

Chapter 1: Introduction

Communication is a basic component of human life. To live is to communicate. The growth of various communication media over the years has brought in significant changes in human civilization. They have been affecting the way we think and act. Our attitudes and opinions get constantly influenced by modern mass media, which include print, radio, television and the internet.

As we closely observe the developments in media and its content there appears a predominant importance being given to the visual content. Interestingly each of the newer formats or applications used for communication that are being structured and synthesized to keep people informed also focuses on including an element that brings 'visual' satisfaction to its users. The traditional visual communication concept, that was considered as the practice of strategically combining words and images to convey information has undergone significant modifications.

They include more than just moving or still pictures. It is a combination of the instructions and information explaining about the usage of a product with the help of graphics, embedded with maps, tables, graphs, charts, diagrams, photographs and videos. For the entertainment industry, along with moving and still images it is graphics and VFX effects. With the world focused on converting every communication made and at all levels into a visual - makes the study on visual communication not only interesting but very important. From academic point of view a study on any area relates to employment and employment is directly or indirectly is the primary concern of education.

An Empirical Study on Visual Media Education Credentials and Industry Expectations

A close look at the developments in academia will reveal that all professional and other programs prioritize their attention on industry-academia interface. It is interesting to understand the extent of correlation between media as an industry with that of pedagogy of the course content in educational institutions offering media education. Rather it is more interesting to understand the association of industry with academia in media. The reasons primarily being, media is one field which is open to all creative aspirants with no compulsion on academic background of media education. Apart from this the continuation of the belief that 'journalists are born and not made' continues to prevail in the industry. Media education is now being offered both by educational institutions under private and public managements as a popular subject. It is an indication that industry is gradually accepting academically trained students in media and corporate sectors. Media students continue to face several hurdles before gaining acceptance in popular visual media like television and film.

It is to be noted that media education is undergoing significant changes keeping in tune with transformations in the industry. Initially, media education focused on print media requirements. However, over the years the communication education components expanded to include the growth of modern mass media. Visual communication is a part of either the under-graduate or postgraduate programs. Exclusive programs in Visual Communication are also becoming very popular.

Visual Communication media requires a blend of academic, creative, management and technical skills. Therefore it is important to understand how the structured curriculums are planned and executed. The production of programs for film or television – the two primary genres of visual communication

provides employment opportunities to a variety of people ranging from technicians to artists. The production work which begins with conceptualization and script writing ends on the editing table. A creative team of artists and technicians works as one team to convert the creative thoughts into an appropriate format presentable to the audiences.

Visual media education is gaining popularity and attracting a large number of students. At this juncture, it is pertinent to examine and evaluate the planning of course contents, required infrastructure and the qualifications of the instructors. Systematic training in visual communication was initiated in areas of cinematography, editing, sound recording and film direction in several polytechnics across the country. The establishment of Film and Television Institute of India in 1960 (FTII, 2016) was a landmark development in India. Along with the development of television, advertising and later multimedia technologies, the study of visual communication acquired new dimensions

Mere academic exposure will not be sufficient to make a mark in the field of visual communication. It requires creativity and a deep commitment in the art of storytelling on the screen. Should the industry rely on academic institutions or the talent pool available outside, is constantly debated. With more and more educational institutions offering courses under attractive banners, it is time to take a look into the overall curriculum aspects of media particularly that of visual media education. It is important to understand the course contents, qualification of the trainers, available infrastructure and the frequency of up gradation of technology and other related areas which are part of the academia.

The present study intends to make an empirical observation on the present scenario and attempt to arrive at a model of training the students suitable to serve in various departments of the production houses. With entertainment industry expected to reach new levels with the insurgence of online media, the study acquires significance.

In the process of proceeding further it is important to review the growth and philosophy of establishing media departments in educational institutions in India. The general perception is that though India is witnessing a media boom, the media education is not matching the boom of media industry particularly that of visual media. The reasons could be many. The intentions of the study are to identify and suggest the methods to bridge the gap between media and academia.

1.1 Developments in Visual Communication

As Edward Tufte (2006) notes that principles of design replicate principles of thought, the act of arranging information becomes an act of insight. Effective visual design involves choice, judgment and a sense of aesthetics. It is the intersection of image, word, number and art. Thus visual communication becomes both informative and artistic.

Going by his words we can then understand visual communication as the transmission of information and ideas using symbols and imagery. It is believed to be the type that people rely on most and it includes signs, designs, films, typography etc.

The roots of visual communication can be traced back to the earliest humanity's expressions. From prehistoric cave drawings to complex computerized

renderings, visuals have the power to transcend the written word (Marilyn A Dyrud: 2006).

When people began printing with woodblocks, the ability to communicate visually blew wide open. The printed word and other symbols allowed for ideas and information to be reproduced, shared and preserved. In the academic sense the study of symbols and visual communication is called semiotics.

Interestingly as observed by Harris Lester, (2002) the efforts of cave paintings mark the beginning of the graphic design of today. Ideographs and pictographs carefully rendered on the dark, fire-lit walls without overlap highlight the design principle of not overlapping previous images. The history of moving images may also reach back to early cave drawings. It has been discovered in recently found caves that, when illuminated with a lighted torch, pictures appear to move. Perhaps these early cave artists were stimulating motion with their design.

Developments in the field of visual communication can be attributed to the Chinese. They invented paper. Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Greek, Italian and other European scribes used the book format prepared by the Chinese by 325 C E. History of visual communication makes a special attempt to remember the efforts of graphic designers who invented additional designs that aided the readability and legibility of the text printed in all forms of media. The designs created by John Baskerville, William Caslon and Giambattista Bodoni are still used today.

After illustrations and drawings it was photography that came as a visual format on the following period of development. From the first photograph published by Joseph Nicéphore Niépce in 1826, photography has brought incredible

changes. The growth in the area of photography from still to movable images has strengthened aesthetic link between words and pictures. Obviously motion pictures took visual communication to a different level. Similarly informational graphics became a story in simple sense. Today with technology updated every alternate day, visual communication is assuming increasing importance day by day. It provides information, education and entertainment. This field, which has earned the status of industry, obviously has turned into an important field for education.

1.2 Visual Media Education.

Education is a process through which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills and values from generation to generation. The Human knowledge is divided into a number of specialized areas of study and research. Higher education flourished in India for a long period. However, several attacks on centers of higher education by foreign invaders resulted in creating a big vacuum.

Lord Curzon appointed a commission to introduce new education system in India under the chairmanship of Thomas Raleigh. Based on the recommendations of the Commission, formation of Universities and other details were initiated.

After independence, India lost no time to take steps to promote higher education. By 1949, the Indian government had established a University Education Commission under the chairmanship of Dr. Radhakrishnan and based on the recommendations of the commission University Grants Commission was established. The present structure of undergraduate program

is based on Dr. D.S.Kothari commission report. Over the years the government of India, is incorporating various measures to improve the quality of higher education. With more than 764 (UGC)universities recognized by UGC, it is evident that higher education is on growth but becomes predominantly important for growth and employment.

Mass communications in general and visual communication in particular are truly fascinating areas of study. Creativity needs to be combined with most modern technologies in visual media. As Murthy C (2010) observes, the first full-fledged Journalism department was started in Hislop Christian College, Nagpur University in early 1950s. Till then as observed by many media researchers though there were many colleges that offered certificate/diploma courses in journalism, they could not be considered as full-fledged departments. The second generation of colleges began in post 1960's. According to Muppidi S. R. (2008) the earlier certificate courses in journalism and mass communication were replaced by university based journalism departments which offered one or two year degrees in journalism. There were only six university departments in 1961 in India and the number went up to 25 by 1981. The departments of journalism started renaming themselves after the mid 1970's as the departments of journalism and mass communication (Dua, 2003). The departments host a range of nomenclatures viz., journalism, mass communication, advertising, public relations, and media studies depending on various aspects. The course titles for the degree programs viz., Bachelor of Journalism (BJ), Bachelor of Journalism and Mass Communication (BJMC), Bachelor of Mass Communication (BMC), Bachelor of Mass Communication and Journalism (BMCJ) and the Master's program viz., Masters in Journalism

and Communication (MJC), Masters in Mass Communication (MMC), Masters in Journalism and Mass Communication (MJMC), M.A in Communication, Masters in Science Communication (MSC) and M.Sc. in Agricultural Communication, while few of the universities also offer electronic media courses with a separate department.

In Karnataka, the first postgraduate journalism department was established by Mysore University under the guidance of Dr. Nadig Krishnamurthy in the year 1972(UoM, 2012). The communication department in Bangalore University was established in the year 1973 (University, 2013).Postgraduate departments in Dharwad and Mangalore were established in the 1980s. And during the same decade media education witnessed a steady expansion. Almost all state universities have today departments of journalism and communication.

Undergraduate course in journalism was introduced for the first time in the state at Maharaja College of Mysore followed by NMKRV in Bangalore. Journalism was introduced in many University affiliated colleges by the end of 1990's. By the end of the last century, several private and deemed to be universities also started Journalism and Mass Communication courses. As per the latest records, media courses are taught in 11 public and 3privateuniversities in Karnataka. Amongst all Universities Bangalore University was the first to start a postgraduate course in Electronic Media followed by Karnatak University, Dharwad and later the University of Mysore. In the several affiliated colleges across the state, journalism is taught as one of the optional subjects at undergraduate courses. Only Manipal School of Communication offers a full-fledged degree course in communication and journalism.

Inspired by the growth of employment opportunities in visual media, quite a few media houses have established their own training institutions. They do not come under the purview of any university regulations and the training is largely focused on the requirements of the industry. With more and more deemed to be Universities planning to focus on the changing trends in media and establish exclusive visual communication programs, it is important to understand the challenges faced while structuring and implementing the visual media courses. Offering visual media courses calls for extensive course planning, setting up of requisite infrastructure, keeping industrial and technical developments in mind and the right talent to offer the course.

1.3 Media Education: Academic Preparations

The course content of media courses needs to keep in mind the changes in the industry. The post-graduation program of Journalism initially included the historical developments of media, Theories of Communication, Media Research, Media Laws along with subjects like Reporting and Art of Editing. They had the main focus on print media, requirements. The publication of a lab journal was the only practical component. With the advancement of technology academicians related to media changed the nomenclature of the courses from Journalism to Journalism and Mass Communication thus enabling the departments to include new topics viz., Radio, Television and Film, Photography, Public Relations and Advertising.

Technological revolution in mass media coupled with other developments like globalization and liberalization opened up new opportunities to restructure the media courses. Electronic media witnessed unbelievable expansion. The

employment avenues grew significantly along with the transformation of media technologies.

Journalism education, which, focused more on print- oriented topics started including newer areas of communication.

Interestingly even during the rapid expansion of television in India during 1970s and 80s curriculum in academia did not focus much beyond the history and development of television and films in India.

Visual media in the country experienced a new wave when the doors were thrown open to privately owned television channels during the post liberalization period. As the print industry experienced migration of journalists to television the teaching institutions gradually started including television production elements in their courses.

The educational institutions which were offering media education gradually shifted their attention to visual media. While the state owned Universities created separate 'Electronic Media' departments to train the aspirants, the private universities did not lag behind them.

1.4 Growth of Technical Education in Visual Media in India

The visual media education can be largely divided into two divisions namely technical and non-technical. The visual media education found its significance when Dr. S K Patil's report was implemented to start a Film and Television Institute of India at Pune in 1960. FTII became the first and only premier institution in India offering visual media education to cater to the needs of the film Industry. The M G R Film Institute down south in Madras (presently

Chennai) in 1966 and Sathyajit Ray Film and Television Institute in Calcutta in 1995 followed the footsteps of FTII. Numerous film institutes spurred across the country to cater to the needs of the industry in the later years.

A few states in the country have established media Universities, namely Makhanlal Chaturvedi Rashtriya Patrakarita Evam Sanchar Vishwavidyalaya, established by Madhya Pradesh Legislature in 1990 (MCRPESV, 1990); Kushabhau Thakre Patrakarita Evam Jansanchar Vishwavidyalaya, University of Journalism and Mass Communication established by the Government of Chhattisgarh in the year 2004 (KTUJM, 2004); and Haridev Joshi University of Journalism and Mass Communication, established under Rajasthan Assembly Act 2012 (HJUJ, 2012).

In Karnataka, Sri Jayachamarajendra Polytechnic took early initiatives in this field and later the Government Film Institute near Hesaraghatta, on the outskirts of Bangalore. These government institutes have produced quite a few renowned cinematographers and editors. Apart from these institutions universities also offer subjects in visual media as part of the curriculum. Though several elements of visual communication were included in Art schools, they could not make much impact. As the requirement of the Industry changed the universities and autonomous colleges were required to establish exclusive electronic media departments like EMMRC in Mysore, Bangalore University followed by Karnatak University, Dharwad. Amongst the Autonomous Universities, while some included visual media education as part of their curriculum some have established exclusive programs in Visual Media

Media education is passing through notable changes. Courses are tailored industry needs. Latest equipment's along with required software's are added to

the departments. Several institutions have taken the lead in forging closer contacts between teaching and practicing arenas. What the industry needs is human resource who have capacity for a creative thinking and ability for content development added with knowledge on technical aspects so that the recruited talent can ensure quality check. Therefore is very important and relevant to examine how visual communication, the most practical and vibrant subject, is taught in various educational centers.

1.5 Visual Media and its Fast Forward Growth

Business transactions in the visual media provide a clear picture about the growth of the industry. Currently there are close to 850 television channels inclusive of international, national, regional and local channels in the country. Cinema, the other popular visual media format, is reported to have produced over 1,969 films a year in national and regional languages and local dialect during the year 2014. The total turnover of entertainment industry is expected to reach Rs.150 billion for the fiscal year 2016 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinema_of_India). Production houses are constantly involved in churning out new stories, ideas and concepts to occupy the viewer 24X7 across the globe. The growth in television entertainment can be attributed to the entry of private television channels. The Indian film industry attributes its growth to the marketing techniques across the globe and the technology enabled multi-screening facility.

In Karnataka, apart from innumerable local cable television channels the state has 26 television channels. The Kannada film industry is reported to release over 150 films on an average in a year. It is important to make a detailed score

on the Indian entertainment industry as it includes all formats of visual media - caricatures to the latest technology in Animation and graphics to bring the high impact visual effects. The Indian television segment contributes over 40 percent of the revenues in the Indian media and entertainment sector; it also contributes 35 percent of the Indian advertising industry. India's entertainment and media sector are expected to grow at a steady rate and touch over Rs. 2.27 lakh crore by 2018 on account of healthy growth in areas like advertisement and television industry, as reported by CII-PwC. It is evident that the content creation and television broadcasting through cable, DTH, IPTV use the broadcast space of the private player's viz., the Zee TV, Sony, Star TV, Colors etc. (PwC & CII, 2014).

The private players, after dethroning the monopolized government television channel Doordarshan, have established their television network channels across national and regional entities, broadcasting various entertainment programs covering numerous genres of show biz; thus boosting the robust development of entertainment sector. That the media giants are expecting to generate Rs. 84,000 crore by 2018 only through the television (including subscription and ad revenue) excluding the share of other visual genres viz., print, radio, films and new media highlights the scope of the growth. With entertainment industry expected to exceed Rs. 2.27 lakh crore by 2018 growing at Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 15 per cent between 2013 and 2018(PwC & CII, 2014), the industry has its key in the rising spend on entertainment by the growing Indian middle class, changing regulatory initiatives, increased corporate investments and integration of existing players across the value chain. In addition to these factors the rising global interest

towards Indian content is also a reason for the growth in this industry(PwC & CII, 2014). The growth of television channels in Karnataka is also attributed to the massive expansion both in General Entertainment and News Channels. There are 26 private channels operating in Karnataka.

1.6 Rationale and Scope of study

The growth of visual media industry in the present era of digitalization has been exceptional. The industry offers excellent opportunities at different levels for the young aspirants who are well trained. However, recruiters seem to be not very satisfied with the inputs provided by educational institutions. This is evident as media professionals have continued to recruit and train the aspirants both from media and non-media institutions.

Annie Besant founded the first school of journalism in 1920. The year 2020 will be the centenary celebrations for journalism and communication education in India. Unfortunately, journalism and communication education is yet to earn the status of professional education.

However with the rapid advancement in visual media technology, it is very important to examine the course contents of Journalism and Mass communication and electronic media courses offered by the universities in Karnataka. Structuring a customized education model for visual media education, to empower the students with various specialized and skilled job profiles on creative, technical and management platform in media is the need of the hour. It can be remembered here that though the National Skill Development Corporation has identified numerous courses in visual media vertical, the programs have not been initiated. The eligibility criteria to enroll for

the National Skills Development Corporation courses, the duration and the methodology have not been found convincing.

At this juncture it is time for re-thinking. This stream of education which falls under social sciences should be able spark the curiosity among the students to take it up for further studies (Raghavan, 2003). The issue bothering the media education in India relates to theory versus practice (Studies, 2015).

The study undertaken will make an attempt to understand the current status, with reference to course content, teacher's ability and education background and infrastructural facilities. It also intends to derive a model for television, films and animation education that will focus its attention on empowering young aspirants. It is important to note here that any visual media production irrespective of genres involves the creative, technical and management teams working together. A quick look at the working schedule at a production house will educate us about the focus of the course. The future seeker has to be empowered not only to work as a team but also to focus on various elements involved in production simultaneously. Understanding a proper sync between creative - concept, location, sets, properties, costumes, identification of talented human resource; management team - advertisement, revenue, marketing techniques, channel, time, budget, travel, co-ordination with the performers and participants licensing; production department – equipment, etc. are a few areas in which a student should be rigorously trained. The student should be made to know practically all technicalities involved during pre-production, production and post-production stages of a program/advertisement / documentary or film. The study intends to design a course that can impart practical training in writing, on-screen performance, technical aspects and in

managing, communicating and coordinating with on-the-ground realities experienced in the process of producing a program for the visual media, precisely for the TV and Films.

The criteria for recruitment changed in both the print and the electronic media. Institutions grabbed the expectations of industry and followed to give importance in designing the content for print media. Institutions though witnessed the changes in the electronic media, visual media in particular, their interest did not seize the opportunity to meet the expectations of the visual media industry. Hence this study is carried to find the gaps and recommend the short coming to map the academic delivery in visual media to industry expectations.

In the first Chapter an attempt was made to examine the growth and development of media education in general and visual communication in particular. Further, the inadequacies in visual communication education were also highlighted. The need to interlink academia with industry was also discussed. In the next chapter research studies related to the current research topic will be reviewed.