel of learning in Jaintiapur to receive education. Later on, the School was opened to all and made rapid progress. It became an M.E school in 1839 and was made a Proceeding High School in 1860-61. Besides the Shella local dialect as the medium of instruction in the School, English, Sanskrit or Bengali were second or third languages respectively. The school was however destroyed in the great earthquake that shook the Khasi Hills in 1897 and “within a span of one generation, their existence was no longer remembered and memory is soon wiped out of the hearts and minds of the people”¹⁰.

Till 1864, the Khasi did not have a script¹¹. Culture was passed orally from one generation to the next¹² within the tribe. General communication with people from outside the region, Bareh (1964) mentions that up to the mid-19th century, ancient Khasi kings used

the neighbour's script such as Devnagiri, Assamese and Bengali¹³. In 1925, a Khasi textbook *Ka Kot A.B* (Khasi Primer) was published and approved to be used in schools¹⁴. Khasi language became the unifying medium of communication among the diversified dialects within a tribe¹⁵. As far as start of formal education in the hills is concerned, (Kharakor, 1998) categorically states "though it is fitting to say that Thomas Jones is the 'Father of the Khasi Alphabet', it is not correct to say that primary education in the Hills started with the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Presbyterian missionaries in 1842"¹⁶.

Expansion of formal education in the 20th century

Towards the latter part of the 19th century, the Christian missionaries have already begun to set up primary schools in the Hills. Much of the spadework was done by the Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Saviour (SDS). St. Anthony's School, Shillong was started as a primary school with forty (40) students on 1 May 1908 and was officially inaugurated on 15 August 1911. In the following year, it was designated as an English Medium School with ninety (90) students¹⁷. The IBVM Sisters from Ireland founded the Loreto Convent, the first English Medium School exclusively for girls that was affiliated with Cambridge, in 1909. It also prepared its students for music examinations at Trinity College. By 1907, Catholic schools in the region were reorganized to meet the syllabus prescribed by the Government of Assam and eventually these schools were granted recognition without difficulty. By 1912, twenty-six elementary schools were set up. In 1915, St. Mary's Girls High School initiated by the SDS was taken over by the RNDM Sisters. St. Edmund's School, an English Medium School exclusively for boys, was started in 1916 by the Irish Christian Brothers. St. Edmund's College, affiliated with Cambridge was opened in 1924 (Nongrum, 1982)¹⁸. More religious literary books were published by the Christian missionaries besides academic texts books to be used in schools. Khasi literature saw a rapid rise by the first half of the 20th century. The period 1890-1940 can be categorized as the first fifty years of joint literary venture by missionaries and indigenous Khasi writers in poetry, fiction and drama (Kharakor, 1998).

The arrival of the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB) in 1892 provided more vitality to the educational scenario in the hills. By the end of the 20th century, western education was already well established in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. The beginning of the 21st century witnessed the extension of academic endeavours in providing more windows of opportunities for students

to opt for through new professional courses that are skill-based or job-oriented catering to meet the market demands of the changing times. One of such courses is the study of the media.

Mass Communication and Journalism in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills

As far as the study of the media in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya is concerned, there is no existing literature published to document the evolution, growth and development of media studies in the region. Data available are only through the primary sources of information in the form of personal experiences, observations, discussions and personal interviews of those people (or those who know them well) who championed the study of media in the region.

Research objectives

The aim of the paper is to provide a chronicle of the journey of media studies in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya to the present times. The objectives are to document the evolution, challenges, growth and development of the study of media in the Hills through the eyes of the heroes (or those who know them close) who initiated the commencement of the course, nurtured it and led it to the progress and advancement of media studies in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. More specifically, the paper tries to unravel the history of media education in the Hills through the following questions.

Research questions

1. How the study of mass media and communications evolve in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills?
2. Who are the media education stalwarts in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and what are their contributions?
3. What are the ordeals and challenges that these heroes faced in due course to elevate the study of media as it is today?

Research Methodology

Using the qualitative method by means of historical method of enquiry, the paper relies on the use of primary and secondary sources of information. Primary sources include the use of personal observations, discussions and personal interviews of the heroes (and those who know them close) who made the study of media possible in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills.

Secondary sources of information include the use of information already published on the background,

evolution and growth of formal education in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills.

Findings and Analysis

Media Studies in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills

St. Anthony's College: Mass Communication and Video Production (MCVP)

The story of the Mass Communication and Video Production (MCVP) course began with Fr. John D. Jayakumar, who was inspired by the “under-representation of the Northeast region by the national media at the time, and he believed that the best way to address this was to train and prepare responsible and ethical media people from the region itself to fill the void,” reminisce Fr. Gervasius Nongkseh¹⁹ one of his conversations with Fr. John. With the innovative efforts of (Dr.) Fr. Stephen Mavely, the idea was brought to fruition in 1995 when the Department of Mass Media was established on 14 September 1995, affiliated to the North Eastern Hill University (NEHU). With the aim of preparing the students for the changing global media industry and grooming them as media professionals with a thorough theoretical understanding of a larger social perspective within which the media industry operates, the undergraduate programme is considered as the first of its kind in the northeast. The two prominent names associated with the department of Mass Media in the college are (Dr.) Fr. Stephen Mavely, under whose tenure the Mass Media Department was launched, and Fr. John D. Jayakumar, the founder and Head of the Department.

The department started off with sixteen (16) students in the first batch who were taught Principles of Mass Communication, Media Scene in India, Script Writing, Visual Thinking, Advertising, Film studies, Photography and Videography, Documentary and Editing, Radio and Television Productions as well as Basics of Media Research. Finding sufficient faculty members and establishing infrastructure was a difficult task at the start of the program. “There were only three faculty members who taught four theoretical papers,” states Fr. Nongkseh. Adding further he says, “Prof. Keval J. Kumar travelled from Pune’s Ranade Institute to complete the whole Media Scene in India coursework in three weeks”. The Department was run with the help of other guest teachers and visiting faculty members with a media background. Dr. Ampareen Lyngdoh²⁰ is the first Khasi teacher in the department. Besides conducting regular media workshops, seminars and symposiums, the annual photographic competition that is open to all is another attraction of the numerous activities of

the department.

Practise based courses, particularly, studio productions encountered a number of difficulties. “There was only one camera in the first year; during the second year, the students had a studio with one vision mixer, one VHS recorder, a manual Character Generator (CG), four or five monitors, and a production control room. During productions, impatient camera personnel would hurry back and forth to the control room for directives from the Director, as the talk back system was exclusively between the floor manager and the Director. Those were the days,” exclaims Fr. Nongkseh. In 2001, a 30-terminal audio language lab was constructed. “A new and much bigger studio equipped with a state-of-the-art professional control room with a talk back system was available to the students within a span of few years,” he further adds. With the grand success of the MCVP course, Media Technologies was sanctioned by the UGC in 2001. Soon, the department expanded not only in terms of manpower but also in terms of facilities. “Today the department is proudly equipped with all the latest technologies both in audio and video production,” concludes Fr. Nongkseh.

While exposing to the 21st-century information and internet revolution challenges and their impacts on young students, the department’s new strategy is to cultivate creative students who can respond to New Media technologies of image and sound in novel ways. “The department has now set out to improve the teaching methodology first and foremost. Teachers in the department no longer limit themselves to simply lecturing in order to mould students into individuals with sound media knowledge, values, and media ethics but also mentor students through cooperation in various media initiatives such as festivals, seminars, and street theatre, exhibitions etc. with other stakeholders such as the government, the parents and research institutes,” Fr. Nongkseh reveals. Facing up to the challenges ahead, he goes on to say that “The department was forced to upgrade on a regular basis due to the ever-changing technologies and the market’s ever-increasing need of ethical media professionals. This necessitates a large number of resources, which can be tough to adapt to at times. That, however, does not deter us from achieving our mandate.”

From the time of its inception up till now, the Department has trained more than 500 young media specialists who are now professionally engaged in various industries of media across the country as well as independent media entrepreneurs and academicians. Those who are not opting for further studies in the media have successfully set up their own

media enterprise and studios across the region and some are becoming independent filmmakers. Today, the College's Mass Media Department is recognized for its excellence in quality media education and infrastructure.

The English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Shillong Regional Campus

The Central University of the English and Foreign Languages (EFL) has its origin from the Central Institute of English (CIE) which was set up in 1958 to ensure high-quality education in English for Indian learners in Hyderabad. In 1973, CIE was given a new name as The Central Institute of English and Foreign Language (CIEFL) and by then two more campuses were set up in Shillong and Lucknow. CIEFL became a central university in 2007 and it was rechristened as the English and Foreign Languages (EFL) University. Besides offering courses in English and Foreign Languages, the Shillong Campus, under the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, offers Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in the field of Journalism and Mass Communication.

The journey of the Department from the time of its establishment till today is a narrative of the arduous tasks undertaken by Prof. Kailash C. Baral²¹ to make the department as it is today. Prof. Kailash C. Baral contributed immensely to the growth and progress of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at the Shillong Campus. The history of the Department started with a modest beginning of a Post Graduate Diploma in Mass Communication (PGDMC). Describing the idea behind the initiation of the Programme, he says "The argument was that CIEFL offered language-based communication courses that might be expanded to media studies." The thought gave birth to launch of the Diploma in Mass Communication (DMC) in 2000 with twenty-five (25) students in roll. The new specialized programme attracts students who wish to explore a new subject. Subjects taught then included Print Media, Audio Visual Communication Advertising, Public Relations, Photography and Film studies.

Looking back at the problems and challenges of running a new course, Prof. Baral explains, "Physical infrastructure issues arose, such as obtaining decent classrooms, a proper studio, and well-qualified teachers." Elaborating on the challenges of running the new course, he states, "The course was taught with the assistance of faculty from various disciplines. For many years, I taught media theory. Some local journalists were enlisted to teach print journalism classes. Professionals from the media and journalism fields were invited to

provide talks and offer practice-based courses."

Expressing grief about the dearth of infrastructure, he states, "Practical photography classes were incredibly difficult. Though a darkroom was eventually built to process still images, a studio is still required for video creation and other practical papers. I had to deal with these issues through local resources that were available." Elaborating further on how the department managed without a studio, Prof. Baral further continues, "There were no regular studios, except for a voice recording studio in Laban. The pupils were sent there to learn about voice recording procedures. Some designated studios were chosen to provide actual practice in photography and videography lessons. As a result of their computer application instruction, the students learned the fundamentals of video editing." When asked about the internships facilities that the department offers to the students, Prof. Baral, in a note of melancholy, states, "Apprenticeships in media organizations and studios are a key issue for our students. Unfortunately, local print media houses were hesitant to accept our students as trainees; however, with my personal connections, I was able to secure positions for our students in most newspaper firms, particularly in Guwahati."

In spite of the gargantuan trials and challenges, the PG Diploma was a success. Prof. Baral in a happy note, remarks, "Students that graduated were hired by local newspapers and are currently working as editors and producers in television stations around the region, while others are employed by the state government in various positions."

After a year or two of the launching of the Diploma course, one permanent faculty member with a media background was appointed and other instructors with a NET qualification in Journalism and Mass Communication joined the department as guest teachers. Seven years later, when CIEFL became a full-fledged central university, now known as the English and Foreign Languages (EFL) University, the Postgraduate Diploma in Mass Communication was elevated a five-year integrated course (3+2) under the tenure Prof. Abhai Maurya, the University's first Vice-Chancellor in 2007. The course allows flexibility for a student to exit the course after three years of graduation or to continue further for a Masters' Degree for another two years.

Within a span of two years, the Shillong Campus shifted to its own land newly allocated within the NEHU campus. "The problem of classrooms was adequately handled with the construction of new buildings. Soon after, the studio, a language lab, and

a multimedia lab with cutting-edge technology, as well as a good collection of books in the library, were all inaugurated and ready to use,” adds Prof. Baral. As more posts were created in subsequent years, the infrastructural challenges were overcome. Today, the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication comprises of one Professor and four Assistant Professors in different areas of specializations along with a number of other guest teachers.

Currently, some of the core courses offered to the students include the Basics of Media studies, Models and Theories and Communication for Development, Advertising, Public Relations, Radio, Print and Broadcast Journalism, Photography and Photo-journalism, New Media Communication, Social Media Journalism and Media Research. Besides the core courses in mass communication, students can also opt for open courses from any department. For the undergrads, learning one foreign language is a must.

In addition to traditional classroom instruction, the department has been successful in obtaining industrial training for its students at prestigious media institutions across the country, allowing them to gain hands-on experience and develop their talents in a field of their choice. As part of the academic discourse, the department provides students the exposure to national and international seminars, symposiums, workshops and research activities through collaborations with state, national and international agencies/organisations and institutions.

In order to meet the needs and demands of the changing times, new courses are introduced from time to time. Gender, Media and Human Rights and Gender and the Media were approved by the BoS held in 2017. The department also offers courses on media in the Northeast and documents the evolution, growth and impacts of media in the socio-cultural fabric of the tribes in the northeast. Emphasising on the significance of documentation, Prof. Baral states, “The north-east offers a wide range of academic opportunities and potentials, with many more areas to be explored in terms of how media influences and impacts tribal and indigenous languages, ethnicity, diversity, cultures, and traditions of the region’s people, and media institutions play an important role in this regard.”

Looking ahead for a bright future, Prof. Baral optimistically concludes, “I see a bright future for the department with the infrastructure in place and a well-qualified faculty.” The Department can now be proud of its alumni accomplishments. Some have landed positions in prestigious academic institutions

across the country, while others are working as media producers and directors in various media organizations, a few more launching their own media companies and some other are now working as freelance media professionals within the region as well as across the country.

The North Eastern Hill University (NEHU)

The Journalism and Mass Communication Department, under the School of Economics, Management and Information Sciences, was established in 2012. MA was started in 2014 with an intake of 20 seats and PhD begins in 2019. Talking about the idea behind the establishment of the department, Dr. Kamal Chirom²² states, “The vision is to become a leading centre for media education, enabling students to critically engage with media texts and scholarship, resulting in the production of gender-sensitive and change-inspiring ideas and content that celebrate multiculturalism, pluralism, and secularism while focusing on development.” The journey of the department since the start has not been easy. “Setting up the infrastructure, such as studios and equipment, as well as filling vacant positions, have been the hurdles for the department in its early years of operation,” recalls Dr. Chirom. The department has three members of the faculty at present along with other guest teachers. Students in roll are from within the region as well as from outside.

Currently, the department offers courses in Print Media, Media and Culture Studies, Development Studies, Film Studies, Communication Research, Communication Theories, Television Production, New Media, Media and Gender. When asked about the department’s in-house skill-based training, he said, “Photography, journalism, radio production, TV production, film production, advertising, and public relations are among the topics covered in training. The course incorporates best practices such as cooperation exercises, acting workshops, and other activities. Internships are also an important aspect of the programme.”

The department is still in its early stages, a little more than half a decade only after its inception, it envisions itself as a “Media research hub and to develop an archive for documentation of regional media texts in the coming years,” concludes Dr. Chirom.

Discussions

Through discussions, the narrative of the journey of media studies in the Hills reveals that despite the infrastructural hurdles that these media institutions face,

the untiring determination and struggles of the visionaries contributed enormously to the success of media studies in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. These institutions have provided students with not only the opportunity to gain access to the study of the media in the region but also admirably equipped them with the skills that are needed to meet the daily challenges as media professionals. "The MCVP programme introduced me to a whole new world of media. It gave me the confidence to speak up in front of a group, to frame questions, and to debate on a certain topic. This skill set assisted me in landing a job as a radio jockey at a radio station where I worked for nine years. The technical components of the training also assisted me in honing my talents as a filmmaker and editor, and I've recently begun producing. Overall, the training has aided me in pursuing a career in the media," says Andreas War.²³ "The course provided me with a sense of purpose in life that I had previously lacked," further adds Deepak Singh²⁴. Despite the odds, the Mass Media Department has done exceptionally well and is proud to have produced eminent filmmakers from the region with national²⁵ and international²⁶ recognition and awards on films made by them.

The EFL University is proud of its students' accomplishments. Rikynti Marwein²⁷ has been recognized for her dedication and hard work in the area of journalism with various honours for her outstanding contributions to the industry. Commenting on the course's value in a professional setting, Donboklang Majaw²⁸ states, "The course has assisted me in becoming acquainted with the huge field of communication studies, and because of EFLU's holistic approach to the subject, it has piqued my interest in the practise, production, and deeper comprehension of the media and its large-scale societal ramifications." "Working as a professional in the AIDS awareness campaigns, the course has assisted me in conceptualizing successful execution of development program(s) through the use of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC), which is already 70 per cent of the job done. I wouldn't have been able to achieve it without a background in media and communication studies," further adds W. Alexander Kharkongor²⁹.

Despite the obstacles, the journey thus far has been inspiring to young minds. Looking back, these institutions have done a remarkable job of maximizing available local resources, as well as utilizing access to new media technology in tapping the latent potentials and bringing out the best in a pupil. The journey was not easy, but the success stories of the students' accomplishments inspire these institutes for "Ever More and Better Ever," from "Words Illumine

Everything," in order to "Rise up and Build."

Conclusion

As the anonymous saying goes, "Success hardly comes from comfort zones" these media institutes in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, despite the uphill task of problems and challenges, they have performed exceptionally well in catering to the needs of providing quality media education to the young students who wish to pursue mass communication and journalism as a career in the region as a whole. Their great achievement in terms of educational quality and facility utilization by maximising locally available resources is commendable. These institutes, in particular, are a lifeline for young students in India's North East, particularly those who cannot afford to study in media colleges in other regions of the nation due to financial constraints.

These media schools have fostered, raised, and produced exceptional minds who are proud of their alma mater. Prof. Baral advises on what more has to be done to increase quality, saying, "Nothing can substitute effective instruction. Concentrate on good instruction and fulfil the mandate of the department." Bringing the discussion to a close, Fr. Nongkse states, "There is still much to be done. As the department gains greater experience and dedication in serving the region, the challenges continue to inspire hope."

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3. Dr. Kamal Chirom, Head Teacher, Journalism and Mass Communication Department, NEHU.
4. Mr. Deepak Singh, Research Scholar at NEHU.
5. Mr. W. Alexander Kharkongor, Assistant Director, Meghalaya AIDS Control Society, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Meghalaya.
6. Mr. Andreas War, Media Entrepreneur.
7. Mr. Donboklang Majaw, an independent documentary and filmmaker.

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- the people of the Hills as they found it to be more compatible with their traditional way of life.
12. Kharkrang, 1990, p. 85
 13. (Bareh, 1964, p. 2) Bareh is of the view that even Persian might have been used. According to him records are preserved in the office of the Deputy Commissioner (Khasi and Jaintia Hills) and as well as the Assam Secretariat Record Room in Shillong.
 14. Maliekal, 2005, p. 172
 15. Maliekal, 2005, p. 282
 16. Kharakor, 1998, p. 4
 17. Maliekal, 2005, pp. 276-277
 18. Maliekal, 2005, p. 152
 19. Current Director of the Department of Mass Media
 20. Dr. Ampareen Lyngdoh is now a sitting legislator and a former Members of the Cabinet, Government of Meghalaya.
 21. Former Professor of English and India Studies at the EFL University, Hyderabad. He was the former Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University and served as the Director of the Shillong Regional Campus (1999-2016)
 22. Dr. Kamal Chirom, Assistant Professor and Teacher In-Charge of the Department of Journalism & Mass Communication, NEHU
 23. Andreas War graduated from St. Anthony's in 2003. Currently runs his own media channel in Shillong.
 24. Deepak Singh, Graduated from St. Anthony's College in 2009. He is currently a Research Scholar at NEHU.
 25. "Silent Poet" won the Best First Non-Feature Film of a Director at National Film Award.
 26. "My name is Eeooow" has won the 'Tangible Culture' Prize in UK. From around the globe, it was a part of the 36 films that was shortlist for the 15th RAI Film Festival held on 29 March to 1 April 2017 that took place at Watershed in Bristol, UK.
 27. Currently the Editor at Highland Post. She received a prestigious *Red Ink Award* for Excellence in Journalism in 2018 and *Ram Nath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Award* in 2019 in recognition of the contribution she made in the field of journalism.
 28. Donboklang Majaw graduated from The English and Foreign Languages (EFL) University in 2012. He is engaged with various international projects besides being an independent documentary and film maker.
 29. W. Alexander Kharkongor graduated in 2012 from EFLU. He is currently working as the Assistant Director, Meghalaya AIDS Control Society, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of Meghalaya, Shillong

Notes

1. Lyngdoh, 1998, p. 32
2. Bareh, 1964
3. Maliekal, 2005, p. 282
4. Maliekal, 2005, p. 284
5. Maliekal, 2005, p. 276
6. Maliekal, 2005, p. 277
7. Maliekal, 2005, p. 273
8. Kharakor, 1998
9. Dkhar, 1993, pp. 41-42
10. Kharakor, 1998, p. 4
11. (Maliekal, 2005, p. 246). Maliekal also mentions that the social and cultural practices of their neighbours are unacceptable to the egalitarian tribal society and social practices unsuitable to tribal customs such as marriage, inheritance, food habits. This is one of the reasons that Christianity was embraced by



Journalism Education in Jammu and Kashmir: Issues and Challenges

AKSHAY KUMAR¹ AND BACHHA BABU²

ABSTRACT

The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir represents two major regions, Jammu and Kashmir. These two regions are not only different in language, culture and demography but also signify an inter-regional divide with the Jammu region which carries a grouse of discrimination at the hands of Kashmir-centric policymakers for decades. Since the year 1947, the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir was predominantly ruled by the heads of those political parties, whose constituency base was mostly confined to the parts of Kashmir valley. The present paper is an attempt to explain the introduction of journalism education in both the regions with reference to the political power. While explaining the introduction of journalism education by various educational institutions, the paper will also try to shed light on the challenges faced by the Jammu region due to denial of introducing the Journalism related courses at par with their introduction in the Kashmir region.

Keywords: Kashmir region, Jammu region, Journalism education, Division, Culture

Introduction

Journalism has a glorious history in Jammu and Kashmir and the first newspaper as per recorded history dates back to the year 1867 when Bidiya Bilas had started its publication in the princely ruled state (Shah *et al.*, 2019). Majority of the newspaper publications in the princely ruled state as well as during the time, when it transformed into a part of democratic India under a democratically elected government, kept their operations confined from both the capital cities of Jammu and Srinagar. These two capital cities also represent an inter-regional division between Jammu and Kashmir with both the regions having different demography, socio, cultural and political aspirations. The Jammu region is dominated by the Hindus majority while the Kashmir region is dominated by the Muslims as a majority group. Grappling with a continued political instability for the last many decades, the state also witnessed inter-regional and sub-regional discontent (Chowdhary & Rao, 2003). The erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir transitioned into two separate Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh following the abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian constitution on August 5, 2019 (Mustafa, 2019).

The present paper is confined to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, which has two major regions of Jammu and Kashmir. These two regions are quite different in demography, political, religious, social and cultural contexts while the

policymaking at a political, bureaucratic level along with developmental scenario across both the regions have also witnessed a non-uniform pattern, despite being governed by a single elected government headed by a Chief Minister. The capital of Jammu and Kashmir is divided between two regions with the secretariat shifting for the six months of winter to Jammu capital and six months of summer to Srinagar capital. Despite having two separate capitals, a feeling of discrimination among the people of Jammu remained palpable. A widespread feeling among the political elite of the Jammu region is that the political decision making in Jammu and Kashmir remained Kashmir oriented and in the allocation of resources the Jammu region remained discriminated (Sharma & Manhas, 2014). Rather than having any uniformity in the establishment of educational institutions, Jammu, as well as Kashmir region, have recorded a different trajectory in the establishment of the educational institutions imparting journalism education despite being governed by a democratically elected government. The establishment of the Journalism and Mass Communication institutes in these two regions offer courses, ranging from Bachelor Degree to Master Degree and Research programmes.

The present paper will discuss the historiography and development of Journalism and Mass Communication as a subject in the colleges and universities of both the regions. An attempt has been made to draw an analysis as to how the introduction of

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Journalism as subject in the educational institutions witnessed a regional bias and how the changes in political scenario at the national as well as state level, contribute to the development of journalism subject. The paper will try to analyze as to how the imparting of Journalism courses in educational institutions helps the particular regions and their issues to gain more prominence. It will also try to understand as to how the imparting of education helps the individuals to have media literacy and helps them to project their issues before the policymakers as well as national and international audience.

Review of literature

Dutta and Ray (2011) explained the relationship between media education and media literacy while on the other, they gave a detailed account of the present status and challenges being confronted by the media education in India. Taking reference to the past studies regarding prospects of expansion of the media industry, especially the television industry in India, the authors pointed out that there were compelling possibilities that India could become a global hub for commercial ventures in the media industry.

Concluding the research article, the authors have explained some challenges ahead. On account of the academic part, the authors have claimed that the course content in most of the educational institutions is traditional and need regular updating. Emphasis is laid to impart practical skills and operational competence among the students during the course period.

Muppidi (2008) while tracing the history of journalism in pre and post-independence India presented a brief account of the early initiatives to start journalism courses with Punjab University at Lahore under the patronage of Prof. P.P. Singh, as a pioneer to start the course in the year 1941 apart from some attempts to start formal education by Annie Besant, Aligarh University and Indian Journalists Association Calcutta. Drawing on the research works of Pradeep Krishnatray and Professor Eapen, the author has drawn a detailed sketch classifying the development of journalism education in four generational phases.

Chandel (2016) explained about the pioneering role of the Kashmiri Pandits in the evolution and development of journalism in the princely ruled state of Jammu and Kashmir. The author has emphasized over the role played by a minuscule population of Kashmiri pundits, residing in different areas of the colonized India before the year 1947, in the social and political awakening of the region by highlighting

various political, social, cultural issues confronting by the then Kashmir society.

Based on the secondary literature, the author argued that since publication of any type of newspapers was banned in the princely ruled state of Jammu and Kashmir until the year 1932, the newspapers, periodicals, magazines published from Lahore find their way into the valley.

Taseer (1989) has attempted to compile the relevant details of the glorious history of journalism in Jammu and Kashmir, giving an overview of the beginning. Taseer has mentioned a large number of newspapers, periodicals, weeklies, monthlies newspapers, which had started its publication and made their way into Jammu and Kashmir. Against the belief of some authors, who claimed that publications of newspapers were banned before the 1930s, Taseer termed Vidyavilas, an eight-page broadsheet bilingual (Urdu-Devnagri) newspaper published from Jammu during 1850.

As it is already discussed that Jammu region, as well as Kashmir valley represents two widely different regions and both these regions witnessed practice of journalism before and after the conversion of a princely ruled territory into a state represented by a democratically elected government. Both the regions experienced journalism in practice while efforts to start journalism education in both the regions. The present study is an attempt to look into the journalism education landscape in both the regions of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, made into a Union Territory.

Research objectives

1. To find out growth of journalism related courses in the educational institutions of Jammu as well as Kashmir region of the Union Territory.
2. To find out contrast between the two regions of Jammu and Kashmir in context of introducing journalism related courses.

Methodology

The research is primarily qualitative in nature and the research design for the present study is interpretative-descriptive in nature, based on the secondary literature available from the educational institutions of both the regions of Jammu and Kashmir.

Sampling frame and sample size

As the research study is confined to two major regions of Jammu and Kashmir of the Union Territory, the sampling frame for the present study comprises of all the higher educational institutions of the Union

Territory including eight universities as well as over hundreds of government degree colleges affiliated with Jammu as well as Kashmir University, while five government degree colleges each affiliated with Cluster University of Jammu and Cluster University of Srinagar and two autonomous Colleges in Jammu and Srinagar city. Moreover, private institutions as well as those institutions that offer distance mode or regular mode of journalism courses in journalism such as Indira Gandhi National Open University were also taken into account.

Selection of sample

Based on the requirement of research study, the purposive sample technique was used as sample design to select it from the sampling frame. All those government recognized higher educational institutions including government degree colleges as well as universities which are offering diploma, bachelor degree, postgraduate degree or diploma courses in journalism and mass communication were selected as sample. To fulfil the above mentioned objectives, data is collected from the official websites of all these sample institutions, imparting journalism related education has been taken.

Unit of analysis

The Unit of Analysis for the present study were the government recognized educational institution in any of the two regions of Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory, which is imparting journalism education.

The Kashmir region

The Kashmir region continued to hold an important position in the political and administrative setup of India since the accession of Jammu and Kashmir into the Indian dominion in the year 1947. Being the winter capital of Jammu and Kashmir, the Kashmir region has a large share of the total population of Jammu and Kashmir along with the number of representatives, it elected for the democratic institutions. Apart from having an important stay in political representation, the region has also witnessed violent political turmoil as well as an emergency of insurgency in the year 1989. The political turmoil, emergence of armed militancy and its repercussions along with the consequent efforts of the governments to contain it brought the region to the centre stage of the national as well as global audience. In light of these political circumstances, the development and introduction of journalism education in the Kashmir region could be seen. The main universities in Kashmir region

are the University of Kashmir, Islamic University of Science and Technology, Central University of Kashmir, Cluster University of Srinagar. Over 90 colleges are either affiliated with Kashmir University or with the newly established the Cluster University of Srinagar.

University of Kashmir

The University of Kashmir was established under the University Act of 1965. The University started a course in Journalism by establishing a separate department named Media Education and Research Centre (MERC) in the year 1985 (University of Kashmir, n.d).

The Centre offers a two year Post Graduate Programme in Mass Communication and Journalism as well as integrated research programmes in Ph.D. Through this course, the students get an opportunity to learn a wide range of media domains. The website of the Department mentions that the alumni of the Centre are working in top media houses of national and international repute, while the local bureaus of most of the national and international media organizations in Kashmir are also manned by the graduates from MERC. Following the spread of internet technologies in the Kashmir valley, several online media outlets and other platforms including news channels are also run by the graduates of MERC. The Centre has also produced documentary films as part of the course which has bagged various national and international film awards. MERC also offers a Bachelor's Course in Mass Communication and Video Production (MCVP) and Mass Communication and Multimedia (MCMP) in its affiliated colleges of Kashmir valley.

Distance Education, University of Kashmir

Apart from offering a regular course in Journalism and Media Studies, the Kashmir University through its distance education mode offers a Post-Graduate Diploma course in Urdu Journalism (PGDUJ). Urdu is one of the five official languages of Jammu and Kashmir and well as over 135 daily, weekly, monthly, bimonthly newspapers and magazines published from Srinagar are published in Urdu language while Doordarshan Kendra Srinagar, Urdu Kashmir, News 18 Urdu also require Urdu knowing journalists. In view of such huge employment avenues, starting a diploma course in Distance Education mode seems appropriate. The duration of the Diploma course is one year with two semesters (University of Kashmir, n.d).

IGNOU Regional Centre, Srinagar

The Regional Centre of Indira Gandhi National

Open University (IGNOU) was started in the year 1999. The Srinagar Centre had started its operations from the campus of Kashmir University with jurisdiction over districts of Ladakh region also with only four Study Centres.

The Regional Centre of IGNOU-Srinagar is offering Post Graduate Diploma in Journalism and Mass Communication with a minimum duration of one year and a maximum duration of two years. The programme is aimed at providing opportunities to working journalists, media professionals as well as aspiring journalists to enhance their working knowledge and to hone their professional skills (IGNOU Srinagar Regional Centre, n.d).

Islamic University of Science and Technology

The Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) is located at Awantipora of district Pulwama. The University is recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). It was established following the promulgation of Act No. XVIII of Jammu and Kashmir State Legislative Assembly 2005 dated on 7th November 2005. The University had started its function in November 2005 and the teaching programmes were started in the month of July 2006. Apart from other departments, the University also started its Department of Journalism and Mass Communication in the year 2008. The Department offers Master degree programmes in Journalism and Mass Communication. The master degree course is aimed at teaching theoretical aspect of journalism, equipping and training students to expertly sift between the dynamically changing media including print, broadcast, radio and online journalism (Islamic University of Science and Technology, n.d).

Central University of Kashmir

The Central University of Kashmir was established in the month of March 2009 and the first Vice Chancellor of the University was Prof. Abdul Wahid Qureshi, a noted academician. The administrative office was set up at Baghi-Hyder, Hyderpora in May 2009. The main campus of the University is under establishment at Ganderbal. The University had launched an innovative postgraduate programme in Convergent Journalism from the academic session in 2011 under the aegis of the School of Media Studies. The main objective of the course was to produce skilled and trained journalists for all the streams of journalism who are committed to the issues of ethics, social relevance and human rights.

According to the information provided by the

University website, Convergent Journalism is taught at very few institutions/universities in the world and South Asia, the Central University is only the second among the institutes offering this programme. At the department of Convergent Journalism, the School of Media Studies claimed to ensure the pace of Journalism in the world and make students learn to produce and manage content for various media platforms. These platforms include print, radio, the Internet, television, social media and other digital and interactive platforms. Apart from two years, Master Degree Course in Convergent Journalism, the School of Media Studies is offering Integrated Research including Ph.D. in Media Studies/ Journalism (Central University of Kashmir, n.d).

Journalism course in Government Degree Colleges of Kashmir region

Apart from post graduate degree courses, post graduate diploma course and graduate level courses being offered by the Universities, the government degree colleges in Kashmir region, which are either affiliated with the Kashmir University or Cluster University of Srinagar, are also offering bachelor degree course or B.A. (Honours) in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Government College for Women, Srinagar

The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication of the Government College for Women Srinagar offers two courses which are B.A. (Honours) in Journalism Mass Communication (BJMC) and B.A. (Honours) in Multi-Media and Mass Communication (BMMMC). The course of B.A. (Honours) in Journalism and Mass Communication is run under the aegis of Cluster University Srinagar while the BMMMC course is run under the University of Kashmir. Both courses follow Choice Based Credit System. The curriculum is focused on imparting technical skills in various areas of mass communication and mass media (Government College for Women, n.d).

Government Degree College, Anantnag

The Government Degree College Anantnag is affiliated with Kashmir University. The College has a separate Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, which was started in the year 2015 with an intake capacity of 30 seats. The main objective of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication is to impart education and training to the students. The courses offered by the Department make the students proficient in diverse fields of

journalism like Reporting, Audio-Visual Presentation, Advertising, Public Relations, Online media, Multimedia etc. As per the objectives of the courses, it is mentioned that the main motive is to educate the students and make them significant contributors to the field of Journalism and become critical thinkers (Government Degree College Anantnag, n.d).

Government Degree College Boys, Baramulla

The Government Degree College Boys Baramulla is also affiliated with the University of Kashmir and along with offering courses in other subjects, the College has also a Department of Media Studies. The Department is providing media education at the undergraduate level imparting education about Mass Communication, Photography, Journalism, Multimedia, Film making, TV Production etc. The Department is offering Mass Communication and Video Production (MCVP), which is a three years vocational program and was started in the year 2002. Another course Mass Communication and Multimedia Production (MCMP) is a three years professional course started in the year 2004. The programmes are designed to prepare students for careers in various professional fields (Government Degree College Boys Baramulla, n.d).

The Jammu region

The capital city of Jammu is the winter capital of the erstwhile state and now the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The Jammu region has comparatively less population than the Kashmir region and sends less number of political representatives to the elected democratic institutions of erstwhile state as well as at national level institutions. A feeling of discrimination remained palpable among the region's population, which was also echoed by several national as well as local leaders. The political turmoil, the emergence of armed militancy and its repercussions in the Kashmir valley impacted the political atmosphere of the erstwhile state as well as nation. Though, the Jammu-region also has four Universities including the University of Jammu, Central University of Jammu, Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Cluster University of Jammu but only one University is offering the course that too from a very recent past. Over 90 colleges are either affiliated with the Jammu University or with the newly established Cluster University of Jammu but not even a single Government Degree College is offering a master degree or bachelor degree course in Journalism.

Central University of Jammu

Central University of Jammu (CUJ) was

established and incorporated by the Central Universities Act, 2009 (Act No. 25 of 2009). The University started functioning on August 8, 2011, in a temporary block and later it was shifted to the main campus at Raya Suchani in district Samba. It was only after three years of its functioning that the University had started the Department of Mass Communication and New Media in the year 2014.

The first batch of students in the department was enrolled for the session of 2014-16 for post graduate programme in Mass Communication and New Media. The post graduate degree programme aimed to train learners with all global dimensions of mass communication. The department offers a post-graduation degree programme and a direct Ph.D. Research Programme from the session 2016. The emphasis of the post graduate degree programme is to train learners with all global dimensions of mass communication (Central University of Jammu, n.d).

Indian Institute of Mass Communication Jammu

The Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) is an autonomous institute registered under the Societies Registration Act 1867, since August 17, 1965. In the academic year 2012-13, IIMC set up its new Regional Centre at Jammu. The then State Government of Jammu and Kashmir had provided rent-free accommodation to IIMC for starting of the academic facilities, as well as for the students' hostel and guest house for visiting faculty (Indian Institute of Mass Communication, Jammu, n.d).

University of Jammu

Despite its establishment along with the University of Kashmir in the year 1965, the University of Jammu had not started post-graduate course in Journalism and Mass Communication, when same was started in the University of Kashmir in the year 1985. It was only in the year 2007, when the then Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Ghulam Nabi Azad had announced to start a post-graduation course in Journalism and Mass Communication ("Eight years on JU fails, 2015). Despite being a delay for eight years in the year 2015, the post graduate course is still not started by the University even in the year 2021. Moreover, out of over 90 affiliated Government Degree Colleges (GDCs) with the University of Jammu or with the newly established Cluster University of Jammu, not even a single Degree College is offering B.A. (Honours) or simple B.A. in Journalism and Mass Communication so far (University of Jammu, n.d).

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Jammu

Popularly known as Rajendra Prasad Institute of Communication and Management, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Jammu is a unit of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan which controls the academic and administrative and examination related matters. The Jammu Centre was named as Bishan Bimala Institute of Journalism and was established in the year 2009 as a private institute. The Institute conducts two courses namely Mass communication, Advanced Programme in Journalism and Mass Communication (Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, n.d).

Gandhi Memorial College of Education, Jammu

Gandhi Memorial College of Education is a private college affiliated the University of Kashmir. The College is offering an undergraduate course B.A. (Honours) in Journalism and Mass Communication and Multi-Media Production for the last few years (Gandhi Memorial college of Education Jammu, n.d).

IGNOU Regional Centre, Jammu

The Regional Centre of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was started in the year 1998. The Centre had started its operations with one Learner Study Centre and in the year 2021, over 35 learner centres have been established in various parts of the Jammu region. The regional centre of IGNOU-Jammu is offering post graduate diploma in Journalism and Mass Communication with a minimum duration of one year and a maximum duration of two years. The programme is aimed at providing opportunities to working journalists, media professionals as well as aspiring journalists to enhance their working knowledge and to hone their professional skills (IGNOU Regional Centre Jammu, n.d).

Discussion and Analysis

From the above explanation about the courses offered by different educational institutions of both regions, it is clear that the evolution and development of journalism' education in both the regions of Jammu as well as Kashmir witnessed a different trajectory. Despite being ruled by democratically elected governments, which were supposed to provide equitable development to both the regions of the state, the Kashmir region remained a preferred region for the policymakers, when it comes to the case of introducing journalism education. The contrast could be found in the case of the University of Kashmir and the University of Jammu. Both these Universities were the offshoot of one university and were segregated

into two separate universities by the same Act but the University of Kashmir got established the Media Education and Research Centre (MERC) in the year 1985, however, in the case of University of Jammu, a postgraduate course and establishment of a similar Centre is still in papers only.

The postgraduate course in Journalism and Mass Communication in the University of Jammu has failed to see daylight even after repeated announcements by political masters of the state. The Kashmir University has been producing postgraduates in media studies for the last 36 years while its sister University has failed to produce a single postgraduate, who could also be able to air the voices of the Jammu region. Similarly, in the case of introducing Journalism courses in the Government Degree Colleges, two colleges affiliated with the University of Kashmir and one College affiliated with the Cluster University of Srinagar are offering Bachelor Degree Course in Journalism as well as B.A. Honours in Journalism. On the other hand, in the case of Jammu based colleges affiliated with the University of Jammu or Cluster University of Jammu, Bachelor Degree Course in Journalism or B.A. Honours in Journalism are yet to be introduced but in the absence of introduction of Master Degree Course in Journalism at University level, the possibilities of starting a Bachelor Degree or B.A. Honours Course seems bleak.

Apart from introducing a Journalism course at the University of Kashmir, a postgraduate course in Journalism and Mass Communication was also introduced at the Islamic University of Science and Technology in the year 2008. In the case of the Jammu region, a technology-related University came into existence by an Act of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly called the Jammu and Kashmir Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University Act No. XVI of 2002. The University had started offering various postgraduate courses similar to the IUST such as PG in Business Management, Financial Management, Computer Sciences, Information Technology, B.Tech in Electronics and Communication, Computer Sciences and Engineering and Information Technology. But the BGSBU had also not started the postgraduate course in Journalism and Mass Communication. Starting journalism courses in Jammu region were only the efforts of some private groups such as Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, which started postgraduate diploma course. In the context of initiatives taken by the state government policymakers, there seemed no concrete efforts to impart journalism education to the youth of Jammu region. It was only in the year 2014 that the first time a full-fledged Postgraduate Department

was started by the Central University of Jammu, which started offering postgraduate degree course in Mass Communication and New Media. However, Central University has not any college affiliated with it, in which it could introduce the Journalism course at the graduate level or start B.A. Honours course in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Conclusion

Give the fact that Jammu and Kashmir was ruled by successive democratically elected governments for several decades, which were duty-bound for the equitable development of all the three regions including Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. From the above discussion, it could be inferred that there were no uniform initiatives from the elected governments to push for a uniform policy for the higher educational institutions to start journalism related courses in the state-run Universities as well as Government Degree Colleges affiliated with these universities. The higher education of both the regions come under the same Ministry of Higher Education during elected governments as well as under Department of Higher Education but at the institutions of Kashmir valley, firstly the Universities and then the Government Degree Colleges introduced the Journalism related courses while their counterparts in the Jammu region, nor even the Universities had been able to start those courses until some central level institutions such as Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) Jammu, Centre or the Central University of Jammu started these courses in recent past. The indifference towards the opening of journalism related courses in Jammu region and consequent less proliferation of media industry in the Jammu region, in comparison to the Kashmir valley, could be the reason behind less media attention to the Jammu. The Jammu region and its issues get minimum coverage and attention of national as well as international policymakers and one reason could be the fact that Jammu region has not got the opportunities and policies to establish institutions and produce local journalists, who could give voice to the issues of Jammu region as being given by the journalists from the Kashmir region. To fill that mismatch between the two regions, the policymakers need to draw and implement concrete plans so that journalism courses should be simultaneously started at higher secondary schools, graduate and postgraduate levels so that the gap between the two regions could be minimized.

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Media Education in India: Gaps, Challenges and Prospects

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ABSTRACT

The whole purpose of education is to create new knowledge. The new knowledge helps in the evolution of society. Media education is the study of the media, its various types, its tools and related aspects. In the past few decades, media education has rapidly developed and gained momentum in schools and universities in India. With the rise of interactive new media, media education is going through a paradigm shift taking it to newer and unexplored areas with a much larger scale and speed. As it is going through rapid technological changes, media education does need quite a churning and an improvement so that it moves in the right direction with the larger objective of giving back to society. In today's context, one of the most important aims of media education is to cultivate knowledge about media literacy. This paper discusses the rationales, approaches, gaps, challenges and requirements of media education in India to seek solutions and prospects. The study presents the ecology of media education in the context of studying the experience; the necessity to solve the problems of implementing media education in terms of reforming and humanizing its educational space.

Key words: Media education, India, Gaps, Challenges, Prospects

Introduction

To create new knowledge is the purpose of education. Media education is rather a new domain of study as compared to other domains or disciplines. The very ideas of communication from where media studies originate are considered to be the basis of various disciplines right from anthropology, sociology, political science, history, philosophy and linguistics. Media education is a dynamic and ever-evolving field. We are going through the 4th Industrial revolution and Artificial Intelligence (AI) machine learning, data journalism and the Internet of Things (IoT) are the evolving fields. Media education, however, has still not been able to evolve itself as a distinct discipline yet.

While discussing media education, one must understand and talk in two different aspects: one, media education as a discipline, which is to be related to all kinds of study, development of research and creating and adding value to the subject. The outcomes of such study and research need to be applicable and adopted in the media profession. The media education needs to be the guiding force in policy building for the media industry. As long as this does not happen, the gap would not let the media studies develop as a distinct and established subject.

Second, media education is regarded as the development of practical skills for mastering modern mass media and practices. Media education

is associated with all types of media, which include the set of information and communication tools that each person interacts with in everyday life: printed (newspapers, magazines), auditive (radio, audio) and screen or audio-visual media (cinema, TV, video, multimedia, Internet, etc.). Just as the media studies has not been able to develop itself as a discipline, and the subject still fights for being an option in All India Central Services Examination; the media industry yet to be truly organized.

As media is the fourth pillar of democracy, media education must be given due importance. Just as media plays an important role in the development of society and nation-building; media education remains its base. It is not only journalism pertaining to print, radio, television or online; media studies and media education contributes to various other fields of communication, be it advertising, public relations, development communication, photography, event management, online media, social media communication as well as research. Media education is multifarious in nature and applicability. Communication is the very basis of our existence, it is one such important area of study that needs special focus especially in our country which is both multi-cultural and multi-lingual. Media education depends on the dissemination of any kind of information be it education, entertainment, government policies and or any other information. It plays an important role in

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national unity and integrity.

In the post-truth era where facts are viewed as irrelevant, or less important than personal beliefs and opinions, and emotional appeals are used to influence public opinion. It has given rise to the era of misinformation, mal-information and disinformation to achieve selfish goals. However, media literacy and critical thinking are measures to be taken in order to increase citizen resilience to propaganda, while media education needs to include media literacy as a compulsory element in its study so that the spread of fake content is curtailed to some extent by giving objective and unbiased instruction /teaching to the young generation and to people at large.

In the wake of technology, people are made aware of the whole process of media creation, its production and distribution. People should know the source, understand the objective, should learn to deconstruct the messages, learn to filter out the right information, should consume the right kind of information, analyze the information, control the outburst of emotions, actions, reactions and drive the technology and not get driven by technology.

Media education needs to be looked into seriously, especially in wake of the internet and technology, where communication and media are engulfed in the web of information. Where the onus lies on the media organization for disseminating, what is right to the masses. And the onus lies in media education to create values and ethics in media students so that they contribute to the profession, to society and create value as good human beings and media professionals. Though there remains a gap. The main aim of education in Swami Vivekananda's words is, "Man making, Character building and Nation-building." In the higher pursuit for media studies, the gaps need to be filled and challenges met.

In the same tone, Jack Lyle says about Wilbur Schramm, "Perhaps nowhere is this more apparent than in the Schramm connection of media and education. He has always been interested in methodology, but he has always been more interested in methodology as a means of solving problems. He was a researcher and a philosopher, but he has always been oriented to action, eager to bridge the gap between experimentation and practical utilization." (Lyle, 1974)

Media studies, Media Education, Media Literacy, Media Information Literacy, News Media Literacy and Media Literacy Education are the few other terminologies media education is grappling with.

Objective

To study various dimensions of media studies

and media education to do the gap analysis in order to seek solutions to various challenges and fills the gaps and look into the probable prospects.

Theoretical bases

About media studies and conduct of media education, there are different views. Different media educators of the world have different assumptions about the impact of the media, there are at least five approaches that can be considered. These approaches to media education are based on the aspects of media consumption, its production, creation and relevance.

The first and protective approach emanates from the ideas of "technological determinism" (Williams, 1974; Czitrom, 1982). The media educators of this view believe that just as technology; media, mainly television or popular media have a negative impact on viewers. They project on the potential ill effects of such media, especially on younger generations.

The critical analytical approach influenced by the critical communication theorists and political economists believes to pose questions to whatever is happening around us. It is based on the view that mainstream media is manipulated by the establishment. The ultimate goal of media education in this approach is to achieve, "critical autonomy" (Masterman, 1985).

The third approach is a creative media approach. This approach is related to the concept of technological empowerment. With the rise of new technology, media production is no longer only in the hands of mainstream media, the audience enjoys the autonomy of media production. Thereby they face to face with the fact as to how objective realities are shaped into media realities. The emergence of new communication technologies thus, lead to great socio-cultural changes.

The social participatory approach of media education tries to address the issue of how people can play a constructive role in media democracy. The approach is built upon the theory of "socially constructed technology" (Franklin, 1990). The approach stresses developing abilities and awareness for participating in the construction of a democratic media system.

The fifth approach emphasizes on enjoyment with media. It is related to "techno-culturalism". The approach is built upon the theory of "socially constructed technology" (Franklin, 1990). It believes media productions are creative, interesting and highly related to our lifestyles. Taking pleasure from the media from a subjective perspective is therefore important. The involvement and experimentation would lead to creativity and innovation.

In western contexts, the media educationists may have taken the evolving aspect as the basis for these approaches, where one evolves and transforms into another. As we talk in the contexts of India where we have a multi-cultural society and there are different levels of development; these approaches may not be the evolving stages, but all may exist at the same time and influence and overlap each other presenting a complex paradigm of approaches based on media environments and technological advancement.

Overall, looking around the globe, we can see that the development of media education is encouraging. It is widely agreed that being media literate becomes more important in the new media age. Although the rationale and definition of media education vary in different countries, the purpose of media education is to cultivate media literacy in citizens who are then able to deal with the media and information intelligently and responsibly.

Research questions

- What are the gap areas in relation to media education and media practices?
- What are the challenges in media education?
- What are the prospects in the field of study?

Methodology

It is important to have a relevant methodology to be adopted to reach the solutions. For the study, it is value research which is chosen. The study is descriptive and exploratory in nature. The study is based on the learning drawn from debates and discussions held on various media education forums as given below:

- Media and Media Education Summit (2018). Organized by exchange 4 media, IIC, New Delhi. 22nd November.
- *Media Educators Conference.(2018) held in Jaipur, 7th July.*
- Session ‘Wisdom Education 4.0’(2021) Business World, May 5.
- Symposium, ‘Vision for Media and Communication Education for India (2015), IIC, New Delhi, 7th August organized by UKIERI (UK-India Education Research Initiative) and CMS (Centre for Media Studies Academy, Delhi)

The study shall help in systematizing the gaps and project prospects in the field of Media education by doing Gap Analysis and Need Assessments. The three main dimensions for gap analysis have been taken with regard to media education, which are further discussed on various parameters:

(i) Dimension I: With regards to teaching and

learning:

1. Standardisation in admission and curricular interventions;
2. Pedagogical concerns
3. Training infrastructure/facilities;
4. Qualifications and training of faculty.
5. Media literacy

(ii) Dimension II: With regards to media industry requirements and practices:

1. Industry needs and requirements
2. Development of skill set;
3. Ethics and practicality;
4. Life skills.
5. Research aptitude

(iii) Dimension II: With regards to media ecology and media environment:

1. Controls and Self-regulations
2. Government regulation
3. Media education and framework
4. Technological advancements
5. Transformations and disruptions

The gaps, challenges and prospects in each of the dimensions shall be tabulated for clarity of understanding covering all the parameters.

Analysis

Change is imminent. The transformation, disruption, evolution happens to give rise to creativity and innovations. It plays an important role in media education too. In the process of evolution of education and for this study, the dimensions and parameters must be well defined to look into the gaps, challenges and prospects in order to do the gap analysis and need assessments.

The three dimensions as per methodology are analyzed for various parameters

(i) Dimension I: With regards to teaching and learning:

1. Standardization in admission and curricular interventions:
Students must take admission to the media courses through common entrances tests and follow the same parameters for admission. Writing skills, group discussion and language efficiency tests are included in the admission process as a required aptitude. Standardization of syllabus/curriculum is also important so that the syllabus contains the basic guidelines which need to be revised every three years. The lack of quality textbooks and reference books is another gap. Indian theories

need to be formed/created since ours is a very different socio-cultural society and cannot be compared to the western thinkers and contexts.

2. Pedagogical Concerns:

In teaching-learning, the student-centric approaches need to have the centre stage; students should develop learnability. Developing wisdom is important. Flexibility in the curriculum is also important. Education is not limited to curriculum or syllabus. Simple classroom teaching is not enough; more openness is needed with the mix of theory, skill, project, research etc. Teachers are to be mentors and guides. The syllabus being learner-centric, it should be such that it teaches the subject-specific skills, soft skills and life skills. The whole purpose of education is to make good human beings.

3. Training and infrastructure/facilities:

Training and infrastructure are also very important in Media education. Though the education needs to be affordable, there is also a need to standardize minimum infrastructural requirements when the media studies courses are given sanctions. There has been mushrooming of courses in media studies that need to be checked for their quality and content.

4. Qualification and training of faculty:

The faculty qualifications, training and exposure are very important in media education. A teacher needs to be a lifelong learner and co-learner with students. They need to constantly upskill themselves. There are two types of faculty, one, who remain in the teaching profession and second, who join after working long years in the media industry. For those who remained in teaching, it is important to do summer training in media houses or with organizations. In the case of those who join teaching after long stints in the media industry; they should be given orientations or training about academic objectives, the importance of pedagogy and that of theoretical basis and also the student-teacher relationships. So that they add to enriching the media education, apart from narrating their own stories of working in the media industry. Faculty body needs to be empowered regularly with FDPs, Orientation courses, refreshers courses and workshops on newer technological areas.

5. Media Literacy:

Media literacy must be defined and given importance. The world is facing the problems of misinformation, disinformation or fake news, fake content and lack of media literacy. "Media literacy

is a set of perspectives that we actively use to expose ourselves to the mass media to interpret the meaning of the messages we encounter," (Potter, 1998, quoted by William Christ). Media literacy more generally is the ability 'to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a variety of forms'. It is a 21st-century skill, education and requirement. Better media literacy means a better ability to understand and interpret the messages. Media education cannot do without including the element of media literacy in media studies.

We can trace the above analysis in Table 1.

Dimension II: With regards to media industry requirements and practices:

1. Industry needs and requirements:

There remains a gap with regards to industry needs and requirements, for lack of exposure, lack of keeping pace with the fast-evolving industry, changing requirements and skill sets. There is a disconnect between wealth and jobs requirements also. Where the jobs will be available remains a guess. There need to be data and projections of such data for media industry which will help for curriculum development as well as students to pursue the courses of their choice as per industry requirements.

2. Development of skill set:

The development of skills pertaining to technology, profession, language and technological are must. Soft skills are also important in media education and need to be developed and focussed on.

3. Ethics and practicality:

There remains a huge gap in the teaching of ethics and practice of ethics in the industry. The ethics and code of conduct are important elements in creating the character of individuals and society and nation at large. The industry though neglects all these teachings but fails to understand that credibility and trust rest on truthfulness, objectivity and right conduct and the very basics of character. What many media organizations need to understand is such values are essential for a successful democracy and human progress.

4. Life skills:

Development of life skill is perhaps more important than professional skills. Handling situation empathetically with sensitivity is important. To work collaboratively with and for society is important. Community orientation must be cultivated through

Table 1

S. No.	Parameters	Gaps	Challenges	Solutions/Prospects
1	Standardization in Admission and Curricular interventions	Admission process throughout all the courses is not standardized Syllabus is not standardized: Lack of Indian contexts; lack of theories and books. Recognized and not recognized courses	To get the students having aptitude for the media education and profession. To have national body on standardization of syllabus; quality content for books and formulating theories in Indian contexts. Mushrooming of courses and institutions	Common entrance tests. Common parameters need to be devised keeping Indian contexts in mind; Indian theories need to be created. Standard guidelines are required with regard to certificate, diploma, UG and PG courses
2	Pedagogical Concerns	Student-centric and learner-centric approaches.	To make learning the student-centric. Faculty needs such training and aptitudes.	Flexible approaches in syllabus, out of class learnings; teachers to become mentors 24X7.
3	Training and infrastructure/facilities	Training and infrastructure/facilities vary.	Because of mushrooming of courses and institutes and colleges, many of them do not fulfil basic requirements of equipment or of infrastructure.	Minimum parameters need to be fixed for various courses, institutes/ colleges regarding training and infrastructure/facilities.
4	Qualifications and training of faculty	Many institutes/ colleges, may not have qualified faculty or well-trained faculty. Faculty exposure is also important	To have subject-specific training, orientations and FDPs and workshops To keep training, updating and upskilling the faculty who is from academic background and face challenge about developments and working in the media industry. To faculty who joins teaching from media industry needs to be trained about the basic teaching-learning practices and importance of media education as a discipline.	Aptitude for learning as teachers have to be lifelong Developing learning and skilling and upskilling. Summer training for faculty in media houses. Orientations for developing teaching-learning aptitudes and respect for media education as an academic discipline.
5	Media literacy	Not included in the syllabuses/curricula yet in many courses.	To fight the problems of misinformation, disinformation or fake news and fake content.	Must be made compulsory in all media courses.

media education. Recruiters do look for grey matter in students but at the same time, they look for such values and skills. These can be developed through projects, extension activities; folk media activities etc. Also to bridge the gaps for developing such traits, centre for happiness, spiritual centre and meditation centres can be made compulsory. Value education needs to part of the education system.

5. Research aptitude:

Research is at the base of any education. It is important to critically analyze and understand the facts and situation through all possible angles. There is also a need to have a connection between media and communication research with the media industry so that the media industry can make use of such research work. Lack of correlation between research and its usefulness for the industry is a big loss for media education if it needs to develop as a discipline. We

can trace the above analysis in Table 2.

3. Dimension III: With regards to media ecology and media environment:

1. Control and Self-regulation:

The environment of media presents various choices, tools and types of media to operate on. The control and regulations on media also have an impact on media education. Control and regulations are important for efficient working and delivery of information. Ownerships and political economy of media play an important role. The dominance and monopoly of media houses and crass commercialization control the media. There are self-regulatory mechanisms in the media industry formulated by the media bodies but seem not enough.

Along with the ownerships or political ownerships,

the grave issue that media confronts is that of owners becoming political which generate a scenario where no one acts as a watchdog. Apart from ownership controls, the TRP wars drive the media environment and give rise to speculative journalism and the concepts of hyper-reality. Hyper localization is now changing the whole media representation and media penetration. Pluralistic ignorance is another questionable phenomenon when it comes to media. Biased and non-objective coverages due to self-interests take them away from public interest and in turn in losing the credibility and trust of the masses in media.

2. Government regulations:

There is a need for an effective media council with more powers and social media regulations in place. Media laws and policies need to be revised

Table 2

S. No.	Parameters	Gaps	Challenges	Solutions/Prospects
1	Industry needs and requirements	Disconnect with industry needs and requirements Teaching practices and requirements in industry Lack of data on job projections and job requirements	Lack of exposure, lack of keeping pace with the fast evolving industry Build a close connect between the industry and academia To create the database and to have projections	Acquire to the changing requirements and develop the skill sets. Having equal representation of members from industry and academia in Board of studies Develop a common platform where the projections regarding needs and numbers of jobs in the industry are displayed.
2	Development of Skill sets;	Technology skills pertaining to profession. Language skills. Soft skills; all are important	To develop all the skills	These skills should be taught as compulsory skill sets
3	Ethics and practicality;	Huge gap remains in teaching and practice, especially in respect to ethics	To apply the ethics and code of conduct in practice	Practice the ethics and code of conduct to bring credibility and trust in media profession
4	Life skills	Skills in Handling situation, sensitivity, positive attitude and empathy Gap in teaching, social values and societal requirements Orientation of students towards knowledge of self.	To instil values in media education, to inculcate them among students. To put emphasis on social values and service to society. To develop such feelings or intuitiveness.	Give importance to functional and life skills in recruitment Compulsory projects for and with society to develop community orientation. Develop spaces for peace and meditation.
5	Research aptitude	Lack of correlation between research, its usefulness and practices in industry.	To make media research complement and correlate with the industry and defining contexts.	To do current research and applied research

in relation to the working of media. Regulatory bodies for fact-checking to combat information pollution should be constituted. For media education, there is UGC at the regulatory helm of things.

3. Media education and framework:

Media education with a focus on interdisciplinarity has to evolve. The future courses as per the National Education Policy (NEP) will have multiple entries and multiple exit points. Accordingly, the new courses need to be formulated. A specific and focussed approach in media studies is essential. Certification programmes and compulsory courses would be important for building skills. Course-related to media literacy and the development of Indian perspectives need to be developed.

Future projections for jobs in media need to be developed. There needs to be a correlation between research and its usefulness for the industry. An Analysis to note the impact of curricula on students, in the long run, needs to be taken to bridge the gaps in media education.

Also, it is time to have a third Press/Media Commission to look into the various issues, gaps and challenges faced by the media industry and media education, so that a comprehensive framework out of the recommendations is formulated for the overall development of society.

4. Technological advancements:

Technological advancements would bring changes in media education. All sorts of boundaries will get punctured. The teaching and learning will go beyond the barriers of time, age, discipline and geography. Lifelong learning and continuous learning opportunities need to be provided. New areas of education viz. data journalism, artificial intelligence, coding etc., need to be devised.

Non-curricular or beyond curriculum interventions need to be valued more. Collaborative programmes with industry and tie-ups are the future learning grounds in media education. Future universities would be credit-based. Training, skilling and employability would be more important rather than a degree as skilling and upskilling would be the key to success.

5. Transformations and disruptions:

The transformation and disruptions are going to stay with the rapidly changing technological environment. The need is to keep pace with it. New avenues will offer, no fixed and long term

jobs. With a disruption laden industry, the need of the hour is to assess and estimate the job opportunities which shall be available in the media industry in specific gaps of years viz. five years or ten years down the lane. Also, the projection as to how many numbers of jobs in that particular sector would be available is very important to make media education relevant. Such employability projection data regarding employment, entrepreneurship and higher education is very important for media education to contribute and result in adding up to the GDP of the country as well.

We can trace the above analysis in Table 3. From the comprehensive understanding on the three dimensions which were chosen, the following inferences can be drawn.

The inherent gaps need to fill and challenges overcome as per the analysis. It needs to be understood that students are not empty vessels today. Students already have a lot of information; the challenge is to create value for knowledge so that the teaching and learning is well interwoven, learning within the syllabus, with the teaching pedagogies, with the required tools and infrastructure and about the importance of media literacy. The teachings need to be relevant for media industry and employability is the outcome of education apart from the student becoming a good human being.

The industry environments would push for frequent changes in jobs each having different requirement and skills. The media education has to be such that it leads the media student or professional to become one person media shops with a bouquet of skills in the basket. So that they can survive the transformative and disruptive environments. Therefore, the cafeteria approach will work. Along with the hard and functional skills, life skill will be valued. Values like teamwork, mindfulness, gratitude, affection, truthfulness and empathy etc., would be essential.

Conclusion and prospects

Media education is rapidly growing with number of institutes and type of courses. Teaching and researching on media education is bound to grow rapidly in schools and tertiary institutions. It is time for media education to evolve into a mature and independent discipline.

The challenge is to prepare media students for life. Education is not to be taken, only as a utilitarian approach, the aim of education is to build good human beings. There is a need to prepare humanity for an

Table 3

S. No.	Parameters	Gaps	Challenges	Solutions/Prospects
1	Control and Self-regulation	Ownerships and political economy of media creates gaps. The dominance and monopoly of media houses. Hyper-reality Self-regulation not effective	Crass commercialization Financial constraints Lack of quality content Intolerant behaviours Selfish interests and TRP wars Pluralistic ignorance	Mechanisms to check the monopolies and concentration of wealth. In lack of self- controls and regulation, establishing and giving more powers with punitive measures to Media council
2	Government Regulations	Regulatory frameworks like Press Council of India is toothless Irrelevant media laws	To come together to have a new media council Need to be revised	To establish a new media council and give teeth to it.
3	Media education and framework	To have new and relevant courses Flexible and continuous learning Lifelong learning	Beyond the curriculum interventions Standardized basic frameworks	To establish Media Commission. Follow UGC guidelines strictly. Opportunities as per NEP
4	Techno-logical Advancements	New relevant courses, new relevant skills Collaborations	Skilling and upskilling opportunities and avenues	Continuous learning aptitudes
5	Transformations/ Disruptions	No stability in jobs Adapting skills and environments Ability to restart	Dynamic and volatile industry To provide changing opportunities Fast-moving technology leading to disruptions leading to uncertainties.	Continuous learning Mindful learning Learn, unlearn and relearn. Adaptive behaviours and positive outlooks.

unpredictable world, which we have already entered into. To be a human first is the larger purpose of education, it may sound philosophical but is true and important.

The open environment in media education would lead to quality content and collaborations within the education sector as well as the industry. Teacher's quality, teamwork and positive attitudes would yield good results. Hyper abundant media environment shall act as enablers. Media laws and policies need to be reframed or revised and ethics need to be adhered to. Media education is the device to bring society on the right tracks.

Jack Lyle says about Wilbur Schramm, "For him, technology and change should be introduced, not for their own sake, but to make learning more widely available, more exciting and, above all, more effective for students, young and old, in and out of school". (Jack Lyle, 1974).

Media studies and media education is a very

vibrant and important field of study. Media education objectives may vary as per various contexts. As every region has its unique media characteristics. In the UK, media education aims at cultivating critical and creative media users who are able to enjoy the media. In Canada, media education is associated with building up Canadian cultural identity. While in Taiwan, media education is employed to educate good citizens. In Hong Kong, it focuses on cultivating critical citizenship. In India, it needs to be contextualized to the diversity of Indian culture and its inherent values, apart from critical and creative thinking.

As media education is very socio-cultural specific, this paper suggests that we should develop media education in social, political, economic, technological and media regulatory contexts.

There is also a need to develop Indian theories so that our masses relate to them well, adopting the theory and practice of media education developed in

America, Britain and Canada will not help. It is time for Indian scholars and media education practitioners to learn how to independently theorize and domesticate media education practices. Definitely, the Indian ways and practices so devised shall be a lesson for the world to follow.

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Media Education through Open and Distance Learning: A Case Study of Odisha State Open University

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ABSTRACT

Media education is equally important to democracy as is media. The present study, while tracing the history of media education in India and Odisha, India, studies the imparting of media education in the Open and Distance learning mode at Odisha State Open University. The paper studies the profile of the students, the method of imparting education and the students' feedback to the teaching-learning process at the University. The study, thus, follows a case study approach. Employing document analysis and focus group discussions, the findings suggest an increased enrolment of learners from the rural belt of Odisha and the overall popularity of the various journalism and mass communication programmes run by the university.

Keywords: Media education, Open learning, Distance learning, Odisha State Open University, Journalism, Mass communication

Introduction

In a democratic society, journalism plays a crucial role. It empowers the citizens by gathering and disseminating information through various communication media. According to Pavlik (2009), Journalism refers to the process of gathering, or reporting, current information, or news, from multiple sources; editing and fact-checking ... and distributing (broadcasting, publishing) that news, typically via storytelling forms (p. 643). Journalism has become a distinct professional practice in any thriving democracy. Like other professional practices such as law, medicine and engineering, journalism too requires a set of skills and a vast amount of specialized knowledge (Basu, 1979). Journalism education contributes towards inculcating the required skills as well as technical and special knowledge among aspiring or practicing journalists, thus playing a significant role in forming and sustaining a vibrant mass media and accountable democracy.

Background and importance of journalism education

Journalism education, in simple words, refers to training and equipping students with the required knowledge and skills to become journalists. It is about teaching the students how to make content for various news media platforms.

Before the launch of professional degrees, journalism education primarily consisted of on-the-

job training provided by experienced editors and reporters. College-level journalism education first started in the United States in the year 1869 (Joseph, 2016). According to Folkerts (2014), the earliest courses in journalism were launched at Cornell University and Washington College, now Washington and Lee University. By 1900, several other public Universities in the US also started journalism courses.

According to Medsker (2005), journalism education was developed to achieve two major goals: to improve the minds of journalists and to improve the image of the profession. Willard G. Bleyer, the creator of first doctoral programme in the field of journalism, said that journalism education is necessary to protect society against immature, half-educated, unscrupulous journalists. Pulitzer too had similar views (Medsker, 2005).

Journalism education has proliferated over the years. As per the World Journalism Education Council's census of journalism education programmes, there are about 2,400 programmes globally. The spread is both in geographical and conceptual terms (Joseph, 2016).

Several scholars agree that journalism education serves the media industry's interest to have quality talent. It also serves the public (Berger & Foote, 2013). Well trained journalists can cope with the changing dynamics of media. According to Nygren (2016), "Journalism education is also part of the socialization into the profession" (pp. 73-74).

According to Scruggs (2012), a good journalism

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education teaches students, (i) to search for answers, (ii) to ask the fundamental questions of all intellectual inquiry and (iii) to develop intellectual curiosity.

Journalism education in India and Odisha

The first formal journalism course was started in 1941 by Punjab University. However, there were several previous attempts to start journalism courses in India prior to that.

According to Pattnaik (2013), journalism education started in India with an evening part-time one-year diploma course by Punjab University. In 1948, journalism entered the academic curriculum of the University of Calcutta, followed by Osmania University (Andhra Pradesh) and Nagpur University (Maharashtra). In 1965, with the support of UNESCO, the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) was set up at New Delhi (Pattnaik, 2013).

Muppidi (2008) divides Journalism education into three generations. The first generation that started in 1950 offered skill-based courses in journalism. By the 1960s, the second generation of journalism education began. Universities offered one or two-year degrees in journalism. The economic liberalisation during the 1990s paved the way for third generation of journalism education. Several private institutes were started (Muppidi, 2008). As Nagaraj and Guha (2012) write, “Economic liberalization of the 1990s in India sparked the growth of media schools dedicated to training journalists for the expanding media sector. These media schools, located in private institutions and universities, were largely oriented towards the English-speaking urban-oriented middle-class population” (p. 143).

In Odisha, the foundation of journalism education was laid at Berhampur University in 1974. The university offered a bachelor's degree in journalism. Later, the university started its Master's programme in Journalism and Mass Communication. The second milestone in Odisha's journalism education was the establishment of the regional centre of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) at Dhenkanal in 1993. The beginning of the 21st century saw a proliferation of media houses in Odisha with new newspapers, and 24x7 TV new channels being launched. This created a demand for more skilled manpower. Several new public and private universities established their schools/departments. Ravenshaw University (then Ravenshaw Autonomous College) started a Masters level course in Journalism in 2002. Utkal University started a Master degree course in journalism in 2007, under its Public Administration department. Sambad, one of the largest media

groups in Odisha, also started the Sambad School of Media and Culture in 2006. Presently, there are 28 private and public institutions/universities in Odisha offering journalism courses. Every year more than 1000 students complete their journalism education, mostly MJMC, in the state. Out of 28 institutions or universities offering journalism degree, only two universities, Indira Gandhi National Open University and Odisha State Open University offer journalism courses through distance learning mode.

Importance of open and distance learning

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has become one of the major means for democratizing education. By removing the geographical and time constraint and offering flexible learning opportunities, ODL has made education accessible to all (Kundu, 2014). Commonwealth of Learning, the only intergovernmental organization concerned with the promotion and development of distance education and open learning, defines it as “a system of teaching and learning characterized by separation of teacher and learner in time and/or place; uses multiple media for delivery of instruction; involves two-way communication and occasional face-to-face meeting for tutorials and learner-learner interaction” (p. 3).

Starting from Delhi University way back in 1962, Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has become a popular mode of higher education in India. It has taken higher education to the doorsteps of people, especially socio-economically and geographically disadvantaged group of population who want to acquire knowledge and upgrade their qualification (Mahanta & Khataniar, 2014).

Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD), now Ministry of Education, Government of India also recognizes the importance of ODL as “significant for continuing education, skill updation of in-service personnel and quality education of relevance to learners located at educationally disadvantageous locations” (mhrd.gov.in, 2019). ODL, according to University Grants Commission, holds special importance in the higher education of India due to its contribution in enhancing the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and democratization of higher education among various sections of people in the country.

Through various policy and programme interventions, attempts have been made to promote the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system to facilitate the expansion of higher education sector for the fulfilment of aspirations of those who are deprived of pursuing it for whatever reason. As a result,

the contribution of ODL to the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education has risen to about 22% (para. 6.1). UGC has recognized 113 Higher Education Institutions in India to provide various courses through open and distance learning mode for the year 2019-20 (Ghosh, 2019).

Distance learning has a lot of potentials to make journalism education accessible to a wider audience. In India, several universities offer various courses in journalism and mass communication through Open and Distance Learning system. Sanjay (2016) in a presentation at the 2016 conference of the 'International Association for Media and Communication Research' mapped 310 Universities, Institutes, and Colleges offering journalism courses. Out of these 54 were distance learning universities, institutes and colleges.

Odisha State Open University

The Odisha State Open University (OSOU) is Odisha's first and only full-fledged distance learning university established by the Government of Odisha in 2015. With jurisdiction over the entire State of Odisha, the university presently offers 59 programmes at various levels and in different disciplines. The university focuses on general and professional courses and delivers programmes both in English as well as Odia.

OSOU operates through its headquarters at Sambalpur, and regional centres at Bhubaneswar, Berhampur, Jeypore and Balasore. It offers undergraduate, postgraduate, diploma and certificate courses in various disciplines including journalism and mass communication. The programmes are offered through eight schools: School of Social Sciences and Humanities, School of Science and Technology, School of Education (Continuing and Extension), School of Teachers Training, School of Business and Management Studies, School of Computer and Information Sciences and School of Agriculture and school of Health Care.

The university follows a credit-based semester system. Each credit is equivalent to 30 study hours. A certificate level course is of six months duration where students are required to earn 16 credits. For a diploma course, students are required to earn 32 credits. Similarly, for post-graduation (PG) diploma and advance diploma 48 credits each need to be earned. Master degree programmes are of 64 credits, whereas undergraduate programmes of three years duration are of 148 credits. Each Semester is of six months duration.

OSOU has jurisdiction over the whole of the state

of Odisha. Its programmes are delivered through study centres, opened at existing educational institutes and colleges, mostly government colleges. The university has established study centres, covering all the 30 districts of the state. Each study centre is led by a Coordinator, who is a staff of the institute or college where the study centre is established. Counsellors conduct contact classes for the students every week.

The university extensively uses Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in its programme delivery. It has launched an Android Application in 2017 with an objective to increase the access to educational resources of the university through android mobile phone by anyone, at any time and from anywhere. Written texts, video/audio lessons are now free for all as part of Open Education Resources (OER). It has also started e-Gyanagar, an online collection of open educational resources of the university and smart eLearning platform (eGyanjyoti) on its website. Video lectures on various subjects are also available through its website and mobile app. All the Self-Learning Materials (SLM) are also available in the website of the university. Student can learn through these technological platforms at anytime and anywhere.

Journalism courses at OSOU

Soon after its inception, the Odisha State Open University (OSOU) launched five diploma courses and one certificate course (OSOU, 2015). Diploma in Journalism and Mass Communication (DJMC) was one of them. Out of 223 students enrolled in the first year, 115 (more than 50%) were enrolled in the DJMC course. Encouraged by the overwhelming response, the university launched a PG Diploma as well as a Certificate in Journalism and Mass Communication in 2017. Presently, the university offers journalism and mass communication education at Post-Graduation, Under-Graduation, Postgraduate Diploma, Diploma and Certificate level, to reach out to a wide range of students (Table-1) (OSOU, 2021)

Table 1

Programme Wise Students Enrolment in OSOU (2015-2019)	
Programme	No. of Students
Certificate in Journalism & Mass Communication	740
Diploma in Journalism & Mass Communication	1272
Advance Diploma in Journalism & Mass Communication	35
PG Diploma in Journalism & Mass Communication	894

B.A. in Journalism & Mass Communication	136
M.A. Journalism & Mass Communication	1030
Postgraduate Diploma in Media Management	11
Diploma in Media Management	03
Certificate in Media Management	03

The Journalism and Mass Communication (JMC) courses are provided through weekly counselling classes at study centres as well as through self-learning materials, video lectures etc. The medium of instruction is bilingual i.e. both in English as well as Odia. The syllabus comprises both theory and practical papers. Students have to write assignments, submission of which is a prerequisite for appearing in the term-end examination. Students have to submit handwritten assignments at study centres. For meeting the skill requirement, OSOU has an arrangement with the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, Dhenkanal, where the latter holds a week-long training session for the university students.

Objective

The objective of the present study is to assess the imparting of journalism education via distance education mode at Odisha State Open University. The popularity of these programmes as well as the challenges faced by them have been observed. Case study method has been employed in the given study.

Research questions

From the above discussion, it is evident that Odisha State Open University within a very short span of time has become one of the prominent journalism and mass communication educators in Odisha. Against this background, this study attempts to answer the following research questions :

RQ1: What is the profile of students pursuing JMC courses offered by OSOU?

RQ2: What are the various means used by OSOU to facilitate learning among its JMC Students?

RQ3: What is the students' feedback to OSOU method of teaching and learning?

Methodology

The study uses document analysis and focus group discussions to answer the research questions. The duration of the study was December 2020 to January 2021.

The method used for the first two questions

is 'Document Analysis'. Bowen (2009) defines document analysis as "a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material" (p.27). A document can include advertisements, agenda, attendance registers, minutes of meetings, manuals, background papers, books, brochures, diaries, journals, event schedules, letters, maps, charts, press releases, proposals, forms, summaries, programme scripts, reports, survey data, and various public records (Bowen, 2009).

For document analysis, various documents such as student handbook and prospectus, syllabi of JMC courses, university profiles, brochure, website, and mobile app by OSOU etc. were reviewed. For document analysis student handbook and prospectus (Academic Session: 2015-2016) to student handbook and prospectus (Academic Session:2021-2022) were employed. Also, the University Profiles of years 2015 to 2020 were employed for the study.

For the third question, the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) methodology was used. FGD is a preferred research method employed by social scientists, including media and communication researchers to arrive at insightful findings (Merton *et al.*, 1946). It is a widely used method for collecting qualitative data during the interaction of a small group of people, focused around a particular topic or issue (Wilkinson, 2016).

For focus group discussions 25 participants were divided into five groups. A total of five FGDs were conducted, with each lasting for 30 minutes to 1 hour. The discussions were held in English and Odia. Students of OSOU pursuing any of the Journalism and Mass Communication courses were selected for the discussion. The discussions were moderated by the researcher. The responses were recorded by the researcher for reporting and analysis. All the focus group discussions were held in January, 2021.

Key findings and discussions

Profile of students pursuing JMC courses offered by OSOU

From the data received from OSOU (till 2019), out of total of 20,229 students enrolled in the university since 2015, journalism and mass communication learners constituted 16.8 per cent of the total strength. At the postgraduate level journalism and mass communication programme has been the second most preferred programme for the learners of OSOU.

The average age of students in various journalism and mass communication programmes offered by the university is 32.60 years. The youngest student to be

admitted to the JMC programme was of 17 years, whereas the eldest was 69 years old.

About 23.5 per cent of learners were employed and 14.9 per cent of learners were self-employed. More than 50 per cent of students enrolled in Master's level course in JMC are employed (35.1 per cent) or self-employed (15.5 per cent). Similarly, about 45 per cent of PG Diploma course students are employed (28.2 per cent) or self-employed (16.5 per cent).

About 23 per cent of learners of OSOU's

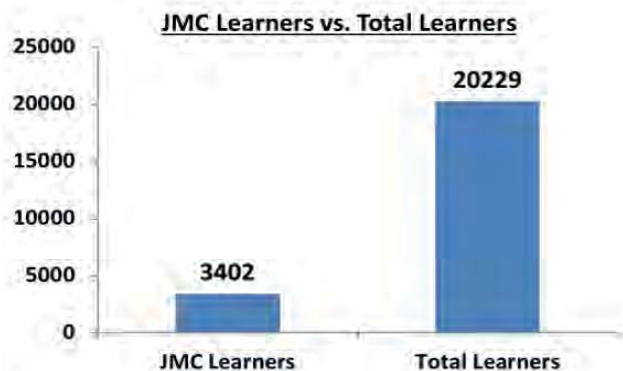


Fig. 1

journalism and mass communication course are female. CJMC has the maximum percentage of female students (27.1 per cent), followed by DJMC (24.7 per cent). The postgraduate programme has 21.2 per cent female students.

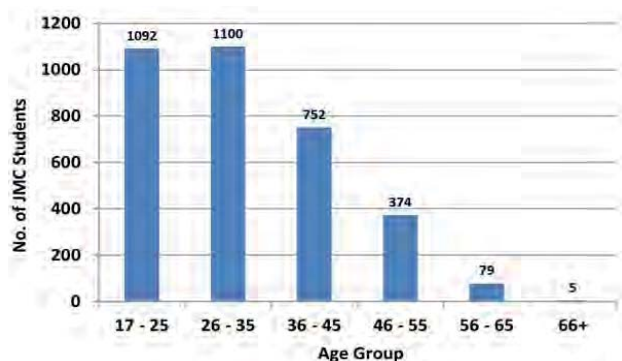


Fig. 2

Geographically OSOU offers journalism and mass communication course in all the districts of Odisha. This is highly significant as out of the 26 institutes or universities offering journalism education through regular mode in the state, 15 institutes or universities are based in Bhubaneswar. Odisha State Open University has been successful in taking journalism and mass communication education to the doorsteps of the people.

Out of the total JMC students, general category students constitute 72.8 per cent, whereas SC and ST constitute 6.4 per cent and 2.3 per cent of the total students respectively. Only 1.17 per cent of

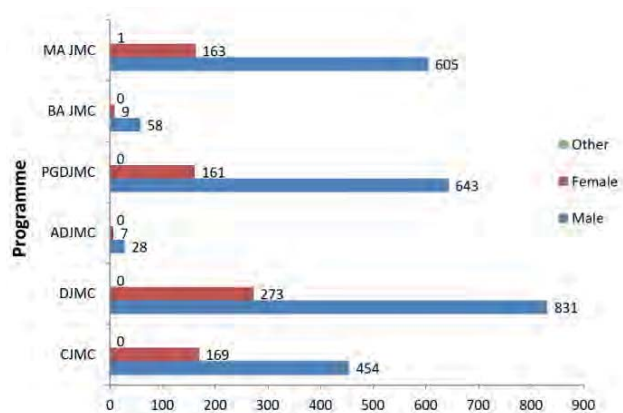


Fig. 3

students belong to the Physically Handicapped Category.

OSOU has been very successful in taking journalism education to rural areas of Odisha. More than 45 per cent of its JMC students are from rural areas, as per data received from the University. Short-term courses like CJMC and DJMC and ADJMC got two-third of their total enrolment from rural areas. However, Master's level courses got 78.7 per cent of their enrolment from urban areas. Similarly, the PG Diploma course in JMC received 80 per cent of its enrolment from urban areas.

Tools and means used by OSOU for JMC education delivery

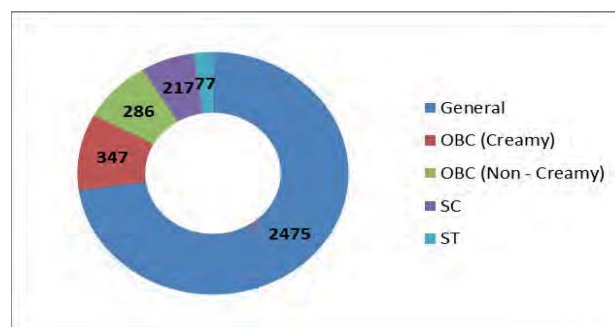


Fig. 4

Like most of its programmes, Odisha State Open University delivers journalism and mass communication programmes through Self-Learning Materials, Contact Classes, and ICT Initiatives like audio-visuals and training programmes.

a) Self-Learning Materials

In Open and Distance Learning (ODL), the learners have less contact with the instructor or institution and hence Self-Learning Materials (SLM) play a significant role. SLMs are prepared not only to impart knowledge but also to encourage independent study. They become virtual instructors to

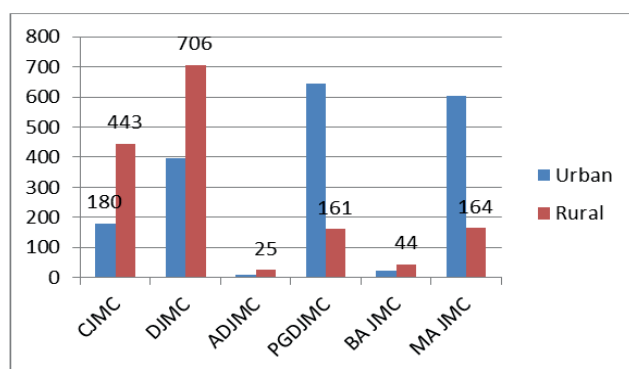


Fig. 5

the learners (Koul & Chaudhary, 1989). Success of ODL programme is highly influenced by the quality of SLMs provided by the institution.

OSOU has developed SLMs for Journalism and Mass Communication (JMC) programmes both in Odia and English. Each semester of the JMC programme has 3-5 courses carrying 4 to 6 credits each. Each course then comprises of 3 to 6 blocks, which are further divided into different units. The units are covered as chapters in the SLMs. A unit in an SLM begins with a description of the unit structure, introduction and objective of the unit. Self-assessment questions are given at the end of each unit to ascertain learning by the students. Each SLM also gives recommendations for suggested additional reading. SLMs are delivered to each learner in hard copy as well as through website and mobile application.

b) Contact classes

Contact classes, which are otherwise known as counselling sessions or contact sessions, is an integral part of student support service by ODL institutions. It creates an opportunity for learners to have a face to face interaction with the university and get assistance for their academic success (Olivier, 2016). It also enables the learners to study as a part of the group (Li *et al.*, 2014).

For all its JMC programmes, Odisha State Open University (OSOU) organizes contact classes regularly at the study centres. The contact classes primarily deal with discussion on the self-learning material, explanation of key concepts, guiding students on assignment and project work as well as other support required by the learners. It also helps the university to get feedback from the students. These contact classes are not compulsory for the learners. For each credit, OSOU organizes at least one contact class. Each class is of 2-hour duration and is conducted by a counsellor, who is mostly an experienced journalist or communication professional with required educational qualification.

c) Use of ICT

Since learners and institutions in open and distance learning system are geographically separated it is difficult for a learner to visit the institution every day to get service/support as available in a conventional system (Rao, 2010). Information and Communication Technology (ICT) provides various opportunities to bridge the gap between the students and teachers by removing the geographical barrier. Besides ICT, ODL has various other advantages like faster and more flexible delivery of various courses and better access to the course materials.

Odisha State Open University (OSOU) uses various new-age ICT tools to reach out to its learners in the most effective way. OSOU's foray into the usage of ICT started with the making of a functional website that hosts various course materials in electronic formats. Besides, OSOU has developed various video as well as audio lectures. The e-gyanagar developed by the university provides various Open Educational Resources (OER).

d) Specialized Training

Since journalism is a skill-based course, OSOU organizes week-long hands-on training programme for its journalism and mass communication students at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), Dhenkanal campus. This training programme, though not compulsory, is open to all Journalism and Mass Communication students who are pursuing various programmes at OSOU.

e) Assessment

Assessment is one of the important components in the process of teaching, learning and certification both in open and distance learning as well as conventional system. ODL institutes follow a two-tier system of assessment. These are formative assessment which consists of the use of assignments and in-text questions and activities for self-assessment and summative assessment which consist of term-end examinations at the end of a semester or session (Chaudhary & Dey, 2013).

Students' feedback on OSOU's JMC programme

In order to understand the impact of journalism and mass communication programme by Odisha State Open University, five Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were conducted. Both present and former students of OSOU's enrolled/previously enrolled in any of the JMC programme participated in the FGDs. The findings from the FGD are given below:

Quality of the Programme

Participants discussed about the quality of JMC programmes and its delivery by Odisha State Open University. Group is referred to as (G) and Participant as (P):

G1, P3: OSOU made us understand the basics of journalism. Counsellors were very supportive and helpful in clarifying our doubts and making us understand the basic concepts of journalism and communication (*Translated from Odia*).

G2, P1: The self-learning material we received from OSOU was very functional. The step by step instructional design helped us to understand the subject and skills (involved).

G3, P2: I am a practicing journalist. But OSOU taught me journalism. The learning we received at OSOU especially during the training at IIMC helped us a lot (*Translated from Odia. The respondent works in an Odia Daily as a reporter*).

G4, P4: I was enrolled for a Diploma course in journalism. I found it very practical and effective. Now I am thinking to pursue PG Diploma or Master Degree in Journalism (*Translated from Odia*).

G1, P5: I am an IT professional. I enrolled in OSOU's PGDJMC programme (just) out of curiosity. But it was a very good experience for me. I got a sound understanding of journalism and its dynamics. Video and audio lectures, as well as mobile app, have been very helpful for my learning.

G2, P2: The flexibility of learning and the educational material offered by OSOU is excellent. The PG Diploma course has been very helpful in understanding how media works. I am thinking to start a career as a freelance journalist after my retirement.

The discussions point out that JMC programmes offered by OSOU have been appreciated by its students. They like the Self-Learning Material (SLM) of the programme as well as the audio-visual lectures. The programme has been effective in imparting necessary skills and knowledge about journalism and media to the participating learners.

Impact on Practicing Journalists

G1, P1: Many people like me who work as journalists at block or district level had no training or qualification in journalism. Many rural journalists joined the journalism programmes offered by OSOU. It has not only helped us in acquiring journalism skills but has also helped us to work in a better way (*Translated from Odia*).

G2, P3: OSOU has made journalism education

accessible to everyone in Odisha, especially rural journalists, most of whom have no training in journalism. Since OSOU offered journalism programmes in the Odia language, it is very helpful (*Translated from Odia*).

G1, P4: There is a big difference in the quality of the news report we were writing earlier and the news reports we write today. This has been possible because of OSOU programmes.

From the discussions, it is evident that JMC programmes offered by OSOU have been very helpful in training rural journalists who work in various media organizations at the district or block level. It has contributed to improving their skills and confidence level. The same answers RQ3.

Conclusion

The Journalism and Mass Communication (JMC) programmes offered by Odisha State Open University (OSOU) have been well received among the students' community. Students, especially from the rural belt have been immensely benefitted from these programmes. However, some of the programmes, such as those in Media Management, have not got the desired response. Future challenges of the university may include getting the desired response for all its programmes. Also, the week-long hands-on training could be insufficient looking at the growing specializations requiring newer skills in media industry. The university, in future, may have to think in terms of arranging continuous training for its learners.

Limitations

The study has the following limitations:

- a. The study does not cover the quality and profile of counsellors who conduct contact classes.
- b. There can also be possibilities of guinea pig effect during FGDs.

Future scope of research

This study is primarily exploratory in nature and brings an overview of impact of JMC courses by OSOU through the ODL system. However, further research can be done on:

- 1) Specific impact on quality of journalism in Odisha
- 2) Specific reasons for popularity of JMC programmes at OSOU
- 3) Comparative analysis of JMC programmes of OSOU with other universities

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Role and Impact of Media Education in Mizoram

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ABSTRACT

While the growth of mass communication and journalism in the country as a whole has given rise to an increasing number of trained professionals possessing enthusiasms and skills, yet, majority of personnel engaged in the media industry in Mizoram are not trained professionals but the ones who learn on the job. However, on a positive note, the professional approach to the field is on the rise. There has been a steady growth in the number of journalists having good experience and competency. The media has also opened up job opportunities for many young educated Mizos which, to a great extent, help solve the unemployment problem in the state. This study recognizes the potential of media education as a platform to further the possibility of tapping media industry to its full potentials. The study used qualitative and quantitative approaches to gather data which help to unravel and support the discussion in the study.

Key words: Media education, Cable television, Print media, Professional training, Mizoram

Introduction

The media landscape in Mizoram is unsurprisingly dynamic and vibrant given the entrepreneurship attitude of the people coupled with demands of media products and ongoing Government's efforts to promote the industry. Although electronic media has a rather late entry into Mizoram as compared to print media, it however has not failed to keep pace with the overall growth and development. In short, it is not lagging behind in progress. A remarkable facet of the media scene is that while cinema as an entertainment medium gained popularity during the late 1960s, 1970s and 1980s; cinema theatres/halls are almost non-existence today except for a few home theatre size which can accommodate very limited audiences. Reversely, during the heyday of cinema as the main entertainment medium, audiences crowded to cinema halls as tickets were affordable to the common man, which was as low as one rupee. In fact, ranges of higher admission ticket prices were also made available for the financially able audiences demanding comforts. Unfortunately, the arrival of small screen and in particular, VCR and cable television overshadowed the big screen and today, it has almost wiped it off from the media scene of Mizoram altogether. The main reason for this desertion of the big screen is that people nowadays prefer to entertain themselves at home rather than going out to get entertained with the same kind of products, which are readily available at home. Another desolating facet of the media industry

in Mizoram is that only a small fraction of locally produced movies/films are certified by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC). At the same time, locally produced Mizo dialect movies are being marketed and disseminated for public consumption mainly through the cable television system.

While print media and in particular Mizo dialect daily newspapers situate comfortably with loyal readers at a steady growth, a positive trend in the mediascape is the progress in new communication media such as web-based news portal, online journalism and social media-based public forum and the general improvement in the awareness on the importance and "power" of media among the mass. The availability of a video transferring system via internet has made it possible for newsrooms at the hub (Aizawl) to cover events taking place in other parts of the state, thereby, bringing about improvement in news coverage. Reporting and journalism as a whole have also taken a more vigilant and aggressive tone, as a trend brought in by the emergence of online journalism and its converging media like social networking sites, blogs, online public forum and others. Similarly, public participation has also been tremendously enhanced with the availability of online public forum and other interactive communication media platforms. The emergence of print, electronic media and online media are all ignition points in the history of media in Mizoram (Lalmuansangkimi, 2015, p.2). While the State witnessed progress in the

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media sphere, there has not been a study to assess the role played by media education in promoting and accelerating development in the field. Appropriately, this study aims at exploring the contributions of media education in embedding progress in the media industry.

Review of literature

The emergence of print media in Mizoram can be traced back to the late 1890s. The Christian Missionaries from Britain pioneered and nurtured education among the Mizo tribe. The consciousness on communication through print media such as books, journal and newspapers began during this period with the composition of a Lushai-English Grammar and Dictionary, and the publication of Christian literatures. In those early days, printing machines were not available in the area, and most of the works of literature were printed outside of the region, with local publications mostly being handwritten or done on a typewriter (Thirumal & Lalrozami, 2010, p.380).

The first Mizo dialect journal ‘Mizo ChanchinLaishuih’ came out in 1897 with Captain J. Shakespeare, the then Assistant Political Officer/Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, as the editor. Newspapers in the local dialect also started gaining popularity during the missionary period (Pachau, 2012). During the period ranging from 1900-1919, the missionaries published two very reflective and insightful monthly newspapers- ‘Mizo Leh Vai Chanchinbu’ and ‘Kristian Tlangau’. The former was the first monthly journal to be consistently published in the Mizo dialect. Its first-ever copy was printed by Dina Nath Press at Sylhet on November 1902, and the fourteen-page set was priced at one *anna*. Makthanga, who served as the editor from 1911 to 1936, is widely credited as the first editor of Mizo newspapers (Lalmuansangkimi, 2015, p.3).

However, despite the steady growth in the number of newspapers, magazines, and journals in Mizoram, the local dialect versions didn’t become popular till the 1990’s. Lack of reliable and efficient printing press and shortage of funding and workforce are common reasons cited for this late entry. Moreover, for the pioneering indigenous journalists, the profession was limited to being a part-time vocation, as rewards were yet not sufficient enough for a full-time pursuit. Under these circumstances, many newspapers were unable to withstand the test of time, incurring financial shortage due to a general lack of professionalism.

Nevertheless, journalism has had a steady growth in Mizoram, and publications today aim to impart information as well as to provide entertainment. A

good amount of personnel continue to enter the field of journalism with the aspiration of addressing social, economic, cultural and political issues; and political parties have, in recent times, shown keen interest as well.

During the early newspaper boom, all the daily newspapers followed a foolscap or newsletter size format. A standardized daily newspaper layout and format is a recent trend in Mizoram. At present, ‘Vanglaini’ which began publication in 1978, is the biggest daily newspaper in terms of copies circulated. The presence and well-organized functioning of the Mizoram Journalists Association (MJA) may be attributed to the growth of print journalism in Mizoram. In the present scenario, more than 200 full-time journalists are covering events and incidences taking place in and outside of Mizoram. There are approximately 100 Mizo dialect daily newspapers published within the state. ‘Newslink’, ‘Mizoram post’ and ‘Highlander’ are the three prominent English dailies published in the state. Besides, Mizo dialect newspapers and journals, Mizo sub-tribes of Hmar, Lai, Mara and others have their own dialect newspapers and periodicals either as an organ of Churches or NGOs. Moreover, many government departments and state-wide organizations also publish journals targeting their own community or the public as a whole - such as ‘Hriselna’ (an organ of Directorate of Health Services), ‘Thu LehHla’ (a mouthpiece of the Mizo Academy of Letters), and ‘Meichher’ (a publication of Mizo Adult Education Wing).

Although print media in Mizoram has situated itself as a major channel of mass media, there does exist an area of concern i.e. an increasing coverage of entertainment-oriented stories and contents. One local journalist quoted, “Entertainment stories involving celebrities and socialites need to occupy huge pie of newspaper space, otherwise, how will we lure the young readers and sell our papers?” Such is the circumstance whirling many weekly magazines where a touch of sensationalism is required to entice readers.

On the electronic media front, the All India Radio (AIR) Aizawl station was established on July 31, 1966, during the height of insurgency triggered by the erstwhile underground Mizo National Front (MNF) declaring independence from the Indian union on March 1, 1966. AIR was introduced with the aim of integrating Mizos into the Indian nation-state. It was the only easily accessible electronic media to the masses at that time. The AIR, Aizawl station was one of the oldest radio stations in northeast India. Through the years, it has withstood the test of time and it is able to revive itself with contents to suit the

need of changing times. To entice young listeners, FM Zoawi was launched by PrasarBharati on August 15, 2008 'for the masses'. This is the second FM for the state, as AIR has been running Lunglei, which airs All India Radio content in the FM band in the city of Lunglei. FM Zoawi operates only for five hours a day, from 5 pm to 10 pm. The FM station has been made operational using a 3x2 KW old transmitter/ RJs from Mizoram's main AIR station that have been roped into service the new radio station.

Commenting on the public response, the then AIR's Deputy Director of northeast region 2, C. Lalrosanga said, "People here are very open to a medium like radio. We have received a good response from our audience and advertisers, as we are the only FM station functioning here. As a medium, we want to do more than just keep it as an entertainment segment in the society." The station plays English, Hindi, western and Mizo music for its listeners. The library of the station consists of its own old stock of recordings, new recordings and regional music. The station also broadcasts 10 minutes of news at 6.30 pm daily. The programming format on the station only changes on Sunday when the station plays devotional songs, as a majority of Mizos visit the church on Sunday (Ali, 2008). At present, there are 9 FM stations including FM Zoawi, Red FM, Radio Gup Sup and others which are catering to the need of young listeners. While giving entertainment to the public, FM Radios are also providing employment opportunity for youths in Mizoram as RJs and also in the technical unit.

In Mizoram, Television has come to the forefront as a Mass Medium during the early 1980s and more so during the mid-1990s. On the emergence of Television, there were two ignition points: the first was the relay of the Asian Games 1982 by Doordarshan from its first VLP Transmitter installed at Tuikhuahtlang, Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram. This telecast of the Asian Games was witnessed and viewed by very few people as only a small number of households owned a television set at that time. Even for those who could afford a Television set, dull and developmental oriented Doordarshan programming and Bangla channel lasting for few hours a day was the only available option. It was Skylinks Cable networks (now ceased to exist), which took the initiative of Cable Television service in Mizoram. Skylinks Cable Networks claimed it to be the first Cable operator not only in Mizoram but also in the whole of Northeast India. Skylinks Cable Networks was launched on 5th September 1991. They began distributing Satellite TV channels through cables to limited households in the southern part of Aizawl. To boost the popularity of cable television,

the first local origination transmissions took place in Mizoram with the launch of LPS Vision Television Production studio in 1992. Then in 1994, Zozam also began producing local origination programmes. Apart from being entertaining, these local programmes have been instrumental in giving information in local dialect/language. When LPS started operating as a local cable operator, the first local cable channel devoted to local content came on the scene. It must be noted that the sole cable operator, Skylinks relied on outside production houses for their local contents till 2002. By then several cable operators distributing satellite Television channels came up in different parts of the state. These cable operators in different districts and villages subscribe to local programmes originated by the three head-ends Cable Operators in Aizawl. These local programmes are sent to them in the form of Compact Disc (CD). Apart from Satellite Television channels, Cable Operators in Mizoram provided their viewers with daily news programmes, dubbed programmes, popular Hindi, English and regional films as well as Interviews, Live shows, reality shows based competitions and music videos that feature local artists and musicians. Many of the programmes are inspired by both Hindi and Foreign satellite programmes. In terms of programme genres, Reality show/Live show, Local News bulletin and Dubbed serials and Movies (Korean serials, English and Bollywood movies) dominated the Local channels (Lalmuansangkimi, 2015, p.7)

Cable television networks in Mizoram are the first among such channels to telecast live coverage of the entire proceedings of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly. This is ostensibly done to keep the public informed. In terms of news contents, the local channels have a perception that Doordarshan is unable to compete with them in news presentation. As one broadcaster pointed out "Doordarshan is a very constrained kind of public broadcaster which has got its own set of rules. Although after it became an autonomous body, it's got some leverage, still there are so many things that it can't do which we do. We are able to give in-depth news, be more critical of the government...They have to give a lot of emphasis on the national news as well, which we are not bound" (Hasan, 2008, p.53). As evident from the above account, the last decade and more so the past 5 to 10 years witnessed media boom in Mizoram, started off by the introduction of Satellite Television. At the center of this growth and development is Aizawl city where the three head-end cable networks are located. An apprehension has always been there with regards to cultural imposition from outside. Furthermore,

the nature of consumption of cable television channels and the production of local channels is not unambiguous as it initially appears. Cable channels are often criticized as being too business-oriented and conscious. As a result, there is the added danger of interpreting and manipulating our culture with slick production values. On a positive note, Hasan (2008) however, remarked, “Although western cultural entertainment is undeniably a source of inspiration for television producers, the “influence” of mainstream Indian culture through Indian television channels has been equally powerful...but neither cultural force has eroded indigenous identity as is evident from producers’ emphasis on indigenous language, symbols and cultural codes in local programmes” (p.67).

With the arrival of online/internet media, more platforms for information dissemination and access to information are available for the public. This has also opened up more career opportunities for young people in the mediascape. Though there has been a progress and improvement in the media culture of Mizoram and a more professional approach has been witnessed in recent years, the majority of personnel engaged in the media industry are still not trained professionals but those who learn on the job. This is what necessitates a study to look into media education and its impact on the state. Nevertheless, on a positive note, enthusiasm as well as the general growth of mass communication and journalism in the country as a whole steadily negates this problem and continues to raise the professional approach to the field. Unquestionably, the media has opened up job opportunities for many young educated Mizos which, to a great extent, helps solve the unemployment problem in the state and more opportunities may further be created if proceeding in the right direction.

Research objectives

This study attempts to look into the history and development of the media industry in the state, thereby, making sense of the present status. It aims to analyze how media education impacts the functioning of media as an institution. It attempts to highlight and profile the current status of media education in the state. It also aims to examine the best way in which media education can positively shape the practice of journalism.

Research questions

To explore the status of media education and how it enriches the practice of journalism and the industry in general, there are certain pertinent questions

needed to be put forward. It is apt to know whether or not media education is perceived as satisfactory? Would working journalists take up journalism as a profession without professional training? How does media education or media persons with professional training in journalism/mass communication have positively impact the practice of journalism in the state of Mizoram? These are some of the questions which must be addressed in media education discourse.

Research methodology

A combination of research methods was used to gather empirical data in support of the discussion in this study. It was felt that different aspects of the research questions could only be sufficiently illuminated by both qualitative and quantitative research methods. These qualitative and quantitative methods helped to arrive at a better understanding of the functioning of media and journalism in the state. Qualitative methods helped to unravel how media functions and the role played by working journalists of the state in disseminating information to the public. On the other hand, the quantitative method provided additional statistical information that supplemented and to a certain extent substantiated these insights.

Research sample

Research samples were generated through a combination of random, opportunistic and informal means. The qualitative nature of the study determined the size of the sample which, though fairly comprehensive, eschewed the large scale sampling undertaken in more quantitative studies. A small scale quantitative survey based on available documents and records was undertaken to better substantiate qualitative claims.

Interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with young journalists having professional training from Aizawl as the key informants. The informants were selected on the basis of their willingness to articulate their views on the practice of journalism and media education. Interviews proved successful and yielded rich insights into how journalists interpret the field of journalism. As media professionals having experience in the local media, their views are quite invaluable for this research.

Focus Group Discussion

The focus group brings together a small number of people to discuss a question or series of questions formulated by the researcher (Deacon *et al.*, 1999,

p.54). Focus group discussions were a crucial method of data collection for this study. The agenda for the discussion was set by the researcher. The interaction within the group is considered crucial for the generation of information about audience behaviour since it is the ‘conversation’ that encourages people to express opinions that they might not otherwise do (Morgan 1988:12 in Hansen et al., 1998: 262). The Focus Group discussion provided invaluable information about the media culture and also provided useful views for interview questions.

Findings (results) and analysis

The Mizoram Journalists’ Association (MJA) is an umbrella body of all working journalists in Mizoram. At present, there are a total of 186 accredited journalists under the MJA in the whole of Mizoram working in different media houses. It is the press accreditation committee of the state government which selected journalists from different parts of the state to be awarded accreditation every year. Since its inception, the majority of MJA members are journalists who learn on the job without a media education background. Their experiences proved invaluable in shaping the journalism trend of the state. Recently, the industry witnessed a surge in young enthusiastic budding journalists who joined MJA and are actively practicing journalism. Undeniably, it is the setting-up of two prominent mass communication and journalism schools in the state which contributed to the surge in youth with the potential to pursue a career in the field of Journalism.

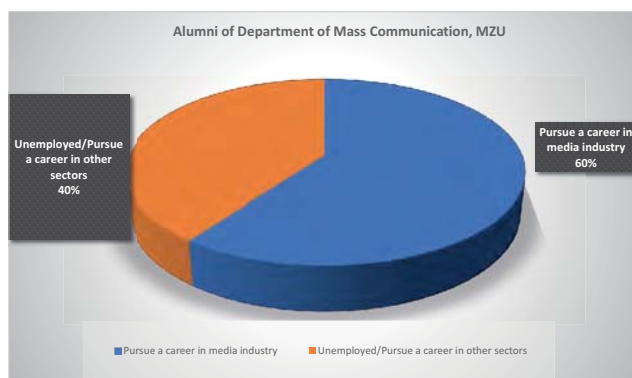


Fig. 1 Career-wise distribution of Alumni of Department of Mass Communication, Mizoram University

The Department of Mass Communication, Mizoram University was established in 2010. The department is presently offering two-year Master degree course in Journalism and Mass Communication (MJMC) along with M.Phil and PhD courses. The department is equipped with video production studio, editing suit and other high-end media equipments.

It also publishes students’ lab journal called —Silhouette, Students blog —Spectator and video news magazine, —Silhouette Newslink. The department uses participatory communication for teaching and learning.

Dr. Irene Lalruatkimi, HOD, Department of Mass Communication said, “A good number of our alumni are pursuing a career in the media industry as a journalist, public relations officer, technical person and others within and outside Mizoram both in government and private setup and we are hopeful that they will also contribute to the positive change we are seeing in the industry.” She also mentioned that currently they are running the 10th batch and in each batch, there are 30 seats.

As evident from Figure 1, 60% of the Department’s alumni are pursuing a career at different capacities in the media industry while 40% are either unemployed or they are pursuing a career in other sectors.

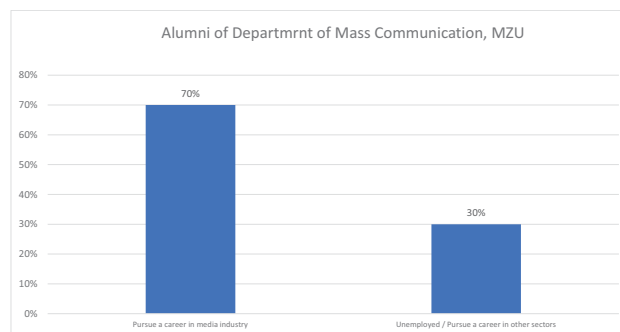


Fig. 2 Career-wise distribution of Alumni of IIMC, North-Eastern Regional Campus

The Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) North Eastern Regional Campus (NERC) at Aizawl was institutionalized and inaugurated on 8th August, 2011. At present, IIMC NERC offers Post-graduate Diploma Courses in English Journalism. The course structured by the Institute represents a meaningful blend of classroom teaching, duly supplemented by practical orientation through lab and studio assignments, field visits, internships and others. The course design is intended to equip students with the basic skills needed for success in their careers and to provide them an opportunity to relate the teaching they receive to the ground realities of the environment in which the industry functions. Accordingly, for every academic term, well-versed media practitioners from the industry are invited to the institute as guest and visiting faculty with the aim to provide students with hands-on exposure to the craft of journalism and to supplement regular teaching mode of the institute.

While keeping in view the diverse requirements of industry, the curriculum of the English Journalism

course is continually reviewed and revised to incorporate emerging trends and technologies in the rapidly developing field of media and communication, for maintaining the relevance of the course even in changed circumstances and also to make the students aware of field realities.

Over the period spanning two semesters, students are provided intensive training in all aspects of journalism. As a practical exposure, students bring out a daily newsletter, as well as a lab journal every month, through which they practice both reporting and editing skills. They are allowed the maximum possible freedom and support in these endeavours. The Institute has been providing a vibrant curriculum, extra-curricular and vocational activities for each academic session since its inception.

This study takes into consideration IIMC Alumni from Mizoram. Figure 2 revealed that 70% of students from Mizoram who studied English Journalism course at IIMC, NER campus pursued a career in the media industry as a reporter, sub-editor, content writer and others. About 30% of the Alumni, however, are either unemployed or are pursuing a career in other sectors.

Discussion

On the current status of media education in Mizoram, Maria Lalramengi who is an alumna of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, North-Eastern Regional Campus, Aizawl and now a full-time reporter for All India Radio, Aizawl said, “Media education in Mizoram is in the nascent stage yet it is not completely wrong to say it is in the process of development. Due to the lack of huge media houses and hubs, there is limited access for students in Mizoram to experience the actual media culture. In media studies, practical experience is way more important than theoretical knowledge because when we work in the actual field, the theory we studied is not applicable.” While elaborating on the inadequacy of media education in the state, Amy Danielle who recently completed a post-graduation course from the Department of Mass Communication, Mizoram University said, “Media education in Mizoram is good but not good enough as because the imparted knowledge is not in-depth, only just as much as a book covers. Though people know what media is but what lags them behind is a lack of literary.” She further said, “When the state should have started a bachelor’s in mass media courses, it provided a PG level study in which many are still hardly even aware of it. Yet, something is better than nothing.” Amy also stressed on how the Covid crisis made authority and people

realized the importance and usefulness of media not only for Journalistic practice but also as a form of education. She added, “If the state was more advanced about media education, it could have perhaps made education during lockdown a little bit easier with the help of ICTs.”

Joseph Lalnunpuia, a mass communication graduate working as a Sub-editor in the leading Mizo dialect daily newspaper Vanglaini revealed how media education in Mizoram as of now is not upto expectation which he said is partly manifested by the way people used social media and said, “We spend too much time on social media, which is very harmful, especially for the youths, we need to be educated on how to effectively use media.” Joseph shared his view on the practice of journalism in Mizoram and said, “Many of the journalists in Mizoram do not have any background on media education. They entered the field without even knowing the ethics of journalism, which, we can say, is discouraging for media industry in the state.” On a positive note, an alumna of IIMC Delhi, Ezrela Dalidia Fanai who is freelancing for a number of reputed media organizations informed that “Media education is improving in Mizoram. So far, the education imparted at MZU and IIMC Aizawl seems quite good. But more improvements can be added. More emphasis should be given to practical work instead of theories. After all, a journalist’s career is all about being in the field, connecting with the people.”

While highlighting the different courses on mass communication and journalism available in Mizoram, Dr.Irene Lalruatkimi, HOD, Department of Mass Communication, MZU said, “We are offering M.A. and PhD courses and IIMC is offering professional courses in journalism; the courses available are satisfactory.” Further, she added that there is a need for more workshops, short courses and training for working journalists who do not have a journalism background. Joseph Lalnunpuia also suggested that awareness campaigns on how to effectively and fruitfully use social media from experts is needed and said, “Organizing more workshops and seminars on media education or even offering short term course on media education might improve the situation.”

“Journalism can be taken up by anyone willing to work hard and dig up the truth. But proper training in the field helps a person in preparation for the job,” said Ezrela Dalidia and she added that in the field of Journalism staying ethical is on the part of the reporter and this is where proper training and guidance in a professional institution comes into

play. “Every beat of journalism requires a special angle of reporting and proper training for each beat of story is a must to become a reliable and respected journalist,” she said. When asked whether or not they’ll take up journalism as a profession without training or course that they have done, Maria explained, “Without professional training, if it is my call I’d still take up journalism as a profession, but at the same time, professional training helps us a great deal, teaches us the various etiquettes to be followed by a good journalist, imbibe the true spirit of journalist culture, helps us prepare and sharpen our minds for our future profession.” Joseph, on the other hand, said that without professional training, he may not enter the field of journalism.

On the question of how media education or people with professional training in journalism/mass communication has benefited the practice of journalism in the state of Mizoram, Ezrela Dalidia emphasized on the importance of unbiased reporting for good journalism and proper training in the field will help a reporter in such a way that while on the field reporting, he/she will know which story to take up, without any bias. As media education is a novice topic in Mizoram, many people still have not really understood the importance of proper training in the field of media. “For people who have a degree in media and journalism, we are well aware of our differences with others who have taken up the job without formal training. Experience always gives a person an upper hand, but to be honest, among our seniors too, those who have undergone extensive media training added with experience, their works are a class apart. I have personally noticed that those who have undergone formal training in media gives you the real picture in their reporting,” she explained. Ezrela Dalidia also cited that there is a need for more of fact-finding investigative journalists that dig out the truth to enlighten the masses. “The era of writing news from Press Releases is slowly decreasing,” she added.

While elucidating on the need and benefits of media education in the state, Maria said, “In journalism, especially in newspapers, social media, electronic and mass media, there are a few etiquettes to be followed by a good journalist. Although one may feel it is not necessary to study mass communication, however, it is very important to apply what we learn in theory especially in print media.” Alongwith the same line, Joseph said, “Media education is still a very young or a new concept in Mizoram. But, young journalists, who are having a degree or diploma in the field of Journalism/mass communication, are

emerging in recent years and they are slowly reshaping the journalism scene in the state. Not many years ago, there were very few freelance journalists in Mizoram, but now, there have been a number of them. There are more and more journalists who are aware of journalism ethics now as compared to the previous decade.”

“People with professional media background in the state practice Journalism differently, while some work ethically, some work just for the benefits. But yes, people with media education background have benefited the practice of journalism in the state,” Amy said. Citing with examples, she further said, “My go-to example would be Lalsawmliana Pachuau, Director of LPS Visions Production. His education in media has benefited the state through their local cable providing the people with news and entertainment. Secondly, Adam Sapringa, Editor of Frontier Despatch has brought news from different angles than what is usually covered by the local newspapers. There are a few more to mention but those are the two few whom I know personally.”

While pointing out ways for media education to help improve the practice of journalism, Maria stressed that media education can help and improve the journalist culture to a great deal. “Although one can practice the profession ignorantly without media education, on the other hand, it is always better to educate oneself as good journalism requires knowledge, intricacies, nuances, etiquettes and rules that are a part of journalism,” she clarified. Amy also elucidated that when media houses in the state start to recruit people with media educational background only that would help improve the practice of journalism. “However, not all who study this profession have a knack for it; it needs to be done with passion. Secondly, the opening of graduation courses in mass media would help a lot for aspiring young Mizo journalist so that they have in-depth background knowledge both theoretically and practically,” she argued. On the pretext of pursuing media education, Joseph said, “Journalists can learn more ethics, their rights and duties, which will boost their confidence as well. They can improve their ways of reporting news or its presentation. They can also improve the way they approach their source and can find ways in which they can contribute more for the society.”

Conclusion

The media in Mizoram is witnessing growth and progress over the years. There has been a positive transformation in the dissemination of information

and also provided job opportunities in the field which, in turn, helps ease the unemployment problem in the state. While hands-on experiences are invaluable in the media industry, the limited contributions by people with professional training or media education have resulted in a lack of professional approach. Comparatively, there is also a possibility that the media industry of Mizoram may be lagging behind in certain aspects or areas being devoid of contributions from people with media education or experts with wider exposure. This is especially crucial in terms of media ethics and background knowledge of the field. It is suggested that with more and more participation of professional trainees, the quality of news presentation and information dissemination would improve to a great extent. To bring about overall improvement in the field, there is a need to organize more workshops, short courses and training for working journalists who learn on the job and to welcome young people with proper training from professional institutions into the industry. Moreover, to add to the optimistic disposition, a professional approach to the field is on the rise.

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Media Education in Haryana: An Analysis

ASHOK KUMAR¹, AJAY KUMAR² AND NAVEEN KUMAR³

ABSTRACT

Media education witnessed expansion, innovation and an improving phase during the last 100 years in India. Presently 900 media institutions offer the diverse programme in journalism education in India. Journalism education in Haryana is transforming rapidly like in other parts of the country. Around 60 media institutions offer media education in Haryana, India. Media education is in its 43rd year in the state. Most of the state, central, and private universities, government, government-aided, and self-financing colleges offer courses in journalism. For the present study, 59 media educators from 12 universities and 20 different colleges were covered in the survey. The Head of the Department and senior faculty members were interviewed. This study finds that media education has expanded across the length and breadth of the state. It has been producing a quality human resource for the industry but despite all the expansion, poor infrastructure, an inadequate number of teachers, insufficient laboratory facilities, and industry-academic gap poses a big challenge to media educators and the institutions in the state. Coordination among media educators and professionals is required to uplift the standard of media education in the state.

Key words: Media education, Curriculum, Infrastructure, Laboratories, Haryana.

Introduction

The idea of improving the quality of journalism by giving the journalist a college or university education was born in the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century (Weaver, 2003). It was started in India in 1920 when activist Annie Besant started first journalism course at Adyar University. Today, 900 colleges and institutes offer Mass Communication and Journalism programmes in India. Most of the institutes are located in National Capital Region (NCR) counting nearly 150, followed by Bengaluru and Kolkata as cities and Maharashtra as a state (Dutta, 2020). NCR has contributed to the expansion of the media industry and education in Haryana.

Media education in Haryana is in its nascent stage. It is witnessing expansion, innovation and an improving phase. Today, 10 state universities, one central university, and 19 private universities offer media courses and about 25 Government aided and self-financed colleges offer media education in the state. Like in other states, growth in media education is quantitative rather than qualitative (Gangwar,

2020).

Journalism education in India expanded as the media industry expanded in the country. During the financial year 2020, the Indian media and entertainment sector registered a revenue growth of 9% at ₹ 1.8 trillion ("Indian Media Industry Report", 2021). Media platforms such as newspapers, television channels, radio stations etc. have expanded their horizon in Haryana. A big area of Haryana has come under the national capital region. This has facilitated the growth of Gurugram, Faridabad, Panipat and Hisar.

There is an enormous rise in employment opportunities for young media professionals. To cater to rising demand, media courses have been introduced in different colleges and universities in Haryana. Today, diverse courses related to media education are available at various educational institutions.

Journalism in Haryana: An overview

The year 1884 marked the beginning of journalism in Haryana and Jain Prakash was the first newspaper that started getting published under the editorship of Jialal Jain from November 14, 1884

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(Mamagaim, 1986). Before 1991, no big newspaper was published from Haryana. *Punjab Kesari* was the first newspaper that launched its first edition in 1991 from Ambala, though it was published by Jalandhar Press. In 1992, the first weekly newspaper *Hari Bhoomi* was started in Rohtak and later on in 1998, it was converted to a daily newspaper. Now, most of the media houses have their offices at the district level in Haryana.

The year 2000 emerged as the launch pad and expansion year for the media industry in the state. The emergence of new technologies and the policy of liberalization vis-à-vis the media sector have opened many employment opportunities, but proper training and education are necessary for success in any profession, apart from innate talent and dedication. This proves that media education is now a need of our society (Dutta & Ray, 2011 in Hirtz & Kelly, n.d.).

Media education in Haryana: A historical perspective

Media education has completed its journey spanning four decades in Haryana. The first department for media education was established at Maharishi Dayanand University (MDU), Rohtak in 1978 as the Department of Journalism but it was closed in 1982. Six years later in 1988, it was started again and one-year Bachelor of Journalism program was offered by the university from the academic session 1988-99 (Nandal & Mukherjee, 2021). The second journalism programme was started by Kurukshetra University in 1993. Initially, the Department of Journalism started functioning as a part of the Political Science Department and M.Sc. Mass communication was the first course offered by the university (Mishra, 2021). In 1995, Haryana Government converted Kurukshetra University's Regional Centre, Hisar into a university named Guru Jambheshwar University of Science and Technology (GJUST). With this announcement, it was also decided to shift some technical courses running at Kurukshetra University to GJUST, Hisar. The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, which was started in the academic session 1993-94 at Kurukshetra University, was moved to GJUST, Hisar. The Communication Management and Technology Department was established in the year of 1995 (Kaushik, 2021).

Until 2000, there were only three Universities i.e. MDU, Rohtak; KU, Kurukshetra and GJUST, Hisar which offered media courses on their campuses. During 2003 to 2020, nine new departments at government universities, 19 departments at private

universities and more than 25 departments in colleges emerged. Today, most of the universities like Chaudhary Devi Lal University (CDLU), Sirsa, Chaudhary Bansi Lal University (CBLU), Bhiwani, Chaudhary Ranbir Singh University (CRSU), Jind, J.C. Bose University of Science and Technology, Faridabad, Gurugram University and many private universities offer media courses in the state. This reflects that media education scenario in the state is quite progressive and impressive, but despite the quantitative growth, quality media education still remains a distant dream.

Background of the study

Few studies have been conducted so far on media education in India. Dutta (2020) traced the journey of journalism education in India. It was the year 1920 when the first journalism course was started by the social activist and philanthropist, Annie Besant at the National University Adyar, Madras in India. Jha (2008) discusses the gap between the academics and media industry and the various issues and challenges faced by media education in India. This study also suggests a model for media education in India. Kumar (2017) examines the growth of media education in the Northeast India. Media education grew after the establishment of central universities in north-eastern part of the country. Singh (2015) opines that Media education can play a vital role in making socially responsible, enlightened and committed professionals and academicians.

Francisco *et al.*, (2012) discuss the need and importance of the “teaching hospital” model for media education. On the pattern of medical education partnership between media professionals and media, departments can help to produce quality content and good human resources for the media industry.

Das (2011) examines pedagogical, media education environment, research and scope for media education at 32 different Central Universities of India. The study reveals that most of the mass media departments were started after the year 2000 at the Central Universities. These universities are presently running under-graduate, post-graduates, PG diploma, certificate course and PhD programs.

Murthy (2011) examines the problem of media education by surveying media educators. Findings of the study reveal that journalism and mass communication education bears no linkage to industrial needs and technological developments.

Similar studies were also conducted by many other scholars such as Bagchi and Rath (2009) and Muppidi (2008).

Research questions

The present study is aimed to find out the current status of media education in Haryana. The study mainly addresses five research questions:

RQ1. What types of nomenclature of the courses are offered by the departments and gauge the satisfaction level of the media educators?

RQ2. What kinds of infrastructure and laboratory facilities are available at the media institutions?

RQ3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the curricula offered by the media departments?

RQ4. What media educators think about Quality Teaching Research in the state and what are their suggestions for the future of media education?

Research methodology

Mix methodology was used to conduct this study. This study covers all state, central and private universities of Haryana. The secondary data is collected through official websites and primary data is collected through questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire method helped to elicit the responses of media educators about the present situation of media education in the state. The questionnaire comprised 30 close-ended questions. 59 media educators from 12 universities and 20 colleges responded to the questionnaire. The survey was conducted from April 5 to 15, 2021. It was very difficult to write the historical development of media education in Haryana, since no written document or report on the growth of media education in Haryana is available. Therefore, telephonic interviews of the heads of the department and senior professors were also conducted to meet the objectives of the study.

Results and analysis

RQ1. What types of nomenclatures of the Courses offered by the departments and satisfaction level of the media educators?

There are three different types of media institutions in the state. About 40 % of them offer undergraduate course. Around 28.3% offer UG and PG, both types of courses and 31.7% offer UG to PhD programme.

Universities and colleges offer media courses with different nomenclatures in Haryana. About 47.5 % (28) media educators said that the nomenclature of their under-graduate course is B.A.M.C., 32.2 % (19) said it is referred to as B.A.J.M.C., 3.4% (2) said colleges are running B.A.M.C. (vocational) programme, whereas 8.5% (5) media educators responded that their college was running a post-graduate diploma. Similarly, post-graduate courses

are also run with different nomenclatures, 47.5% (28) said that they had M.A. Journalism and Mass Communication course, 15.3% (9) had M.Sc. Mass communication. Some universities are offering

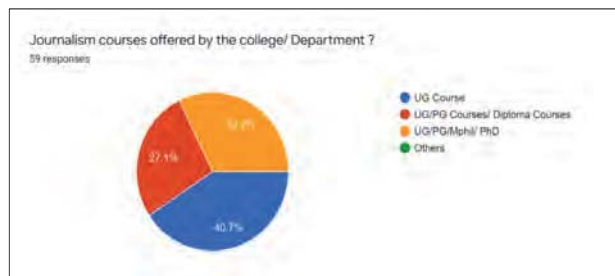


Fig. 1

M.Phil. and PhD programs as well.

About 67.8% (40) media educators' feel satisfied with the nomenclature while, 23.7% (14) do not feel satisfied and 8.5% (5) not sure about their satisfaction with regard to the nomenclature. 45.8% (27) said that

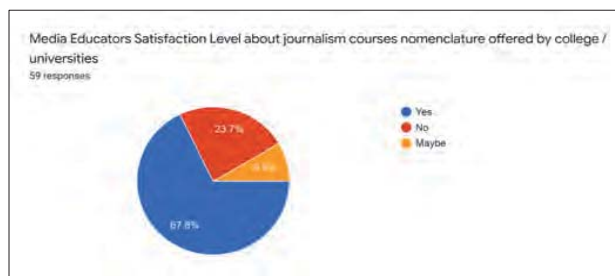


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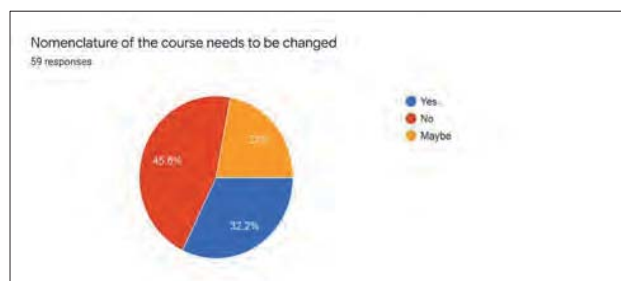


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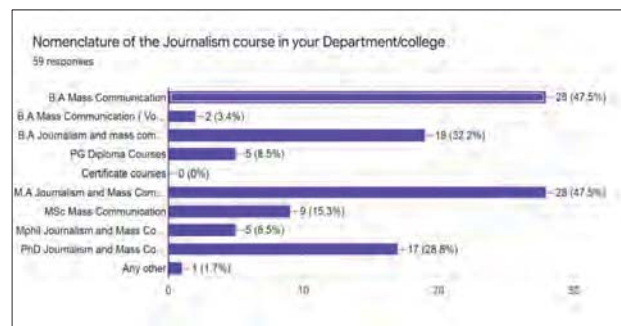


Fig. 4

there was no need to change the nomenclature, 32.2% (19) maintained that the change in nomenclature is needed and 22% (13) were not sure. Most of the nomenclatures of media programs are in consonance with the prescribed norms of the University

Grants Commission (UGC). There are different nomenclatures for the degree, and a number of terms are used interchangeably such as “Journalism” “Mass Communication” “Media” when referring to the degree (Muppidi, 2008).

RQ2. What are the infrastructure and laboratory facilities available in the media institutions?

Availability of the infrastructure is in a very dismal and pathetic condition in colleges and universities in Haryana. Around 78% of media educators said that appropriate infrastructure was not available in media departments.

There is non-availability of classrooms, computer

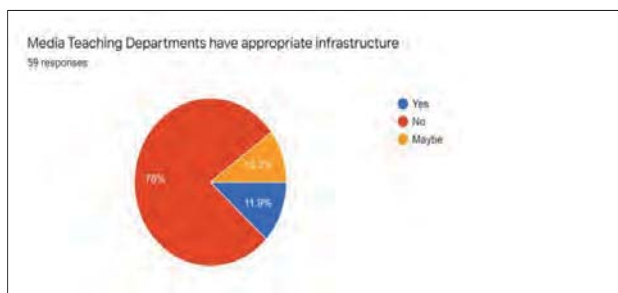


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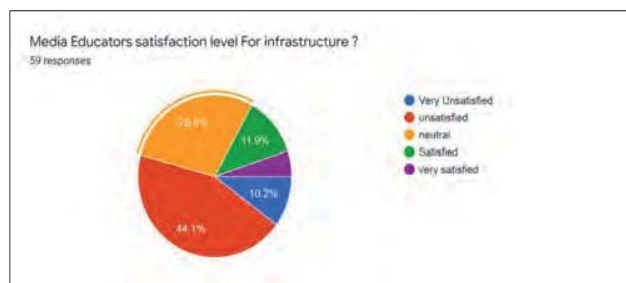


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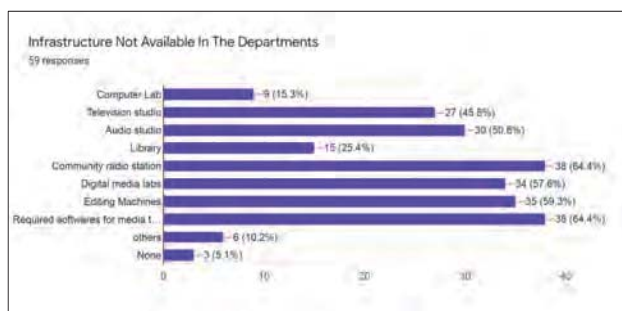


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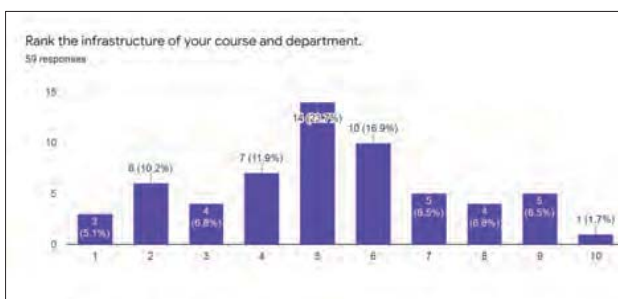


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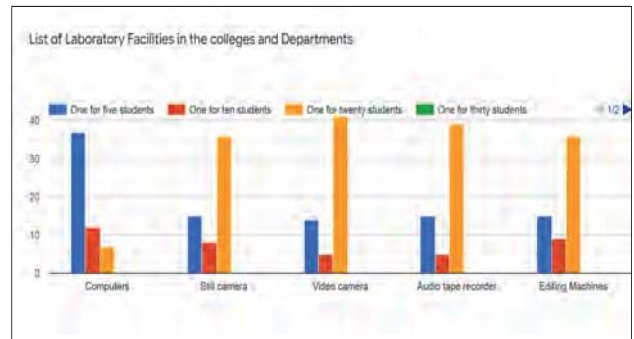


Fig. 9

labs, audio-video labs, digital labs and libraries; even books are not available in the media departments. 59.3% of media educators replied that editing machines are needed, 64.4% said that required software for the media courses were not available. Media houses are switching over to digital media but 57.6% of media educators said no digital labs were available in their departments. About 64.4% said that community radio station, 45.8% said that television studio and 50.8% said that audio equipment and 15.3% admitted that they did not have computer labs in their departments. There is a severe scarcity of literature, books, journals and newspapers and magazines in the library. Poor infrastructure, dismal condition of libraries in Indian journalism and mass communication departments are other worrisome factors (Murthy, 2011).

Out of 59 media educators, only 42.7 ranked infrastructures between 6 and 10 and 57.3 ranked between 1 and 5.

A total of 36 media educators said that though computers are available, however their availability does not commensurate with the requirement of the department. The student equipments ratio of important equipments such as DSLR camera, video camera, audio tape, recorder, video editor is not in satisfactory number in most of the departments.

RQ3. What are the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Curricula offered by the media departments?

Overlapping of subjects, theoretical in nature, lack of updated curricula, one language medium, skills gap are the major weaknesses of the media education curriculum (Gapasin *et al.*, 2008). About 49.2% of media educators said that the curriculum offered by the universities and colleges in Haryana is not well updated, 57.6% said that it was not in conformity with the needs of the industry, 25.4% said that courses were poorly designed, 30.5% said they were highly theoretical, 18.6% admitted it is repetitive and lacked comprehensiveness, 20.3% said that there was a gap in the syllabus, 40.7% maintained that different

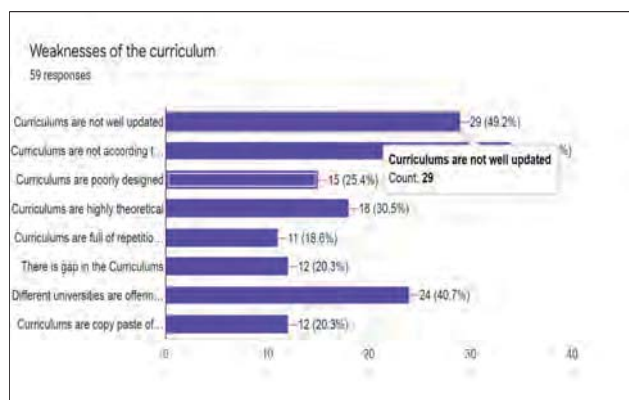


Fig. 10

universities offered different courses and 20.3% said that syllabus lacked originality and innovation.

About 37.3% of media educators also admitted that most of the curriculum is highly academic in nature, 33.9% replied well designed, 27.1% said according to the need of the industry, 25.4% said syllabuses are compared and competed well with those of other central and state universities, only 20.3% said that it is well updated, 40.7% said that there was a fine balance between theory and practice in the syllabus. This shows that media courses offered by the universities are not being updated nor do they cater to the need of the media industry. The purpose of media education is more than just understanding theory and practice; communication skill development and communicators' capacity building are essential too (Dutta & Ray, 2011 in Hirtz & Kelly, n.d.).

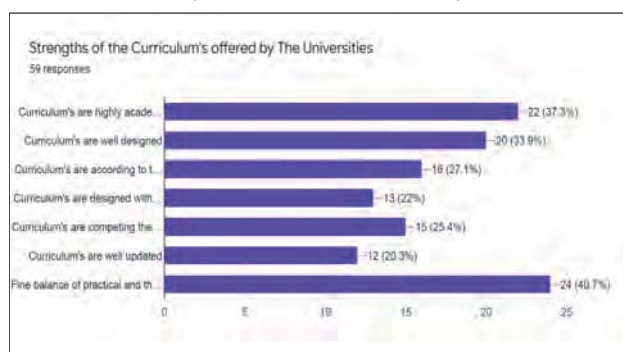


Fig. 11

RQ4. What media educators think about Quality Teaching Research in the state and what are their suggestions for future road map of media education?

Media educators were asked to rank the media teaching on the scale of one and 10 in the state. Most of the media educators maintained that the quality of media teaching was average in the state. Approx. 50.9% ranked it between one and five and 49% ranked it between six and 10. About 40.7% of media educators were unsatisfied while 20.3% were

satisfied and 39% were indifferent to the quality of teaching. Around 35% of media educators ranked their respective department on media teaching between one and five and 64.2% ranked between six and 10.

Quality of research in media education in the state

Quality research has always been a debatable issue in media academics. On quality research, 42.4% of media educators were found unconcerned

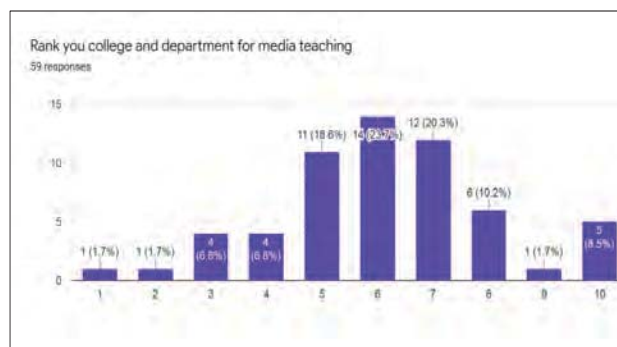


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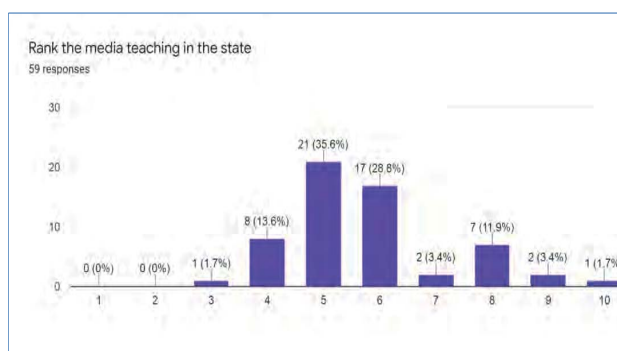


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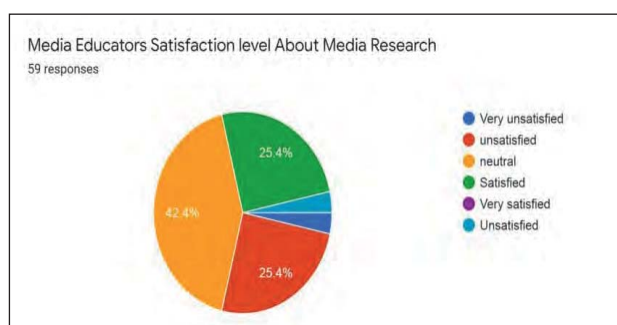


Fig. 14

or indifferent, 25.8% were unsatisfied and 28.8% were satisfied with the quality research. About 45.8% media educators ranked their department between six and 10 and 54.2% ranked between one and five for quality research.

Media educators cited different reasons for the poor quality of media research in the state.

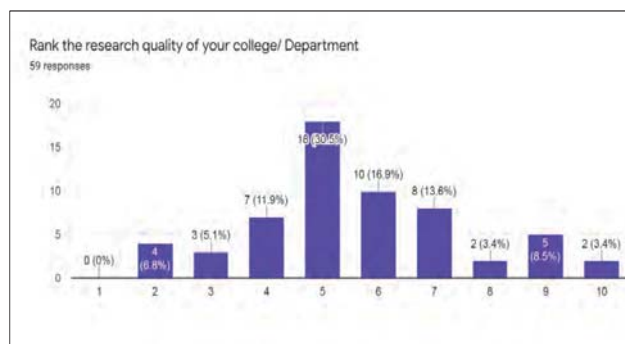


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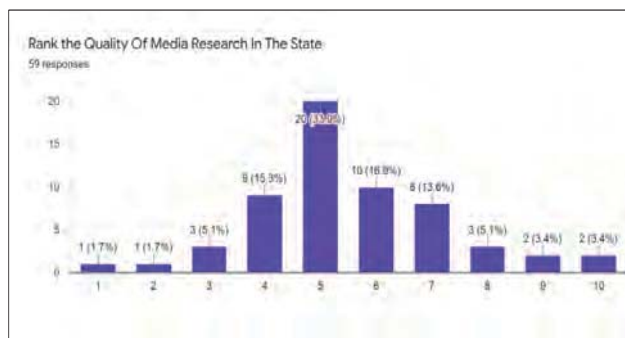


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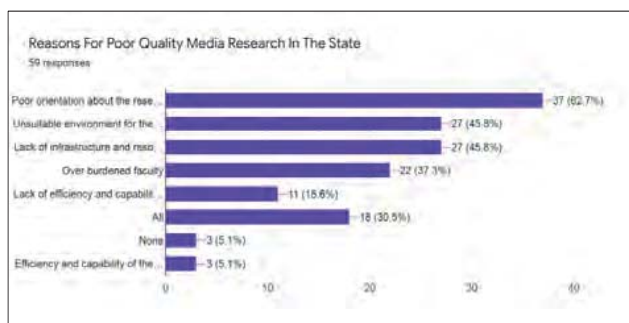


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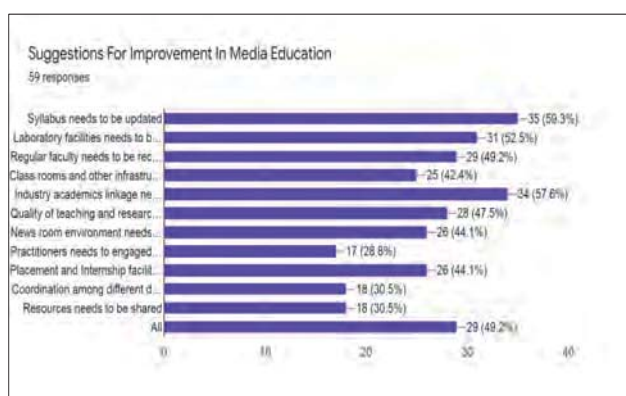


Fig. 18

62.7% said that poor orientation of the teachers, 45.8% replied research atmosphere, 45.8% said lack of infrastructure and resources, 37.3% replied overburdened faculty, 18.6% said lack of efficiency among teachers, 30.5% said all above and 5.1% said some other factors were the reason for poor quality research in the state. Media education has

to contend with umpteen numbers of issues such as the dearth of quality teachers and teaching, lack of trained teachers, absence of practical orientation, lack of quality material and syllabus. Adoption of the required technology for media education is not stringently adhered to (Bagchi & Rath, 2009). No worthwhile research is happening in journalism and mass communication in India. Lack of interest in promoting research among top players in private universities is also perceptible (Murthy, 2011).

Media educators also have suggested a road map to improve media education in the state. About 59.3% said that the syllabus needed to be updated, 52.5% said that laboratory facilities needed to be upgraded, 49.2% replied that regular appointments of the teachers were a must to bring about improvement, 42.4% said that there was an urgent need to focus on classrooms and to create sufficient infrastructure. About 57.6% said that no improvement could be possible without academic-industry linkage, 47.5% agreed that quality teaching and research called for improvement, 44.1% said classrooms should be treated as newsrooms, 28.8% said that more people from the media industry needed to be engaged for teaching, 44.1% said that placement facilities must be enhanced, 30.5% media educators said that there should be a coordination between universities and colleges to improve the quality of media education in the state. Around 30.5% held the view that resources of different departments and universities must be shared to effect improvements in the quality of media education in the state.

Conclusion

In order to improve media education in the state, designing curricula as per the needs of industry is the most important task. There should be coordination between media educators and industry people to design the best syllabus for the universities. Industry people must be included in the board of studies and other academic bodies of the media departments. There must be more focus on practicals and the creation of newsroom environment in the media departments. Field assignments must be given to the students. The curriculum upgradation can be done by incorporating more skill-oriented, technological, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary courses. Hands-on training must be given to the students; internship should be an important and compulsory component of the curriculum.

There should be uniformity in the syllabus, and a regular committee comprising media educators and professionals needs to be established. Regular faculty

must be recruited in the universities and colleges to raise the standard of media education in the state. UGC Model Curriculum Development Committee 2001 had recommended minimum laboratory facility to start any PG course in the country. After 20 years of these recommendations colleges and universities still do not comply with the condition of minimum laboratory facilities for the students. To bridge this gap, the interaction between students, media educators and media professionals is required in the state. Laboratory journals, campus bulletins, in house websites, newsletters need to be started to create newsroom environment in the classroom. Media educators and policymakers need to critically evaluate the current media education scenario in the state.

Recommendation

1. At the state level, a joint committee of media professionals and media educators needs to be created to regulate, monitor and uplift the state of media education in the state.
2. There should be a provision for one-month compulsory internship for both media educators and students during an academic session.

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Skill Gaps vs Curriculum in Media Education: An Analytical Review

SURBHI DAHIYA¹ AND ANKURAN DUTTA²

ABSTRACT

The debate around skill gaps has gained new momentum especially in the 21st century. The expansion and diversification of print media, the boom of broadcast media and deeper penetration of digital media sector has given rise to new jobs across the country. The recent major developments in the industry include heavy growth in digitisation, new generations of media like smartphones, tablets and apps etc. It has also enabled the industry in the emergence of new job roles and re-defining the existing job roles in the Media and Entertainment sector. Media and Entertainment Skill Council (MESC) states that the Media and Entertainment Industry is growing at an exponential rate but at the same time it is grappling with many skill development challenges including a huge supply-demand gap both in terms of quality and quantity of workforce. This paper aimed to identify the basic skills that are required for working in different sectors of the media industry and the qualification framework for the same. The researchers tried to find out the reasons for skill gaps between the industry and the media education in India along with developing methods to bridge these gaps. Penultimately, the researchers looked into the work of the Ministry of Skill Development at the policy level with regard to skill gaps in media and entertainment sector. This study was done with a qualitative approach. Content analysis of the media curriculum taught in different media departments in Indian universities/institutes was done. The researchers conducted in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions with eminent media professionals, bureaucrats from the ministries concerned, recruiters and academicians to achieve the objectives.

Key words: Media education, Skill-gaps, Job roles, Media industry, Skill, Curriculum

Introduction

Every year the percentage of graduates and post-graduates is increasing in the country. Although, it appears to be a positive development for our society but when in-depth analysis is done many contradictions emerge. Though, the exponential growth in the media sector in the last few years has enabled the industry to create new job roles and facilitate more jobs in the existing roles, the skill gaps among the new entrants into the media field are making them unfit for recruitment in the industry. Most of the developed economies of the world have learnt the importance of skill-based education years ago and that is why they have reached a position where they stand today as developed nations with high literacy rate and high employment. Statistically, India, still a developing country, lags behind many of the developed economies in terms of workforce which has undergone formal skill training (Mazumdar, 2008).

In India, the Government launched National Skill Development Mission in 2008 under the chairmanship of the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The target of the mission was to impart skills to 500 million

people by the year 2022. The policy aimed to develop about market information system, both at centre and the state level. For the implementation of the mission three-tier institutional structure was established in 2008 - (1) National Council of Skill Development under the chairmanship of the PM (2) The National Skill Development Coordination Board and (3) The National Skill Development Corporation. Recognising the need for skill development, Government of India, came up with National Skill Development policy in 2009 which is reviewed every five years to look into the implementation and emerging trends in national and international environment. As the whole scenario goes through big change in a gap of five years, they change their own policies accordingly (MSDE, 2020).

National Policy on Skill Development aimed to harness skill development in the country in an institutionalized manner. With this initiative, India has certainly taken a leap in skilling its workforce but still a lot is needed to be done. It was also felt that private players should be included in its initiative of skill development, hence, National Skill Development Council (NSDC) was also established in 2009 that

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took into account 31 sector skills councils (SSC). This move promoted need-based training programme across various sectors in the industry. Another body named National Skill Development Agency (NSDA) has been working with various state governments in India to help in skill-based training across the states. National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) has been instrumental in NSDA's role to combine skilling and education together and then to reach a competency level which is marked as per NSQF norms. This has led the building of 12,000 industrial training sites and 3200 polytechnic institutes across India. NSDC, in its skill gap study has stated that India needs a whopping 11.92 crore skilled manpower by the year 2022 (CEE, 2020).

Realizing the importance of skills, the newly elected government of India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi recognized the need for the establishment of a separate ministry for 'skill development' and 'entrepreneurship' on November 9, 2014 (earlier Department of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship created in July 2014) to resolve the issue of skill gap in India and to take India to a level where it can match up with developed economies of the world. The ministry is responsible for the coordination of all skill development efforts like skilling, re-skilling and up-skilling, and encouraging entrepreneurship across the country. This Ministry was set up with an agenda to skill India and impart employable skills to its growing workforce, which will be useful to get jobs internationally as well (National Policy on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015).

The National Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Policy (2015) takes one step further and targets to meet the challenge of skilling at scale with speed, standard and sustainability. The policy takes into account all skill related activities and then aligns them to common standards. It has also created sector skill councils which will further look into the work of skilling at a larger scale.

Sector Skills Councils (SSC) are industry-led bodies which are working towards increasing the efficiency and expanding the outreach of workforce involved in various sectors of our economy. These Sector Skills Councils have been responsible for the evolution of National Occupational Standards (NOS) and Qualification Packs (QPs) for various job roles across all the sectors in our economy. Each job role is to be defined as per the notification of National Skills Qualification Framework. The SSCs have the responsibility to make sure that people who are trained to NOS or QP are employed by the employers

in their sector.

National Skills Qualification Committee (NSQC) under NSQF is an umbrella committee constituted to look into the development of standards by the sector skills council. NSQC reviews all the NOSs and QPs developed by the SSCs and then they are conferred the 'National Standards Status'. Vocational training in the country has to align itself to these national standards.

The focus on new entrants in the media field is given to look into the debate between the gap in the curriculum of media courses taught in various Indian universities/institutes and rapidly changing professional needs in the media industry. Hypothetically, there is a huge gap between the curriculum taught in Indian universities and institutes and the new job roles in the different sectors of the media industry. For example, digitization calls for new skill development. One can understand that the media industry lacks skilled professionals to meet the needs of the time and technology and it adversely affects the proper functioning of media. It is important to adopt new methods and plans to train the existing media persons and upcoming journalism trainees in a systematic way.

Contextual framework

This study comes in the light of increase in the number of media related courses in various universities, opening of full-fledged media universities, regionalisation of Big Media houses and low wages to journalists, especially in vernacular media.

In 1990s, came the age of liberalisation of Indian economy and that period saw a boom in the media industry with private news channels being launched. Though, the old Doordarshan was still looming large over the landscape of TV journalism for quite a few decades but private news channels had a kind of sensationalism attached to it. Suddenly, journalists with good voice and command over the language started switching to the broadcast media. As a result, media courses were started to be taught in various Indian universities which started attracting a lot of youngsters. Most of these courses were taught by journalists themselves, who had some experience in the media industry.

At that time, very few journalists had a degree in journalism. But everything was changing so fast in the media sector because of globalisation that many media houses themselves started courses on media studies. Now, people with journalism degrees were getting priority by media houses when they applied for jobs. Due to rapidly changing scenario in media, media curriculums taught in the

universities couldn't match up with it, thus leading to skill gaps among students of media. Also, the old problem of low wages given to journalists still was a sad but true story of many media houses. In the context of above-mentioned things, this research helps to delve deeper into the problem of skill gaps in media industry.

Objectives

This study aims to identify the basic skills that are required for media industry and to identify the skill gaps in the industry along with developing methods to bridge the skill gaps. With this background, the researchers listed the following objectives:

1. To identify new job roles and various types of skills required for working in different segments of media industry as perceived by academicians, industry professionals and MESC.
2. To identify the skill gaps between the curriculum transacted/syllabus taught in media universities/institutes through content analysis and the professional requirements of the media industry.
3. To find out the reasons behind the skill gaps in the academia and the media industry.
4. To find out possible remedial measures and recommendations for bridging the gap between academia and industry and for creating a skilled workforce.

Review of Literature

The researchers tried to look into the documents, reports, case studies and articles related to skill gaps in media industry. All the media universities, organizations working on skill gaps in media industry, governmental initiatives were also looked upon.

The policy aims to develop about market information system, both at centre and the state level. For the implementation of the mission three tier institutional structures were established in 2008 which include National Council of Skill Development under the chairmanship of PM, The National Skill Development Coordination Board and, The National Skill Development Corporation. As mentioned in the report, the trends which have been sighted to impact employment and skills requirement are Growth in Channels (Digitization of cable), increase in Time Spent and Growth in Regional and Tier II, Tier III markets, Emergence of new platforms for consumption like PC's, Tablets, smart phones etc. Growth in foreign participation pursuant to more liberalization of FDI norms, Growth in Cost Competitiveness. According to 2012 report, FICCI has taken the initiative of incubating

the sector skill council in media and entertainment. It seeks to address the availability of skilled and employable resource, absence of standards, absence of infrastructure support and existence of unorganised manpower (FICCI, 2016).

MESC has conducted a skills gap study for the Media and Entertainment Sector. The report envisages the need for skill development in the media and entertainment sectors and throws light on the sector revenue, trends and developments, list of occupations, workforce demand, and skills gap pertaining to each subsector in media and entertainment. The draft report has been circulated among the key stakeholders of the industry and among the members of the Governing Council for their feedback and authentication of the facts stated in the report. National Skill Development Agency documented the "Empowerment through Skill Development" in 2014 (Media & Entertainment Skills Council, 2014).

The UK- India Education and Research Initiative Report- To support Research and Innovation in Media Institutions in India and United Kingdom was released by Centre of Media Studies (CMS) and Stirling University together. The report says that the Indian media industry is expected to grow at a rate of 18.4% per year with a size of Rs 918 billion. The report also looks into the MESC skills gap study report which states, 'there is a sizable shortage of trained professionals that possess the relevant skills for jobs within each sector' (UKIERI, 2015).

The report mentions that more than 80% of media professionals who were interviewed for skill gaps in media said that 'though the fresh graduates come with good technical skills but they lacked general awareness and writing ability', 'fresh media graduates need to be spoon fed in the initial one year and most of them rely on search engines like Google and that's why they are called Google journalists of the organization.', opined a media person, according to UKIERI (UK –India education and research initiative) report.

In 2021, FICCI along with EY (Ernst & Young Associates LLP) came out with Indian Media and Entertainment Industry report. According to this report, Experts say that Several digital trends accelerated their trajectory, fed by growth in broadband, personal devices and smart televisions. Year 2020 saw demand patterns shift as consumers actively sought alternatives and had all the time to try new things, specially during COVID and lockdown. Digital media adoption accelerated as it was Aided by the growth of digital infrastructure. Consequently, consumption patterns shifted and increased across

online news, gaming and entertainment. As the new demand-side patterns emerged M&E businesses had to accelerate some of the changes that they had started and to relook at their customer engagement models (FICCI & EI, 2021).

Today content creation and storytelling are much more diverse. They come from all parts of the country. Business models are changing majorly from B2C to D2C models. Basically, new distribution models and monetization strategies are evolving across both large and small screens. The supply side transformed as M&E companies took the opportunity to reinvent themselves. Appointment viewing on news television, gamification on e-commerce apps, circulation transformation in print companies, short video on OTT platforms, interactivity and brand solutions from radio companies were some of the many strategic shifts that were seen in 2020 (FICCI & EI, 2021).

The era will be defined by a segment-agnostic media landscape, which focuses on D2C (direct to consumer) products, and differentiated techniques for acquiring, retaining, and transacting the D2C relationship. The traditional media companies are compelled by this segment-agnostic media landscape to redefine themselves according to the evolving demands of the consumers. For example, in efforts to build end-consumer platforms, traditional broadcasters are modifying themselves as content producers in the new media platform and playing their bids on it. Newspaper companies have also acquired new strategies to create content in audio and video format and serve the needs of their communities through transactions and classifieds. D2C platforms have been launched by the Content production houses and telcos. D2C has emerged as the latest parameter to decide a media brand's worth and standing in the market (FICCI & EI, 2021).

These changes are driving a shift in monetization of content investments.

The Indian M&E sector fell by 24% to INR1.38 trillion (which is equal to US\$18.9 billion), in effect taking revenues back to 2017 levels. This fall is around INR 439 billion. The last quarter of 2020 showed a marked improvement in revenues for most segments and it is expected the M&E sector will recover 25% in 2021 to reach INR1.73 trillion (which is equal to US\$23.7 billion) and then to grow at a CAGR of 13.7% to reach INR2.23 trillion (US\$30.6 billion) by 2023 (FICCI & EI, 2021).

While television remained the largest segment, digital media overtook print, and online gaming overtook filmed entertainment segment which was really disrupted in 2020. Digital and online gaming

were the only segments which grew in 2020 adding an aggregate of INR26 billion and consequently, their contribution to the M&E sector increased from 16% in 2019 to 23% in 2020. Other segments fell by an aggregate of INR 465 billion. Largest absolute contributors to the fall were the filmed entertainment segment (INR119 billion), print (INR106 billion) and television (INR102 billion). The share of traditional media (television, print, filmed entertainment, OOH, radio, music) stood at 72% of M&E sector revenues in 2020 (FICCI & EI, 2021).

While the M&E sector usually grows faster than GDP, it also falls more than GDP degrowth, given the discretionary nature of advertising and this time the sector fell three times (3x) India's nominal GDP fall. In 2020, when the GDP fell by 8% advertising fell over 25% while the sector overall fell by 24%. Overall, in 2020, it was a 1383 billion industry whereas in 2019, it pegged at 1822 billions (FICCI & EI, 2021).

Media and Entertainment Skills Council (MESC) is an important body set up under the National Skills Development Mission, Government of India under the aegis of National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC) and promoted by FICCI. The Media and Entertainment Industry is projected to grow in the times to come. Therefore, it becomes imperative to have skilled workforce catering to the growing needs of the industry across various subsectors in terms of quality and quantity (MESC, 2020).

MESC has been formed with the following objectives of identifying skill development needs and prepare catalogue of skill types, to develop national occupational standards, to develop quality assurance framework, to develop a well-structured "Labour Market Information System", to standardize the affiliation, accreditation and certification process (MESC, 2020).

Research Methodology

At the outset, the researchers did an analysis of curriculum taught in the media departments of the Indian Universities and Institutes and examine the professional skill development needs in the media Industry. The universities and institutes have been selected on the basis of location and the subjects that they offer using purposive sampling method. The researchers chose two Universities and one Institute of National/Regional importance each from North, East, Central, West and South India (each) that specializes in Journalism/ Mass Communication. The syllabi of these universities were collected. Content analysis of the syllabi was done. On the basis of content analysis, a questionnaire was prepared. The heads of department

and Vice Chancellors of these Universities were interviewed. Some of these institutions/universities include Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism, Bhopal, Haridev Joshi University of Journalism and Mass Communication, Jaipur, and Kushabhau Thakre University of Journalism and Mass Communication at Raipur and many other institutions at State and Central level in North, East, South, West and Central India (Himgiri University, Centurion University, Xavier Institute of Communication, Lady Shri Ram College, Gauhati University, SNDT University, FLAME school of Communication, University of Calcutta and Amity University). The researchers focused on in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions with the academicians and course curriculum developers to understand the present scenario of academics related to the subject and tried to find out the skills that the students are trained in for working in the industry.

Six organisations (Network18, Business World, Pioneer, ANI News, Times Internet, Tribune Group) were chosen from each category including print, electronic and online portals. For this, the researchers adopted a semi structured interview schedule for the eminent media professionals, recruiters and HR heads of different media organizations in Delhi and Mumbai to examine the needs of the industry in terms of skills required to work in the industry. The study was focused on new job roles that have emerged in the Indian Media Industry and the qualification framework for the same.

Finally, the researchers took in-depth interviews with people associated with four public organisations associated with skill development in India. These are: the Ministry of Skill Development, Government of India; National Skill Development Agency (NSDA); National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and Media and Entertainment Skills Council (MESC).

Joint Secretaries of the Ministry and the Director General of the NSDA were interviewed to know about the government's agenda and views on the sector. On the other hand, Chief Operating Officer of NSDC and the Chief Executive Officer of the Media Entertainment skills council (MESC) were interviewed to understand the industry interface and future action plan of the council.

The results were extrapolated qualitatively through rhetorical analysis. The researchers analysed the data critically and finally made recommendations. The list of interviewees is given as Annexure A.

Skill Development Initiatives in India

As described, developed countries are able to provide a better living standard to their citizens since most of them are employed as the concerned governments have adopted the skill development approach for long. India is trailing behind in this respect. As mentioned earlier that a skill gap study has been conducted by National Skill development Cooperation in 2014, which indicates that there will be an additional net requirement of 11.92 crores skilled manpower in twenty four key sectors by 2022.

As introduced in UK-INDIA Education and Research Initiative report (UKERI, 2015) on “Support research and innovation in Media institutions in India and United Kingdom,” “Media education in India is anchored in two dominant systems of media industry and education sector, while the education sector in India is much evolved and is overseen by Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD), the media industry *per se* is not yet very organized”.

Gone are the days when any graduate who had good command over language could enter the profession of journalism. Now, even a print journalist can't switch easily to broadcast journalism they are very different mediums with their very specific demands of their own. Lack of proper training according to changing technology as well as economy is major issue in journalism/media industry. It is important to adopt new methods and plans to train the existing media persons and upcoming journalism trainees in a systematic way (UKERI, 2015).

Today, it needs a specific set of skills to be a journalist and that's why many media and journalism Institutes and Universities are emerging. At present, there are around 300 media or journalism schools at the University and non-university systems. These schools offer courses at bachelor, master and diploma level. The courses that fall under university system or State Government follow the UGC and MHRD guidelines. Whereas, non-university institutes or courses that do not fall under any authority, need not follow any specific guidelines. Most of the universities in India have been providing theoretical education for decades while very less attention is given on the practical aspect and skill development of the students. This theory-based approach of our educational institutions is making thousands of students unemployable, though there is no dearth of jobs in the market (UKERI, 2015).

With media universities coming into existence, the number of people aspiring to get jobs in big media houses is increasing and therefore unemployability

is also increasing in this field. Specially the speedy growth of private institutions in recent times, has given rise to many uncertified courses, which are being run by the media organisations of repute. Either the people choose to work at lower wages or switch their fields because most of the new jobs have come through the regionalization of the media where journalists are paid very low.

There was a time when editors of newspapers used to train the new entrants to the profession to enhance their skills as per the market demand and this process continued for decades. Now, the media industry has become more management oriented rather than editorially oriented which means that today most of the media institutions are headed by managing editors rather than just editors. Because of this change, media industry needs people who are well trained and skilled before applying for a job. In order to gain more profits, the owners of these media houses recruit those who are unskilled because they are not ready to pay as per the demands of skilled professionals. This leads to the entry of many unskilled or semi-skilled people in the media sector. Even those who are skilled are most of the times not paid appropriately and commensurately.

The landscape of media sector has undergone a paradigm shift in our country in the last two decades. Media education is still in its infancy in India which is an emerging powerhouse of the world. Skilled 'media professionals' is the need of the hour for India to grow into a developed economy and society. As India moves progressively towards becoming a 'Knowledge economy' it becomes increasingly important that it should focus on advancement of skills and these skills have to be relevant to the emerging economic environment. Skills development is indispensable to meet the various challenges and the demands.

Discussion

Almost 80% of the people interviewed for this research maintained that every sector needs people who are skilled and well-trained at least to get a job in the market. If a person has theoretical understanding of the subject in addition to his/her skills then it becomes an added advantage both for the person and the employer. The sector skill councils play a significant role in bridging the training and need, guiding to develop the curricula based on the industry-link. Media and Entertainment Skills Council (MESC) has been setup under the National Skills Development Mission, Government of India under the aegis of National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC) and promoted by FICCI, to address the workforce skill development needs of Media & Entertainment

Industry covering the important industries like Film, Television, Animation, Gaming, Digital, Radio, Print, OOH and Advertising. Till now 64 new job roles in media and entertainment sector has been approved while 23 job roles have been defined as per National Occupational Standards (MESC, 2021).

Media and entertainment sector is not as unorganized as it appears to be. For example, Film Employee Federation of South India and similar other organizations situated in Mumbai which has close to 1 lakh membership. Film Employee Federation of South India alone has members of around 25,000. Only the members of these organizations are suited to get various benefits of the industry (The Hindu, 2020).

National Occupational Standards (NOS) specify the standard of performance an individual must achieve when carrying out a function in the workplace, together with the knowledge and understanding they need to meet that standard consistently. According to Qualification Pack (QP), media curriculum can be defined and syllabus can be derived. Essentially NOS are benchmarks of good practice. Under the first category, i.e. NOS in public view the job roles that are covered are that of Hair dresser, Make-up artist, Prosthetics, VFX rendering/lighting artist, Vfx roto and Paint Artist, Vfx Editor and Coordinator. Under the second category, i.e. NOS under industry validated some of the job roles and still some under consideration like Sales director, Sales manager, Sales executive, Sales Coordinator, Traffic Coordinator, Advertising operations coordinator, Account Director, Account Executive and Voice over artist. In the draft NOS, the third category, includes job roles like Editor-in-Chief, Desk Editor, Correspondent, Correspondent- Tv and Radio, Senior Correspondent, Assignment Editor, Director of Photography, Camera operator, Assistant Cameraman, Broadcast Operations Director, Broadcast Operations Engineer, Broadcast Operations Manager, Ingest Executive, MCR Engineer, OB Engineer, Lighting Director, Gaffer, Lighting Technician, Marketing Head, Marketing Manager, Marketing Executive (MESC, 2021).

Views of Government

In order to identify qualitative skill gaps and in order to help develop a skilled workforce, the researchers interviewed three Joint Secretaries of the Ministry of Skill Development, Govt of India (Sri Pawan Aggarwal, Smt. Jyotsna Sitling and Sri Rajesh Aggarwal) and also found out the reasons behind the skill gaps in the country, especially in the media industry. The biggest challenge is that demand is very less in our country as compared to other countries

like Korea, UK, Germany etc. Emphasizing on the challenges, they said that media space is highly fragmented. It has 7-8 verticals and each space is different thereby creating difficulty in standardising things (P. Aggarwal, Personal Communication, June 03, 2015).

Another important point came out that the journalists especially of vernacular media appear to be unskilled and changes are required at implementation level. More focused attention on skill development is required in the country as 54% of its population is under 25 years of age and the aspirations of the youth to seek a better job are rising. Even the expectations of employers are growing and they are looking for an efficient, well-trained workforce. Thus, the Government of India notified the formation of Department of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship on 31st July 2014 and created full-fledged ministry on 9th November 2014 (ibid).

Without skills, the person is just good for nothing. The new scheme “Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna (PMKVY)” was also mentioned, which is the programmatic part and flagship outcome-based skill training scheme of the newly established MSDE. It also encourages standardization in the certification process and initiate a process of registry of skills. It will be implemented through Public Private and Public-Public partnership and NSDC will be implementing agency for this scheme. The scheme will also provide monetary incentives for successful completion of market driven skill training and certification (J. Sitling, Personal Communication, June 03, 2015).

In India, educated unemployment is higher than uneducated unemployment. As cited by a Jt Secretary of the Ministry Sri Rajesh Aggarwal, in Germany where after high school nearly 70% of the students are put through vocational training and nearly 30% receive higher education because society doesn't need too much of highly educated people because there are not as many jobs to match their calibre. The officer then emphasized on having a vertical pathway and providing that mainly to the unemployed youth (R. Aggarwal, Personal Communication, June 03, 2015).

Views of the Industry

Various HR heads, industry interactions, talks with eminent journalists and media professionals (as mentioned at the methodology section) brought the following points to the forefront-

- The skill gaps in India are a major cause of unemployability, especially among the educated youth of the country. In terms of skill gaps of all the sectors of Indian economy together, only 2% of the population can be said to be skilled in their work, when compared with other countries, skill gap in India is too huge.
- Indian society has a major role to play to change its attitude regarding skill-based training. In this society, theory-based education is considered to be the only good thing for a student while vocational courses are looked down upon and in public perception these courses are fit for only those who don't succeed in formal education.
- Today, media sector especially the vernacular media is facing a grave situation vis-à-vis the kind of content they are producing. The reason attributed to it is the entry of unskilled and semi-skilled workforce into the profession because of less number of media graduates working in the vernacular media, profit oriented approach of the media managers who want to get their work done for a meagre amount of money from non-professionals and improper training given to those working in these media organizations.
- Even among those who are recruited from media schools, the quality of candidates and their technical skills are often not up to the mark. Often, they have theoretical/conceptual knowledge but lack practical training and an understanding of how to apply these concepts to their work.
- Wages and employment for stage-hands are governed by trade unions that do not have any minimum certification or criteria required for enrolment. As such, the quality of workforce is not standardized and output is low. In some cases, employees are not trained to use the latest equipment.
- Due to budget constraints, the quality of equipment being used by the industry is usually not as per international standards. This further reduces the quantum and quality of output per person.
- The biggest skill gap among the fresh media graduates is their writing ability, rechecking, cross-checking and double-checking the facts before filing a story. Both journalism and non-journalism graduates have this deficiency. Many recruiters do not treat new entrants in media sector as “finished products”.
- Candidates who possess multi-tasking ability bring value addition to their existing set of skills. A HR person of a media house said that it takes nearly 4-6 months for a new entrant in the media field to get settled in his/her job. He emphasized that command over language both verbally and literally is necessary for a journalist to deal with

day-to-day situation in an effective and accurate manner. It was also mentioned that most of fresh media graduates lack this skill which needs to be bridged.

- There is a wide gap between course curriculum taught in Indian Media Universities and professional skills needed in media. Practical news environment exposure, whether reporting or at the desk; to work within deadlines; imparting of updated information etc. are various important skills required to work in media.
- No one can teach writing at the industry level, rest everything can be taught. Those who can't develop their writing skills should give up the idea of doing journalism.
- There is a huge 'aspirational gap' between what people aspire to produce in industry and what they are producing. An estimate on the number of people employed in Media and Entertainment sector, today more than 5.5 lakh people are engaged.
- Interaction with industry professionals also established that as the digital consumption of the content is on the rise and consumers have moved beyond the traditional TV sets and newspapers for media and are increasingly using modern electronic devices, it has resulted in increased demand for skilled professionals such as programmers, app developers, software testers, content curators, copy writers, bloggers etc. Other fields where skilled workforce is required are character designers, key frame animators, 3D modelers and layout artists etc. With the growth of TV channels, skill intensive sectors of film like animation, gaming, VFX, the demand for qualified talent is only set to escalate.
- The media schools and departments should create an army of skilled 'para-media professionals' who will be able to operate, maintain and service the machines and equipment that have become an essentiality of Media today. Journalists and media persons should be exclusively trained for intellectual and creative activities. For example, while reporting in field a cameraperson and the reporter perform different generic functions. Both need not be trained similarly. Moreover, their roles need to be well-defined.
- There are huge gaps in terms of technology and content which need to be managed at the level of education. There is a dire need for people who are equipped to manage the technologies of computing, imaging, telecommunication and mobile telephony. Marrying technology with content production, distribution and delivery is a great challenge before media educators. Content production is an intellectual and purely academic study. Basic theories of neurology, sociology and cognitive resonance play a major role to comprehend and plan human communication.
- Media is both a professional and vocational course. For professional media persons theoretical perspectives from social sciences as also from the fields like neurosciences have to be incorporated into their studies. For skilled persons, electronics and mechanical engineering become essential. For media people who are into content production, is to be able to think out of the box and they should be conscious of the impact of word and picture on the minds of audiences. Attitudinally, media professionals should be trained to have an inbuilt ability to distinguish between what is in public good and what can create divisions. They should be ultimately trained to create content that unites humanity and prevents the expansion of inequalities.
- The Medical Education Model to be adopted for media education for better professional exposure. There should be standardisation in media education for which a regulatory mechanism should be evolved. UGC should reframe its norms for teacher's eligibility to attract competent professionals into teaching. This will bridge the gap between theory and practice.
- Journalism at its highest level is a Profession as it requires a detailed and broad understanding of a number of issues. eg. perspective on editorial side that requires understanding of human angle. But since it is practised at many levels and dispersed at various levels, it may be considered vocational

Views of Media Educators

The researchers have also looked into the universities/institutions that are running media and allied courses in the country and interviewed the heads of select departments and Universities. This has been done to assess the percentage of practical portion in the curriculum of media studies in these institutions which helped in finding out the gaps in what is taught in classrooms and what is needed in the market. The researchers also compared it with National Occupation Standards defined by NSDC and examined the professional skill development needs in media Industry by interviewing academicians and industry professionals. From the interviews with Media Educators have highlighted the following important points-

at some levels. The media schools should have close ties with the industry and be more vocationally oriented than formal education, but at the same time we believe in all round education in equipping students for higher roles in life. Skill Development alone, can narrow the role to a part skill, therefore we cater to a broader role in education.

- Media students in present environment have to be multi-skilled, they should be able to write well suitable to different platforms: print, broadcast, online and mobile. They should also be able to take photographs and shoot and edit video by using professional equipment as well as mobile. Even if they go to advertising and public relations these skills are handy in today's media environment. The more skills they master, the better will be their employability and efficiency. They should also master use of big data and should have understanding of their audiences and should be able to relate to them.
- Universities are very thin in conducting and promoting research. No tradition of modern in-depth methodology like semiotics, semiology, discourse analysis, textual analysis, mapping media and studying emerging patterns are done. Media persons should have all the basic skills required to enter the media industry. Some of them being, articulation, sense of purpose, meticulousness, diligence and rigour.
- Media Education is a professional course. However, the UGC or AICTE treats it as a non-professional study. For UGC or AICTE, it is not on par with MBA, Pharmacy, and the like which have a higher fee structure and rigor of training.
- Another major challenge faced today in the country is the public perception that views skilling to be the last resort for the students who did not qualify for the formal academic system. Interaction with industry and academia revealed that the vocational training programmes are not upto the mark when compared with industry expectations. Moreover, there is no tendency to treat skilled and unskilled persons at par. This supposed 'stigma' associated with skill development has resulted in low enrolments in vocational education courses. Consequently, industry often says that we do not have enough skilled people at functional level to build bridges, lay pipelines or work in factories.
- Media studies is a combination of both vocational and professional study as it not only prepares students for specific trade earning areas like

photography, videography, audio engineering etc but also classifies as academic programme which is interdisciplinary in nature like knowledge of accounting, business administration and much more.

Summary of the findings

The following are the findings from the discussions:

- Media sector is suffering from a huge skill gap, especially in the vernacular media
- Media education is not up to the demand of the industry
- Practical aspect of media education is appreciated more in the industry than the theoretical understanding of the subject.
- There is a need for opening up of more media institutions in the country and integrate skill development in the curriculum.
- Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship came out as a result of the realization by the government to tackle the situation of skill gaps in the country but media and entertainment sector has not been given much importance in the scheme of things as of now.
- Media sector is expanding rapidly according to all the studies and reports that have come out in the recent years and the demand for skilled workforce is increasing.
- There is a need for training the trainers themselves so that skill gaps in various sectors of the economy could be effectively bridged.
- Most of the new entrants in the field lack good command over language both orally and literally.
- India is lagging behind both developed and developing economies as there is a huge overall skill gaps in the economy.
- Skill gaps directly affect the condition of economy in our country.
- Producing skilled workforce in Media and Entertainment sector is the need of the hour.
- The issues facing media education relate to theory versus practice and the quality of faculty.
- Media education in India is facing many problems including diversity of media courses taught in the country.
- Curriculum should be updated regularly to keep pace with the industry and while designing the syllabus, needs of the industry should be taken care of. A new model curriculum needs to be written, keeping in mind the changes in the industry. Skills and technical know-how should also be integrated.

- Industry professionals feel that the new entrants are not skill oriented and not fully equipped for the present job roles reflecting a disconnect between industry and academia.
- The most important skill that senior academicians and industry professionals emphasized was on “writing skills” and “language fluency”.
- There should be formal and regular interface between academics and industry.
- An accrediting body should be created that should look into the challenges and problems of media education.
- Research done by Department and media institutes is very thin and does not connect to the requirements of the industry.
- Due to lot of disparity in terms of course content, content delivery, teaching and training of students in universities, departments and colleges and institutes, there is a need for standardization of journalism education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following are a few recommendations:

- First and foremost, the researchers recommend to create a demand for skilling in consonance with the demand of the industry and connect the supply of skilled media professionals with the media industry.
- As a public perception, skill sector is considered to be lower than mainstream academics. To bridge the skill gaps, skill certification should be equated with mainstream education.
- Also, certification should be linked with quality assurance framework like NSQF.
- Policy makers should recognise the fact that mainstream education in order to be complete has to have a skill integration programme attached to it. Unless there is a backward integration of skills into mainstream education, both mainstream education and skills education will suffer.
- Mainstream education and skill education should acknowledge training in mother tongue. English education should not be the high end criteria for this country.
- MESIC should promote formal skill development through a PPP model. Rope in private players to invest in infrastructure and equipment. MESIC should create training capacities through credible media institutes.
- To promote the interest and awareness levels of students, Media and Entertainment related courses should be introduced at the secondary school level.
- As developed economies have stressed on vocational training to majority of its population, India should try to move in the same direction as this would help in providing much more employment opportunities as well as make many people entrepreneurs who instead of looking for jobs will generate jobs. Skilling must give rise to a dynamic entrepreneurial economy.
- Vocational training should be made aspirational for youth and comparable in standards with mainstream education, so that employers can understand the value of skilled manpower.
- Incentives should be given to students who successfully complete their certification.
- Skilling should be in line with changes in digitization, new technologies and convergence in the media industry.
- Emphasis should be on training part in every curriculum because without training the skills won't get developed. It should be cautioned that though theoretical understanding of the subject is very necessary all the media institutions should not teach an outdated syllabus. Another thing which is important is train the trainers themselves because many a times it is seen that those who are in-charge of training people are themselves cut off from the rapidly changing demands of the industry.
- The youngsters should be encouraged to keep working within the industry along with their education to get a sense of what is needed of them in the market when they go out to work on a full-time basis. The government should also play a part in opening new internship slots to give the youngsters an overview of the working in government sector. The government should also encourage various universities to open up media courses.
- Skill development must match up with the global and national standards and people should be trained to be skilled in their jobs but they should also be multi-skilled because a multi-skilled person is the requirement of this age.
- Flagship and niche programmes should be started at different levels to meet the demands of the media industry.
- Create an online data for aggregating demand and supply of skills to help align efforts towards bridging the existing skill gaps.
- Employers, industry professionals and academicians should join hands in creating curriculum that meets the demand of the industry

and establish national standards.

- Recognise the value of on-the-job training, by making apprenticeships in actual work environments an integral part of all skill development trainings and mainstream education.

Conclusion

The researchers conclude that India is suffering from a huge skill gap at this time. Most of its educated youth are not skilled enough to find a job which matches their aspirations. The employers are frustrated with the kind of unskilled people who come to apply for job. Apparently, most of the job providers are not finding skilled people to get the task done. Although, there is a dearth of job market but the picture is not as gloomy as it appears.

This is reflected by the fact that those who possess some technical skills do find a way out to get a decent salary or payment using their skill even if they are not having a good theoretical background while on the other hand people with a formal degree are finding it difficult to get a job. The situation is very much the same in media sector too.

The media sector which is expanding in India is facing serious problems regarding bridging the gap what is taught in media courses across universities and institutions across the country and what is the demand in the profession. The media education needs to be more of a skill-oriented thing rather than being just theoretically oriented.

Fresh media graduates should have good command over the language in which they are going to practice their business as well they should be well equipped with the use of technology. Those who lack these skills are not appreciated in the industry. Generally, media houses do train the new entrants into the profession to get them adjusted to the demands of profession. The researchers also conclude that journalism as a profession should be made a licensed practice like law or medicine and a proper regulatory body should be made to regulate the profession as bodies like Bar Council of India or Medical Council of India do to their respective professions

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship should take more initiatives vis-à-vis policy making for the media sector ensuring that it gets implemented so that skill gaps could be reduced. The trainers in the field of media need to be trained themselves to impart quality education and training who are aspiring to become journalists. The number of these trainers should be increased and with their help more universities should start courses on media education and follow standardized syllabus.

Finally, the most important thing is to make a connect between media institutions/ universities with the industry so that students get proper exposure during the time of their study itself so that by the time they are done with their studies they possess skills rather than just degrees under their belt.

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Sh. Lakshman Roy, Senior Journalist, Network 18 (online)
Ms. Yamini Sharma, Business World
Sh. O P Gupta, HR head, Pioneer

Annexure 1

List of the names of experts who were interviewed

Ministry Officials

Sh. Arun Bhatnagar, Chief Operating Officer, NSDC
Sh. Anukumoda Ramesh, Chief Executive Officer, Media and Entertainment Skills Council (MESC) (*MESC office, FICCI*)
Sh. Pawan Aggarwal (IAS), Joint Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)
Ms. Jyotsna Sitling, Joint Secretary, MSDE, Govt. of India and Director NSDA
Sh. Rajesh Aggarwal, IAS, Joint Secretary, MSDE

Media Industry Professionals and HR Heads

Sh. Sailesh Goyal, Times Internet Limited
Sh. Ashok Dixit, News Editor, ANI
Sh. Jaibans Singh, HR Head, ANI news services
Sh. Paranjay Guha Thakurta, Senior Journalist
Sh. Vipul Mudgal, Senior Journalist

Media Educators/ Academicians

Prof. B K Kuthiala, Former Vice-Chancellor, Makhnall Chaturvedi National University of Journalism and Communication, Bhopal
Prof. Sachidanand Joshi, Former Vice-Chancellor, Kushabhau Thakre University of Journalism, Raipur
Sh. Sunit Tandon, Former DG, Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC)
Dr. Pradeep Thomas, Professor (Indian Origin), University of Queensland, Australia
Dr. C B Pattanayak, Professor and Director, Institute of Knowledge Societies, Bhuvneshwar
Dr. S Periyannayagi, Professor, Xavier Institute of Communications, Mumbai
Dr. Vartika Nanda, HOD, Journalism Department, Lady Shri Ram College, University of Delhi
Dr Mira Desai, Head, SNDT University, Mumbai
Dr. Tapati Basu, Professor Former Head, University of Calcutta, Kolkata



Coverage of Covid-19 Pandemic in India by Western Media: A Study of the Opinion of Indian Mediapersons

PRAMOD KUMAR¹

ABSTRACT

The awareness generated among people by media across the world played a key role in saving billions of lives during the Covid-19 pandemic. How the Indian media covered the Covid-19 pandemic is known to all Indians who follow the media regularly, but how the foreign media, particularly a section of the Western media covered it is known to very few people in India. Whatever they could know was through the stories published by some Indian newspapers citing the reports or articles published by the Western media. A close look at the Western media's coverage of the Covid-19 pandemic in India in March 2020 shows that it began with the conventional premise that India will not be able to cope with coronavirus infection. The same mindset continued to dominate in a section of the Western media till mid-August 2020 when the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his Independence Day Speech on August 15, 2020, announced that "today, there is not one but three coronavirus vaccines under development in the country. As soon as these vaccines get a green signal from scientists, the country is prepared to manufacture them on a large scale." After this announcement, a section of the Western media was noticed targeting India's preparedness to fight the pandemic. They not only questioned and ridiculed the Indian preparedness against the pandemic, but also raised questions over the quality of vaccines being administered in India and the Indian vaccination drive. Whether it was because some Western countries found the huge Indian market for their Covid-19 vaccines slipping from their hands or whether it was for any other reason, needs a serious thought. This study has been conducted to assess the opinion of Indian journalists, media educators and media students on the coverage of Covid-19 pandemic by Western media and it found that majority of respondents (82%) are not convinced with the reporting of Western media on Covid-19 pandemic in India.

Key words: Covid-19 Pandemic, Foreign Media, Western Media, Indian Media, Agenda Setting, IIMC Study on Western Media

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic, caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), claimed 4,565,483 lives globally as on September 6, 2021 (WHO, 2021). The figure of casualties in India stands at 4,40,752 as on the same date (MyGov, 2021). Obviously, media played a key role in sensitising people to follow all kinds of precautions, which definitely paid dividends. The Indian media covered the pandemic in its own manner, while the foreign media, particularly a section of the Western media, covered it with its own narratives and premises. The researchers who kept a close watch on the coverage of Covid-19 pandemic in India by the Western media claim that the Western media covered the pandemic in India with its pre-set narratives about India, and the stories fit to that narrative were given prominence (Upadhyaya, 2021). A story carried by *The Guardian* on March 23, 2020 claimed that the poor countries like India will not be able to curb the coronavirus (Malik, 2020). On May 25, 2020 when India and China were having real trouble in Galwan Valley and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a meeting of

the Chief of Defence staff, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force the very same day, that news did not find mention in any of the leading Western newspapers the next day. What found the prominent space was a small-time crime story from a Kerala village, where one husband put a cobra in his wife's room and the wife died because of cobra bite (Simcox, 2020). *The Daily Mail*, *The Daily Mirror*, *South China Morning Post*, *The Guardian*, *Gulf News*, etc carried that story as prominently as if it was one of the biggest stories from India on that day. Another story is related to hydroxychloroquine, which was much discussed in May 2020. The then US President Donald Trump was getting hydroxychloroquine and other countries were also asking it from India. On May 23, 2020, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) permitted the use of hydroxychloroquine. At that time first wave of Covid was at its peak in Europe, Britain and Italy. So, hydroxychloroquine from the news point of view was an important story at that time. Another important news of the same day was about migrant labourers in India. Many media outlets including *BBC*, *The New York Times*, etc. were talking about that. The

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very same day Government of India declared that all the migrant labourers will be transported free to their native places. Four lakh migrant labourers were transported by the Indian Railways free of cost. But none of the Western newspapers which were heavily discussing the migrant labour issue, devoted any space to this news. They had the cobra story.

These are the classical examples how a section of the Western media covered the Covid-19 pandemic in India. Some reports were found even violating the journalism ethics that the Western media proudly claim to follow while covering the happenings in their respective countries. No doubt, no specific opinion should be built about any section of the Western media on the basis of some stories. Keeping this fact in mind, the Department of Outreach Activities in the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) in June 2021 started a systematic study of nine major newspapers of the West—*The New York Times* (New York, USA), *The Wall Street Journal* (New York, USA), *Time*, (New York, USA), *The Washington Post* (Washington, USA), *The Daily Mail* (London, UK), *The Telegraph* (London, UK), *The Guardian* (London, UK), *BBC Online* and *The Financial Times* (London, UK). The IIMC's Department of Outreach Activities gathered the opinion of Indian mediapersons i.e. journalists, media educators, media scholars and media students on the coverage of Covid pandemic in India by Western media through an online survey in June 2021. The findings of that survey formed the dataset for this paper.

Methodology

A questionnaire titled '*A Study of the Coverage of Covid-19 Pandemic in India by Western Media*' was developed and was shared through Google Form, which is one of the most convenient methods of collecting data as far as diverse respondents are concerned. The forms were shared with a random sample of journalists, media educators, media scholars and media students. Revealing their identity was, however, optional for the respondents. Demographic details of the respondents were collected in the first section of the questionnaire. Next, 15 questions of mixed types—short answers and multiple choice—sought information on the questions to assess the respondents' reach to Western media i.e. where did they get the international news from, and finally, what they think of the coverage of the Covid-19 pandemic in India by the Western media. The last question in the questionnaire was open ended where the respondents were free to make any comment on the coverage of Covid-19 pandemic by the Western Media. From June

16 to 30, 2021 a total of 538 responses from media professionals and students were received. Since some respondents submitted their responses more than once, a total of 529 responses formed the final data set for analysis.

Demographic details of the respondents

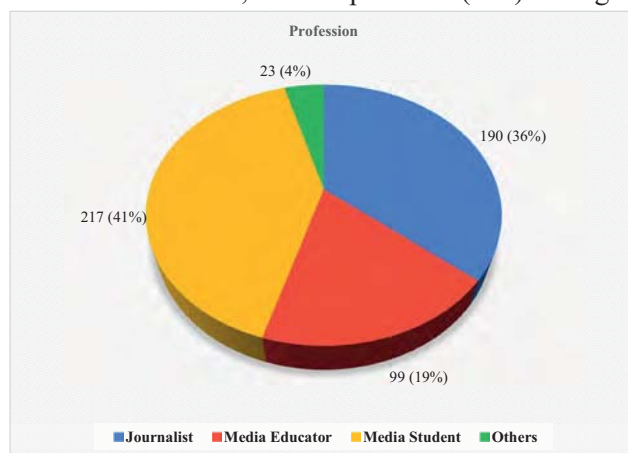
In demographic details the information including email id, name, phone number, gender (male/female/prefer not to say), the age group they belonged to (18-30, 31-40, and 41 years and above), and profession (journalist/media educator/media student) was gathered. The next set of questions were specific to journalist respondents and included questions such as name of media house/media institution they work for, type of their media organisation (print, TV, digital), their current designation, and language in which their publication or TV channel publishes or broadcast news. The survey made it optional for the respondents to reply to questions regarding their personal details such as name, phone number, and name of media house/media institution they worked for so that they did not feel uncomfortable while taking the survey. The survey received 529 responses including 190 from journalists, 99 from media educators, 217 from media students, and 23 from others which included journalists-cum-media educators, journalist-cum-media students, PR professionals, freelancers and other media professionals (Figure-1).

Results

Following is the demographic information of respondents:

(Figure-1)

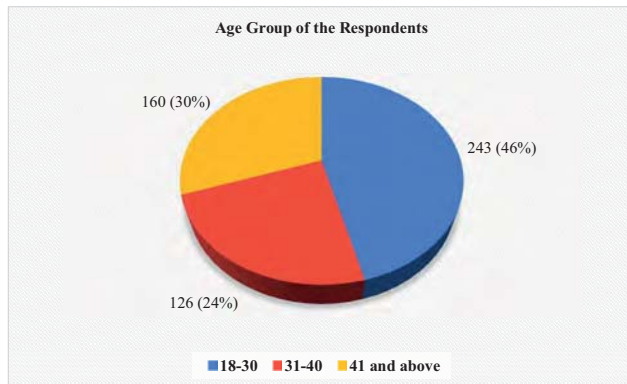
Of the total 529, most respondents (243) belonged



to the age group of 18-30 years (46%), followed by 126 between 31 and 40 years (24%) and 160 (30%) in the 41 years and above groups (Figure-2).

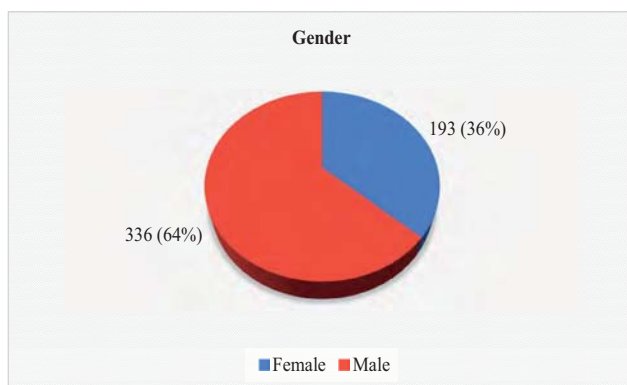
(Figure-2)

The survey received responses from 336 male



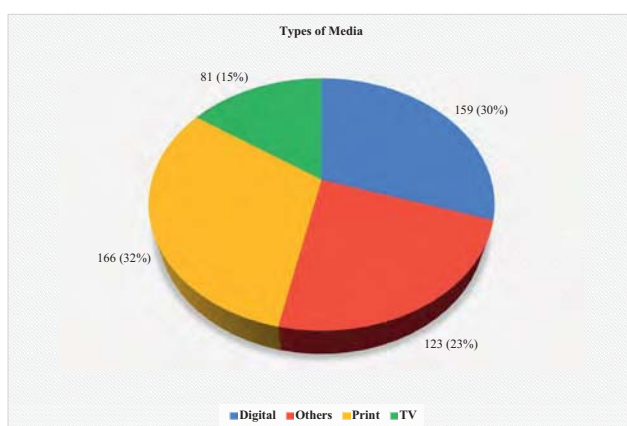
(64%) and 193 female (36%) respondents (Figure-3).
(Figure-3)

The respondents belonged to various types of



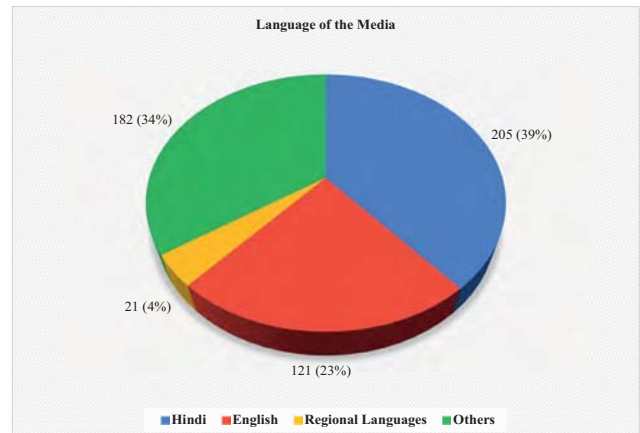
media organisations including 166 (32%) from print, 159 (30%) from digital, 81 (15%) from TV news channels, and 123 (23%) from other types of media organisations (Figure-4).

(Figure 4)



In terms of language, the respondents were 205 (39%) from Hindi, 121 (23%) from English, and 21 (4%) from regional languages. 182 (34%) respondents did not mention their primary language they speak/work with (Figure-5).

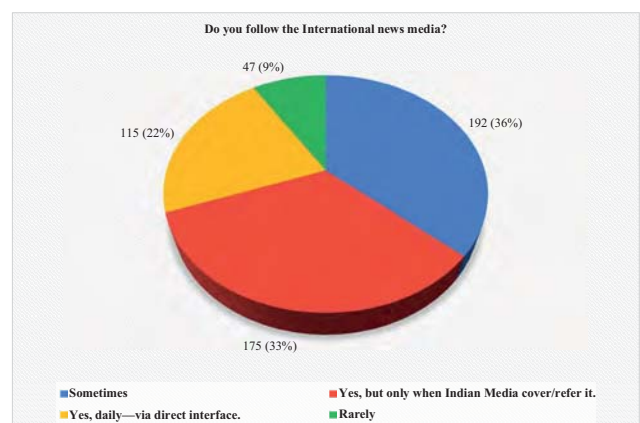
(Figure 5)



Question No. 1: Do you follow the international news media?

On this question, 529 responses were received. The options and percentage of the responses received were (a) Yes, but only when Indian media cover/refer to it 175 (33%), (b) Yes, daily—via direct interface 115 (22%), (c) Sometimes 192 (36%), and (d) Rarely 47 (9%) (Figure-6).

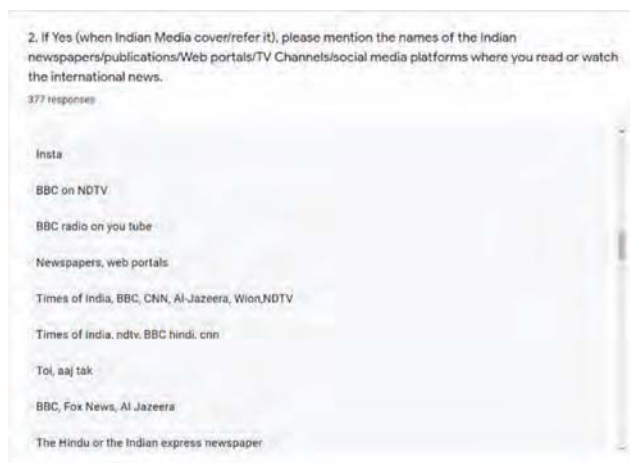
(Figure 6)



Question-2: If Yes (only when Indian media cover/refer to it), please mention the names of the Indian newspapers/publications/Web portals/TV channels/social media platforms where you read or watch international news.

Being an optional question, a total of 377 responses were received to this question. The names of the Indian newspapers/publications/web portals/TV channels/social media platforms where the respondents individually read or watched the international news included several media houses such as NDTV, TV9, News 18, Lokmat Samachar, Hindustan Times, The Times of India, The Himalayan Times, ABP, ET, Business Standard, The Hindu, The Indian Express, Amar Ujala, Dainik Jagran, AajTak, ABP News, The Print, Quint, and Newslaundry among others.

(Image: Screenshot of some responses on Question No-2)



Question-3: If Yes (via direct interface), please mention the names of the Western newspapers/publications/web portals/TV channels/social media platforms you read or follow.

Being a non-mandatory question, a total of 323 responses were received, which listed many media outlets including *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post*, *Observer*, *The New York Times*, *CNN*, *BBC*, *Reuters*, *Time*, *Dawn*, *Reuters*, *AP*, *AFP*, *Xinhua*, *Gulf news*, *Daily Mail UK*, *DW*, *Al Jazeera*, *Star News*, *Huffington Post*, *Fox*, etc.

(Image: Screenshot of some responses on Question No.-3)



Question-4: Which Indian media house(s) refer to international media frequently? (You can name more than one)

The question received 529 responses, in which the respondents mentioned different media organisations including *Dainik Bhaskar*, *BBC India*, *The Times of India*, *India Today*, *India TV*, *The Hindu*, *ANI*, *Dainik Jagran*, *WION*, *The Indian Express*, *The Print*, *AajTak*, *CNN IBN*, *NDTV*, *Zee News*, *The Hindustan Times*, *The Economics Times*, *The Telegraph*, *India News*, *Raj Express Group*, *The Muslim Mirror*, *News 24*, etc.

(Image: Screenshot of some responses on Question

No.-4)

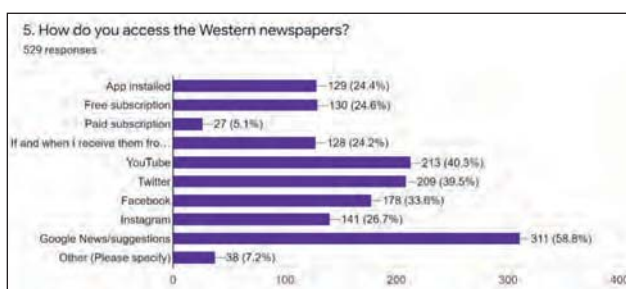


Question-5: How do you access Western newspapers?

All 529 respondents answered this question. This was a question where respondents were asked to select one or multiple answers. Following were the responses (in percentage) received from the respondents (Figure-7).

- App installed: 129 (24.4%)
- Free subscription: 130 (24.6%)
- Paid subscription: 27 (5.1%)
- If and when I receive them from someone via WhatsApp, etc: 128 (24.2%)
- YouTube: 213 (40.3%)
- Twitter: 209 (39.5%)
- Facebook: 178 (33.6%)
- Instagram: 141 (26.7%)
- Google News/suggestions: 311 (58.8%)
- Other (Please specify): 38 (7.2%)

(Figure 7)



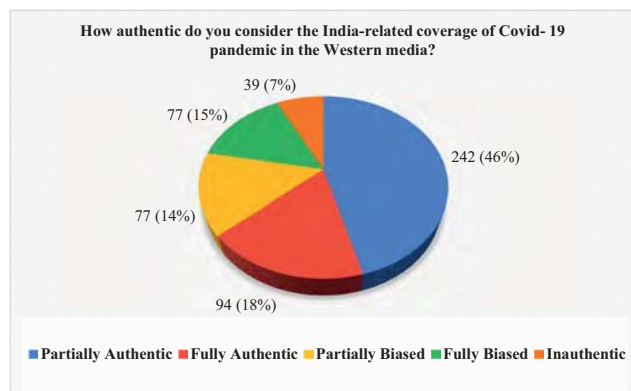
Question-6: How authentic do you consider the India-related coverage of Covid-19 pandemic in the Western media?

Following were the responses and their percentages received from the respondents (Figure-8).

- Fully Authentic: 94 (18%)
- Partially Authentic: 242 (46%)
- Partially Biased: 77 (14%)
- Fully Biased: 77 (15%)

- Inauthentic: 39 (7%)

(Figure 8)

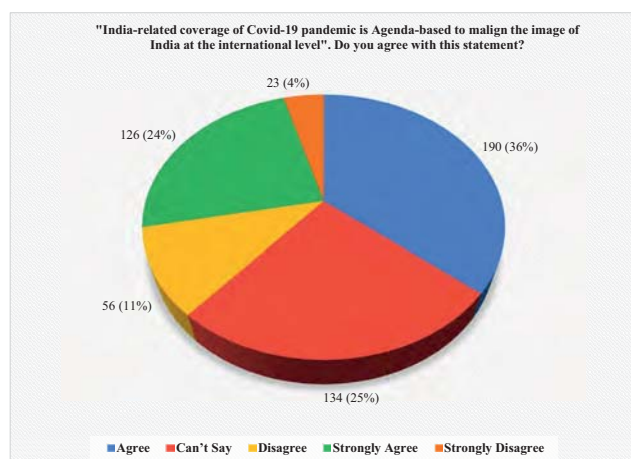


Question-7: ‘India-related coverage of Covid-19 pandemic was agenda-based to malign the image of India at the international level’. Do you agree with this statement?

Following were the responses and their percentages received from the respondents (Figure-9).

- Strongly Agree: 126 (24%)
- Agree: 190 (36%)
- Can’t Say: 134 (25%)
- Strongly Disagree: 23 (4%)
- Disagree: 56 (11%)

(Figure 9)



Question-8: If you agree, what could be the reason(s) of the biased campaign against India by the Western media?

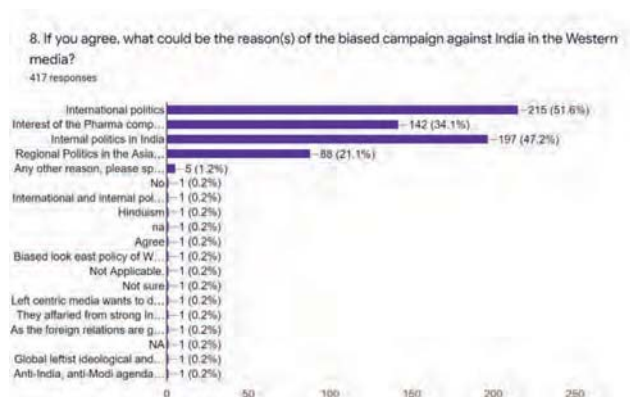
This was a question where respondents were allowed to tick in the checkboxes and they could select multiple answers. A total of 417 respondents answered this question. Following are their responses:

- International politics: 215 (51.6%)
- Interest of the pharma companies: 142 (34.1%)
- Internal politics in India: 197 (47.2%)
- Regional politics in the Asian region: 88 (21.1%)
- Any other reason, please specific: 5 (1.2%)

The respondents were also given the option of giving any other reason, which they thought was behind the biased campaign against India by the Western media. Some of the reasons mentioned by the respondents include:

- Anti-India, anti-Modi agenda...
- They afraid from strong Indian Government. Foreign media always wants a weak government in India.
- ...Biased look east policy of Western countries especially towards India having rich civilization.
- Left centric media wants to defame the Modi govt.

(Figure 10)

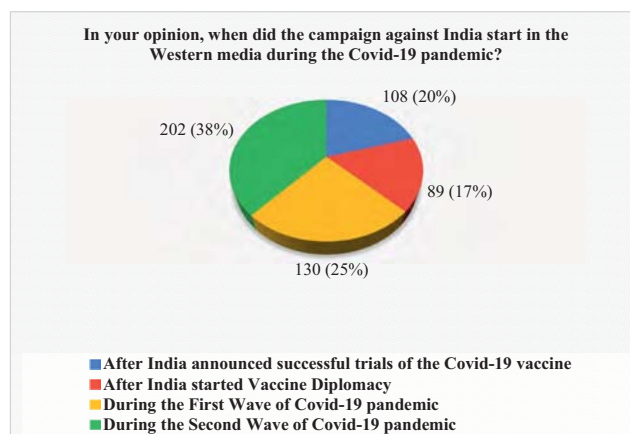


Question-9: In your opinion, when did the campaign against India start in the Western media during the Covid-19 Pandemic?

Following were the responses and their percentages received from the respondents (Figure-11).

- During the First Wave of Covid-19 pandemic: 130 (25%)
- During the Second Wave of Covid-19 pandemic: 202 (38%)
- After India announced successful trials of the Covid-19 vaccine: 108 (20%)
- After India started Vaccine Diplomacy: 89 (17%)

(Figure 11)

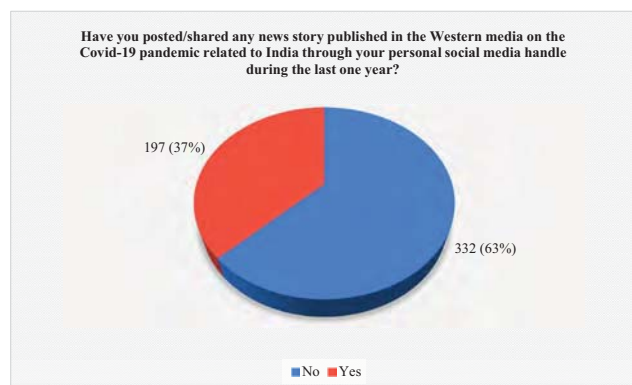


Question-10: Have you posted/shared any news

story published in the Western media on the Covid-19 pandemic related to India through your personal social media handle during the last one year.

The responses were asked in a 'Yes' or 'No'. A total of 197 (37%) said Yes, while 332 (63%) said No.

(Figure 12)



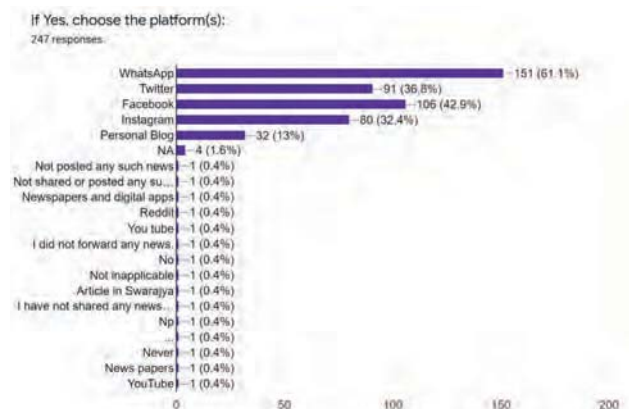
The above question was followed by a supplementary query and a total of 247 people responded it:

Question-11: If Yes, choose the platform(s):

Following were the responses from the respondents (Figure-13).

- WhatsApp: 151 (61.1%)
- Twitter: 91 (36.8%)
- Facebook: 106 (42.9%)
- Instagram: 80 (32.4%)
- Personal Blog: 32 (13%)

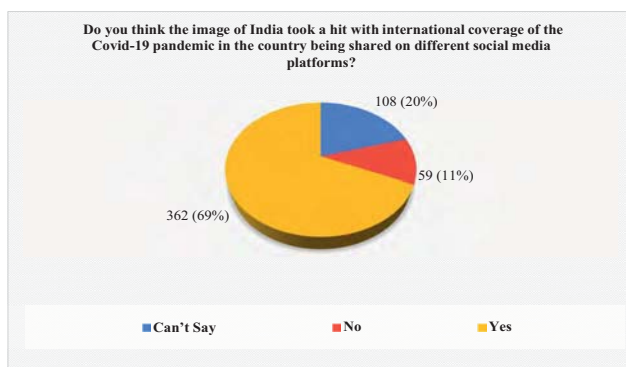
(Figure 13)



Question-12: Do you think the image of India took a hit with the international coverage of the Covid-19 pandemic in the country being shared on different social media platforms?

The responses were asked in a 'Yes' or 'No' and 'Can't Say'. A total of 362 (69%) said Yes, 59 (11%) said No, while 108 (20%) had no opinion

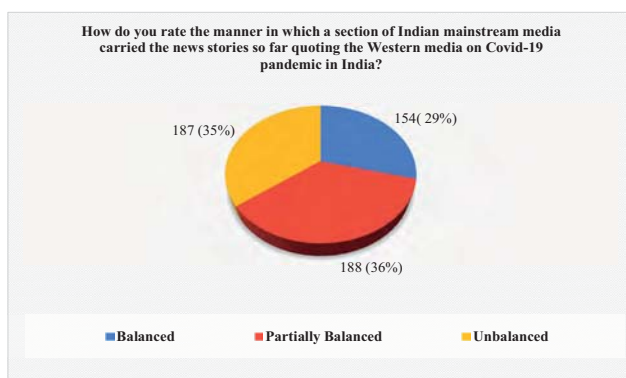
(Figure 14)



Question-13: How do you rate the manner in which a section of Indian mainstream media carried the news stories so far quoting the Western media on Covid-19 pandemic in India?

The respondents were asked to indicate their responses as 'Balanced', 'Partially Balanced', 'Unbalanced'. A total of 154 (29%) found it balanced, 188 (36%) found partially balanced, while 187 (35%) said unbalanced (Figure-15).

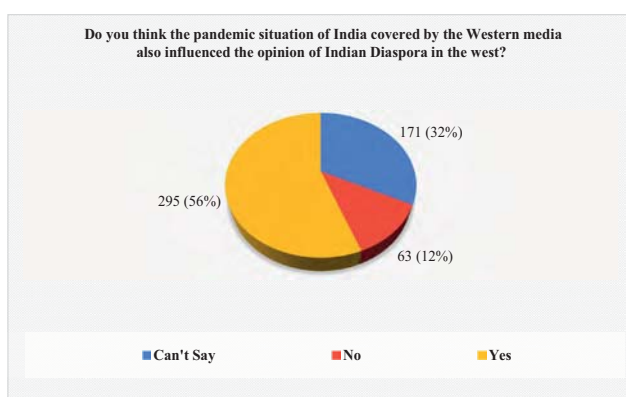
(Figure 15)



Question-14: Do you think the pandemic situation in India covered by the Western media also influenced the opinion of Indian Diaspora in the West?

The responses were asked in a 'Yes' or 'No' and 'Can't Say'. A total of 295 (56%) said Yes, 63 (12%) said No, while 171 (32%) chose the 'Can't Say' option (Figure-16).

(Figure 16)



Question-15: Any other comment/observation

you wish to make about the Covid-19 pandemic-related coverage of India in the Western media.

In response to this question, a good number of comments and suggestions were received, which have been compiled in an abridged manner in the following section of this study under the title “Comments by the Respondents”.

(Image: Screenshot of the open-ended responses on



Question No. 15)

Comments by the Respondents

During the study, about 400 respondents made comments. Since there was lot of repetition in the comments, following comments have been included in the study after deleting the repetitions:

- Balanced and true facts should be shown.
- Rather than being concerned of our image we should be more concerned about creating better facilities for our citizens.
- I cannot say if the coverage was agenda-driven and what agenda could it be, but the coverage could certainly have been more authentic and balanced.
- Had mainstream media in India played a responsible role from the beginning, the government would have been more alert in handling the crisis, and the situation where we are feeling horrified by Western media would not have arisen.
- Success of our scientists should get more coverage.
- Some journalists working for international media are biased in their views.
- Western media should be honest.
- Some Western media outlets have stopped journalism and switched to infotainment and started spreading negativity and fear about Covid-19 situation of India.
- Western media only covered negative aspects of the disease, facilities and isolation about the Covid-19 situation in India, resulting into fear and hiding of disease.
- Western media has nothing to do with India. We, the Indians, provided them the masala.
- For foreign media has the agenda to show India and the current government in bad light.
- In its coverage the media should also consider how it is going to impact the society, the country and the world.
- Western media's coverage was absolutely biased and agenda-driven to malign India, the present government, Hinduism and Hindus.
- Western media groups are continuously indulging in propaganda against India.
- International politicians don't want India to be powerful and Atamnirbhar. That is why they play game with India.
- Left oriented media and other political parties are hell bound to tarnish the image of India at this time when the whole world is facing the huge wave of pandemic.
- Criticism by the western media is good if it is constructive. We can reply them back by our rapid vaccination drive in India.
- It needs to be more authentic and balanced.
- Media should not be biased.
- International media diverted focus from China's relation to Covid-19.
- Western media's coverage made environment for their pharmaceutical companies. They talked about third wave targeting children without any authentic research.
- Fully biased and anti-India.
- Media is in doubt these days.
- Western media coverage lacked originality.
- Western media should be honest.
- India's successful covid vaccination does not suit international media.
- More than anything else, internal politics in India is maligning our country's image worldwide.
- Western Media can't see an Asian country giving them tough competition. Developing vaccine and providing it to other countries were considered as threat to Western pharmaceutical companies high-cost vaccines.
- This coverage is very much in the interest of US and other western countries which are in the race of manufacturing Covid vaccines.
- India is always underrepresented.
- Indian media is still to find balance between what it thinks of the individual western news giants and how to react on the stories they pursue.
- Covid-19 pandemic calls for re-evaluation of the importance of specialist reporters in news industry. The response to the pandemic should be

improvements in health journalism.

- There focus is only to publish the darker side or negative stories. They never publish the stories related to good practices of the government and cultural & social organisations.
- The western media should emphasis more on bias-free reportage unlike to malign the image of any country.
- Aimed at destroying the image of India.
- Mostly agenda related to international pharma lobby and dent India's vaccine diplomacy.
- Created controversies rather than informing the people. It seems inappropriate to international ethics of journalism.
- The GoI should send information related to vaccination to the international news agencies so that they could know how many people have been vaccinated in India.
- The daily death in India had been under 3000, but it was almost 4000 in America in January. But we never saw pictures of cremation grounds in the US.
- The condition of Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands were so bad last year that the Government had asked/advised older people not to come to the hospital (and die in their homes). Their media didn't act as vultures. Yes, people are dying and it is a heart-breaking situation, but you are making a mockery of their situation for your commercial benefits.
- The coverage was made to suit the interests of particular organisations/countries.
- We should have strong guidelines for foreign media to restrict their interference.
- They must do balanced coverage.
- Western media always had dual standards while covering the issues in developed and developing countries.
- We should communicate more with western media and provide them information on how we are fighting against Covid-19 as a nation.
- It's all political propaganda, which the western media follows as and when required.
- It's totally biased. They want to damage the image of India, because India is a fastest growing power now.
- Indian media should have international platform to place its voice.
- A set propaganda at the international level against India and Indians.
- Government of India should take proper action against the Western media as per the international law.
- It is true that not much authenticity is maintained in Western media about India.
- In fact, some Indian political parties always try to influence the western media against India.
- International media groups hire and encourage selected Indian journalists who have strong bias against Prime Minister Modi and the BJP.
- This was the biggest attack on India's efforts to become Atmanirbhar.
- They should also have shown how India fought the virus despite large population and limited resources.
- Western media mostly portrayed India as a poor and unstable nation. It suits them. It is due to their colonial and racist approach towards India.
- Indian government must formulate a law to penalise biased news coverage. The Government must also show courage to break the snake charmer image of India in the western media.
- India controlled the first wave successfully, but the Western media didn't mention the efforts of Indian government and public.
- India holds second largest population in the world and never-ending challenges are there. But the Western media ignored all these facts.
- They just covered the images of collapsed system and represented India as backward nation which is struggling to save life of the people.
- Western media coverage is balanced.
- The way western media represented India during covid 19 situation is totally wrong.
- Western media should verify facts before publishing them.
- Top editors of Western media should be taken around so that they can see the real India.
- No ground work reflected in their reports.
- Naming the new variant as Indian version dented India's image badly.
- Indian media is heavily influenced by the Western media.
- Media should create more awareness rather than covering rumours and spreading fear among people.
- It should also show the positive side how India is fighting against Covid.
- The right amount of the data has to be shown.
- No country was capable to handle this pandemic. The US fainted, Italy collapsed but a group of Indian journalists wanted the Indian machinery to collapse. No productive journalism. There are many examples of vulture Journalism, tool kit gang, fear mongering on vaccine and what not. The list goes endless.
- I think it's for the vast interest of international

- pharma companies and political leaders.
- An attempt has been made to show India very weak, deliberately.
 - It started after the start of vaccine manufacturing and turned aggressive after India's vaccine diplomacy.
 - Time for media houses to introspect their role and purpose of existing in the profession. Before it's too late to cover up the damage done...
 - Readers and audience have already lost trust on television, news channels during the pandemic. Credentials of seniors and trainers is at stake.
 - Trainees must take strong initiatives to pull up socks and prepare a fleet of 'Reformer journalists'
 - Western media has been critical about many developed countries. So, nothing to be touchy.
 - The left oriented western media didn't cover any positive news. They strongly ignored the achievements of India during pandemic.
 - Western media created panic during pandemic.
 - We should strongly counter their unverified coverage.
 - Since 2014, some Indian politicians and media persons have joined hands with western media to tarnish the image of India.
 - Most of the so-called analysis on India's Covid situation was based on opinions and not on data. Western media chose to ignore comparative facts and peddled an anti-India narrative. The reasons are both political agenda and racist approach against India.
 - Everyone should follow Covid-19 guidelines.
 - Indian media should also take stands on important international issues.
 - Very biased reports as they failed to know the ground reality in India.
 - Toolkit was used for biased media coverage.
 - A large chunk of left-leaning columnists and writers knowingly and maliciously destroyed the image of India in international media. Their agenda was to pressurise the Government of India so that they could get some political benefits.
 - Western media is also divided as everywhere else in the world. A part of media tries to be objective and other tries to be in good books of the government
 - Positive news items are need of the hour.
 - Western media may not have a complete picture of the Covid situation available to them.
 - I feel the ideological differences with the current Indian government is one of the factors to malign the image of India.
 - I believe they reported the bitter truth.
 - Fully agenda-driven coverage aimed at tarnishing India's image. They did the same with Donald Trump in the US.
 - It is partially unbalanced according to me.
 - Media should spread positivity during pandemic instead of showing negative information.
 - Tarnishing the image of a nationalist government.
 - Please don't spread rumours against India.
 - Photos of the dead bodies buried in Ganges basin were fabricated, misrepresented.
 - The internal politics of India may be the major reason.
 - Western media are biased against India and its overall growth. The success of Indian vaccines has given a blow to foreign pharma companies, which were looking for vaccine business in India. These companies are now creating a negative image of India and its vaccine by bribing corrupt media houses.
 - Highly organised.
 - Western countries don't want India to be a global power. With over 1 billion population India has shown the path of fair international relation and humanity, which is its strength. PM's image as the world champion is also a factor.
 - True picture of the situation is definitely important but there should be some positivity also while sharing the news.
 - Western media should show the truth without discrimination.
 - Globally, we proved that we are better in this pandemic situation compared to other countries.
 - Western media should change their mindset.
 - Accuracy of facts is necessary.
 - The Indian mainstream media should take a call on those news articles that try to malign India.
 - India needs to have credible writers in international media who share the great work done in India on Covid management and in other areas like alternative energy resources management.
 - Western media should not join hands with any so-called medical racket.
 - Covid is man-made and man-spread pandemic.
 - This would be a useful survey. It is necessary for media students to observe the image of India shown in Western media regularly, be it through any media platform particularly news agencies as other media houses subscribe to it.
 - Government spokespersons should brief the Western media for better coverage and facts-related stories.
 - Many sting operations provided fodder to the Western media in the form of images, videos, tweets and

words. Authenticity of such information is always under question.

- They are showing the real face of partial media of India.
- Lop-sided, agenda-driven, biased against India. They are losing credibility in the Indian market.

Data Analysis

The study shows that majority of respondents (82%) are not convinced with the reporting on Covid-19 pandemic in India done by the Western media. Of the 82 per cent of respondents that responded to this question, a little less than half found it to be only 'partially authentic', while an almost equal number found it 'fully biased', 'partially biased' or 'inauthentic'. Also, 69 per cent of respondents believe that India's image took a beating by such coverage, while 11 per cent thought otherwise, and 56 per cent respondents said such coverage may have negatively influenced the opinion of the Indians abroad. Respondents were asked if such negative coverage could influence the opinion of the Indian diaspora there, more than half the respondents replied in affirmative. About 32 per cent did not express their opinion on whether such negative coverage influenced the Indian diaspora adversely.

A majority of 60 per cent respondents 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the Western media had an agenda when they covered Covid-19 pandemic in India. Also, good journalistic practice demands that the stories reported are balanced in nature. But when feedback was sought on the Western media's stories about the pandemic in India, clear majority of the respondents – about 71 per cent – said the stories lacked a balanced narrative. Of this, 35 per cent said the news coverage was 'unbalanced', while 36 per cent respondents said the reporting was only 'partially balanced'. While exploring the respondents' opinion on the question when the Western media's campaign against India actually started, the most respondents (38%) believed that it started during the second wave when India was busy fighting the worst spell of the pandemic, while 25% believe it started with the first wave itself. However, a significant number of respondents said that the negative campaign against India started after India announced successful trials of the Covid-19 vaccine (20%) and after India started its 'vaccine diplomacy' (17%).

The study also tried to know the possible reasons behind the Western media's biased coverage of the pandemic in India. Many reasons were proposed by the respondents, but some of the main reasons suggested by them were international politics (51%),

internal politics in India (47%), interest of pharma companies (34%), and regional politics of Asian region (21%). On this question, the respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers. Interestingly, a majority of the respondents said they didn't forward or share on social media such stories published on the international platforms to malign India's image. About 63 per cent said they didn't share it on any social media or messaging platforms, while 37 per cent accepted sharing such stories on social media platforms in the last one year. Those who did share such stories, did so on WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or on their personal blogs. As many as 54 per cent respondents said they frequently followed the international media's coverage about India. Of these, 22 per cent read international publication directly, while 32 per cent read such foreign media coverage when Indian media published them. Meanwhile, 36 per cent said they followed the international media but not quite regularly. When asked how they access Western publications/media, they said they used multiple platforms but indicated their preferences (multiple answers possible) as Google News suggestions (59%), YouTube and Twitter (both 40%), Facebook (34%) and Instagram (27%). The other popular sources mentioned by respondent were news 'apps installed' (24%), 'free subscription to news websites' (25%), 'news received as forward' (24%), and 'paid subscription' (5%).

Senior editor level Indian journalists are also not convinced with the manner a section of the Western media covered the Covid-19 pandemic in India. Senior journalist Alok Mehta who led many newsrooms in Indian media houses, while chairing a discussion at IIMC on the same topic opined: "The Indian media should be very careful while taking up stories published in the Western media. They want to throw garbage in our country. We should not spread that garbage all over the country by carrying forward their stories. We should discourage the anti-India reporting of the Western media" (Mehta, 2021). Executive Editor of *CNN News18* Anand Narasimhan said: "What happens in my house is my internal matter, I don't want any outsider to lecture me on it. ...I do not allow you to fly your drones over my crematoriums unless you allow me to do the same in your country (Narasimhan, 2021). Eminent Indian author, screenwriter, columnist Advaita Kala raised questions over the funding sources of Western media and opined their reporting depends upon the agenda set by the agencies which fund those media houses (Kala, 2021). However, senior journalist NK Singh opined that the reporting by Western media during the

Covid-19 pandemic was correct and it was to open the eyes of the Indian agencies.

Conclusion

The study gauged the mood and perception of Indian media professionals and media scholars about the Covid-19 pandemic-related coverage of India done by the Western media. It found that a significant majority respondents were not convinced with the reporting on Covid-19 pandemic in India done by the Western media. It also found the coverage of the Western media to be either 'fully biased', 'partially biased, and 'inauthentic'. Also, the survey found that most respondents believe that India's image took a beating owing to such coverage, and more than half of the respondents said such coverage may have negatively influenced the opinion of Indians living abroad. The survey raises a question over the manner the stories carried by a section of the Western media were further carried in a section of the Indian media. However, it is a good indication that a good number of Indian journalists and media students did not share the India-related reports of the Western media through their social media handles. There is little doubt in the minds of majority of the respondents that a 'biased' coverage by the Western media did harm the reputation of the country among the Indian diaspora. Any news about India in the Western media is likely to influence the Indian diaspora there. If the media paint a good authentic picture through their reporting, the non-resident Indian will be happy about their country. But if there is a sustained, agenda-driven reporting against India, it is likely to affect the Indians abroad in negative way. As happened during the second wave of Covid-19, the coverage must have made them worried about their loved ones in their motherland.

The study suggests that the Press Information Bureau (PIB) of the Government of India should strengthen interaction with international media outlets and provide them timely information with full facts and figures. Interactions with the foreign journalists should be organised frequently to keep them abreast of

the government's efforts and ground realities. Special tours for foreign journalists may also be organised to help them have ground information on certain issues like India's vaccination drive. Interactions/briefing/communication with Indian journalists, columnists, bloggers, etc. especially those who write for foreign media should be strengthened. Mainstream Indian media should be encouraged to strengthen their coverage of international news in different languages particularly targeting the Indian diaspora to minimise chances of misinformation or agenda-driven reporting by some international media houses. Following good journalism practices, the Indian media organisations should not rely heavily on the coverage done by the Western media and should cross check their reports particularly on the internal matters of India before carrying any story on those reports.

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Print Media as a Source of Knowledge Retention: An Analysis

RAJAT SHARMA¹, PAWAN KOUNDAL² AND DEEPSHIKHA

ABSTRACT

Digitization of the products and services people use has regularly impacted their consumption patterns in a way or the other. Ranging from the consumption of audio-visuals from television to online streaming, or tuning to satellite radio stations and podcasts, or even switching from newspapers to e-newspapers, we are advancing in consumption practices with the emergence of new technologies everyday. These practices influence various cognitive processes of individuals at several intellectual levels. One of those is the retention of the information gained from the consumption of various content available on several media platforms. This study aims to assess the useability of printed material as a significant factor in the process of retention of knowledge. In this study, a quantitative research approach is used to collect data, yielding a wealth of important information about the consumption of printed material. The analysis of the collected data signifies that retention of knowledge from printed material is high, however, it is not a most preferred source of knowledge and information for consumers in this very digital age.

Keywords: Knowledge, Retention, Print media, Digital media, Media education

Introduction

We are in the age of technological advancement where humans are becoming superhumans with the help of mega machines, global connectivity and an abundance of knowledge and information. But the present phase of human society is the result of a long journey from a primitive age to the information age. This journey comprises of making and breaking several empires and sovereignties. We have a great base of information that is collected, assessed and passed to us by our past generations through oral and textual material. Both of these two forms of communication have their importance when it comes to analyzing the information and practices performed by our ancestors to deal with day-to-day chaos.

Oral culture or orality was considered as the only and most valuable source of information to carry the cultural practices from generation to generation until the emergence of the idea of printing text and using it to preserve and pass on these cultural beliefs. Printing technology has revolutionized the process of sharing and archiving important text in the forms of scripts, books and other printed material, etc.

In the age of media globalization, technological achievements in media production have become quite important. Kaul (2011) suggests that technologically promising is the growing multimedialism which connects several types of media on one platform. It affects television, web broadcasting in multimedia,

and even printing. The objective of each printed document is to convey the message to the target audience effectively. It begins with the desire of someone to reach the audience with printed material. These printed documents may contain books, journals, pamphlets, posters, catalogs, etc.

“The printing press is a device that allows for the mass production of uniform printed matter, mainly text in the form of books, pamphlets and newspapers” (Printing Press, 2019). The exact site titled for the origin of the printing press is not known but it is evident that the oldest known printed text is originated in China (Printing Press, 2019). The printing press revolutionized society in various ways and press has played a great role in the history of media and globalization. Prior to the printing press, the production of documents was slow and expensive. With the advent of printing press, reading material has become cheap and can be circulated easily. The explosive flow of economic, cultural and political ideas around the world connected people. The processes of globalization were inextricably linked to the development of the printing press (Eisenstein, 1979).

Johannes Gutenberg invented the metal block printing press which is a significant milestone in the development of printing technology for the mass production of books and other texts. This key invention started the Printing Revolution. Based on the design of

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existing screw presses, a single Renaissance printing press could produce around 3,600 pages per day. Its capacity is pretty high when compared to hand-printing used before this invention (Wolf, 1947). He is also credited with the development of an oil-based ink that was more durable than the previously used water-based inks (Kapr, 1996). Bible was the first book that was printed by his moveable types (denoted to this printing machine). It is estimated he printed 180 copies of the 1,300-paged Gutenberg Bible, as many as 60 of them on vellum. Each page of the Bible contained 42 lines of text in Gothic type, with double columns and featuring some letters in color (Printing Press, 2019).

The industrial revolution is yet another significant event that we need to consider while tracing the development of printing technology across the world. The mechanics of the hand-operated Gutenberg-style press were highly modified by including new material in its construction, use of improved ink etc. that has resulted in the improved efficiency of the moveable types. The steam-powered rotary printing press, invented by Richard M. Hoe in 1843 is the most accepted replacement for the moveable types (Meggs, 1998).

By the middle of the 19th century, job presses took over the market especially small publishing houses. The worldwide spread of the printing press is a significant reason for the greater distribution of ideas across the world. The benefit of the rise of printing technology is not only limited to the dissemination of information but has also contributed to the development of world trade, creation of national currencies and sharing of cultural ideas among different countries located far from each other.

Emergence of digital technology in print media

The printing industry has totally changed its way; it has now become a multimedia industry. Technology has transformed this industry in a big way. Since we are living in the smart-phone age, the printing industry has also changed its nature from printing press to news websites and now the revolutionary news apps (mobile news applications). We can take example of newspapers. The digital technology allows us to get the information from newspapers in different ways. Getting news from conventional newspaper (hard copy) can now be accessed through its another versions – viz. e-papers, mobile applications, news websites and social networking websites as well. While the print medium provides only text, photographs and graphics, the online medium can be a convergence of newspaper/magazines, television

and radio. It can incorporate new combinations of text and photographs with multimedia elements such as audio clips, video clips and animated graphics. Text stories can now be presented in many different forms so as to provide different and enriching experience for the users.

The print medium interacts with readers to a certain degree, via comments, opinions and letters to editors. But the interactivity in online journalism is immediate and can be done in real-time. Readers can feedback on a bigger scale through e-mail and react quickly (Fitzgerald, 1996). The advancement of internet also influenced and developed a new way to print media. It has contributed to the emergence of a new situation where many newspapers and magazines have begun to publish their online editions which have brought the whole world on a reader's desktop/mobile. The Internet took less than 15 years to claim that mantle when, at the end of 2010, the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism found that for the first time, more people got their news from the Internet than from newspapers (Rosenstiel & Mitchell, 2011).

Internet brings excitement and expectations, many historians and media professionals still feel very strongly about the print newspapers, and sometime advocated that the electronic newspaper can never replace the printed newspaper. Publisher Donald Brazeal from *Digital Ink Publisher* thinks that the print product is not going to disappear anytime soon (Dineley, 1994). Media commentator Steve Outing suggests that electronic newspapers are supplemental services, with little in common to print newspapers, and that they will not replace their print cousins (Erlindson, 1995).

Review of Literature

Understanding of different ideas and concepts in all possible dimensions along with their applicability can be noted as the main objective of knowledge. Knowledge is appraised as a significant characteristic of a cognitive mind. According to the Cambridge Dictionary knowledge is the “understanding of or information about a subject that you get by experience or study, either known by one person or by people generally” (“Knowledge”, n.d.). Another important concept that we need to understand in depth is retention. A continuous possession of something (especially an idea or skill) that can be used to perform an action, can be considered as an uncomplicated explanation of the concept of retention. It is significant for any scholar, researcher or for even an explorer to retain the important information he/she coming across while

gaining knowledge about their field of interest. If the retention of the required concepts is low then the learning becomes futile for that person.

In technical cognitive terms, retention is actually a skill of knowledge management. Different innovative ways of creating, sharing, using and implementing knowledge and information are the key factors for better knowledge management (Girard & Girard, 2015). Source of the knowledge accomplishes a significant part in the process of retention. Retention of information is done by storing it in human memory. This process of storing is primarily done through active learning, repetition and recall of the same piece of knowledge again and again for a long time (Kahana, 2014). The sources of information in the present age of digital technology is abundant. From digital text files like PDFs, E-Books, E-Magazines to audio podcasts, live streaming of videos on digital platforms etc. the sources of information are increasing every day. Thus, the retention of the information has a significant impact of different sources on the human.

Textual material is among the oldest sources of information for humans. Whether it is the oldest surviving philosophical manuscript in Sanskrit written on palm leaf fragments known as Spitzer Manuscript (Franco, 2005) or the Diamond Sūtra a Buddhist holy text ("10 of the Oldest Known Surviving Books", 2018). Textual material is always considered an authentic source of information. These scripts are reproduced in several languages for the propagation of various ideas and beliefs across the world. If we consider the world we are living in the movement, we can see that books and other textual sources are still holding an important place for the retention of knowledge. The print media have evolved significantly in India. Technological advancement has influenced printing technology to a large extent (Koundal, 2020). The prime characteristic of providing text directly in the hands of the audience makes the conventional publishing of texts one of the most accepted methods of accessing information (Koundal, 2020).

Close contemplation of contemporary society signifies that it is the true era of the 'learning society' (Shukla, 2010). We can compete with other developing countries as well as developed countries only by expanding a powerful reading culture among the youth of our nation. Reading plays a significant role in the process of retention. All the forms of textual material including books, magazines, newspapers etc. promotes intellectual standings. Inculcating the reading habits among the people is equally important to the development of resources for spreading awareness and literacy (Shukla, 2010). Reading for

pleasure is associated with stated and unstated benefits for ones' knowledge base and worldview expansion. Reading for retention of knowledge and skills is significant for the upward mobility of individuals in any sector. Without information about development in science and technology, politics and economics, it is difficult for them to rise upward in their line of business (Shukla, 2010).

Research shows that printed newspapers improve their readers' knowledge of what is going on around them. In general, newspaper reading raises awareness of a greater number of public-affairs topics as compared to using other information channels, like for example television (Ferguson & Weigold, 1986; Allen & Izcaray, 1998). Several studies have suggested that online newspapers are complementary to print editions, not competitive. People who go online to seek out information about politics, sports, business, science, international affairs, local news, and entertainment news are likely to continue to read about those niche interests in traditional media (Dutta-Bergman, 2004).

The National Book Trust of India (NBT) has published around 2013 titles including 74 originals, 199 translations, 1729 reprints and 11 revised editions during the period of 2019-2021. Besides these, NBT has also organized International Book Fair and Mobile Exhibitions, and also started *Samagra Shiksha Initiative* and Grant-in-Aid program for the proliferation of reading among the youth of the nation (National Book Trust, 2020). Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi has started a Text Book Programme to promote books in various Indian languages for the propagation of Indian regional languages (Textbook Publishing Programme Report, IIMC, 2020). These important initiatives are the base of the knowledge expansion and presenting books as an important source of knowledge for the readers of all sections.

Objectives

This study is focused on the printed material such as books, magazines etc. as a source of information. Following are the prime objectives of this research study:

- To assess the people's perception of print media as a source of knowledge and information.
- To analysis the contemporary situation regarding the credibility of print media as an authentic source of information.
- To compare the level of knowledge retention among print and digital media and how it is impacting the consumption of media.

- To assess the usability of printed material i.e. books, magazines, newspapers as a source of knowledge retention.
- To evaluate the impact of pandemics on the consumption pattern of print media.

Research Question

- 1 What is the people's perception about print media being a source of authentic information?
- 2 What is the credibility of printed material as a source of knowledge among various media consumers?
- 3 Among print and digital media, which one has the highest level of retention of knowledge?
- 4 What is the impact of retention on the consumption of various media?
- 5 What are the different usability of printed material as a source of knowledge and information?
- 6 What is the impact of pandemic on the consumption pattern of print media?

Research Methodology

This study is about people's perceptions related to a specific type of media consumption. Hence the most appropriate tool for the collection of data is directly asking people through a survey. Therefore, a quantitative analysis of the data collected through a structured questionnaire is performed to fulfil the desired objectives and get the answers to the research question raised in the study. Other important technical details related to the applied research approach are as follows:

Universe :The universe consists of all survey elements that qualify for inclusion in the research study (Lavrakas, 2008). For this study research universe includes all the media consumers irrespective of what type of media they are consuming for the gratification of their social, mental, physical desire.

Population :A research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query (Research Population, n.d.). All the print media consumers above the age of 18 years are included in the population of this study. This allows the study to assess the cognitive stand of the individual participants on the ground of their life experiences and perceptions related to different aspects.

Sampling Method: Sampling is a method that allows researchers to infer information about a population based on results from a subset of the population, without having to investigate every individual ("Methods of sampling from a population", n.d.). The convenient sampling is applied in this

study. A survey is conducted utilizing a structured close-ended questionnaire. The survey is mailed and circulated in various Whats App groups/emails and the collected data is tabulated for analysis.

Sampling Size : It is a term used in research for defining the number of subjects included in a sample size (Sample Size, November 2019). The sample size that analyzed for this research study is 112. Statisticians agree that the minimum sample size to get any kind of meaningful result is 100. If your population is less than 100 then you really need to survey all of them (Bullen, n.d.).

Findings and analysis

Considering the prime objective of this study, a survey is conducted and all the responses are collected and tabulated to analyze the trend associated with the usability of printed media (newspaper, books, magazines, journals etc.) as an important source for the accumulation of knowledge.

Age and gender of the respondents

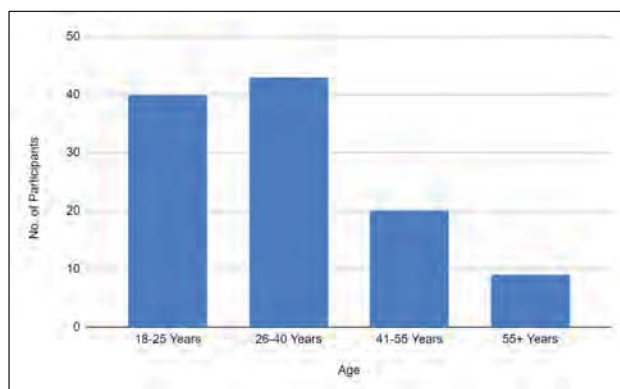


Fig. 1 Age of the participant (n= 112)

By analyzing the data collected from the participants, it is found that the highest number of the respondents belongs to the age groups of 26-40 years. The second-highest number of participants were from the age group of 18-25 years. And the least number of participants were from 55+ years age group. The data relating to the age of the respondents always helps to understand the trends related to media consumption among various generations during the same period of time.

It is evident from Figure 2 that the participants from both genders are of almost the same count. An equal number of respondents from both genders helps us to analyze the data that is free from any gender bias. Total 52.7% of the respondents are Males and 47.3% are Females.

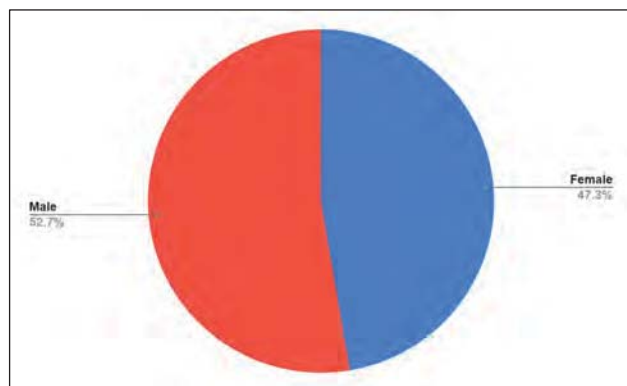


Fig. 2 Gender of the participant (n=112)

Education and Demography of the respondents

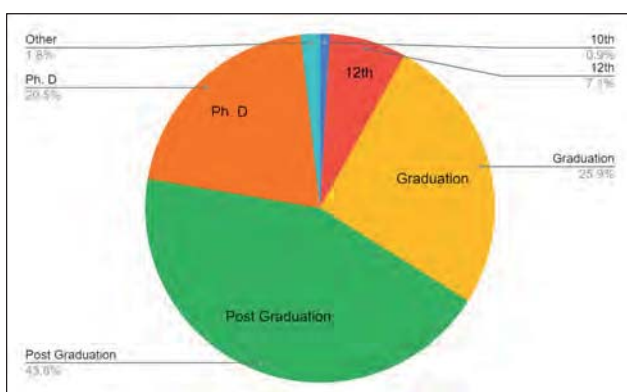


Fig. 3 Education qualification of the participant (n=112)

It can be seen in Figure 3 that 20.5% of the respondents hold a Ph.D degree, whereas 43.8% of the respondents hold a Post Graduate degree. A total of 25.9% of the respondents hold Graduate degrees. Only 1.8% of the respondents have 'Other' qualifications than the above mentioned. Rest 8% of the respondents hold an education qualification less than graduation.

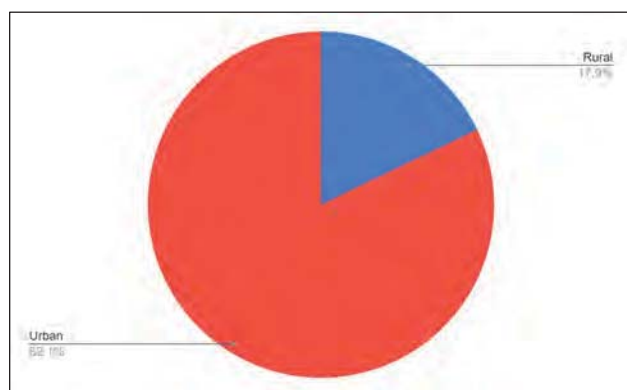


Fig. 4 Demography of the participant (n=112)

Among 112 participants a total of 17.9% belong to rural setups whereas the rest of the 82.1% belong to urban setups. Data related to demographics helps us to understand the consumption pattern followed by the people living in different demographic setups.

The preferred source of information

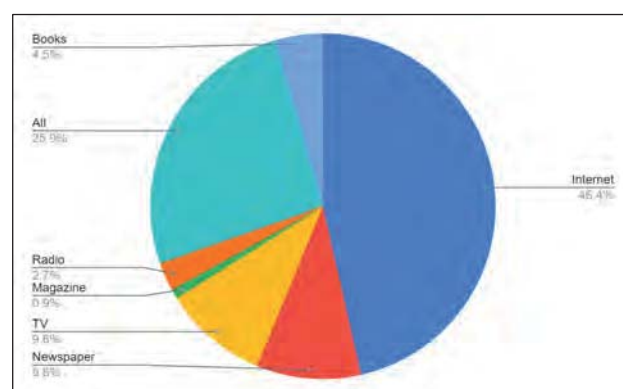


Fig. 5 Preferred source of information (n=112)

It is evident from Figure 5 that the Internet is the most preferred source of information by securing 46.4%. Both TV and Newspapers are preferred by an equal proportion of participants i.e. 9.8%. Radio is less preferred from TV and Newspapers i.e., by only 2.7% of the participants. The least preferred source of information are Magazines at 0.9%. Besides these, 25.9% of the respondents preferred all of these media as an important source of information for them.

Reading patterns

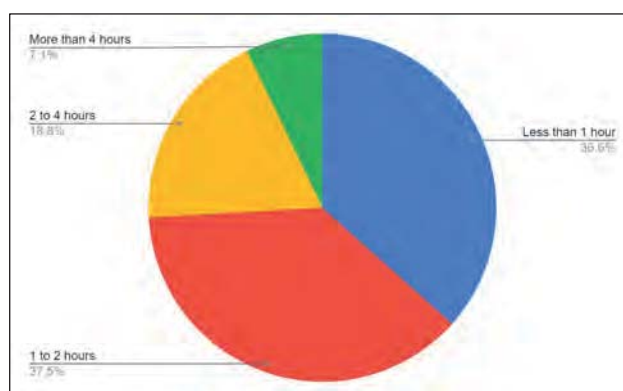


Fig. 6 Reading hours per day (n=112)

According to Figure 6, a total of 36.6% of the participants read less than an hour per day. Whereas most of the participants i.e., 37.5% read more than 1 hour but less than 2 hours per day. Only 18.8% of the participants dedicate 2 to 4 hours to reading per day and the rest 7.1% dedicate more than 4 hours to reading per day on average.

Reading preferences

From figure 7, it can be noted that there is not a big difference in the preference between printed material (books, newspapers, magazines etc.) and e-reading material (e-books, e-newspapers, e-magazines etc.). The preference for printed material is 47.3% whereas the preference for e-reading is slightly more i.e. 52.7%.

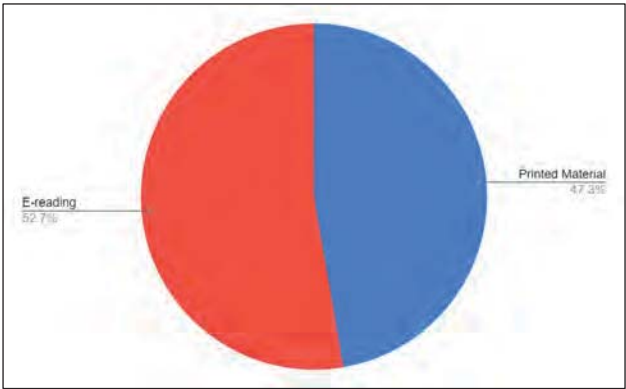


Fig. 7 Reading preference (n=112)

Impact of pandemic on reading habits

Almost half of the participants i.e., 49.1% believe that the pandemic has impacted their reading habits. Whereas only 36.6% of the respondent believes that the pandemic does not have any impact on their reading habits. Rest 14.3% can't say about the impact on their reading habits.

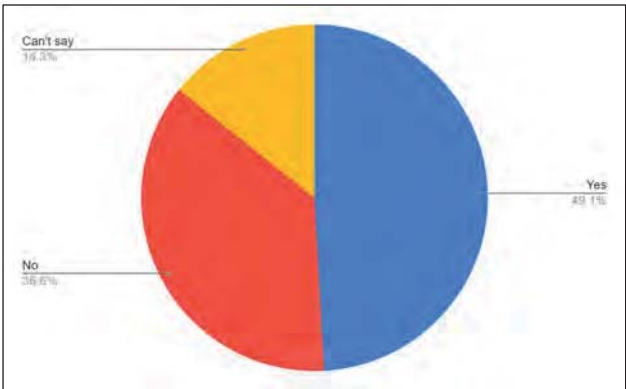


Fig. 8 Impact of a pandemic on reading habits (n=112)

Higher retention of information

Figure 9 suggests that the retention of information is higher from the printed material i.e. 54.5% as compared to the retention of information from digital material. As we can see that this difference is not big but still it is a significant fact to understand the priority of the readers from the perspective of an information producer.

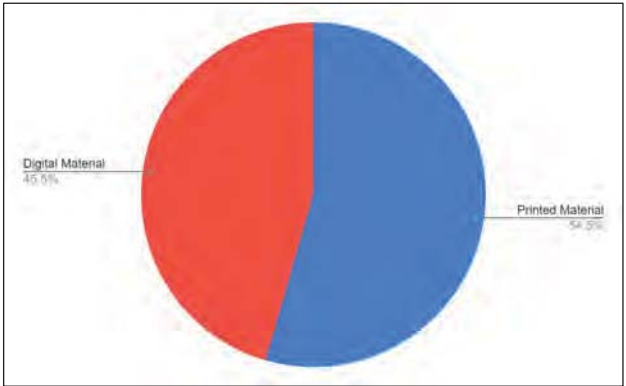


Fig. 9 Higher retention of information (n=112)

Retention of the printed copy

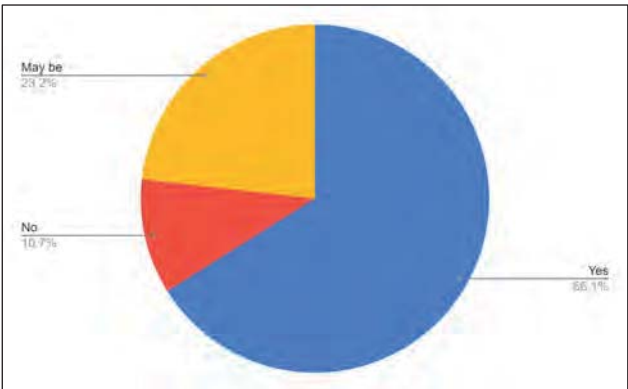


Fig. 10 Retention of a printed copy (n=112)

Around 66.1% of the respondents retain a copy of the printed material they get impressed with while 10.7% does not retain any printed copy. Whereas 23.2% of the participants are not specific about this practice.

Change in paper consumption due to deforestation

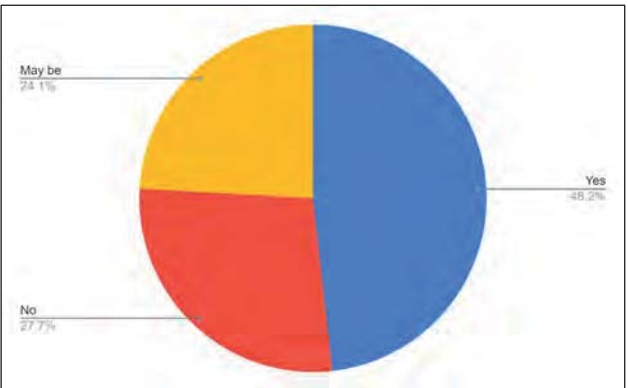


Fig. 11 Change in paper consumption pattern deforestation (n=112)

From figure 11 it can be said that the paper consumption pattern of the participants has been impacted due to the rising cause of deforestation. Around 48.2% of the respondents have accepted this change. Whereas there is no change in the paper consumption pattern of around 27.7% of the respondents. Rest 24.1% are not able to assess that this environmental cause has any impact on their paper consumption pattern.

Travel with a printed copy or a digital copy

It is seen in the Figure 12 that the majority of the participants i.e., 37.5% prefer to travel with a digital copy of the text whereas only 25% of the participants prefer to travel with a printed copy of the text. Around 33% of the participants travel with both printed and digital copies of the text and only 4.5% do not travel with any type of text copy.

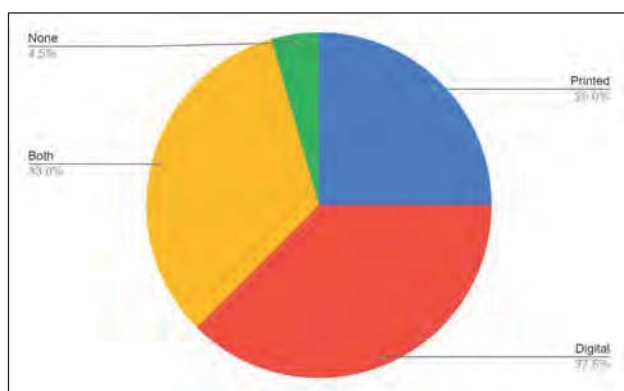


Fig. 12 Travel with a printed copy or a digital copy (n=112)

Important factors while purchasing printed material

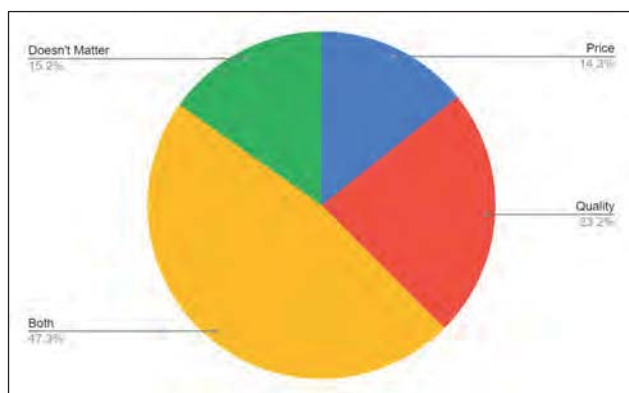


Fig. 13 Important factors while purchasing printed material (n=112)

According to the Figure 13, while purchasing a printed material 23.2% of the participants give importance to quality, 14.3 % give importance to price, 47.3% give importance to both and only 15.2% does not have any influence by any of these factors.

Discussion

Print media seek, collect, process and produce information; on the other hand, news appearing on the internet is more transparent as website visitors can effectively see or read the sources journalists relying on. To reach a point where websites make complete use of the internet features that make them unique, Lowrey (1999) said both journalists and users need to understand the mechanism of online news processing and reading the news as another customized version of print media respectively.

On the other hand, the content which print generates is rich because they analyse, they have time, and they compare similar events. In online, there is no time to do the analytical stuff on a very detailed basis as print does. The print media has a lot of people working for them who are specialise

in their respected beats. So while they (print) will have people working who have good optics, effects, graphics, and all that ensures that despite the fact that news is old for everybody, they still want to read it in print to get the minute details and that minute detail become a good story for the next day (Verma, n.d.). According to the report by Havas Media Group India, "print media has emerged as one of the most credible sources of information for most consumer, brands and marketers" ("Print media most credible", 2021).

The print media has a long history and over a period of time it has evolved significantly. Due to its paper and printing costs, the advancement of online media has influenced printing technology to a large extent, but conventional publishing actually provides text directly in the hands of the audience, which is still the most accepted method of accessing information (Koundal, 2020).

Conclusion

The merit of printed material is still significant along with various other factors. From the data collected for this study, it can be concluded that today internet has rooted itself as a significant and authentic source for information. We cannot say that print is out of the league, in fact, print is the biggest competitor of the internet to become an authentic and credible source for knowledge. On the other hand, printed material is still leading the consciousness of cognitive minds by providing the highest retention of information to its consumers. According to a majority of the respondents, the rate of retention of information is higher from printed sources as compared to the other forms. Well, it can be also concluded that the abundance of information available on the internet is a drawback for this platform. And this drawback gives other printed material like books, magazines, newspapers, journals etc. a lead.

As, the electronic form of any text can be easily carried from one place to another with the help of smart devices such as tablets, i-pads, smartphones etc., they are becoming the first preference for the text consumers in the present era of smart and mobile technology. We can also analyze that both pandemic and large-scale deforestation are making a huge impact on the paper consumption patterns of the people. Due to the cutting down of forests at a large scale and its impact on the global temperature, a number of campaigns (Madan, 2019) are running on various media platforms to reduce paper consumption.

Being global citizens, our small participation can lead to major changes in the world. Another important finding of this study is that people still like to retain

a copy of the printed material they get impressed with. This shows that the value of printed material is not just limited to the text which is printed in it but the look and feel of that printed material also plays a significant role in the purchase and retention of a copy.

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The Idea of Women Emancipation in Indian Narratives and Media

SUNITA MANGLA¹, NIVEDITA GIRI² AND SANJAY BHARTI³

ABSTRACT

Literature and media together have played a very important role in accelerating women empowerment and feminism. As stories and narratives written, published and furthered by media has proved to be extensively contributed to feminist movements all over the world. This is because media has found to be the significant tool as it has the power to reach out to wider extent of audience by mass communication. In recent times, all forms of media—print, electronic and social media are adding a lot to the process of feminism and women emancipation. The word feminism very well attributed towards empowerment of women refers to the advocacy of women's rights on the basis of the equality of the sexes. It adheres to the belief that women should receive the same social, economic and political privileges as men. For centuries, human experience has been synonymous with masculine experiences and this has made the entire image of humanity one-sided and, thus, partial. Feminism has often highlighted what is absent than what is present. Where 'female' is a subject of biology, 'feminism' is more about culturally defined characteristics. For a very long time, the same situation had prevailed in India when a woman was denied being defined as a subject in her own right. The feminist movements in India have been submerged in the freedom struggle, which liberated women from conventional social constraints and gave them the Constitutional rights. The changes, which took place thereby in the social front, were the aftermath of political turmoil. Indian feminists have fought against cultural issues deeply ingrained within the patriarchal society, such as inheritance laws and practice of 'sati' system. There has been a lot of Indian Literature that describe how women were being portrayed in the intricate paths of human mind and the subtleties of human females. This paper tries to discuss and analyse the feminist trends in the Indian narratives and the role of media in the supporting feminism and empowering women.

Keywords: Emancipation, Feminism, Narratives, Movement, Mass media, Communication etc.

Introduction

'Feminism' word has been derived from a Latin word 'femina', which means woman. Thus, it refers to the advocacy of women's rights which aims at abolishing any discrimination against women. This term gained prominence during the early twentieth century, in order to highlight women's sufferings or securing their voting rights in the western world. Feminism has often been connected with the socio-political movement for women's liberation from the patriarchal oppression and has reflected the concern with marginalization of women in patriarchal culture. Feminisms are political discourses, which reveal the symptoms of oppression, irrespective of their grounds, identify the problem and offer substitute versions of liveable realities.

The literature on women issues mostly developed since the late twentieth century, when the authors like Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelly, George Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Kate Millet, and Betty Friedan came forward to write in order to begin a movement to highlight the female 'self' constructed by male

authors (Gamble, 1998). In 1860, John Stuart Mill published *Subjection of Women*, which was a very influential and well-reasoned book and exerted great impact on the feminist movement (Lazenby, 1968). Also, Charlotte Bronte expansively condemned the social system, where women are made to consider marriage as their sole destiny (Robinson, 2017). The Indian literary landscape is so heavily dominated by male voices that it gets easy to neglect the female voices. Despite this, the works by female writers to name a few—Meena Kandasamy, Kamala Das, Nayantara Sehgal, Anita Nair, Jhumpa Lahiri, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Manju Kapur and Anita Desai have been particularly thunderous and stirring. In addition, many other Indian feminists have gone far away to advocate the quality of life of women and their development with their empowerment in various ways. Bina Agarwal deals with gender equality and social exclusion of women, while Devika Jain deals with feminist economy, Kamini Roy is a poet, Gita Sahgal deals with fundamentalism and racism, Vandana Shiva is an environmentalist and

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eco-feminist; Prof. R. Indra also an academic, critic and rationalist, who is an expert in modern feminist thinker (Vishwakarma, 2015). Beginning with the interrogation of the male-centric writings which depicted women in an undignified and oppressed model, these feminists challenged past imaginations of the feminine within their literary scholarship.

The idea of women emancipation

There are various forms of feminism - liberal, radical, Marxist and socialist, cultural, eco-feminism etc. but the very meaning of the term seeks to analyze and redress the power imbalance between the sexes. (Harison and Boyd, 2018) It takes on different forms in various contexts, on the basis of various critical analyses of male privileges and women's subordination within diverse societies. The Indian society considers men to have the power and cultural hegemony in the society. An amusing feature of Indian society is that men advocate maleness and consider women as 'not manly'. Women are marginalized through cultural institutions and religious ceremonies.

Historically and traditionally, right from the ancient times, women have been deprived of even their basic rights. However, twentieth century has witnessed an increase in the awareness among the female community regarding their desires, sexuality, self-definition, destiny and their very existence. There are many still working very hard to liberate the female through their writings from the condition of intolerable socio-cultural constraints and tyrannical myths of their respective countries. In India, education has inculcated a sense of individuality among the women and has also made them interested in knowing about their rights. The feminist trend in the Indian literature, too, emerged on the horizon and women started coming out in the open through their published words challenging the double standards of social law practiced through ages and the conventional moral code.

In the early stages of the feminist revolution, the feminists and revolutionaries were constantly criticized by the patriarchal society for polluting the minds of women with the ideas of liberation from their suppressed conditions and pushing them to blatantly shun the mindless subordination to the established conventional dogmas. However, the scenario started to change in the global front. Their descriptive and creative writings helped greatly in shaping feminists' struggle to empower women and help them rise above their status of being deprived. In fact, their work has contributed greatly in bringing about a change in the social milieu. The most apparent shift in

feminist literature could be seen in the representation of women's victimization to that of their resistance. Although a long fight has been fought by the feminists to achieve the legal right for women, yet there is much more to be done at the social level. Various countries with different religions and cultures might have new experiences of plight of modern women, talking about their dilemmas and conflicts with their fight to achieve self-identity.

Women emancipation and Indian narratives

The emancipation of women, no doubt, has begun through Indian narratives, specially through Indian literature and the broader concept of feminism in India is not a single theoretical point of reference. It has transformed with time maintaining a fine balance with historical and cultural realities, levels of awareness, outlooks and actions of individual women and women in mass. Feminist writers today take pride in defending their causes of 'womanhood' through their write-ups.

Indian feminist writers constitute a major segment of contemporary Indian writers who write in either English or any of the vernacular languages. Some of these writers are females and are the ones who have suffered oppression and injustice. A strong wave of feminism in late twentieth century helped put a woman's discourse through various writings. A written text read from the feminist perspective could lead to a better comprehension of woman's condition. Thus, the reformist nature of feminism helps women to understand their position better.

The modern Indian feministic movement could be said to have begun during the renaissance period with Raja Ram Mohan Roy's success in persuading East India Company to pass a bill making it punishable for a widow to burn herself on the funeral pyre of her husband and widow to remarry (Roy: Hindustan Times, Nov. 2019). Later, social organisations such as *Brahmo Samaj*, *Arya Samaj* and people like Ramabai Ranade did laudable work for upliftment of women. Female freedom fighters like Sarojini Naidu and Vijaylaxmi Pandit entered the political scenario under the leadership of Gandhiji to fight shoulder to shoulder with men. (Alamgeer, 2019).

Socially, women's voice rather became silent and silence became a part of women's identity. However, women writers have proved themselves as silent protestors. Writers like Sarojini Naidu and Toru Dutta have vented their emotions through poetry. The collections of Sarojini Naidu – *The Broken Wing* and *The Golden Threshold* look into the buried and broken heart of a woman. Also, work of Gouri Deshpande – *Beyond the Slaughter House* – produced the evidence

of her disinterest in Hindu ethos. Gouri was able to distinguish between the hierarchy of male and female and bring into light the injustice a woman faced in the society. Another significant writer, Rassundari Devi, a Bengali housewife wrote her autobiography in Bengali in 1876 called *Amar Jibon* (My Life) (MA English Paper, Utkal University)¹. Her book described the deplorable condition of women at that time and secretly appealed women to stand up from their subservience position to be critical of their own lives including the prevalent social customs and practices. Kamala Das, an aggressive feminist published – *Summer in Calcutta* and *A Dozen Poems* – contrasting between desire and spasm. Other women poets like Monika Verma, Tapati Mookelji, Tilottama Rajan and Sujata Balasubramaniam have come out in their Indo-Anglian poetries talking about their frustrations, humiliations and triumphs (MA English Paper, Utkal University)².

In the early 1930's, the era of short stories started and thus began the coming out of feminist short story writers. Anita Desai with her collection of short stories – *Games at Twilight and Other Stories* – pleaded for an attitude of self-control and adaptability of changing situations in the virtue of her protagonist characters. Considering the Indo-English literature published in 1970's, the contribution of female authors seems to have been increased remarkably and the awareness has begun to rise, with many critics directing their attention at the literary representation of the modern women and their problems, be it psychological, emotional, social or economical.

The feministic elements could well be seen in the books written by both male and the female authors; however, after 1950, this genre of books started becoming more prominent. For instance, Venu Chitale's *In Transit* 1950, Shanta Rama Rao's *Remember The House* 1956, Attiya Hussain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* 1961, Nayantara Sahgal's *The Day In Shadow* 1971, Bharati Mukherjee's *The Tiger's Daughter* 1973, and 'Wife' 1976, Rama Mehta's *Inside The Haveli* 1977, Mrinalini Sarabhai's *Thus Alone Is True* 1977, Veena Pamtal's *Midnight Woman* 1979 and Anita Desai's novels are the prominent ones. Since 1975, there has been a steady increase in the number of women's welfare organizations in India and their documents published, widely circulated and discussed in many forums helped the feminist movement got sensitive support from government and policy makers. Many issues that the women's movement took up during this period were against liquor abuse, missing girl children, violence against women, etc. Dalit women's rights and marginalized

women's rights, growing fundamentalism, women's representation in the media have also been taken up by the women's movement. The feminist movement during this period got strength from some of the important women's organizations like SEWA, National Commission for Women, National Council of Women, Joint Women's Programme, Kali for Women, Delhi and many more.

Women emancipation and media

The media at large has been instrumental though not to the degree desired in supporting the movement for women emancipation by focusing on the neglect and marginalization of the position of the women in society. (Shubha, accessed on 24.10.2021) Communication is extremely important for women's development and mass media play significant role. As a powerful agent of communication media can also reinforce the images of women and their roles in society. The word media conceptually include those technological agencies which are engaged in the creation, selection, processing, conveying and distribution of messages among people. As a logical nuance, the mass media deal with the day to day problems and issues of the nation especially of the general people. It contributes towards the emergence of mass society and mass culture. Mass Media comprises of print media and electronic media which are composed of the Radio, Television, Film, press, publications, advertising and also to an extent currently the social and digital media.

The mass media have been considered as the watch dog of society and this tradition given upon them the social responsibility to mirror and guide the process of social change. It is also considered as one of the important pillars of any progressive and independent country. But it has been argued that in contemporary time in India, in general mass media under various pressures have become the commercial channels only and failed to reflect the social problems or aspirations of the whole population, especially the problems concerning women in particular. (Patowary, 2014) So, the portrayal of women in Indian media whether it films, television programmes, visual advertisements or newspapers and magazines is becoming an area of great concern. There is an ongoing trend in today's media, both electronic and print, to portray women as commodity, sex objects and sometimes as victims. It is known to everyone that patriarchy is established everywhere and every aspects of life, and media is not an exception to that practice. One can easily see that media as the organisations are still dominated by the male. In all the higher posts men are employed and

they by controlling the whole system of media try to project the picture of women as weak and inferior.

On the other hand, even though the Indian media has been criticised as mentioned above no one can ignore its contribution in promoting issues concerning feminist thinking and the process of women empowerment carried out by government agencies and civil society organisations through various media platforms. Indian vernacular press and daily newspapers have contributed feminism to a great extent by bringing out narratives of women sufferings and discrimination for the reading of common people at local, national as well as global levels. The Indian media has been engaged through its newspaper, radio, TV and social media to cover the issues of women empowerment and the associated challenges, and the actual practice of deep-rooted patriarchy and other socio-cultural causes that women face. Also, the media has played a significant role in highlighting and promoting feminist narratives and created a huge impact in the society. For example, Media played an crucial role in the Nirbhaya Case and bringing in a new law Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013 known as Nirbhaya Act related to sexual offences against women.

Women's participation, performance and portrayal in media are important dimensions for the feminists. For empowerment and development of the women, it is very important to give them appropriate environment where they can raise their voices against the inequalities and the gender-gap they are experiencing in patriarchal societies. Alleviating the status of women in the society in every respect is considered as the only way to eliminate gender gap and achieving quality life for the women. Communication therefore can be regarded as an important way and mass media can do a significant task in shaping social values, attitudes, norms, perception and behaviour. It has been widely recognized that media can play substantial role in promoting and disseminating information among the masses and are considered as the key players in the socio-political and economic development of women. Media can provide space for women to talk about their rights, liberties and most importantly media can provide a democratic environment where women can participate, represent and in which they will be portrayed positively. A positive portrayal of women in media is necessary to maintain the real dignity and status of women which will minimize the gender gap and inequalities. But if media also become male dominated or play the role as a mere agent to take forward this tradition then the whole

situation will be against the women where their development and empowerment will not be possible.

Conclusion

Emancipation of women through Indian narratives, especially literature, presents futuristic constructs, which often become the very foundation of the revolutionary social transformations. Besides exposing the traces of alienation present in the parts of human life and its predicament, these literary works also embrace in themselves the social, cultural or mythical glimpses of their native lands. Literature has always been an important vehicle of fundamental changes. The popularity of feminist ethics in India has also given a way to the 'new' image of women presented by feminist writers in their works. Feminism isn't only about the advocacy of the equality and rights of women; it is more about compassion, respect and acceptability from the male counterparts. The major cause of dissatisfaction among women today is the superior attitude of men throughout, which was earlier accepted in silence. Feminist writers like Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Kamala Markandya have actually portrayed the various aspects of the male dominated society as the main theme of their works.

Through the late twenty-first century, feminism has emerged as a system, a point of view to realign the realities of the world, an optimistic approach to life, a step towards wisdom in human relationships and, also, the only mode for preservation of human race on the planet. Elaine Showalter in her essay, *Towards a Feminist Poetics*, says that a major challenge facing the feminists is to find a new language and a new way of reading which could possibly incorporate our intelligence, experience, reason, suffering, skepticism and vision (Karmarkar, 2014).

While the post-colonial puzzle had gradually transformed into a neo-colonial awakening in India, the creative writers, including the women factionalist, have come forward to examine the role of modern women in terms of her family and society differently and optimistically. The second generation of feminist writers like Urvashi Butalia, Shobha De, Chitra Banerjee Divakurni, Kamala Das, Meghna Pant, Jyoti Basu, and male authors like RK Narayan, Bhabani Bhattacharya and Raja Rao have exhibited a steady progress in context of three stages discussed by Elaine Showalter. The female protagonists in their work display a psychic transformation growing and evolving slowly but firmly through the respective phases of mindlessly copying the traditions, protesting and advocating the rights and lastly introspecting further leading to self-discovery. This has well

metamorphosized women into strong, independent and expeditious women who are ready to face the assaults of life, not merely as a minority but with the awareness of being powerful sustaining force for society as whole.

It has never been realized that if the conditions of women are not improved then the next generation of the present children will have absolutely no respect for the women be they are their sisters, wives and mothers. Hence the most important objectives of media must be to perform the programmes relating to improvement of women's status that they are free to assert themselves as human beings socially, morally and politically with men. There should be a positive portrayal of women taking note of their role in all facets of life. Thus, it can be concluded that the overall effect of the portrayal of women in media is to reinforce. The mass media in India has to make more efforts to discuss serious issues concerning women and prepare them to play their rightful and equal role in society. To transform this condition, on one side, it is required to monitor the media and point out the merits and demerits continuously and on the other side, the feminist narratives need to continue their efforts to project the issues and challenges of women in all walks of life.

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An Analysis of Global Media Coverage of Events in India

AMOL PARTH¹

ABSTRACT

Global media outlets looking for growth of their digital platforms beyond their respective countries have found India as the most lucrative market with a huge English-speaking population. In a bid to build their market in India, they have been observed to deliberately take controversial lines on socio-political developments in India. To understand the nature of their coverage on India, five case studies have been conducted. Data for their readership in India over a period of two years (March 2019–March 2021) was unearthed. Findings reveal that the global media outlets have grown more rapidly in India in comparison to their growth globally. Their monthly growth in India for the period of March 2019 to March 2021 was also measured. For this study, the data were procured from American media measurement and analytics company ComScore.

Keywords: Global Media, Covid pandemic, Digital Growth, Click bait journalism, Negative News

Introduction

On June 16, 2021, in a very surprising turn of events, on the tarmac of an airport in Geneva before boarding Air Force One to head back home after attending Geneva summit with Russian President Putin, US President Joe Biden snapped at the blue-eyed-boy of the American Press and said, “To be a good reporter, you got to be negative. You got to have a negative view of life; it seems to me, the way you all never ask a positive question” (The White House Briefing Room, 2021). In what can be summed up as the greatest irony of the century in the global news media industry, in 2019, it came to light that the foundation on which news principles were defined was misinterpreted. The scientific work of a professor, which warned against negative and sensational reporting was used as reference to practice negative and sensational journalism. Adversarial reporting has been the hallmark of good journalism since this Norwegian professor, Johan Galtung, defined news principles in 1965 through his scientific study, wherein he allegedly listed conflict and immediacy as the hallmarks of news reporting. In 2019, clarifying that his work was intended as a warning and not a guide, Galtung said, “It’s a complete misunderstanding. Our definitions were intended to show how news was getting it wrong.” Blaming the Western Media for this misinterpretation, he said that according to his paper “if news continued to reflect the world in this antagonistic way, it would generate extreme negativity. Our work from the early 1960s was meant to be a warning of the consequences for the way news media filtered the world. But the

western news industry believed I was describing how things should be done, instead of what is being done” (Haagerup, 2019).

Similar principles based on a false premise were manifest in global media coverage of COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic is a global tragedy and has actually given people more bad news than good, but one Economics Professor in the US while following news in 2020 observed that towards the second half of 2020 when situation slowly started to improve with lesser number of deaths and COVID cases, regardless of what the scientists said, the news stories always remained negative. For instance, if the number of cases in one area started to decline, media would start ignoring this area and focus more on the areas where the numbers were increasing. Vaccine research was given less space. Then this Economics Professor at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire Bruce Sacerdote, along with two other researchers, started studying the data on coverage of the pandemic by major media houses in the US. In this study titled ‘Why Is All COVID-19 News Bad News’, they found that “eighty seven percent of stories by U.S. major media outlets are negative in tone versus fifty percent for non-U.S. major sources and sixty four percent for scientific journals. The negativity of the U.S. major media is notable even in areas with positive developments including school re-openings and vaccine trials” (Sacerdote *et al.*, 2021)

New York Times journalists like David Leonhardt agreed with the study and acknowledged the problem. He went a step further to add another reason behind media’s bias towards bad/negative news, “Our healthy

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skepticism can turn into reflexive cynicism, and we end up telling something less than the complete story because we don't weigh positive news and negative objectively" (Leonhardt, 2021). Award-winning American podcaster and author Jay Acunzo says that it's all about business. "Our media is addicted to growing ad revenue. The business model is the illness. Everything else is a symptom" (Acunzo, 2021). Cognitive scientist at Harvard Steven Pinker, in an article titled 'Media Exaggerates Negative News', says that the media scholars who tally news stories of different kinds have confirmed that the gatekeepers prefer negative to positive coverage, holding the events constant. Pinker further underlines editorial formula of these media houses, "make a list of all the worst things that are happening anywhere on the planet that week, and you have an impressive-sounding, but ultimately irrational case that civilization has never faced greater peril" (Pinker, 2018).

Analyzing the impact of Donald Trump as President on the media business, an AFP Report quoted a communications professor at the University of Hartford, Adam Chiara as saying, "The Trump years gave a temporary bump to news organizations like the New York Times, which has seen sharp gains in digital subscribers" (AFP, 2021). According to the research firm ComScore, after Trump left the White House, "Online visits to the New York Times fell 30 percent from November 2020 to February 2021 and 27 percent at the Washington Post" (AFP, 2021). Owing the fall in viewership to Trump's departure, another Professor of political communications at Boston University, Tobe Berkovitz told AFP, "The lack of drama in Washington, means 'fewer eyeballs' for media outlets, which translates into declining ad revenues and subscriptions, deepening their economic woes. President Joe Biden is a boring guy who doesn't generate much drama, making it more difficult to attract readers and viewers" (AFP, 2021). From this, it can be inferred that the lack of drama at home along with declining demand for print, compounded with limited space to grow in their own countries, has led to fall in readership and revenue. This may have motivated these global media houses to venture out looking for better markets with huge English-speaking population, like India. With over 130 Million, India has third largest English speaking population in the world. This number explains why India is a lucrative market for these global English publications which are looking for new avenues to increase their digital subscriptions and revenue (Rukmini, 2019).

Research Methodology

The researcher studied more than 3000 India-related Articles by *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *TIME* and *The Guardian* over the last decade. Out of these, a total of 500 articles, that is, 100 articles each by these five publications were randomly sampled. To find these 3000+ India-related articles, India and South Asia correspondents' write-ups were searched for; columnists who write on India for these publications were identified. Their author pages were scanned for articles on India. To find more relevant articles, Google search was done with keywords as India and the names of these five publications.

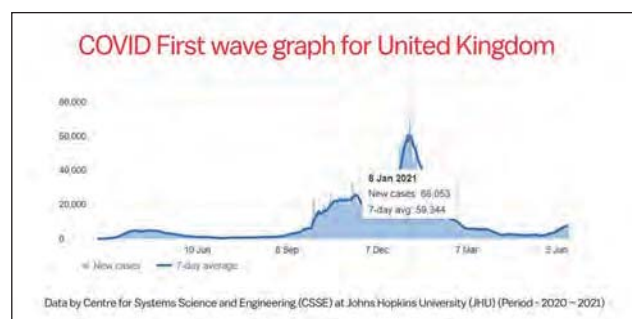
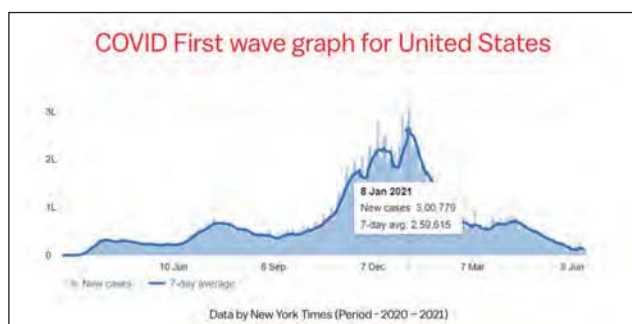
Analysis and Findings

Words/language used: The words/language that these publications have used the most in context of India are negative, divisive, outrageous, full of contempt and ridicule for India. In these 500 headlines, it was found that the most used words were these 10 – *Fear*, *Hate*, *Violence*, *Riot*, *Hindu*, *Muslim*, *Kashmir*, *Cow*, *Mob*, and *Protest*. It can be inferred that these foreign media outlets have been trying to exploit the alleged fault lines within India, looking for controversies and potential contentious issues which may catch more eyeballs. This not only creates social unrest in India but also hurts India's image globally, in turn putting India's foreign relations and economic interests at risk. For instance, almost every 1 out of 5 articles on India by these publications has *Hindu* and *Muslim* in its headline. This is an attempt to provoke controversies along religious fault lines in India. This not only endangers peace and harmony in India, but also puts overseas Indians at risk. In what may be construed as an example of prejudiced and classist approach towards India, *Cow* appears quite frequently in their headlines. While India has registered many firsts in space exploration, these publications would still want to perceive and portray India as cattle class.

Illustrative Case Studies: Following case studies and analyses make a strong case for inferring that global media's limited understanding of India is partly due to ignorance of India's diversity and complexities and partly motivated by their desire to grow digital business in India. In the words of an award-winning Indian investigative journalist, Neha Dixit, who coordinates with North American news broadcasters visiting/reporting on India,

“Their storytelling is different than the way I do my work. Since it is for an international audience, they try to simplify complex matters, and lose out on the nuance” (Borpujari, 2019). Writing in *Columbia Journalism Review*, Indian journalist Priyanka Borpujari highlights how by ignoring inputs from local journalists/ground reporters, foreign journalists and their reports end up with poor understanding of the complex realities of India, “Too often, Western journalists are the sole authors of stories about non-Western subjects, and the inequitable relationships within journalism get reproduced in the published work. The result is a glut of predictable and monotonous news pieces about rape in India and war in El Salvador” (Borpujari, 2019). Following are five case studies which are examples of Global media’s editorial prejudices and poor understanding of India’s complex realities.

Case Study I: In April 2021, BBC published a photo story with disclaimer “This article contains images some people may find upsetting.” The Article screamed in bold letters, “Harrowing scenes from India show the extent of the crisis gripping the nation as the second wave of Corona virus brings the death toll to over 200,000” (BBC, 2021). Such reportage by the Western Media was missing when lakhs of people died in first wave of COVID-19 in 2020 in the US, UK and Europe. There were no screaming Headlines. These media houses were in solidarity with the dead and their families, while the COVID first wave was at its peak in November 2020, December 2020 and January 2021 in US.



Case Study II: In November 2017, New York Times painted India’s decision to promote its indigenous textile industry as an obstacle in country’s growth. “Since the Bharatiya Janata Party formed a national government in 2014, the Indian fashion industry has been pressed to aggressively promote traditional attire and bypass Western styles” (Qadri, 2017, para. 3). It’s ignorance to attack the promotion of local industries of *Saree*, which has been women’s attire in the Indian subcontinent since Indus valley civilisation and continues to be so today as well. “During his campaign, Mr. Modi had promised to revive the tradition of the *Banarasi Saree* and to help its weavers, a significant percentage of the constituency’s



Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/12/fashion/india-nationalism-sari.html>

electorate. The weavers, who are mostly Muslim and following a family trade, largely live in poverty” (Qadri, 2017, para. 14). To prove its point, New York Times goes on to falsely claim that clothing choices are being imposed upon people. “Mr. Modi has made traditional dress a priority and, as many in the country want to please him, the fashion industry has followed along” (Qadri, 2017, para 5).

Case Study III: A Truck driver running over people in lower Manhattan in 2017 was called deadliest terror attack by The New York Times, but when a suicide bomber attacked the convoy of



Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/31/nyregion/police-shooting-lower-manhattan.html>

Indian Security personnel in March 2019 in Kashmir killing 40 paramilitary soldiers, The New York Times chooses to call it an “Explosion”, even after the Pakistan-based terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammed claimed responsibility for the bombing (Mueller *et al.*; Rashid, 2019).

Case Study IV: In September 2014, The New York Times published a cartoon ‘India’s Budget Mission to Mars’. This wasn’t to appreciate the fact that India became the first country in Asia to reach Mars and first country in the world to do so



Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/29/opinion/heng-indias-budget-mission-to-mars.html>

in its first attempt at one-tenth the cost of similar NASA mission. But on the contrary, the cartoon was in poor taste, showing an Indian farmer with a cow knocking at the door of so-called “Elite Space Club” (Heng, 2014).

Case Study V: On December 19, 2013, The New York Times published an editorial justifying the arrest of then India’s deputy consul-general in New York Devyani Khobragade despite her diplomatic immunity. On protests from India, The



Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/20/opinion/indias-misplaced-outrage.html>

New York Times editorial headline said “India’s Misplaced Outrage”, taking the moral high ground about following American laws and hence non-

applicability of diplomatic immunity (Editorial, 2013).

Same year, an American diplomat and his family were whisked away from Kenya by the US embassy within a day after the said US diplomat killed a father of three whose widow was six months pregnant. This diplomat was Joshua



Source: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/08/02/diplomat-kenya-car-crash/2612229/>

Walde, an information management officer at the US Embassy in Nairobi. There was no editorial published by The New York Times about following Kenyan laws (Straziuso, 2013).

Readership in India and Digital Growth

India is a very good market for global media outlets. At 130 million, India has the third largest English-speaking population in the world after United States and Nigeria. Number of people who speak English in India is almost double of the entire population of United Kingdom and almost 40% of the entire population of United States (Rukmini, 2019). India is the second most populous country in the world with most varied demography, languages, religions and classes. This makes India a complex society with many possible fault lines which can be exploited.

Readership growth data for a period of two years corroborates how these outlets have intelligently leveraged aforementioned aspects to grow in India. This data has been procured from American media measurement and analytics company ComScore, for this study.

New York Times grew in India, while declined Globally

Between March 2019 and March 2021, The New York Times witnessed a growth of 22 per cent in the Indian market, while its readership declined globally by 8 per cent.



Source: ComScore, 2021

In March 2019, India's percentage share in The New York Times' total global growth was 2.38%. India's share grew to 3.17% by March 2021.

Wall Street Journal grew more rapidly in India than Globally

In the same period between March 2019 and March 2021, Wall Street Journal grew in India twice faster than it did globally.



Source: ComScore, 2021

In March 2019, India's percentage share in Wall Street Journal's total global growth was 1.99%. India's share grew to 2.60% by March 2021.

TIME saw rise in India and fall Globally

TIME grew at a rate of almost 50% in India, while it lost 31 per cent of its market globally in two years from March 2019 to March 2021.



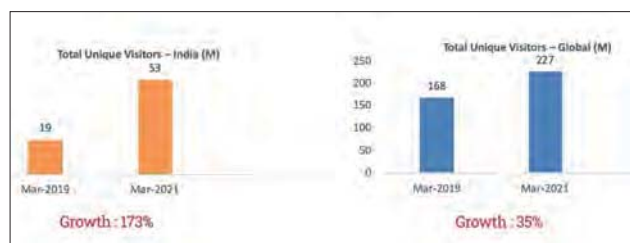
Source: ComScore, 2021

In March 2019, India's percentage share in TIME's total global growth was 2.71%. India's share grew to 5.87% by March 2021.

BBC's growth in India was five times more than its growth Globally

Between March 2019 and March 2021, BBC

grew by 173% in India, which was almost five times of its global growth at 35%.



Source: ComScore, 2021

In March 2019, India's percentage share in BBC's total global growth was 11.14%. India's share grew to 23.11% by March 2021.

Washington Post remained almost stagnant

During the same time period between March 2019 and March 2021, Washington Post didn't see much change, with 7% decline in India and 3% global growth.



Source: ComScore, 2021

In March 2019, India's percentage share in Washington Post's total global growth was 1.52%. India's share fell marginally to 1.36% by March 2021.

The Guardian saw decline in India and marginal growth globally

The readership of The Guardian fell by 47% in India, while it saw marginal global growth of 5%, in between March 2019 and March 2021.

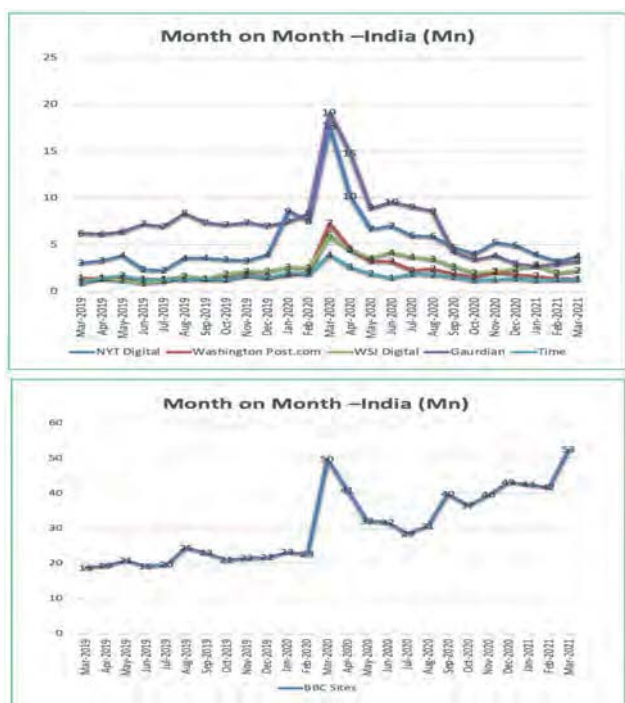


Source: ComScore, 2021

In March 2019, India's percentage share in Guardian's total global growth was 7.01%. India's share fell to 3.50% by March 2021.

Monthly Readership data of New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, The Guardian, TIME and BBC in India

It is evident that the readership of these media outlets in India suddenly starts growing massively in December 2019 when the CAA protests began, and keeps growing till March 2020 till the protests began to subside. With the end of the CAA protests after mid-March 2020, their readership witnesses sudden decline.



Source: ComScore, 2021

Discussion

The minimal staff strength for covering a vast and diverse country like India is another reason for the lack of nuances, poor understanding of complexities, limited fact-checks and hence substandard reports and low-quality journalism in the global media outlets. What makes matters worse is that even these few correspondents are based either in national capital Delhi or financial capital Mumbai. Their local sources are from Delhi and Mumbai clubs and hence these sources themselves have limited reach and understanding of an event happening in India thousands of miles away from Delhi and Mumbai. These publications have at most 2–3 correspondents based in India. Out of them, 1–2 is for entire South Asia region and only one is dedicatedly reporting for India. Some don't even have that one single dedicated correspondent but a freelancer who paints similar picture about a particular development for multiple foreign media

houses (Dhillon, 2021).

Global media saw massive growth in their readership in India over last few years. Between March 2019 and March 2021, the percentage growth of these foreign media houses in India has been much higher than their global growth during the same period. Month on Month readership data for these global media houses shows how their disproportionate coverage of protests and controversies in India gives significant jump to their readership in India. The usage of words and language based on study of 3000+ Articles show how global media's choice of words to describe events in India is indicative of their attempts to exploit fault lines within India. The foundation on which news principles were defined was misinterpreted by the Western Media.

Conclusion

The study concludes that decline or saturation of readership in their home countries has led to fall in revenue of the global media. This has motivated the global media houses to venture out looking for better and bigger markets. Two factors make India a lucrative market for global English media houses –1) At 130 Million+, India has fastest growing English speaking population, and 2) Potential social fault-lines owing to varied demography. The study highlights multitude of doomsday prophecies on India by Global Media—Suggestive of using cynicism and fear to grow in India. Global media's limited understanding of India is partly by ignorance and partly driven by their business model. Their ignorance is because of their arm-chair journalism as they report on complex issues/developments in India while sitting in New York/London/Mumbai/Delhi! Rest is all about making money, which they do while riding on the back of their deep-seated prejudice against India. The study points out Global Media's approach—they report on issues in India differently from the way they do it back home. The values they hold while reporting about events in their own countries; they don't abide by the same values in their reportage on similar events in India. Readership data analysis confirms pattern of using human tragedies as business opportunities. Example - Global media's COVID coverage in India. To sum it up, their choice of words, issues and prejudiced views in almost every other article on India under the garb of freedom of expression is a result of their desperate need to expand their footprint among the huge English-speaking population of India. Hence, driven by revenue, market share, editorial prejudice and limited understanding of Indian democracy, diversity, demography and governance structure, most of the

global media's news reports and opinion columns on India are at best half-truths.

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Road to Sustainability: A Consumer Based Analysis of Green Marketing Initiatives of the Indian Automobile Industry

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ABSTRACT

Worsening state of environment is a foremost concern for the world today. Vehicle pollutants cause immediate and long-term effects on the environment and harm human health. Therefore it is important for the industry to think of ways to reduce its carbon footprint and adopt more sustainable practices. The automobile industry has developed a variety of green technologies to ensure sustainability and to reduce the damaging effects that the industry has on our planet. The objective of the automobile sector should not just be to develop environmental friendly products but also to carve a unique and a strong environment friendly identity too. The study focuses to probe the green initiatives of prominent automobile industries in India, the level of consciousness and perception of customers towards green vehicles and their green advertisements. The study is limited to green cars only. The study may be helpful to the automobile companies, marketers and retailers to work out a good green marketing campaign for their vehicles, after understanding the level of awareness and perception of consumers on green initiatives of automobile companies. The population of the study has been identified from Bhopal city and a sample of 100 customers has been selected from the population using the techniques of "Convenience Sampling". It is a quantitative study and has used questionnaire and content analysis to collect data.

Keywords: Green cars, Green initiatives, Green marketing, Green advertising, Sustainability

Introduction

Environmental pollution has reached almost the threshold level in India. To mitigate environmental issues, the Indian Government has also decided to encourage Electric Vehicles (EV) to reduce pollution. The country prepares to shift towards EVs by 2030. The government desires the car manufacturers to migrate to EV production, which will curtail the oil bill by US\$60 billion, reduce emissions by 37 per cent and decrease the dependence on the imports of fuel, thus protecting from susceptibility against crude prices and currency fluctuations. According to the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturer (SIAM, 2017), EVs would make up 40 per cent of new car sales by 2030 and 100 per cent by 2047. Adopting green technology by the automotive industry is imperative for the future of the environment and the car manufacturers are pushing forward the competition by following the ecological and sustainable path, staking on hybrid technologies and electrification.

The term "green", implies an underlying concern for preservation of the environment and a noninvasive lifestyle. Considering the automotive industry, transport accounts for roughly a third of greenhouse gases emissions worldwide and majority of population considers it as one of the most evident source of pollution. Many automobile firms are now

adopting green initiatives in order to reduce the pressures and for creating a better image by keeping their business in a sustainable manner, like green supply chain management, reverse logistics, green marketing, green advertising and use of eco-labeling (Smith, 2010).

Customers who are price sensitive and reside in developing countries, like India and neighbouring countries, may find its high price as the major constraint and refrain from such products. In this case, it is paramount to understand that whether the consumer behaviour is changing toward paying a higher price for the product, which is eco-friendly or safer for the environment (Chan *et al.*, 2012a). In the context of the automobile sector, the Indian consumers are sometimes willing to pay a slightly higher price, if their vehicles will save some money in terms of fuel, or for purchasing of alternative fuel option such as LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas), CNG (Compressed Natural Gas), and Battery powered. Therefore, if we see the recent trends in Indian automobile industry, we find that leading Indian Automobile companies are focusing on the eco-friendly cars and appealing to their customers successfully. Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, Mahindra & Mahindra and many more in India are focusing on the production of greener cars (Shrikant *et al.*, 2012).

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Green advertising

The green product marketplace has grown in the last decade (Lee, 2014). There has been a gradual increase in research on green marketing and green consumer behaviour studies in India since 2008. Today advertising is playing a new role, the role of creating advertisements that show environmentally friendly products. According to Julia Corbett, "Green advertising is defined as product ads flaunting environmental benefits or corporate green-image ads". Worldwide evidence shows that concern for the environment encourages consumers to change their behaviour (Mishra & Sharma, 2014). Popular culture and the mass media play an enormous role in shaping people's perception and understanding of environmental issues. Nature has become a marketing device in advertising. The automobile industry makes the best use of nature by using nature, weather, and animals to reflect value, safety and the sense of finding adventure all of which contradicts the fact that cars pollute our environment.

Green advertisement reflects the following characteristics:

- (a) An advertisement that directly or indirectly addressed the relationship between a product, the physical environment, and the biological life forms within the environment;
- (b) An advertisement that promoted a green lifestyle with or without highlighting a product/service; and
- (c) An advertisement that presented a corporate image/identity or an action of environmental responsibility (Banerjee *et al.*, 1995)

Review of Literature

Global pollution is on the rise and each effort made, is to cut back the CO₂ emissions and save the earth. One such effort is the introduction of electric vehicles as the automobile sector is one of the largest emitter of CO₂ and therefore it is important to decrease it. The Indian government has devised ambitious plans of introducing EVs to the Indian market and narrow the pace with the event of EVs globally. The National Electric Mobility Mission Plan 2020 has included a detailed report on the EVs. India faces a huge challenge in shifting the transportation sector from ICE engines to EVs. It requires a lot of planning along with research and development. Charging infrastructure must be adequately built to deal with range anxiety. It is important to form demand generation by making all government buses electric and offering tax exemptions for people who own EVs (Kumar & Sanjeevikumar 2019). India

contributes to about 18% in transport sector in terms of carbon emission. The EV is one of the possible alternative solutions to defeat the crises efficiently. Many automobile companies are introducing EVs and are expanding their portfolio. Promoting EVs can help reduce dependency on fuel and pollution and benefit both consumers and the nation. The educational level of people has a considerably higher influence over their awareness level on EVs. Apart from manufacturers, Government should try hard to create awareness and a positive perception among potential customers (Masurali & Surya, 2018).

Indian Scenario is different because the current market share of EV/PHEV is only around 0.1% and almost all vehicles consider fossil fuel-based transportation. These pollute the atmosphere by the production of greenhouse gases and causes global warming. The gap between domestic petroleum production and consumption is broadening. India imports around 70% of oil needed per annum. Therefore there is a urgent need to explore issues and challenges for sustainable and cleaner alternatives (Gujarathi, *et al.*, 2018).

Selection of cars depends upon ecological concern, cost, comfort, trust, technology, social acceptance and availability of infrastructure. These arguments have been tested for both conventional cars as well as EVs. These factors have a direct influence on individual choice of vehicle and also found that both EV manufacturers and government need to invest more for social acceptance of the vehicles and this can be done by improving infrastructural facilities and giving more thrust on technology to create trust. It is clear from the analysis that the population is already well aware of the environmental benefits. The responsibility rests on the shoulders of the government and manufacturers to invest in the manufacturing of EVs (Bhalla, *et al.*, 2018). The government should develop an aggressive strategy for the adoption of EVs in India and ensure a well-executed implementation. India's geography and diversity pose problems that require thoughtful solutions. Purchasing four-wheeled vehicles for government offices, buses and three-wheeled vehicles for public transport will definitely accelerate the growth of EVs. Though, the private EVs may take 5-6 years to gain acceptance and popularity, investments by fleet operators such as Ola and Uber, and food distribution operators like Swiggy and Zomato, will boost the initial growth of two and four-wheeled electric vehicles (Kesari, *et al.*, 2019).

Indian companies recently have started taking steady steps to be ecologically conscious. But some of the studies revealed that the automobile

firms are still hesitant of showing themselves to be environment friendly irrespective of such features (Vatsa, *et al.*, 2015). One obvious reason for this may be the lower level of consumer awareness. Leading Indian Corporates like the Tata, Unilever, Mahindra, Wipro and ITC are all actively participating in green and sustainability initiatives. Companies have now noticed the increasing demand for green products and are shifting their marketing efforts to tap this new breed of green consumers (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006).

Interest in developing sustainable lifestyles creates demand for green consumption. Consumers are becoming more aware, responsible and driving change in the marketplace. In response, companies are also integrating appropriate green strategies into their operational activities, product development processes, and promotional activities to gain a competitive advantage in saturated markets. This will help companies to maximize their market share and minimize production costs (Malyan & Duhan, 2018).

The use of language of the environmental protection movement and green imagery by the advertising industry has been criticized. Green advertisements have been perceived as a means to create and foster new consumer desires and to inject competition into the market in a way that does not rely upon price and even denies it as a factor (Holder, 1991). Green and Peloza (2014) proposed that how consumers respond to advertising appeals that inspire environmentally friendly consumption behaviour are considerably influenced by the decision-making context."

Bickart and Ruth (2012) observed consumers' perception of a green advertisement is affected by brand familiarity and it plays a very dominant role in managing it. When consumer environmental concern is high, an on-package eco-seal included in an advertisement copy helps familiar brands, but hurts unfamiliar brands. According to Kangun *et. al.*, (1991) low environmentally concerned consumers evaluate the familiar brand more favourably than the unfamiliar brand. Clearly, brand image has the power to affect consumers' trust (or skepticism) in advertisements claiming the green performance of the product. In the car market a strong brand image conveys the quality and the features of the car therefore, it is important to consider brand positioning effect on the mind of the customer.

Efficient regulation of green advertising claims has been the objective of a number of public policy studies. Green advertising usually involves the practice of claims that either underlines the association

between the product/service with the environment, or the commitment of brand towards the ecosystems (Banerjee, *et al.*, 1995).

Statement of the problem

Automobile companies are employing numerous green practices to save costs to increase its competitiveness in the market and to create environment conscious brand image for themselves. The automotive sector is an important source of employment and economic growth but it is also the prime polluters of the environment. Car manufacturing companies have been trying various innovative ways to control their environmental impact through efficient production systems, fuel efficient engines, eco-friendly design, eco-friendly materials for car components, etc. This study focuses on examining the green operations initiatives of the prominent Indian automobile brands and also to understand the customer perception of purchasing green cars and towards their green advertisements.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the various green marketing initiatives adopted by leading automobile players in Indian market environment and opportunities and challenges in implementing these initiatives.
2. To understand the customer perception towards purchasing green cars.
3. To identify those factors that motivates the customers to purchase green cars.
4. To identify those factors that discourages the customers to purchase green cars.
5. To understand the customer perception towards green advertisements of green cars.

Significance and scope of the study

Indian automobile industry is gearing up for transformation and companies have started adopting green marketing practices in recent times though they are facing many obstacles in implementing green marketing practices in the India. The study focuses to probe the green initiatives of leading automobile industries in India, the level of awareness and perception of customers towards green vehicles and their green advertisements. The study is limited to eco-friendly cars only. The study may be helpful to the automobile companies, marketers and retailers to work out a good green marketing campaign for their vehicles, after understanding the level of awareness and perception of consumers on green initiatives of automobile companies. The population of the study was identified from Bhopal city and a sample of 100

customers has been selected from the population using the techniques of “Convenience Sampling”. The scope of the study is limited to the customers in Bhopal city.

Methodology

It is a quantitative study and used questionnaire and content analysis to collect data. Primary data was collected through questionnaire designed using Google docs and its link was sent to 100 respondents residing in Bhopal city. The participants included both genders that were between the age group of 21–56 years from middle and upper socio-economic backgrounds. Secondary data were collected by conducting a comprehensive literature survey of text books, national and international referred journals, magazines, newspapers, government publications, websites etc.

Discussions

Green initiatives of automobile sector

All over the world renowned automobile companies are adopting green initiatives. However, adoption of green technologies as well as marketing strategy in Indian automobile industry is in a nascent stage. Based on the concept of green marketing, numerous cars have come into the market including hybrid electric vehicles, plug-in hybrid electric vehicles, battery electric vehicles, compressed-air vehicles, hydrogen and fuel-cell vehicles, neat ethanol vehicles, flexible fuel vehicles, natural gas vehicles, clean diesel vehicles, and some sources also include vehicles using blends of bio diesel and ethanol fuel or gasohol.

Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra, General Motors and Hyundai are in close competition with each other in producing green cars in India. Tata Nexon EV, Tata Tigor EV, Tata Tiago EV, Hyundai Kona Electric, Mahindra e-Verito, Mahindra e2oPlus, MG ZS EV, Strom R3, Jaguar i-Pace, Mercedes-Benz EQC are currently available in the Indian market. In the next two years many more like Maruti, Toyota, Honda, Hindustan Motors, and Volkswagen may enter the market. During July 2021, total registered EV sales were at 26,127 units, whereas in July 2020, total EV sales were at 7,512 and are expected to grow at 26% in FY21–23 (Fitch Solutions).

The green initiatives taken by the top four key players in the EV Car market in India:

Tata Motors

Tata Motors is vigorously working towards a low-

carbon strategy and is the leader of the environment-friendly alternate fuel mobility in the country. Being a ‘Future Ready’ responsible corporate and a signatory of RE100 initiative, it aims to source 100% renewable electricity by 2030. Tata Motors under its ‘Go Green’ initiative in association with an NGO, will plant a sapling for the sale of every new commercial vehicle and for those customers who will get their commercial vehicle serviced. They have introduced Tata Nexon EV, Tata Tigor EV, Tata Tiago EV and Jaguar i-Pace electric vehicles in India.

Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) has launched research projects like REEVolution, REHEV and Range-e running for the electrification of premium sedans and all-terrain vehicles. Tata Motors was the first Indian automobile company to launch vehicles with Euro (emission) norms well in advance of the mandated date and is focused on making its engines more environment-friendly. The Jaguar XF MY12 line-up consists of a diesel version with Intelligent Stop-Start technology which makes it the most fuel-efficient. The innovative engine fitted in MY12 Range Rovers aims to achieve a 14 per cent decrease in carbon dioxide emissions and a 19 per cent improvement in consumption of fuel. Tata vehicles use aluminum and other lightweight materials to reduce vehicle weight. Jaguar XJ and XK are based on this technology and include both natural as well as recycled materials in its construction leading to substantially low energy demand and minimal carbon footprint.

Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M)

Mahindra & Mahindra is all set to become a carbon neutral company by 2040 and is focusing on energy efficiency and the use of renewable power to achieve this goal. M&M was the very first company in the world to pledge to double energy productivity by adoption of the Climate Group’s program EP100. It has doubled the energy productivity of the automotive business almost 12 years ahead of schedule by using energy proficient lighting, efficient heating, air conditioning (HVAC), ventilation, motors and heat recovery projects.

It declared its internal Carbon Price of \$10 per ton of carbon emitted to fund investments needed to follow the path of carbon neutrality. The company has an experience of more than 10 years in creating carbon sinks. Mahindra’s “Rise against climate change” campaign had a significant impact. It is also working on its carbon neutrality commitment with Environmental Defense Fund (EDF). It is a signatory of the Science based targets initiative which provides companies with a clear roadmap for decreasing

emissions in line with the Paris Agreement's aim of restricting global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. Mahindra is the founding member of the Carbon Pricing Leadership and an award-winning sustainability framework to its credit. M&M has introduced more than 4 new all-electric vehicles in India and has emerged as the leader in bringing EVs to the Indian market.

Morris Garages (MG)

MG Motor India has joined hands with TES-AMM, a global e-waste recycling and end-to-end service provider for building a robust EV infrastructure to facilitate India's transition to green mobility. The partnership will ensure greater peace of mind to the ZS EV owners about their ecological footprint by secure recycling of MG ZS EV batteries, thus ensuring environment sustainability. MG is committed to develop a comprehensive EV ecosystem that supports India's drive towards its greener and cleaner future.

Motor India's has launched a powerful brand campaign #ChangeWhatYouCan featuring Benedict Cumberbatch and MG ZS EV, urging Indians to drive positive societal change and champion environmental conservation through adoption of EVs. Utility giant Tata Power and MG Motor India have signed a Memorandum of Understanding, with an aim to contribute towards electric vehicle revolution in the country. Tata Power will deploy 50KW DC superfast chargers at select MG Motor India dealership locations and offer end-to-end EV charging solutions to its dealerships spread across the country to provide our customers with a robust charging ecosystem to promote the adoption of cleaner and greener mobility solutions.

Hyundai

Hyundai Motor India Limited was recently awarded the 'IEI Industry Excellence Award' for the year 2019 by the Institution of Engineers (India). It has introduced initiatives with the aim of driving customer focus towards 'Air Pollution' and has also undertaken the maintenance of 'Greenery Belt'. Hyundai has announced its blueprint to be a carbon-neutral manufacturer and is taking all possible steps to help combat climate change and reduce environmental impact. It aims to achieve this target by 2045, and has laid out its plans and set objectives based on three important pillars: clean mobility, newer mobility platforms and green energy. Hyundai is familiar with making electric vehicles as it has already unveiled its Electric-Global Modular Platform (E-GMP) which is dedicated to BEVs. The manufacturer has also been

focused on hydrogen fuel cell technology, to encourage the use of cleaner fuel and reduced emissions from its vehicles and is committed to reducing carbon emissions at the company's production facilities. Hyundai is also taking measures to enable its EV to send back the energy to the grid with its Vehicle-to-Grid program and is working with local partners to commence commercial reuse of second-life EV batteries.

Sample Description

Out of the 100 respondents who participated in the study, 72 per cent were male and 28 per cent were female. In terms of age (14%) of the respondents were aged between 21 to 28, (17%) were between the age group of 28 to 35, the majority (30%) were aged between 35 to 42, (20%) between 42-49 and (19%) were aged between 49-56 years. In terms of educational qualification, 52 per cent were post-graduates, 34 per cent were Graduates and 12 per cent had doctoral degrees. (25%) of the respondents earned an annual income in the category less than R6000000, 12% between R600000 to R800000, and 12% in the R800000 to R1000000 category, 2% between R1000000- 1200000 category. The majority (49%) of the respondents belong to the category of more than R1200000.

Data Analysis

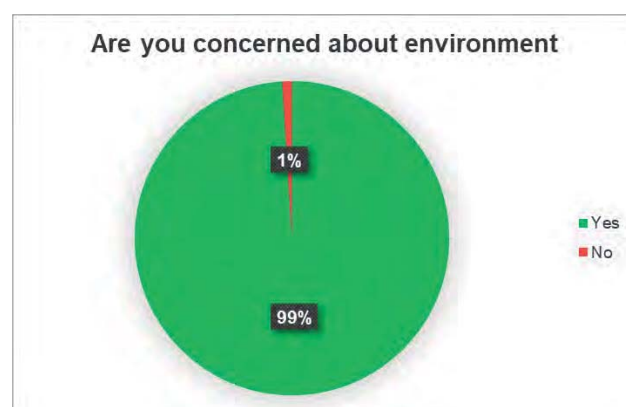


Figure 1: Concern for the environment and environment-friendly products attributes

Out of 100 respondents who were surveyed, majority 99 per cent (Fig.1) gave importance to environment-friendly products features while purchasing products and showed a concern for the environment. Only 1 per cent of the respondents showed no concern towards the environment and environment-friendly products features.

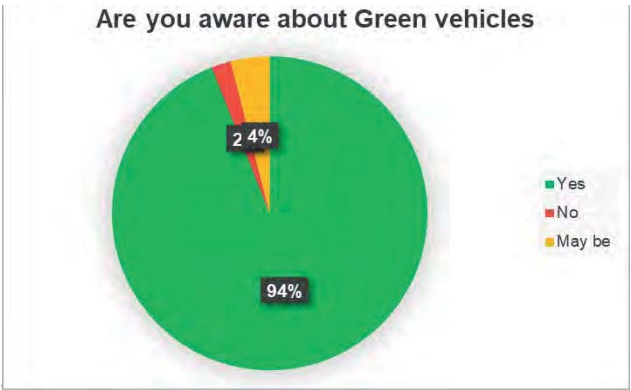


Figure 2: Awareness about green vehicles

94 per cent (Fig. 2) of the respondents were fully aware of green vehicles, 4 per cent respondents had some awareness and only 2 per cent knew nothing about the green cars. Thus it can be concluded that out of the respondents’ surveyed, a very large section of respondents were fully aware about green cars.

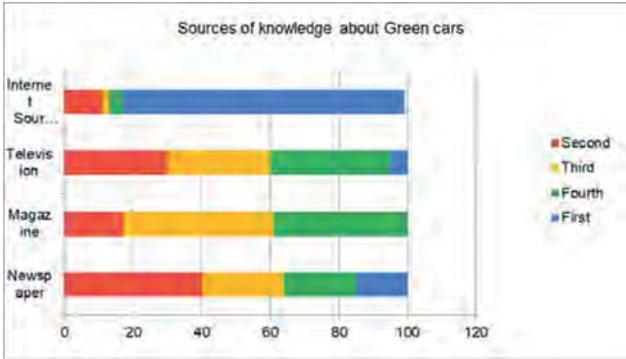


Figure 3: Sources of knowledge about green cars

Figure 3 depicts the sources of knowledge about green cars among respondents. Out of the 100 respondents surveyed, for majority, internet was the most important source of knowledge and information about green cars, followed by newspapers, television and magazines respectively.

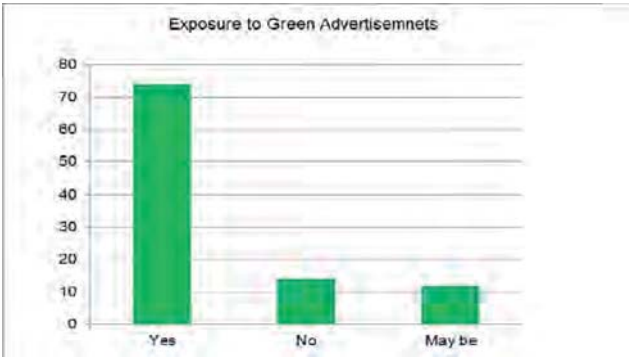


Figure 4: Exposure to green advertisements of automobiles

74 per cent of the respondents (Fig. 4) had seen green advertisements of automobiles in the past, 14 per cent were not sure about the exposure to such ads and 12 per cent had never seen green automobiles advertisements.

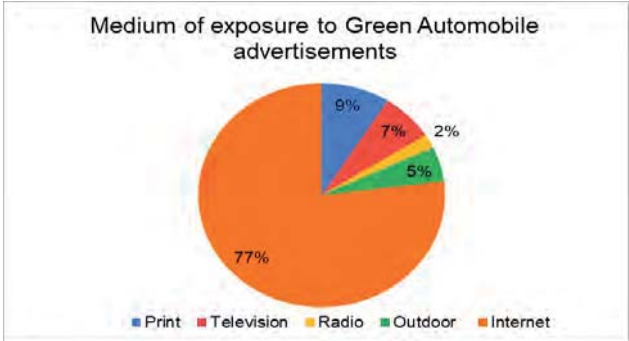


Figure 5: Medium of exposure to green automobile advertisements

Figure 5 depicts the medium through which respondents were exposed to green advertisements. Out of the 100 respondents surveyed majority 77 were exposed to green advertisements through Internet, followed by Print (9) and Television (7) respectively. Outdoor (5) and Radio (2) were ranked lowest in terms of ad exposure.

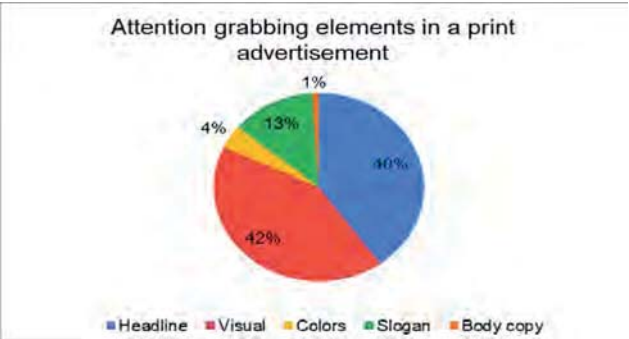


Figure 6: Attention grabbing elements in print advertisements of green automobiles

In a print advertisement of green cars, visual was the most effective element that grabbed the attention of the respondents (42%), followed by headline (40%), slogans (12%), colors (4%) and the body copy was the least effective element.

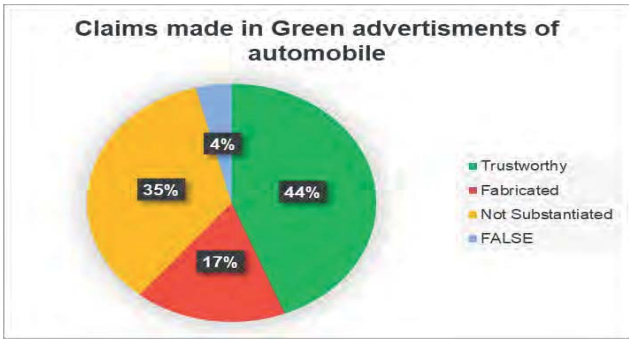


Figure 7: Claims made in the advertisements of green cars

Out of the total respondent's majority 44 per cent found the environmental claims made in the green advertisements of cars trustworthy, 35 per cent felt that the claims were not substantiated well enough and 17 per cent of the respondents felt that the claims were fabricated and 4 respondents found the claims to be false.

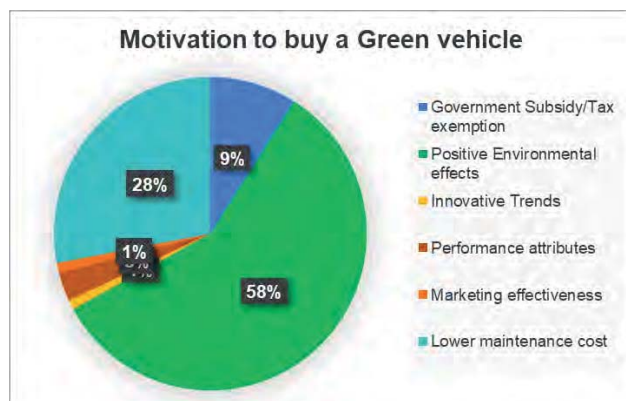


Figure 8: Factors that motivate to buy a green car

The analysis of factors that encourage the purchase of green cars revealed that for majority 58 per cent of the respondents (Fig. 8), the motivating factor for purchasing green cars was positive environmental effects. 28 per cent were motivated by the lower maintenance cost of green cars, 9 per cent were motivated by Government Subsidy/Tax exemption, followed by performance attributes (3 per cent) and innovative trends and marketing effectiveness by 1 per cent each.

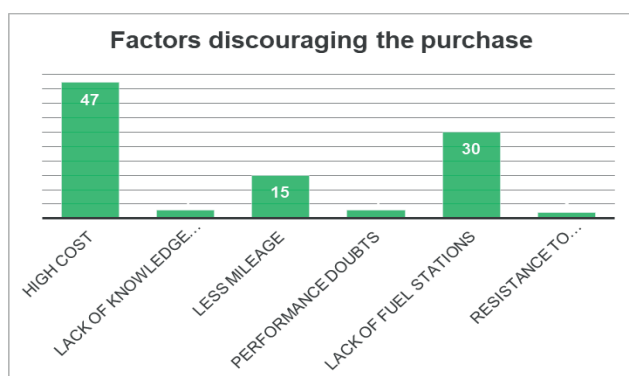


Figure: 9 Factors that discourage the purchase of Green cars

It can be seen in Figure 9 that the highest barrier to purchase green cars by the respondents was high cost (47%). Purchasing power plays an important role in determining the selection of green cars. The second highest barrier is lack of fuel stations (40%). The major obstacle in buying behaviour of green cars was less mileage (15%) and the other discouraging factors were related to doubts about performance, lack of knowledge and resistance to change.

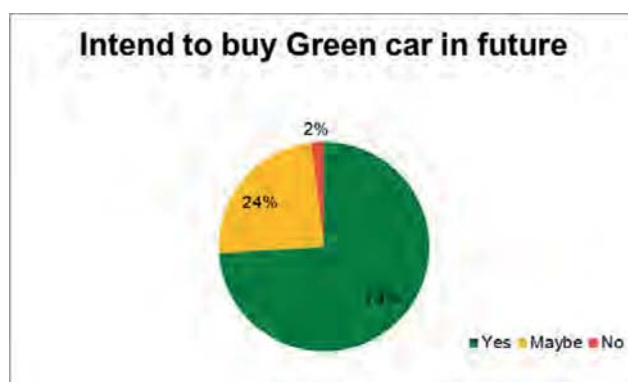


Figure10: Intend to buy Green car in future

Figure 10 depicts that 74 per cent of the respondents intend to buy a green car in future and 24 per cent were open to the idea but not very sure. Only 2 per cent of the respondents showed no interest in the purchase of a green car in the future.

Conclusion

Delhi was ranked as the most polluted capital in the world and India was placed third with worst air quality out of 106 countries in 2020 in the World Air Quality Report by IQAir. The air pollution from fossil fuels has led to at least 30.7% of deaths in India which means that around 2.5 million people die every year due to breathing toxic air. Reducing tailpipe emissions from urban transportation is critical to address climate change and electric vehicle promise zero tailpipe emissions and a reduction in air pollution in cities. The Indian government is leaving no stones unturned to encourage faster adoption and manufacturing of hybrid and electric vehicles. This study confirms that more and more consumers are becoming aware of sustainability issues due to the green marketing initiatives adopted by car manufacturers. Environmental benefits do influence consumer adoption intentions. People who are concerned for the environment are more likely to adopt EVs. From the study it is inferred that majority of the respondents do have an awareness of the green vehicles. Though there is a need for a more aggressive promotional strategy to encourage the enactment of environmentally friendly consumption and not just recognition of the issue. The green mission seems to be a universal common factor for every car manufacturer and they need to use the right tools to encourage consumers. Only those manufacture who are willing to accept the current challenge will be able to face the crisis and catch the opportunities created by market pressure in terms of green demand. The electrification of road transport will not only assist a post-pandemic economic recovery, reduce oil imports and strengthen

energy security but is also crucial to reducing air pollution and moderating climate change. To actually improve EV adoption and India's role as a value chain participant, the Indian government cannot rely merely on subsidies; it needs to encourage more private investment in the country by creating the right policy framework and incentives. Subsidizing manufacturing for every aspect of an electric drivetrain will also prove to be a game changer. Better researched aggressive market strategies will ensure that they can manage their rollouts in an amplified manner. For decades, the people of India are habituated to conventional cars therefore a sudden shift to EVs will be a bit difficult for them. The high cost of EVs is a major deterrent in adoption as compared with a similar conventional vehicle. There are several other factors that discourage people from EV adoption such as lack of fuel stations, shorter driving range and limited number of products also. The incentives offered support the acceptance of an EV.

India stands at the cusp of a revolution when it comes to EVs and presently in India 1% of the total car sales are EVs. This number is expected to be rise to a great extent. Automobile companies have the opportunity to not only become more profitable, competitive and resilient but also to lay the foundation for a positive societal change and champion the protection of the environment at the same time. Future belongs to Green Technology, and as the industry progresses, we will continue to see our planet getting cleaner and air becoming fresher. As pollution is on the rise in many cities in India, these electric vehicles are a viable solution to the problem for people who care for the environment. The change towards EVs in India is imperative in the near future, though not imminent.

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IIMC ORIENTATION PROGRAMME



(From Left) Shri Om Birla, Shri Anurag Thakur, Shri Harinvas Narayan Singh, Shri Arif Mohammad Khan, Shri Apoorva Chandra and Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi at the Five-Day Orientation Programme organized by IIMC

Free and unbiased media strengthens democracy: Om Birla

The orientation ceremony of IIMC successfully completed, eminent journalists interacted with the students

The five-day session of the Orientation Programme of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) was organized from October 25 to October 29, 2021. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the program was organized online. The orientation programme was inaugurated by Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Om Birla on October 25. Director General, IIMC Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi, Additional Director General Shri Ashish Goyal and Convener and Dean (Academics) Prof. Govind Singh, including faculty members and students of all centers of the institute participated in the programme.

On this occasion, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha **Shri Om Birla** advised the students of journalism and mass communication to create news based on facts and focus on spreading positivity and constructive messages through their reporting. He said that India is the mother of democracy and free and fair media empowers democracy. Shri Birla said that there is democracy implicit in our civilization, culture and thoughts. India's

democracy is the richest in the world. With the help of the Constitution, Indian democracy has made the journey towards development and prosperity. The whole world is aware of our hard work, innovation, determination and collective power. The journey of 75 years after independence, much like the history of freedom movement, is a reflection of the hard work, innovation and entrepreneurship of Indians. Shri Birla said that media has a big role in making social consciousness. It's the media that decides the accountability of the government and political parties and facilitates bilateral dialogue between administration and the people. Today the scope of journalism is expanding. The reach of the media has increased but, along with it, the responsibility of journalists has also increased. It is the responsibility of a journalist to be fearless and also to be outspoken.

According to the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, the role of media has become even more important during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have also succeeded in saving lives of people through social media but we must understand the difference

between media and social media. He said that social media also needs to be made accountable. Shri Birla also invited all the students of IIMC to watch the proceedings of the Parliament.

Youth are providing solutions to problems: Prof. Dwivedi

Guiding the new students, the Director General of IIMC, **Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi** said that the influence of media in India has grown rapidly in the last two decades. The number of people using and utilizing media has also increased. Keeping pace with a rapidly growing economy, media has now turned into a big industry. Prof. Dwivedi said that the doors of new possibilities are awaiting you in this country. It is in your hands to decide if you want to be part of the problem or the solution. If your intention is pure and you are devoted towards your duty, then every decision of yours will lead you towards the solution of any problem. Prof. Dwivedi said that our present and future are not decided by success and failure. As long as the youth of India have the zeal to innovate, take risks and move forward, there is no need to worry about the future of our country.

Media has given a new identity to folk culture: Malini Awasthi

Eminent folk singer **Ms. Malini Awasthi**, while speaking on the topic 'Folk Culture and Media', said that media has an important role in the preservation and promotion of folk culture, because newspapers have made important efforts for the preservation of folk culture. During the same session, renowned film actor **Mr. Ananth Mahadevan** spoke on the topic 'The Changing Nature of TV and Cinema in India' and NDTV journalist **Ms. Nagma Sahar** talked about 'The Future of TV News'.

'Facts' and 'Truth' are important to media: Arif Mohammad Khan

On the second day of the orientation programme, the Governor of Kerala, **Shri Arif Mohammad Khan** said that it is the duty of every journalist to correctly inform the society, maintain social harmony and work for the welfare of the people. To stay long in the field of journalism, it is very important to have 'facts' and 'truth' along with patience, diligence and

talent. According to Shri Khan, freedom of the media is an important dimension of democracy. It has to be preserved but this freedom comes with responsibility. So we all have to be responsible too. Following the ideal code of conduct and behaviour to discharge any responsibility is what constitutes *Dharma*. Journalists are facing numerous challenges in the changing environment. Therefore, they should discharge their duties in a fearless manner keeping in mind the established values.

According to Governor Shri Khan, news or perspectives that could possibly spread hatred and despair in society should be avoided. Welfare and development of society is the primary aim of journalism and journalists must work towards this goal. He said that you should evaluate yourself as to what effect of your news will have on the society. Journalists should present facts to society keeping in mind the dignity of the fourth pillar of democracy. Information revolution has broadened and enriched the field of journalism. Instead of falling into the trap of negative journalism, the media students should learn healthy journalism and share with people whatever good work is being done in the society, he added.

Agriculture is not a business, it is a religion: Dutt

Executive Director of Kheti Virasat Mission, Punjab, **Shri Umendra Dutt**, while speaking on the topic 'Agriculture Culture and India', said that agriculture in India is not a business but a religion. He said that agriculture does not mean market. Farming is that what gives food and food is one which gives good health.

The goal of Doordarshan is to deliver information: Agarwal

Shri Mayank Agarwal, Director General, Doordarshan, while talking to the students on the topic 'Government Information System', said that Doordarshan is different from other channels today because its agenda is not TRP but to spread information and empower people.

Confidence will lead to victory: Yathiraj

Paralympic Medal winner **Shri Suhas Yathiraj** also shared the secret of his victory with the students of IIMC. He said that unless you make an effort



**Indian Institute of
Mass Communication**

Orientation 2021-22

Date : October 25 to October 29, 2021





Sh. Om Birla
Hon'ble Speaker
Lok Sabha



Sh. Harivansh N. Singh
Hon'ble Deputy Chairman
Rajya Sabha



Sh. Anurag Thakur
Hon'ble Union Minister
I & B, Govt. of India



Sh. Arif Mohd. Khan
Hon'ble Governor
Kerala



Dr. L. Murugan
Minister of State, I & B
Govt. of India



Sh. Apurva Chandra
Secretary, Ministry of I & B
Govt. of India



Ms. Malini Awasthi



Mr. Ananth Mahadevan



Ms. Anuradha Prasad



Ms. Nagma Sahar



Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Ata Hasnain



Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Dhruv Katoch



Mr. S. Ranganathan



Mr. Sudhir Chaudhary



Prof. Bhagwati Prakash



Prof. Raj Nehru



Ms. Smita Prakash



Mr. Vishnu Tripathi



Mr. Suhas Yathiraj



Prof. Pankaj Mittal



Mr. Mayank Agrawal



Ms. Manisha Kapoor



Mr. Sankrant Sanu



Prof. Nirmal Mani Adhikari



Mr. KNR Nampoothiri



Mr. Parag Karandikar



Mr. Rajesh Raina



Mr. Susanta Mohanti



Mr. Umendra Dutta



Mr. Supriya Prasad



Mr. Rana Yashwant



Ms. Simrat Gulati



Mr. Harshendra Verdhani



Mr. Kalyan Ranjan

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[12:15 PM - 01:15 PM]
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yourself, no one can carry you forward. You will get both success and failure during the struggle but you have to face both with confidence.

Time to convert challenges into 'economic opportunities': Prof. Sharma

On the third day of the programme, eminent journalists and educationists of the country interacted with the students. During this, while discussing the topic 'Economic Future of India', former Vice Chancellor of Gautam Buddha University, Noida, Prof. Bhagwati Prakash Sharma said that if India has to become self-reliant, then its production capacity and exports have to increase as compared to imports. Indian human resource is a part of technical fields all over the world but multinational companies take advantage of the technical products created by these people. This allows foreign companies to profit from Indian knowledge and talent. To stop this, India will have to go towards indigenous technology. He said that if we buy indigenous products, then it will not only benefit the Indian economy but will also help in the development of technology.

New Education Policy making the education system modern and better: Prof. Mittal

General Secretary of Association of Indian Universities **Prof. Pankaj Mittal** apprised the students about the important topics related to 'National Education Policy'. Prof. Mittal said that the education policy of India is working to make its education system modern and better for the students.

The need of the hour is to put learned skills into use: Prof. Nehru

Vice Chancellor of Shri Vishwakarma Skill University, Haryana, **Prof. Raj Nehru** said that there is a need to work on how to better benefit society with the skills that we have learned. Students must also learn new skills to make their life better.

Advertisements should be in public interest: Manisha Kapoor

Ms Manisha Kapoor, Secretary General, Advertising Standards Council of India said that the

general public is at the center of all advertisements, so it is our responsibility that advertisements should be in public interest.

'Golden Age of Journalism'

In a special session, eminent journalists of the country addressed the students on the topic 'Challenges and Opportunities in Journalism'. **Shri Sukumar Ranganathan**, Editor-in-Chief, Hindustan Times said that today technology has given a new power to the media. This is the golden age of journalism. According to **Ms. Smita Prakash**, Editor-in-Chief, Asian News International (ANI), today people form their opinion based on limited information on social media. Media students should avoid doing this. The Editor-in-Chief of Zee News, **Shri Sudhir Choudhary** said that today innovation and technology need the utmost attention of the students. This is the mantra to be successful in journalism. Executive Editor of Dainik Jagran **Shri Vishnu Tripathi** apprised the students about the need of journalism and its relationship with social concerns. He said that journalism has any meaning only when social concerns will prevail in it.

Important role of 'Knowledge Based Economy' in 'Knowledge Era': Harivansh

On the fourth day of the orientation programme, Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha **Shri Harivansh Narayan Singh** interacted with the students on the topic 'Media and Public Concerns'. He said that 'Knowledge Based Economy' has an important role in the 'Knowledge Era'. In the 21st century, India will be the center of a knowledge-based economy. A journalist should have knowledge of every subject related to society. Today technology has enhanced this capability of journalists. Artificial Intelligence has brought a big change in the world of journalism. He said that the beauty of words, the breadth of ideas, the seriousness of journalism and the dignity of expression are visible in the pages of newspapers. In this era of technology, new forms of media will appear but the dignity of the written word will always remain intact.

While advising media students, the Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha said that if your skills are not good, then you cannot practice good journalism.

This is the reason why you should learn something new every day and use it for the betterment of society. He said that the reader is your consumer. Along with information and entertainment, it is also the duty of journalists to educate the public. According to Shri Harivansh, the dignity of the language and the truthfulness of the facts is very important for the media. Journalists should have no difficulty in stating the facts publicly. We are harming the credibility of journalism by

giving false or wrong news in the race of news. If the credibility of journalism is maintained, then it would be easier for journalists to work on issues of public concern.

'China and Pakistan main challenge'

On this occasion, a discussion on an important topic like 'Challenges to National Security' was also organized. Chancellor of Central University of Kashmir, **Lt. Gen. (Retd) Syed Ata Hasnain** said that China and Pakistan are in front of us as the main challenges in India's security scenario. Instead of war, there will be a trend of cyber attack in the coming times. At the same time, Major General (Retd) **Dhruv Katoch** said that due to COVID-19, a biological warfare like situation has arisen all over the world. India has also succeeded in dealing with it on the basis of knowledge and research.

'Vernacular journalism is the future of India'

Eminent journalists of the country also addressed the students in the important session on 'Future of Indian Vernacular Journalism'. **Shri Parag Karandikar**, Editor, Maharashtra Times said that now a days the youth prefers to read 'Notification News'. They form their opinion only from the news that comes as a line of notification. According to **Shri Rajesh Raina**, Editor of News18 Urdu, linguistic journalism is the future of India. Today digital channels are becoming 'hyper local' and TV channels are starting their own regional

“The nature of media has changed with mobile, internet and digitalisation. In this changing era, there is a need to draw the *Lakshman Rekha* between 'Fact' and 'Fake'. Media should use technology to protect the unity and integrity of the country and freedom of expression.
– Anurag Thakur

channels. He said that if you are not an all-rounder in media, then your field will be very limited. **Shri Susanta Mohanty**, Editor, Odia newspaper 'Samaj' said that the circulation of regional language newspapers has declined during the period of COVID-19 but the readership of these newspapers on digital platforms has increased. Speaking on the occasion, **Shri KNR Namboodiri**, Editor of Malayalam

newspaper 'Janmabhoomi' said that digital media has given a new direction to vernacular journalism.

Need to draw decisive line between 'fact' and 'fake': Anurag Thakur

During the closing session of the orientation programme, Union Information and Broadcasting Minister **Shri Anurag Thakur**, while interacting with the students, said that the nature of media has changed due to mobile, internet and digitization. In this changing era, there is a need to draw a decisive line between 'Fact' and 'Fake'. Direct communication with the public is now possible with the help of modern technology. Media should use technology to protect the unity and integrity of the country and to preserve the freedom of expression, he said.

Addressing the students of the media, Shri Thakur said that the meaning of communication has changed in the era of COVID-19. New ways of conveying information to the people have emerged. Today the global media landscape is changing. By the time you reach the media industry after completing your studies, it will be changed even more. He said that as a future journalist, whatever you say or write in the coming time, it will help people to form their opinion on any issue. That's why you must create a habit of talking and writing very thoughtfully.

According to Shri Thakur, technology today has reached every corner. COVID-19 has affected every plan of ours. But this era also presents us

with an opportunity to start afresh. There is an opportunity to see and understand things in a new way. Today the entire world is in need of people who can bring about a creative change in the world. Shri Thakur said that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is preparing itself for present and future challenges. The government believes that with the use of right information, the common person can take the right decision on any subject. Therefore, in the changing times of media and social media, the government has been working on a human-centric communication system, so that information can be delivered to the common person immediately. He said that the government's plan is to bring information to the last person in the society and local and regional media have an important role to play in this.

Correct use of right information is very important: Chandra

Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and President of IIMC, **Shri Apoorva Chandra** said that earlier only newspapers were the medium of disseminating news, but today everything has been reduced to a mobile screen. Today there is a wealth of information but the common person is unable to distinguish between important and unimportant information. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is working seriously in this direction, so that people can make proper use of right information.

Social media and TV complement each other: Prasad

Ms. Anuradha Prasad, Managing Director, News24 while addressing the students on the topic 'Future of TV News' said that we get a day old news when we read newspapers. However,

in TV and digital media, just minutes old news is available. Just as TV channels and newspapers complement each other, social media and television also complement each other.

'English is not the medium of success'

The author **Shri Sankrant Sanu**, while addressing the students on the topic 'English: Language of News vs. Language of the Medium of Education', said that out of the 20 most developed countries of the world, English is used only in four developed countries as it is their own mother tongue. In the remaining 16 countries, people use only their mother tongue. **Prof. Nirmal Mani Adhikari** from Kathmandu University, Nepal, while expressing his views on the topic 'Communication Tradition of India', said that people who went to study in other countries from India studied in English language and then created a similar education system in India. Owing to this, the dominance of English language increased in India's education system.

Alumni interaction with new students

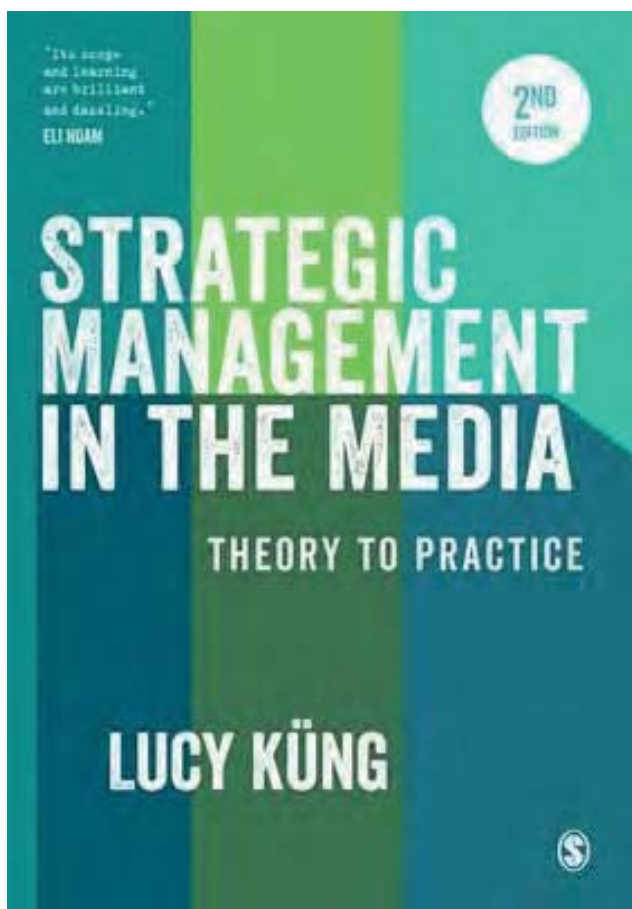
In the concluding session of the orientation programme, the alumni of IIMC interacted with the new students. Aaj Tak's News Director **Shri Supriya Prasad**, 'India News' Editor-in-Chief **Shri Rana Yashwant**, Public Relations Specialist **Ms. Simrat Gulati**, IFFCO's Public Relations Head **Shri Harshendra Singh Vardhan** and IIMC Alumni Association President **Shri Kalyan Ranjan** were present.

At the end of the programme, the Director General, Prof. Sanjay Dwivedi thanked all the speakers who participated in this sacred ritual of sharing knowledge.

-Ankur Vijayvargiya



Strategic Management in the Media Theory to Practice



Strategic Management in the Media Theory to Practice, 2017, 2nd Edition, Publisher: SAGE, Thousand Oaks, United Kingdom, 372 pp. ₹ 3,823.41 (Pbk). ISBN 978-1-4739-2950-0
Author: Lucy King

Introduction

Mass media worldwide have undergone a shift change due to the technological development that has; 1- Brought all the media formats in one converged digital mode; 2 - that are accessible by everyone with a compact digital device called mobile phone. The book gives a comprehensive knowledge of how the technological advancement is altering the overall structure, functioning, production, distribution and management of media companies pan globe. With the overview of the changes, media industry is undergoing worldwide, it also provides conceptual and theoretical understanding of the challenges these

changes pose and how the media leaders, thinkers and executives are devising innovative business models and advantageous environment to keep up. This is relevant for the Indian media researchers who want to understand how global changes in Media industry have affected Domestic media industry.

The structure

The contents of the book have been organised in an easy, understandable chronological manner. The listed cases studies of various media organizations making it an easy read for the readers who want to rummage through the examples of the practical ongoing solutions of the present challenges. There is a preface to the second edition, in which, the author briefly compares the contents of this book with the first edition and what is new that this new edition offers. The Introduction, that is also is the first chapter of the book, gives clear and concise view of all the materials in the book. Next comes the basic terms, questions, their answers and operational meanings viz. “*What is media Management*”, *Media Economics*, *Media Studies*, *Mass communication & Journalistic studies*, *Media Management*, *Media Industry*, *Business models*, *digital media etc.,*. It is only after the brief summary of all the 9 chapters, the book begins formally.

“First, it maps the contours of the media industry, detailing histories, business models, value drivers and current strategic issues in the various sectors that together constitute the industry” (Kung, Lucy.,2017, 22, Introduction)

The Contents

Strategic Management to the Media Theory to Practice, as the name suggests, holds relevant media management theories, their explanation and also the practical applications. The book can be a reference source for media students, thinkers, managers and researches alike who wish to understand the pragmatics of current media culture that include the challenges, the fight, the innovations and the overhaul of the organisations in a wake to keep up with the industry dynamics.

Instead of approaching the ‘media contents’

in ‘editorial terms’, this book deals with the media contents in *strategic* terms. It answers the vital question - How the technological advancement and other market forces have made it inevitable for the organizations to bring key strategic changes. Lucy Kung has adopted a practical view to explain the conventional structures of print and electronic media companies and their leap towards the present modern work culture and technological up gradation. Many new case studies, revenue streams, innovative business models, value addition strategies resorted by the companies have been included and explained in the book which give a holistic view of today’s media industry.

Chapter-2, 3 and 4 titled as *The strategic Context, Strategic Concepts for Media Industries* and *Strategic Response to technical Changes* respectively explore meaning, theoretical framework, concept, significance and underlying meanings of the key term ‘strategy’ in the context of media. PEST analysis of Public Service Broadcasters and the value chain management through private broadcasters like MTV have been presented in tabular forms and through graphical representation.

Chapter 5 named as *Creativity and Innovation* deals with the creative production as well as the structural and functional innovations. The case study of CNN that *applied* creativity to its system and strategy has been discussed in detail to make the reader easily understand the implications of creativity and innovation. *Culture, Mindset and Strategy* is the 6th chapter that “addresses core elements of the interpretative school of strategy, and their relevance for strategy in media firms” (p. 40).

Chapter 7 & 8 that have been labelled as *Organisation structure and Strategy & Leadership* respectively are important from the management perspective as they, in great detail, explain how the firms have made infrastructural, functional and technological changes in order to keep up with the advanced media environment. A comparative study of the changes in the *leadership priorities of the BBC DGs*, provides the students with the understanding of need, urgency and vulnerability of leadership roles in media Organizations.

In the final chapter of the book, the author concludes with the note

“The media industry is at an extraordinary point of transition. Things that were happening slowly are now happening fast. We are at the end of the digital beginning: convergence is a reality, the mass paradigm is eroding, and the media industry is inexorably drawing closer to the technology sector. This is a context that presents both enormous challenges and fascinating opportunities, for researchers and students in the media field as well as for those engaged in strategic activities in media organizations” (p. -317).

Relevance for Indian Media students and researchers

Media environment worldwide is changing at a rapid pace. Indian Media Industry is also responding to the changes by making instrumental modifications in the infrastructure, functioning and revenue streams. Media management study is basically a causal study of the environmental forces that led to the present form of media arena. It adds to the basic knowledge of all the media enthusiasts who want to understand the dynamics of Indian media industry also. The book also adds to the relevant and essential readings to all the readers who have are interested in media management studies and research. It provides a detailed, comprehensive and easy to understand account of media industry environment, its products, value addition mechanism, challenges, business models and management practices. The book has been written in easy legible language and organized fashion that makes it easy to rummage through the different contents of it. The valuable additions that makes it a distinguished one from the other books of same topic, is the fact that author has presented the practical examples of media industry to explain the theoretical applications.

Chitralkha Agrawal

Asst Professor (Guest), Media Studies, Delhi

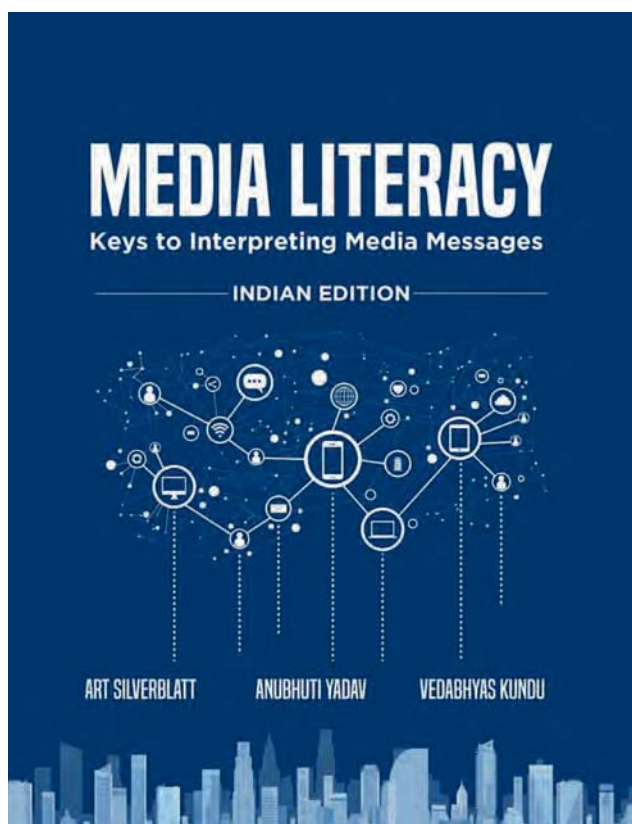
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Media Literacy: Keys to Interpreting Media Messages



Media Literacy: Keys to Interpreting Media Messages, 2021, 1st Edition, Publisher: Kanishka Publishers and Distributors, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi, 250 pp. ₹995 (Hardbound). ISBN 978-93-91450-18-2

Authors: Art Silverblatt, Anubhuti Yadav and Vedabhyas Kundu

Media literacy is a very topical and relevant addition to the literature in India. The topic of media literacy has been in parlance for quite some time but there has been a dearth of the good standard books in that field. This book by authors' Art Silverblatt, Anubhuti Yadav and Vedabhyas Kundu is a welcome contribution. One of the main goals of Media Literacy, according to the book, is to enable students (as well as media enthusiasts and the general public) to develop a healthy and critical independence from media influence while still being able to enjoy interacting

with the media and developing their abilities to create media content. The book is primarily aimed at students of mass communication, but it may be beneficial and interesting to those in other fields of media education as well as general readers.

The appropriate construction, deconstruction, and interpretation of media messages have become vital given the tremendous expansion of mainstream, social, and digital media. The book dwells into the topic of media literacy from giving the background and history and growth of the subject. It contextualises the media structure in terms of media consolidation which has a great implication for the media content and monopolies and agenda setting. The issues of copyright and intellectual property rights have emerged as important concepts.

The chapter on keys to interpreting media messages is the crux of the book. The Book presents a framework which refers to various structural elements of a production: introduction, plot, genre and conclusion. The chapter deals with practical aspects of the tools and techniques and decoding and interpreting the picture, film, video, news, news feature, headline or online content among others. The framework presented in the chapter is interesting. For example, "how the introduction or opening of the media presentation can have a great impact of the audience attention and expectation. The movie title or new story headline, advertising slogan, political mottos, or social media hashtags or hooks are designed to grab attention in a very competitive field of communication. Media producers also uses "illogical premises" and sometimes with an ideological overtones and advertising also frequently using this trick to hook and once the basic premise is accepted the next steps become of buying or believing becomes easy to take things forward".

The particular segment of young children being extra vulnerable as they may be developmentally incapable of recognising the relationship between events and they may not be able to make connections

regarding the consequences to behaviours in a program. The book suggests that it is here the power of media literacy helps you with examining the underlying premises of the presentation and you can make a conscious and informed decision whether or not to suspend your disbelief.

The book also has what are labelled as “media literacy tips” as a practical doable principles and practices in different media forms such as films and television programming. Explaining the explicit and implicit content, subplots, genre, functions of the genre, formula and understanding what goes on in there and how these may affect our reception and perception and belief the illogical premises and embedded ideological underpinnings or biases and stereotypes. The chapter actually takes numerous examples of films and TV programmes and deconstructs them on these elements and brings out the insights that reveal much more layers and nuances which are not so visible and apparent. It helps us to better critically understand and appreciate the content without getting unnecessarily getting influenced or persuaded or affected at sub conscious and unconscious levels. It points out that because of the conclusion of media presentation is the last segment that an audience is exposed to, it influences how we respond to that narrative as a whole. Consequently, examining the conclusion can be a valuable key to the interpreting of the media messages.

The last chapter talks about production elements which sometimes are hidden or not known to the

viewers, listeners, readers and audience but have great impact on how we view and receive the content. The authors say, “production values are roughly analogous to grammar in print, in that these elements influence the reception, interpretation and reaction to the information presented. As a tip to the media producer, it is instructive to note that an intelligent mass communicator uses production elements and production values to engage the audience with the media experience. These stylistic elements operate on an affective or emotional level that frequently escapes our conscious attention. These include editing, which contains inclusion and omission, temporal and spatial inferences. Colour, lighting, shape, scale, relative position, movement, angle, choice of words jargon, connotative images, manipulative messages, non-verbal performance elements, and sound and VFX elements among others”.

It might be worthwhile to have a separate book not just for students of mass media but for consumers of the mass media content who do not generally get an insider’s view of the construction and interpretation of messages. And given that in near future, the media and its construction and presentation is even going to be more technologically advanced and immersive, this book may serve its purpose very well.

- Dr. Sanjeev Kumar,

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Beat Reporting and Editing: Journalism in the Digital Age



Beat Reporting and Editing: Journalism in the Digital Age, 2021, 1st Edition. Publisher: SAGE, New Delhi, 550 pp. ₹775 (Paperback). ISBN 9789354792144

Editors: Prof. (Dr.) Surbhi Dahiya and Shambhu Das Sahu

“Beat Reporting and Editing: Journalism in the Digital Age” trying to understand the best techniques of the news reporting. The book contributors talk about the nuts and bolts of good journalism, they all have their eyes on how these tips still have to apply in the digital age. The aim of this book is to equip budding journalists with the tools and best practices related to different thematic specializations in journalism. The editors Prof. Surbhi Dahiya and Shambhu Sahu has drawn on the expertise from reporters, editors, and professors in India to provide students with a guide

to the state of journalism in the country today. What you see in the book, are 48 chapters focusing on the specifics of different beats, data journalism, emerging technologies, ethics, visual approach, and editing. The book is divided into eight sections.

Section I - Understanding Reporting: Consists of 4 chapters, this section deals with in-depth knowledge on reporting, it is a study on guidelines, ethics, responsibilities, duties of a journalist. In the last few decades, we have witnessed the boom of the digital era overtaking various platforms. The digital era has somehow affected even traditional journalism, but the fundamentals of journalism still remain the same. This section takes its readers back to the actual journalism.

Section II - Mastering Beats as Specialised Reporting: This section takes its readers deep into different beats of reporting and specialization. This section comprises 28 chapters, starting with the most important beat that is the crime beat. Readers may also benefit from the "in practice" sections that provide real-life examples from working journalists and the discussion questions and suggested resources at the end of each chapter.

Section III - Data Journalism and Visualization: Journalism is gathering, processing, disseminating news, and information related to the news, to an audience. The word applies to both the method of inquiring for news and the literary style which is used to disseminate it. This section is all about the importance of data and its utilization, these chapters mention how data itself can be a source of news and how important it is to collect data for every news that is delivered as data journalism adds more insights to news stories.

Section IV - Journalism in the Digital Age: It is essential to stick to traditions but, at the same time, it is necessary to keep oneself updated. Traditional methods help to maintain a strong foundation at the same time, contemporary methods help one to fit in

the surrounding. The fourth section of this book is all about the digital age the authors write about; how machines can keep track of your beat, they have the potential to be an effective arsenal for the journalists of any beat.

Section V - Visual Approach in Journalism: It is not enough if one agrees to contemporary methods the essential part is how one puts in efforts to learn the contemporary methods. In the fifth section, the author takes the book further by explaining “Photo journalism”. It is an old adage we are all familiar with “A picture is worth a thousand words” and this section would help its readers to learn photojournalism not only technically but also the aesthetic values of visual storytelling.

Section VI - Beyond Reporting: Opinion and other forms of writing: Writing is an essential job skill. Writing is an important part of communication, good skills in writing allow one to reach far more audience than any oral conversation. Good journalism without writing skills is not sufficient to become a journalist, it is indeed a requirement that a skilled journalist is a skilled writer also. This section dwells beyond reporting and concentrates on the art of writing for various beats like Editorial, Middle, Feature, Supplements, and so on.

Section VII - Misinformation, Fake News and Data Verification: Developments in the last few years have placed journalism under fire. A range of factors is transforming the communications landscape, raising questions about the quality, impact, and credibility of journalism. At the same time, orchestrated campaigns are spreading untruths - disinformation, mal-information, and misinformation - that are often unwittingly shared on social media. This section discovers how the industry can bridge the

gaps between the public, journalism, and academia. As misinformation has been touted as the biggest online threat to democracy.

Section VIII - Understanding Editing: An unedited copy is like a rough-edged diamond. What is editing? Why is editing done? Who does edit? These are some of the questions that come to the minds of beginners in the field of editing. This section deals to all the above questions and also learn the methods of editing. As good editing can convert a bad piece of writing into a good one and a good piece of writing into a better one.

Anyone in the media knows that journalism is changing at a rapid rate. What reporters were doing to cover a story five years ago, heck even two years ago has changed. And by next year what is “new” now is likely to shift even more. Gone are the days of just covering a story, writing about it, and then seeing it the next day’s edition. Good reporters are extremely busy ones now. They write a story for the web page, update it, take photos, shoot video, add audio, tweet, react to responses from readers, and then get it ready for the actual paper. So, budding journalists not only have to learn those skills, but they also need to know that it’s pretty much a given that any job that’s out there for them will demand it. This book may be a good source for the budding journalist as it carries knowledge, practical experiences and values about journalism.

- Dr. S. Arulchelvan,

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