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Status of Learner's Satisfaction in Journalism and Media Education in Changing Times: A study on the UG & PG students of the Journalism and Mass Communication with regard to Bangalore University Syllabus

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Abstract:

Higher education in India, like in any other developing country is facing sharp criticism for its apparent inability to provide education, relevant to the needs and aspirations of the knowledge seekers apart from providing employability. The phenomenon of ever escalating unemployment in the area of educational interest has further aggravated the problem of Higher Education. Interestingly the statement made as early as 1985 "the whole process of higher education has become warped, dysfunctional, producing a number of unemployable young women and men" (The challenge of Education) holds well till date.

Unlike any of the professional courses in India, Journalism & Communication and Media Education has never been considered to garner the professional status. The course originates way back in 1948 when Aligarh University launched its Diploma course in Journalism, has seen massive change sprouting out to the under-graduate and master degree courses by various Universities and its affiliated college. This has made the institutions offering media and journalism courses, toddle for placements.

It seems the present approved curriculum for BA Journalism & Communication and Media Education courses in particular, the Universities by itself does not offer any scope for employment on one end, while an attempt never made to study focusing the attention on students satisfaction who have joined these courses are on the other adds to it. The locale of the study is carried out in aided and private colleges affiliated to Bangalore University. The research study outlines targets the policy makers of University to rejuvenate the skill component which leads to innovative thoughts and knowledge based research in teaching courses of Journalism & Communication and Media Education. At this juncture the study was undertaken to critically analyze the present status of curriculum in terms of learners' satisfaction, with that to examine the perception of available skills in the present trainers by the students.

Keywords: Journalism, Mass Communication, Education, Employable Skills

1. Introduction

The southern India saw the rise in journalism and communication courses during 1980's and 1990's. With the history of 75 years (1938 to 2013) in journalism and communication, media education has not been identified as the Higher Education or Professional Education and has failed in structuring social and economic infrastructure, mentions the National Policy of Education 1986, 2002-03 and 2007-08 (Desai, Reviewing Communication/ Media Education in India: Many Players, Diverse Directions but Lost Focus., 2007), while (Dr. Sathanarayana Pattnaik, 2001, 2002), contradicts the recognition of journalism and communication that has not been recognized as professional studies, but agrees on the pathetic status of syllabus and media education across universities. While scholars (Desai, The Making of Media Professionals for the Infochange, News and Analysis on Social Justice and Development Issues in India, 2009) Dr. Mira K Desai (2007), (Rath, 2009) & Dr. Pradosh (2009), Sharadh K Sant (2009-10), Sussane (2007), (CSHN Murthy) Ammu Joseph (2006), (Muppidi) Belvadi (2002), Ranganathan (2006), (Asthana, 2006) too mention their concern about the existing lacuna in teaching media studies, with regard to syllabus, facilities, trainers and infrastructure.

The other facet of academics lacks with the unavailability of professionally skilled trainers with industry experience. A very few industry professionals rarely accept to be a visiting faculty on a regular basis due to the time taken in preparation for the session,

setting of question papers, evaluation and other administrative work on one hand, while their earnings and growth in the industry manifolds in the same given time.

The aforementioned scholars have mentioned about the rise in media courses and institutions offering journalism, mass communication and electronic media. The demand for skilled trainers too exists at every institutional level. Management of most institutions offering these courses, have ever flown admission, with all the cribbing reasons that the media education has not been given the status and importance as given to other professional courses. The unstructured syllabus, lack of infrastructure, facilities, trainers, books on Indian content, the course has pragmatic students who are at the entry level with the theoretical knowledge for the print media.

Nevertheless, every student pursuing the course has various options to pursue their career and is in a confused state to choose. The courses have mainly catered to the print medium and visual medium with more of the writing skills and desk operations that could squeeze in the news publication agencies and news channels. Students have felt that the subjects are taught theoretically, while those of their interest are given less priority. Technical areas like the photo journalism, photography, cinematography; audio and video editing, sound production, radio production and other studio production which plays vital role in producing audio-visual content are never taught with practical hands on experience. This is due to huge investments on human resource, requirements on infrastructure, procurements of equipments and its maintenance. This has been the primary reason not to be catered to the visual media industry by the academics.

In this scenario, the need of the hour is to restructure the syllabus of mass communication which enables them to be at the entry level of any visual media channels not only in the desk operations but also on the other areas and technical aspects of news and entertainment program production. Proceeding to the study, the demand is to identify the satisfaction of students and trainers of journalism and mass communication with their course. The opinions of the students and the trainers collected here furnishes the information as what is been expected by the respondents of both the categories, which shall help as a tool in restructuring the syllabus.

The selected institutions in locale of the study, are Shesadripuram College, Garden City College and Oxford College all located in Bangalore, with a sample size of 100 students and 25 media educators/ trainers from Journalism and Mass Communication and electronic media courses affiliated to the Bangalore University Syllabus.

2. Methodology

The study had both Qualitative and Quantitative method, to yield the better understanding. The questionnaire was designed for a Collective opinion, which was administered among both Media students and Trainers as quantitative tool, to find the satisfaction of media learners and trainers on the syllabus and subjects. Content of present syllabus structure was analysed to find out the lacuna of media studies at institutional level.

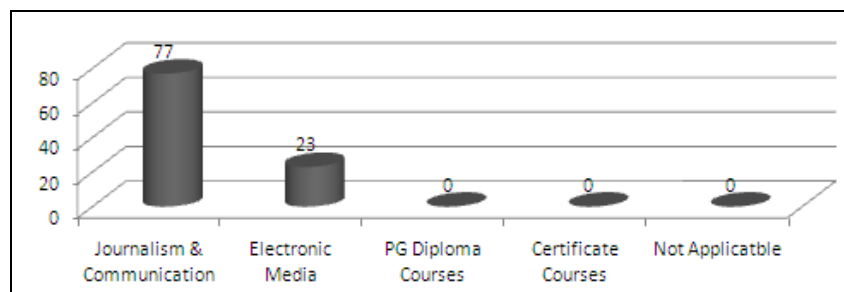
The student's questionnaire was designed to understand and interpret in detail about the Courses and Pedagogy, Facilities and Infrastructure. The questionnaire for Media Trainers was administered to interpret the Institutional Support for Academic up-gradation, Infrastructure & Facilities to suit the Course & Pedagogy.

3. Findings

3.1. Students

Respondents under this category were both from the under-graduation and post graduation students with 77% between the age of 20-22 and 31% falling between the age group 22-24 and 3% were in the range of 24 and above. The group of students across the respondents consisted of 33% male and 67% female populace, in which 53% and 47% are pursuing their studies in private and aided institutions respectively and all the institutions (100%) affiliated to the State owned university.

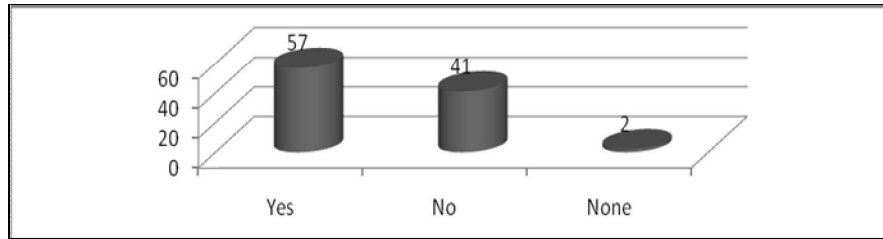
77% of the respondents were those who had opted for the course Journalism and Communication, while 23% chosen electronic media.



Graph 1: Distribution of respondents opted for media courses

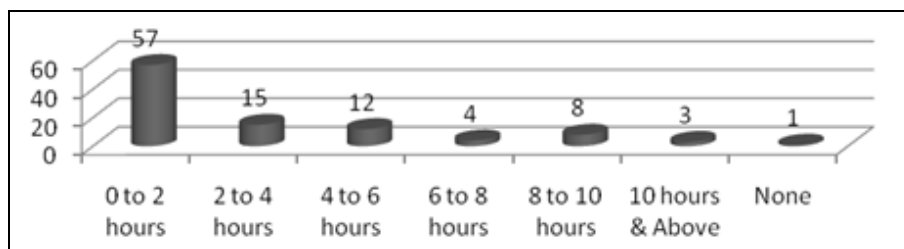
To support the objective of the study, the students were questioned about the training, learning, hands on practical and satisfaction level in the course. Students who agreed that they have studied or would be studying electronic media subjects sum up to 24% among chosen respondents. 19% of the respondents mention that subject like News Reporting for Electronic Media, has been offered for specialization, while the rest agree other subjects like video editing, camera & lighting, sound designing are their

combinations. 57% of them agree that their institution provide hands on practical training, while 14% say that the training is for news reporting for electronic media and 28% say none while others opt for other subjects.



Graph 2: Distribution of respondents, opinion on providing hands on practical training in institution

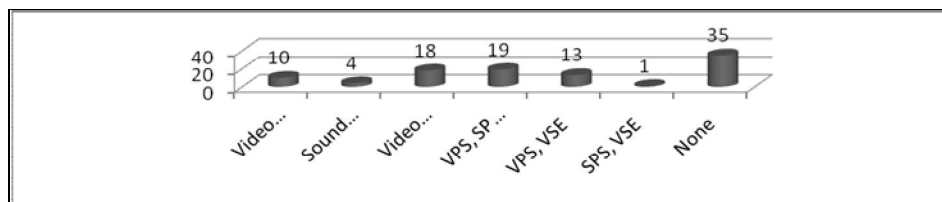
The most interesting is that 32% mention that the pedagogy and subjects taught are theoretical while 19% say its 80% theoretical with the rest being practical sessions. When asked about the time spent in Labs or hands on practice, 57% mention that they are allowed to spend quality time on practical's between 0-2 hours in a week, while 15% say between 2-4 hours.



Graph 3: Distribution of respondents, response on time allotted for practical sessions

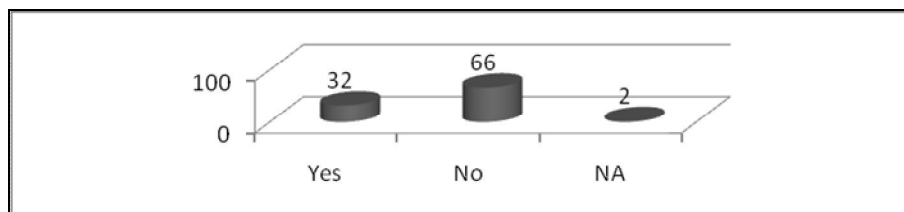
Nevertheless, 72% of them mention than their institutions support/ encouragement for internships and projects, while 65% say that their internship/ project is evaluated.

The respondents in the student's category were asked their opinion about the infrastructure, where 35% of the respondents mention they have none with regard to studio, editing labs, sound studio, while 10% agree they are provided with.



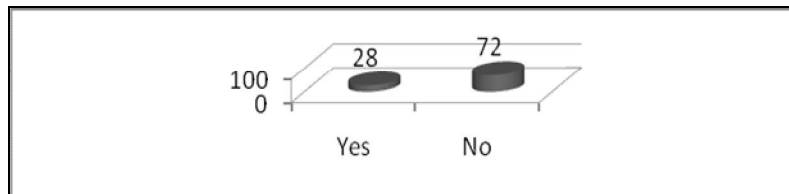
Graph 4: Distribution of respondent's opinion on infrastructure

The labs are quipped with windows systems mention 22% while 14% mention Apple systems and 27% say none while others opt for both. The college possesses the equipment, 37% say none while 15% say a professional video camera is available and 36% say they are not provided with any video editing software while 19% mention that its Adobe Premier and 10% with Final Cut Pro, while 15% mention they use Sound Forge for sound editing while 41% says they have no option of that. With the ratio of equipment and student ration, 44% say 5 students use 1 camera, while 31% says none and 13% mention its 1:3 ratio. When it comes to editing students are trained with a ratio of 5 students per system says 38%, while 17% mention 1:2 and 30% says none. When question with regard to the pedagogy were asked, 66% of them said they are not happy with the training method while 59% mention that they are not happy with the training facility.



Graph 5: Distribution of respondent's opinion on training satisfaction

While 79% agree that their trainers are qualified, 72% mention that the present curriculum does not meet the industry's standards or requirements.



Graph 6: Distribution of respondent's opinion the present curriculum meeting industry standards

68% strongly agree to introduce more practical/ lab sessions and 64% strongly agree that the curriculum should be based to present industry standards, 72% opine that internships must be compulsory and 68% mention to have more workshops and training with 75% opining to have authorized certifications on the training.

3.2. Media Educators

The age group between 31-35 years is 32%, while the age group between 25-30 and 36-40 were at 24% each. 16% of them belonged to the group between 41-45 years and 4% between 46-50 years. The participation of trainers were 24% male and 76% female trainers, of them 72% were post graduates, while 20% and 16% had their Master of Philosophy and Doctoral degree respectively, all of them teaching both the undergraduate and post graduation courses.

60% of these respondents were with the academic experience between 0-5 years, 28% in between 6-10 years and 12% were having the experience 11-15 years respectively. Remarkably 64% of these respondents had no industry experience while 24% of the trainers had industry experience between 0-5 years and 4% between 6-10 years.

To know about the educator's linkage between the academic and the industry as well to observe the educators structure in hiring to teach, 80% of them strongly agreed that they only had 100% academic experiences while 20% strongly disagreed to our first statement. The percentage who agreed and strongly disagreed to having 20% of industry experience were 4% each, while 92% strongly agreed they had the least industry experience but 80% of academic experience.

While the third statement meant to know about the industry connects, were analyzed that 96% do not have the industry connect while 4% neither agreed nor disagreed on the statement.

68% of the educators strongly disagreed on the statement that they were equally connected with academic and the industry while 32% strongly agreed to the fourth statement. This is backed by the fifth statement where 96% of them strongly disagreed that they were industry professionals while 4% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

92% of them strongly disagreed that they were industry professionals taking guest lecture while 4% each among neither agreed nor disagreed and strongly agreed categories visit institutions to deliver guest lecture apart being an professional. While 96% strongly disagreed that they work both in academics and industry at equal ratio while % of them strongly agreed to the seventh statement.

With regard to the faculties handling the technical and non technical subjects, 76% of them were found not to be part of teaching technical subjects like video editing, still photography & lighting, videography & lighting, sound recording, visual effects and image or photo editing, while 24% of them handled the combination of these technical subjects. To compliment this statement, 88% of the media educators handled non-technical subjects like journalism, communication, television & film management, media marketing, visual media advertising and reporting & writing, while 12% taught combination of these subjects.

3.3. Courses & Pedagogy

The respondents we encountered belonged to the various courses in media. With the ratio of students enrolled to journalism and communication courses (77%, mentioned in Respondents of Study, Q.5), the subject respondents are exposed to scores 24% for news reporting for electronic media, while video editing and other subject like advertising, television, news magazine, scripting are rated at 80% each.

While sound editing and entertainment programs are studied by 2% each, 1% studies cinematography. Sixteen various combinations of all these subjects have been found to be studied by 40% of the respondents.

News reporting for electronic media, other subjects like the film production, film making, news magazine, advertising combined together and the combination of these subjects which are offered as specialization are in their institution score 19% each, video editing is offered by 6%, cinematography, sound editing and entertainment programs are offered by 4, 3 and 2% of the institutions respectively and 28% has opined for specialization not being offered. Continuing with this, the next question comes to the pedagogy, where 57% gets hands on practical while 41% and 2% opted for not getting the practical hands on and no specialization offered respectively.

The practical hands on training experienced by the students for better outcome, 14% of the respondents opined news reporting for electronic media, while cinematography with 1%, video editing with 6%, sound editing and design with 2% and other subjects with 5% of practical hands on training are in practice. Entertainment program has no hands on practical sessions, while the combination of all these subject receiving hands on practical calculates to 44%, while 56% opined for the absence of hands on practical training.

The pedagogy of teaching has been designed with 90% theory- 10% practical have been stated by 32%, while 1% states 10% theory and 90% practical. While the 80% theory scores at 19%, 12% mention their learning is 50% theory-50% practical model. 11% and 10% each stated the 70% theory-30% practical's and 40% theory and 60% practical's respectively. The rest 14% opines to the other pedagogical ratios.

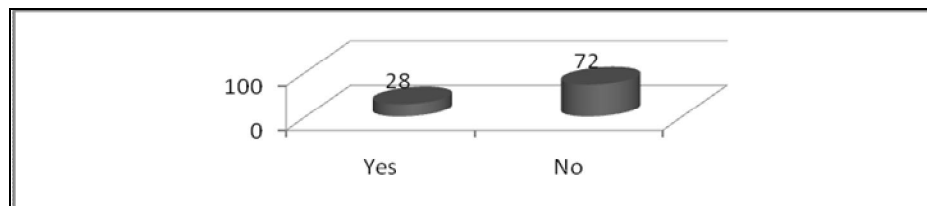
3.4. Academic Support for Media Educator's

Institutions offering media courses encourage and support for academic growth has been agreed by all the respondents, 88% of them mention that they are encouraged to attend research based seminars & conferences on technical updations, field visits, workshops and to get certifications, of which 92% of them are allowed to attend seminars happening in the city- state level and nation level.

The rest 21% opt for other combinations among the five options of academic support, 8% say that they attend seminars at the city-state level.

3.5. Infrastructure & Facilities

92% of media educator's opinions compliment the opinions to that of the students respondents, that the practical's are taught on the windows platform, while 80% agree to not provided with the photography, institutes not being equipped with photography/ videography equipments, acoustically treated along with the equipments in sound & editing studio and video editing lab/ studio are agreed by 72% in each of them 80% of the trainers opine to not having the software's for image and audio editing, 76% opine for not having video editing software.



Graph 7: Distribution of media educator's opinion on acoustically treated studios

8% mention to use photoshop to edit images, between 4 to 8% of them train on audacity, sound forge and sound track pro to edit audio. While respondents between 24% mention for having software's like adobe premier, final cut pro for video editing. Nevertheless 92% of the respondents are unsatisfied with the pedagogy and the syllabus prescribed, 88% share their dissatisfaction in the subjects they handle, the same percentile suggests the change of syllabus to the present industry structure, books- research articles and periodicals with Indian context, include more of practical training, frequent faculty updations and up gradation of systems and software's at the lab.

With the analysis of the above data one can conclude in a single statement the both the learners and trainers are not happy/ satisfied with the course outcome and majority opine to impart practical experiences in their subjects and upgrade the syllabus by structuring as per the requirements of the industry.

The reason having books referred are based on the western concepts, which are of the period over three decades, educators express their dissatisfaction to that they deliver.

The above analysis strongly expresses the concern to re-structure the existing syllabus for journalism and electronic media.

4. Findings of Content Analysis

The analysis of the Bangalore University journalism and electronic media courses content proves to be more of classroom based lectures for each of the subjects. The lectures broadly discusses on the concepts and methods of executing are extended even to technical subjects like audio and visual media, while the industry expects the student to have the skills in executing them rather than the concept level of knowledge. Media aspirants employed are trained practically on the job to which most of their theoretical concepts acquired at the institution do not sync. The huge gap between the learning at the institution and doing in the organization can be fixed by imparting equal hour practical training for each subject irrespective of they being theoretical or practical based.

The model here is based on the saying's "Practice makes man Perfect" and "I do I believe", where each theoretical hour of the subject like news reporting needs to have the experience of reporting in real time. The present method practiced is overshadowed by the phrases "I hear/ listen, I forget and I see, I remember". The transformation of the teaching methodology, imparts more skill focused learning, which builds the career of the aspirant as well get professionalism in the media industry.

The practical sessions to be imparted at the under graduation and post graduation need not be during the regular lecture hours, but each of the students is free to make their reporting for both the print and the electronic (visual) media on the real time events of their choice. The recordings of these real times reporting for visual media need not be specifically observed on the quality of the visual but on the quality on the reporting style which includes the vocabulary, body language, skills and confidence in reporting facing the camera (P to C), while the writing skills develops simultaneously for those to be in the print. Likewise the coverage of the event for electronic media and building the story with visuals which are shot live and those clips downloaded from the internet, voiceovers and public opinions/ bytes in the edit room on a day to day basis, shall not just enhance the vocabulary and executing skills. These practical assignments integrating the subjects of each semester and among other semester as they graduate should be submitted at the end of each semester by each student producing at least five of their own news story on various issues in the society. While the student may take the assistance of his/ her classmates to anchor or handle the camera, write and edit the texts and videos. This also builds harmony to work in teams among the student group in producing each of their news stories. Implementation of this model also opens the door to pursue carrier of each of their interests in being a reporter, copy writer, news editors, cameraman, audio and video editors with the guidance and training by the faculty which has to be evaluated.

One may question to the equipments required to produce these practical assignments, the same must understand the power and possibilities of the advanced technology in the gadgets. The model suggested here need not require a mid range or a high end camera and acoustics at the very beginning. A piece of camera can be shot on a mobile camera which records the mp4 format and recording the audio by plugging the hands free, which can be later converted to the editing formats. The basic idea of these practical exercises is to drill the students to practice to the perfection. While at the later stage of the course, students are exposed to handle the mid range camera, editing of software's like final cut pro to develop and create stories.

Analytical overview of syllabus for UG and PG journalism and electronic media courses prescribed by the Bangalore University.

4.1. Syllabus for UG: BA Journalism

The subjects covered in both the courses in all its semester are found to be same.

- **First semester** introduces to mass communication, which informs on the history, definition, nature, scope, kinds and models of communication. The practical which can be imparted can be of role plays of communication, group discussions as the primary level.
- **Second semester** teaches on the fundamentals of journalism which covers the definition of journalism, history of press in India and Kannada journalism, review of news papers and periodical contents. Writing articles for each lecture hours, with the review and research of the information on the topics, presentations on each of the topics shall impart and develop the skills and confidence of communicating to the group or audience.
- **Third semester** is where the students their learn media laws and ethics, which discusses on the freedom press, public & private model, Indian constitution, freedom of expression (Article 19 (1) (a) and 19 (2), media laws and media acts. The student must implement the media laws and acts based on the freedom of expression in analyzing the presentation in media on day to day basis and debate them while presenting in the classroom. This improves the thinking ability, debating skills which makes them to behave as professionals as per the media law.
- **Fourth semester** introduces the basics of Audio Visual media covers the history of radio and development of television in India, types of programming and programming trends and techniques. These are taught on the conceptual front than doing practically. Analyzing the radio and television programming formats, content and reproducing the radio commercials/ ads, jingles, simple radio and television program concepts, handling of mics and camera, composing the shots, recording and compiling audio and video are those to be imparted as practicality in this semester.
- **Fifth semester** reporting methods covers the definition of news, values & structure, news interviews and techniques, feature writing, covering conferences are again more with the conceptual theory learning, while producing a news interview, news programs, covering conferences in real time and packaging them with the voiceovers involving the feature writing are to be imbibed in this subject.

The other subject which is also taught is editing techniques which covers the operations of the organization, duties & responsibilities of editorial department and the editor, principles of editing and importance of typography and graphic arts focuses toward the print media, while those editing techniques which builds the story for the visual media is neglected. Audio and video editing skills plays a vital role in the electronic media, which is more powerful today when compared to the print.

- **Sixth semester** speaks about media management discussing on the news paper organization management, business and operations, types of ownerships and the problems faced in India and globally. This subject does not empower the student to move the ladder in the business and operations of the print media. A bachelor degree is useful to enter the industry, while this should be taught in the post graduation.

The other subject offered is advertising and public relation, which speaks on the nature, scope, function and ethics of an ad agency, copy writing and other functional areas, nature, scope, qualification and the responsibilities of a public relation officer, house journals, corporate communication. The students here do not have the connect of an ad agency which helps them in understanding the process and working style in an ad agency. The same is also with the other subject too, which lacks industry connect. The modification suggested here is to empower and encourage the student to intern with the companies, agencies in the various positions of their interest. Performance of these students should be periodically assessed by the faculty as per the feedback received from the officer/ authority at the interning company.

This gives the scope to the student in not only understanding but also gets connected to the industry professionals and organizations. This shall give a broad overview in understanding their skills and interests. Those who do not get the opportunity to intern must produce projects related to print and visual media at the institutional level, giving scope to play the role of their interests.

4.2. Syllabus for PG: MS Communication and MS Electronic Media

The model here is designed for those who have completed their under graduation course in the journalism prescribed above.

The subjects in the post graduation course is never different and new from the under graduation subjects. All the subjects in the four semester in this courses too should be based on the same model designed for the under graduate course.

- **First semester** in post graduation **Electronic Media** course, has introduction to mass communication, writing for electronic media, basic production technique, media society & culture, graphic and animation. The practicality which can be imbibed here is writing for electronic media which has to be integrated to the basic production technique along with

the basics of creating animation graphics on 2D or 3D and produce content and packaging them as per the broadcasting formats.

- **Second semester** focuses more on the television production with the subjects like the development of television, production of news programme, electronic media management, cinematography, advertising, corporate communication & marketing. Subjects like introduction to mass communication and development of television is proposed to be knocked in this model as these have been implemented during the under graduation. This is replaced by media research which is learnt in third semester, while advertising and corporate communication & marketing, cinematography and media management should be with more projects of producing individual program production for television. A new subjects to critically analyze the concept in producing the content needs to be introduced, where the student and the faculty discusses the pros and cons of the project they intend to produce. Advertising and corporate communication must deal with the critical analysis and conceptualizing the concepts for advertisement for various media.
- **Third semester** delivers Media research, Sound & Sound Recording, Media Laws & Ethics, Radio Programme & Production and Video Editing, while the subject media law and ethics need to be knocked off, as media research deals with a topic to be researched. Sound and sound recording needs to be practically recorded with the equipments and systems, radio program production must have more projects on radio programs with celebrity interviews, film based reviews and promotion, special programs production for special festive events and production of radio programs based on the different listening target groups which is related and similar to the program slots practiced by the radio channel. As well video editing which would be a part in the previous semester should enhance the students in editing both audio and video and in packaging the content.
- **Fourth semester** has Web Design & Development, New Communication Technologies, Electronic Media Commercials, Project & Viva- Voce, and Internship+. Web designing & development should be replaced with the media ethics and laws, giving more space to produce more projects involving them working in their specific interests. New communication technologies and electronic media commercials has more scope when the students are to produce commercials. This involves the creative and critical thinking to reach the target audience as well integrates to use new communication technologies in distribution of their projects. Those who get the opportunity from the industry in their specific interest to intern for the whole semester should be evaluated by means of their measurable work and the report from their immediate reporting managers or concerned authority of the organization.

5. Conclusion

An aspirant who is passionate is always self driven and shall always try his/ her own means and methods of producing the media content but unfortunately aspirants like them are very few. While on the contrary, every institution must abide to build passion, develop and nurture their students which make them to be self driven at least for the compulsion of grades during their course but later realize them when it opens to build their carrier.

With all the modifications in the syllabus, it is the immense support of the institution in facilitating the trainers and students with the required infrastructure and equipments, and the dedication of each of the trainers/ educators parallel to it, which can bring the change in building the career of each of the student, who forms to be a part of the better media industry.

In fact this as a course what I visualize must function in the University or institution having residential facilities. This allows the student spend more time on the subjects, completion of projects professionally. Time should never be a hindrance to the aspirants who are mastering to enter the creative industry. The students must have the resource to discuss and refer books even after the class or lecture hours.

The under graduation course which can be perused in any of the University affiliated institution having all the infrastructure and facilities designed for the course, the post graduation course is designed on a 24x7 student working model, where the faculty's support to guide and discuss on these projects are on the limited official working hours. This empowers the students passing out of these courses with the knowledge, skill and confidence in executing the role he/ she is offered at the work place.

6. Suggestion and Recommendation

When media as an industry is scaling up, academics, the strength of any industry must also scale up in regard to training and imparting knowledge on the industry standards and more importantly restructure the course, syllabus and content. The books and the reference materials need to be of Indian content, Indian law and working styles than to that of the western information's what is been taught today.

On the other hand courses, which are classified into Journalism and Mass Communication, Electronic Media, should have infrastructure required to make the student on par with the industry and impart the technical skills. Offering specialization in areas other than writing and reporting should be upscale with subjects like camera & lighting, video editing, sound and audiography/ sound designing and production management shall strengthen the industry with more knowledgeable and skilled people who are productive on the first day- first hour and enhance the quality of products in the industry with their academic base.

For any better output, evaluation holds the key in assessing the skills, knowledge and the concepts of a learner. Evaluations in media courses presently are evaluated on theoretical knowledge of the learner. The process needs to be modified by conducting exams adopting the techniques of written answer scripts, practical assignment and exposure to current trends with a viva-voce.

The division of marks to evaluate suggested here are fifty for the final exam assignment/ written scripts, forty for the internals and ten for the viva-voce, which should also be evaluated by the subject expert external examiners.

While the other subjects having practical which are skill based has to practically be done individually by the learner which gets evaluated for fifty marks, internal assessments for forty marks and ten marks for viva-voce by both the internal and the external subject expert examiners.

Every student shall be made compulsory to intern as a part of course structure in the area of his or her interest. To streamline the candidature the area of specialization shall remain the same through out the course, with a provision to change only before the third semester.

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