

## Media Markets vs. Media Institutions: An Analysis from the Perspective of Students Choice and Aspirations at Private Universities in India

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### ABSTRACT

Today, the presence of audio-visual media, new media and other interactive media has provided a boost in generating employment in media industries. Now, Media is not restricted to the traditional domain but includes many other new platforms i.e. convergent media, digital media and interactive media etc. But, there is a general perception that there is a wider gap which exists between media education and media markets in India. Number of private institutions offer journalism programmes that proliferate media education. It is observed that students' aspirations are not met by academia especially in terms of media markets need is concerned. In this context, article examines the relation between market's demand and students' aspirations. Addressing this critical issue, the paper suggests for innovative change in pedagogy and the idea of interdisciplinary approach in media education which may improve the standards and fulfill the gap between media markets and students' choice and aspirations.

**Keywords:**Media Education, Media Markets, Students Aspiration, Inter-disciplinary.

### INTRODUCTION

In a world of innovation, experimentation and cut throat competition, the media sector needs talented human resources, which can meet the challenges to today's world and shapes the future. These talents need to be trained with the vision and be equipped with the skills, required to be a perfect media professional. During freedom struggle in India, offices of newspapers served as journalism school too which nurtured new generation of media world. But due to growing pressure, proliferation in media industries and advent of new technology, need of organized media education was felt.

Looking back to history, it is evident that formal journalism education in India was initiated by Punjab University in 1941. Then P.P. Singh first established journalism departments in Lahore (1942), Delhi and Chandigarh (1962). Singh was an accomplished academician trained in London and Missouri (cited in Columbia, 1983; Tewari 2010). He was a fierce defender of journalism teaching and despite criticisms; he continued to encourage the setting up of departments in

various universities (Sahay, 2006). Journalism teaching began to hold its credit. Despite received sever criticism from several corners, intellectuals, academicians and media professional, this continued to be overwhelmed by concerns about nomenclatures for journalism related courses like print media, electronic media, advertising, film, photography etc. It was suggested that to run these types of courses in India. At result, it was offered at different schools and departments of government run institutions. The study curriculum, infrastructure and resources, teaching methodology and evaluation criteria followed. Singh's vision and ideals led to an American influence in Indian and Pakistani journalism training programmes. The push towards a formal education process in journalism was provided by the University Grants Commission (UGC) in 1977, which constituted a subject panel for journalism. Universities played an important role in formalizing the education system because they stood under the government's umbrella and characterized the liberal atmosphere of thought and action. Meanwhile, there were also steps taken by individuals and groups to spearhead the cause of media education. In 1971, journalism teachers united to form the Indian Journalism Education Association (IJE), which was set up under the aegis of Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC). The Second Press Commission in 1978 also recommended the setting up of a National Council for Journalism Training. However, that did not materialize for lack of support from the industry. Despite many hiccups, this was the phase that laid out the roots for journalism education and training. Limited

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resources did not stop universities from offering different types of programmes or seeking internships for students in various print media houses and trying to establish industry-academia rapport. Training in audio-visual media was limited due to the lack of financial support, little access to government sponsored media and few choices of media outlets. In a span of few decades, this was to completely change because media saw a grand expansion in terms of magazines, newspapers and television etc.

After the globalisation and liberalisation, this phase saw many positive developments for journalism departments. More emphasis began to be given to training in electronic media. It was found to be seen the need of the hour. This was also the era when the Indian middle class rose and with that it gave rise to young aspirants of journalism (Bhirani, 2007). State-run institutes like IIMC, National School of Drama (NSD), the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), and the National Institute of Design (NID) flourished and began to contribute to the requirements of the media sector. Many polytechnics, press academies, advertising associations and other professional bodies also started training programmes of varying durations in communication. The institutes and the courses offered proved to be crucial for developing the edifice on which media education in India stands today. Though, the number of institutes offering journalism and communication courses which are substantially increasing and mushrooming. In recent years, media education has witnessed the growth by many private and public institutes. There are many courses offered by different media institutions run by media houses too.

The students are equally participating in different and diverse courses offered by both private and government run institutions. Thus, the number of students studying journalism generally remained miniscule. Departments in universities usually enroll 15 to 20 students in the Master's programme. Also, there are only a handful of institutes that offer both Bachelor and Master's courses. Recently, institutes have started diploma and certificate courses for working professionals who can allot study time after their working hours.

Journalism schools generally function with a minimal number of qualified teachers since they normally hire the guest faculties from media industries. Most of the teaching positions in the departments remain vacant for years. In most of the cases, the syllabus is designed by guest lecturers from the industry (Chauhan & Chandra,

1997). Though, they certainly cannot be a replacement for permanent teachers who engage in regular teaching. The lack of teaching and research assistants has hindered the faculty from achieving its potential, despite being known as Gujarat, in India as the best place for journalism education. Not having adequate teaching faculty obstructs many things like the inclination to undertake research, build industry contacts and even the motivation of students to take the course seriously.

Presently, the number of mass communication schools exist which claim to fulfill the need of media world. Along with journalism education, other subjects like public relations, advertising, corporate communications, media production, event management, film studies etc, are being taught in integrated and comprehensive courses. at the end of which a journalism graduate can choose from the wide range of opportunities presented to him/her. Knowledge of allied fields is supplementary but one can create more demand in future as well, since media industry incorporates the idea of producing media products which has relation with other social science disciplines. Many journalists shift from being employed in a traditional media environment to technical writers and content developers for websites and research organisations. Journalism programmes can therefore take the following measures to remain relevant to the changing media environment.

As of now, journalism education in India is in transition. A mere quantitative expansion may not fulfill the demand. What is needed is a new model of inclusiveness, free of conflicts but of serious, yet healthy competition is required for a sincere pursuit for excellence. The UGC has already initiated measures to focus on journalism education during the 12th Five-Year Plan and the mapping work is underway. What needed is a comprehensive policy of socio-economic inclusion as well as avoidance of the side-effects of actions including reverse discrimination. For that, a broader participation of all the stakeholders is required. The earlier idea of a national council for journalism education suggested to the second Press Commission for improvement of journalism education in India.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Despite the phenomenal and almost explosive growth witnessed in the Indian media industry, professionals in the field are concerned about the quality of Indian journalism education. It is not that education will totally determine the kind of journalists entering the industry, but it will have

an impact on the issues that they cover and the understanding and perspectives that they develop with regards to socio-political problems. that the present lot of journalistic professionals across the print and electronic media feel that the popular media has not given justice to the coverage and analysis of developmental issues and policies, poverty and deprivation and has instead focused more on building the 'India Shining' brand (Ray, 2008). Ray traces the roots of the situation to the corporatization of the media, with its ownership being concentrated in a few hands like politicians, corporate and businessman. The working of media conglomerates in India is interested more towards the cause of profit other than expressing the democratic value. This presents modern Journalism schools in India with an interesting scenario (Sainath, 2007). Most of these institutes today are busy in generating money and wealth since they receive high packages to offer students who get admission in media studies. Media institutes today promote the placements offered to students and pay packages more than promoting the course and the institute itself (The Hoot 2011). This is something that media schools have done for a long time to attract students to a particular college when there is so much competition around. This has become the reason for competition among various media education institutes. Even students prefer the private institute or university, which can place them in a big media house or a reputed media firm. Besides, there is huge demand at the media institutions run by media houses in lieu of getting employment just after the completion of course. There are few schools run by media houses like the Times School of Journalism, ISOMES (A news 24 institute), Jagaran Institute of Media Studies (JIMS) and the Asian School of Journalism etc. Keeping in the view of students' need, choice and aspirations, private institutions may try to bridge the gap between media institutions and media markets for achieving sustainable goal.

### **RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Many of the issues facing media education in India relate to theory versus practice, updating syllabus to keep pace with advancements in media technology, nature of courses, lack of research and conceptual clarity among graduates, involvement of industry professionals, admission procedures, the quality of teaching faculty, reference books and equipment. In the Indian case, most journalism schools have lacked these resources. They are more related to theories of journalism, which leads to students having very little knowledge. How the rich legacy that Indian

journalism possesses or ought to have. Much of the reference and course materials too are based on textbooks and practices. The educational institutes have not realized the importance of contextualizing education to particular cultural, social and political settings. This problem is more acutely felt by journalism graduates in regional language institutes because it is difficult for students to relate the academic knowledge to their own language and culture. Hence, it seems that there has been the negligence of regional languages in the mainstream media.

Over the years, media industries in India have not only experienced phenomenal growth as it is expected. But also it has substantially expanded to a certain extent. Emerging new technology and huge competition forced media sector to develop with scope for a new dimension of development. Realising the need of differences and gap between media education and media markets over a past few periods in India, appropriate and innovative syllabus and curriculum may ensure the quality media education. The views and feedback, opinions and aspirations from stakeholders like students, academia and media proprietors can ensure the future plan. In the age of digital society, convergent media, social media and new media have gained momentum and utmost importance. It may create new opportunities for academia, industries and students. Those opportunities require to be taken as an important means for media institutions and media markets. To strengthen media markets in digital society and widen the scope of employment opportunities in emerging media sector, appropriate relevant media contents and syllabus can ensure better media education, particularly by the private university. To keep intact of student's learning interest; interdisciplinary education may find a place for further exploration since media markets has expanded from mainstream hardcore media industries to diverse research and developmental sector.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Since student's aspiration is equally important to fulfill with need in a new emerging market, this paper really intended to examine the diverse backgrounds, different opinions and interests among students. These following research questions were addressed and raised in order to broadly understand the view of media professional, academic curricular activities and aspiration of students.

1. What are the students' aspirations to join media course?

2. What are other expectations they have in relation to their career and future of media education?
3. Does media institution provide the education based on students choices and markets' requirement?

## RESEARCH DESIGN

To remain free from any pre conceived notion (if any), quantitative approach has been adopted for data analyses and exploration. 200 questionnaires were employed among media students of various university and institutes to understand their aspirations. Random sampling technique was adopted to select respondents in different private universities and institutions. Other secondary literature like journal articles, books and periodicals and internet sources were used for data analysis. In terms of data collection and analysis, equal proportion of data across gender, caste, religion, region and education was primarily considered. Chi-square technique has also been followed to see the association between variables selected for study.

## FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

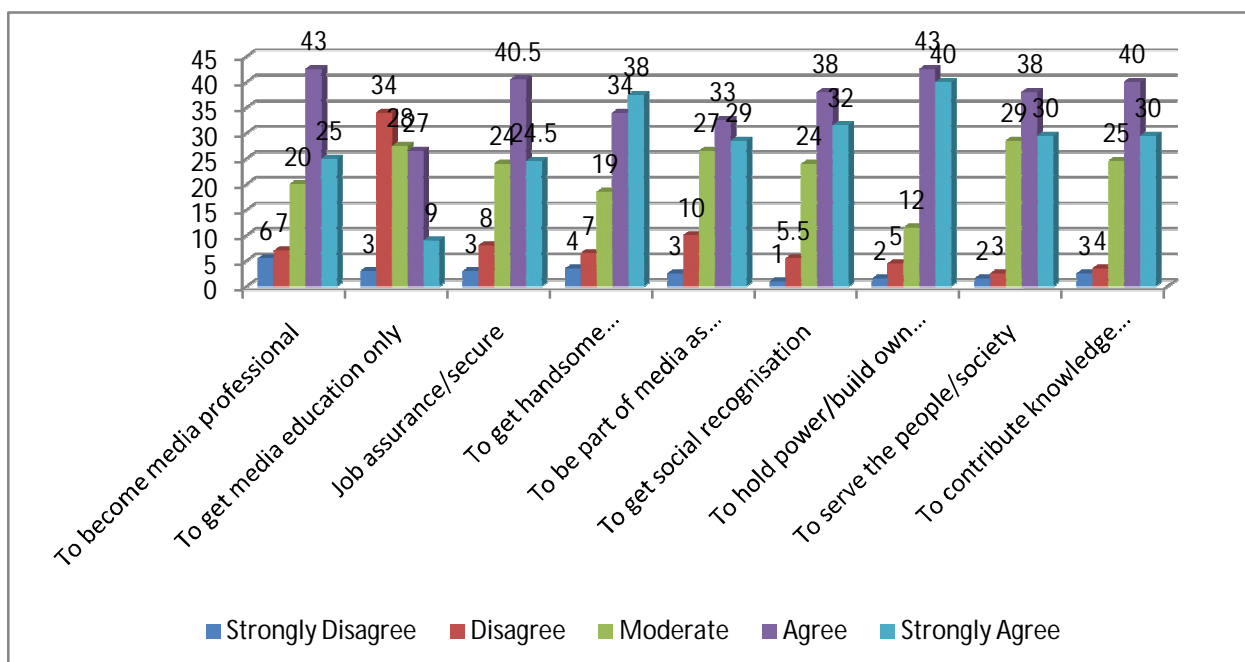
### Student's Aspirations towards Media Education

This section attempts to examine the quantitative data collected from 200 media UG and PG students on the variables like students aspirations in terms of reasons for joining the course, course or study areas preference and intention for higher studies. Despite, other independent variables such as socio-economic profiles across education, income, caste, region, religion and gender were

collected to support the quantitative analysis. The detailed analysis is given here as under.

The empirical survey indicates that students particularly studying in private universities have diverse expectations, intentions, choices and aspirations. It is distinctly evident from the above table that students were asked to understand the reasons for joining the course. Around 40 per cent of students eagerly want to build their own reputation by possessing power through media hype and publicity as well as want to receive handsome package at same time. Few students, in an average of around 30 per cent students are interested to be part of glamour business and to serve the society as well. Very few students say that media job is secure, thus, we are studying to get media education only and it can create a social recognition if being part of media industries. Even during the formal or informal discussion with media students, it is evident that students are always flexible in changing their interests as the course goes on. But previous idea of joining the course has little impact on deciding their career. The above survey results indicate that students are interested to get handsome salary, to become media professionals and involved in research activities along with to build image of their own through power and prestige. There are other intention of joining courses like to serve the people through writing, speaking and acting, but has shown little interest. In terms of job assurance, students feel that journalism course can only provide or fetch a job in the market. The main purpose not only remains with idea of joining media industry, but to get social

Graph-1 Reasons for Joining Media Course



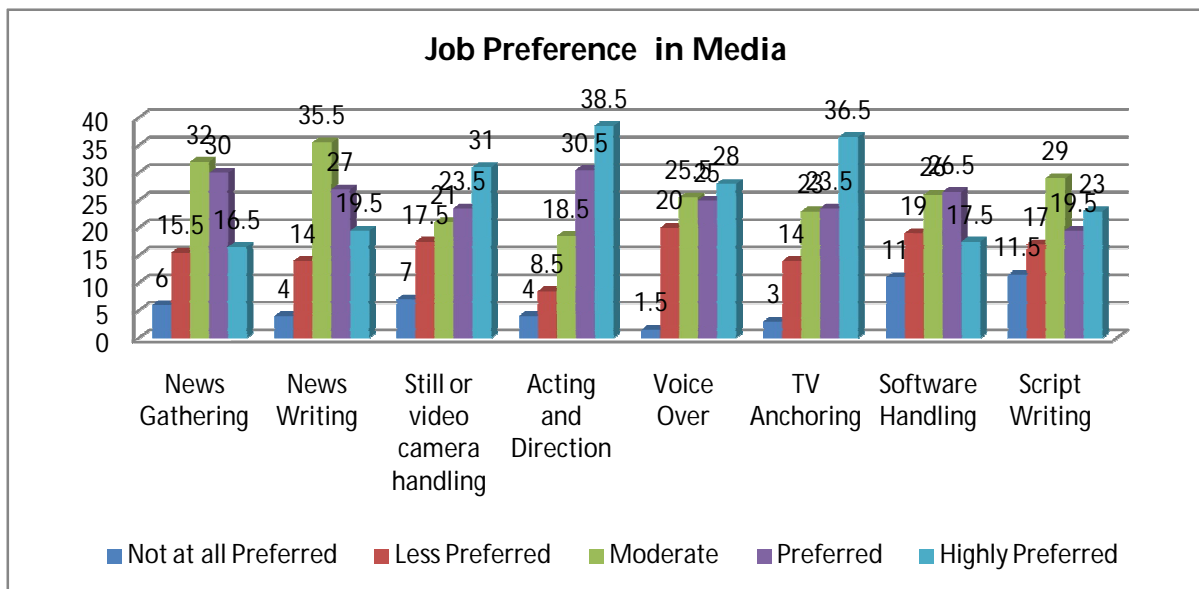
recognition through political power and active involvement in politics in long run. Joining media course has not only remained limited with the idea of getting job and employment in media sector.

**Job Preference among Students**

In these days, it is not easy to get job directly in the media sector. Unless a student occupied with diverse knowledge or expert in a particular area, it may be difficult to get job in media markets. Although it is not an easy task to decide, still they take decision before getting admission into the course. In this context, it has been made an attempt to understand the preference of job among media students in private universities in India.

photography and TV anchoring. As they find that media sector is so glamorous and charming to work for in which they should become part of this. Very few students are hardly interested in reporting, editing for both print and electronic media in these days. As students are motivated by other media professionals who has already become part of media industries. It is also observed that those students hail from middle class families are more interested in glamour business. Poor background or lower class students do prefer to make their career in hard core media job such as reporting, editing and writing for both print and electronic media. Thus, there is a strong relationship between parent’s family income and the job preference of the students. The culture of the students also does

**Graph-2: Job Preference**



It is evident that job preference among students has become static. The variable mentioned in the above table has independent score with a range from highly preferred to not at all prefer. Each selected students were given opportunity to give their choice. The data reveals that TV anchoring (36.5 per cent), acting and direction (38.5 per cent) was the most highly preferred by the media students. Similarly, only 19.5 per cent students prefer for news writing and script writing. News gathering and script writing also are given less importance by students. Other technical areas are live voice over, still and video camera handling. The choices or job preference in the areas of media sector like news gathering, news writing, still or video camera handling, acting and dancing etc are more or less preferred by students at private universities. Apart from these, students are more interested in acting and direction,

influence in taking decision of the job that they would like to have.

Irrespective of the course such as print, electronic, new media, developmental and corporate sector has seen to be mostly preferred by the students before the joining course. Before getting admission in to these courses, few students are either influenced from media industries; through consumption of mass media; motivation from parents or relatives in terms of media preference to join the media. Few students also get confused to decide whether they do normally have to wait till course completion or not. Mere patience among the students in this generation has influenced their decision to prefer job preference in media sector. Due to technological and intervention of new media, easily available of online media, students don’t provide time to

think and decide. It was evident that most of the students interviewed are struggling to get internship and job due to not matching the profile of the students with the requirement of media industries. Students also reacted to the change and design the syllabus as per the markets demand. It is also evident that few students are already in the job before completion of the course, even if at bachelor's degree level.

**Intention for Higher Studies**

The study seeks to understand and examine the reasons for pursuing or not pursuing higher studies after Bachelor or Masters in mass communication as it has implication with media markets demand and students' choice for job. The details are given as under:

**Table-1 Do you want to Pursue Higher Education after BJMC (%)**

Gender	Yes	No	Can't Say	Total
Male	66 (56)	26 (22)	25 (21)	117
Female	39 (47)	17 (20)	27 (33)	83
Total	105 (53)	43 (22)	52 (26)	200

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.216 <sup>a</sup>	2	.200*
Likelihood Ratio	3.188	2	.203
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.864	1	.091
N of Valid Cases	200		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 17.85.

Source: Field observation, 2016

Note: \* not significant across gender

It is clearly understood that 53 per cent students agreed for higher studies and 22 per cent students did not agree for higher studies. Other 26 per cent students did not ever decide what they want to do after the course. They either may go for job or due to lack of financial support from parents or they can continue if they don't get job. Across gender, male students opt for higher studies with compare to female student. But statistical result doesn't support this statement as these data are not significant. Thereby, it is assumed that female students also interested for higher studies without going for job.

It has also been observed that students pursuing graduate courses don't want to pursue higher education especially diploma or master's in mass communication. Very few students want to opt since they have strong belief that they would

succeed in building career in the field of journalism and mass communication. Despite having with diverse intention and indifferent ideology before coming to pursue media course (Sahoo and Srivstava, 2017), they believe that only BJMC course is making ready one to get a job in media industry where they can establish and create their own image. Few among others feel that course is completely professional oriented, no other opportunities to achieve in other disciplinary or inter-in disciplinary subjects in social sciences. Since aspirations stay valued in the core disciplines like journalism and mass communication among the students in few number, out of them female students are less interested. Although chi-square results does not support the assumption but it proves that male student are more keenly interested for higher education compare to female graduates. Comparing with previous findings, female students showing interest towards TV anchoring, television production and advertising design, they think graduate degree can help them to achieve their desired goal.

Students' interest and choice is mostly important and has to be taken care of by both media institutions and media markets. Private media institutions owned by corporate world, media industries and politicians in India expect that cent percent students would be placed immediately once the course is completed. But, at the end, most of them remain un-employed. Thus, it is worthy to be noted that if the gap between media market and institute can be met and reduced to a certain extent, then more number of students also can be attracted towards media education at private universities. It is here to be examined that the nature and pattern of course opted and what are the students' choice and aspirations towards media education.

Growing number of students rush to private institutions and universities in large number in these days. It seemed to have great impact of upcoming mushrooming private institutions. Not only the expansion of media institutions, but also the various courses like diploma, PG diploma, under graduation and post graduate are being provided. Under the banner of media and communication, there are different courses like animation graphics designing, print and electronic production, public relation, advertising, photography, cinema studies, documentary, event management, new media, radio, community radio, development communication etc. being currently provided by these institutions. It seems that there has been a clear shift not only in their vision of media industries but also courses

running by different organisations/institutions. The intention of these courses is to attract number of students into the fold of private bodies. Once the students are captured, they are produced and trained as per what university wants to provide and run institution. Thus, there is a huge gap between media institutions and media industries.

## **MEDIA INSTITUTIONS VS MEDIA MARKETS**

Media began to expand their markets in India. Sub regional television services and media are sprouting up as well. All these changes have created a demand for graduates who are global-minded and familiar with national and international issues in media and communications. However, media course and programs are, in general, challenging and demanding. To keep abreast of the recent trends, as the above data suggests that communication programs should be linked to the market forces by introducing courses in international or regional communication and by incorporating international dimensions in individual courses. Setting up exchange programs with universities in other countries is also an important where students aspire can be well placed in abroad for job and higher studies. Academia at private sector can create exchange opportunities among Asian communication programs. The successful undergraduate programs in private university over the years can play the largest role in influencing and fulfilling the demand of media markets in long run, and preparation for, the global society within which they will have to function (Skolnikoff, 1993:231). Communication schools have two general curricular orientations: practical and analytical while some schools may emphasize one area more than the other, many choose to place dual emphasis on both. Communication schools are also distinguished by the level of training they offer, either restricting themselves to graduate level, or to both undergraduate and post graduate levels. Four major patterns of communication schools are observed. Communication students often have to rely on textbooks and journals for teaching materials. To make communication more socially relevant, communication educators in India have to produce more textbooks and follow pedagogy practice based on the students' social context in which they are used.

Modern journalism education in India is struggling to find the balance between imparting practical skills and enhancing conceptual depth and critical thinking. It is also striving to achieve the gap between media institutions and media

markets. To sort out these problems, it is needed to sharpen the analytical as well as practical skills of journalism graduates along with provide the specialization courses based on market demand to generate more employment opportunity. It may not only help in getting jobs, but also can ensure the quality and diverse media contents/products. The solution for this is not just proliferating private colleges or increasing the number of seats. The theory, interdisciplinary issues, current affairs and practical course should go together since it is crucial to journalistic life. Journalists do not become what they are only by gaining good writing skills or the knowledge to operate the latest media technologies. They must have analytical capacities, innovative ideas as well as a human sense for generating news. They need to have a holistic vision to influence the way society functions. Journalism education, to set a standard of quality, must follow an integrated and inter-disciplinary approach and not compartmentalize the skills set required for professional success since job is not remain confined to media industries only. There are different organisations and media institutions who hire the people who have both theoretical and practical approach. Students having speaking, writing, researching and analyzing abilities are mostly preferred by the organisations who are involved in development and research activities.

Widening the scope for journalism studies by initiating more institutes cannot solve or fulfil the students' choices and aspirations. The discipline is striving for an identity of its own and it is the responsibility of both the academia and the industry to make gainful efforts by bridging the gap between media markets and student aspirations. Journalism education in India is still developing and though, it has grown its size and importance. It is still not treated at par with other traditional disciplines of knowledge. To attain this status and satisfy the students' need of interdisciplinary, it needs a culture of intellectual debate and research which will produce new body of knowledge. Unlike other disciplines in the natural sciences and social sciences, media studies lack a continuous theoretical tradition, a rigorous body of scholarly work and research that gives the new idea of interdisciplinary. The inter-disciplinary nature of media studies has worked to its advantage, but the discipline also heavily relies on theories and laws promulgated mainly by other social sciences such as political science, sociology, economics, cultural studies and anthropology.

## CONCLUSION

Media education in the country remains intact by bridging the gap between supply and demand, particularly emphasizing to understand the students' need, choice and aspiration. The study makes an attention to the academia, students and media industries. Certainly, it has also implication for other social sciences subjects like history, culture, geography, economics, anthropology, sociology, psychology and political science. Idea of interdisciplinary may create a newer understanding among the students that how the students of sociology find on caste, religion, ethnicity and gender representation in media industries would be an interesting. Political scientist could correlate the relations between political movements and interest in journalism. Besides management courses could also avail the finding of the study for their business plan. In overall, the study is important to understand the courses run by private institutions and universities in India and may be a great help to design the course curriculum and syllabus based on the markets choice and demand. University may follow the unique approach for school of media studies rather than adopting central ideas meant for all the departments. Although, students are fascinated and interested with film studies, script writing, acting and directions, anchoring and photography, academic institutions require to strengthen these areas as focus of the study. Thus, not only students, but media institutions and media industries in general will be benefitted. It may also help in policy making and strategy building for not only media institutions but also for media industries in India too.

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