

Media Education in North-East Indian Central Universities: A Study of Media Programs and its Nomenclature

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ABSTRACT

The journey of media education has completed around five decades of its existence in North-East India. It was first started with launching of a 'Diploma in Journalism' in 1967 under the Department of Communication & Journalism at Guahati University. Thereafter, media education marked very low presence in the university system in the region due to a long discourse on its necessity in post independence era. However, the discipline grew with the establishment of media departments in each central university in the North-East India during last two decades, which is still continuing and reflecting progressive scenario. This research paper primarily traces the birth of media education in central universities of North-East India. It examines media programs and its nomenclature and also analyses research programs being offered by the departments.

Keywords: Media Education, Central University, North-East, Discipline, Research, Nomenclature.

MEDIA EDUCATION: AN INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalized world, the proliferation of media has reached at the doorstep of every society. Millions of messages are roaming around us, which is being gathered, processed and disseminated by media every day. It is further perceived and analysed by the masses of various sections of societies on the basis of their interest and gratification, which ultimately shapes their ideas, opinions, feelings, emotions and behaviour patterns.

This whole process is complicated, but helps in building socio-political, cultural and economic fabric of any nation. The success and failure of any media message totally depends on the creative and critical abilities of both communicator and receivers. Therefore, it is essential to impart media education from pre-school to university level (Grunwald Declaration, UNESCO, 1982). Media education is the process of getting familiar with the working mechanism of media through teaching and learning, which makes us aware about how and why media messages are being created, disseminated, perceived and analysed.

The idea of media education was first conceptualized by UNESCO in 1977, which led the path for its orderly growth as a discipline around the world.

Media education is the study, learning and teaching of, and about, the modern media of communication and expression as a specific and

autonomous area of knowledge within education theory and practice, distinct from their use as aids for the teaching and learning of other areas of knowledge, such as mathematics, science and geography.' (International Film and Television Council-IFTC, 1977).

It was redefined in 2001 through UNESCO Policy paper titled 'Media Education: A Global Strategy for Development'.

Media education is concerned with the full range of media, including moving images media (film, television, video), radio and recorded music, print media (particularly newspapers and magazines), and the new digital communication technologies. It aims to develop a broad based 'literacy', not just in relation to print, but also in the symbolic systems of images and sounds (Buckingham, 2001).

The pedagogical framework of media education is broad, which incorporates theory, practice and research concerned with various mediums of mass communication such as print, electronic, new media, cinema, advertising and public relations. It inculcates creative and critical abilities among masses in order to transform them into 'Media Literate' and to make them understand about the nature, techniques and impact of media messages and productions.

Media Education is an attempt at making media users critically conscious of the impact of media on their lives, in order to enable them to become creative users of the media. It may be defined as a process of education by which people become aware of the ways in which the various media influence their thinking, affect their value system and change society. As a result, they become critical and discerning receivers of media

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messages capable of demanding quality media programs and even creating their own media. They are thus able to respond intelligently to media creations and manipulations (Srampickal and Joseph, 2002).'

In India, media education is going to complete 100 years of its existence in 2020. A journalism program was started first in 1920 at Department of English under Faculty of Arts at National University of Adyar, Madras (now in Chennai) under guidance of Dr. Anne Besant (Bagchi & Rath, 2009). This journalism program could not survive for long and closed down in 1925 (Eapen, 1995). The next effort took place at Aligarh Muslim University in 1938 when a diploma program in journalism was launched. It was also short-lived and stopped in 1942 (Prof. N. A. K. Durrani, personal communication July 17, 2017).

Punjab University gave birth of first media department in un-divided India in 1941. Prof. Pushpendra Pal Singh (popularly known as Prof. P. P. Singh) was instrumental in setting up and developing the department. It is still longest surviving department in Indian sub-continent (Eapen, *ibid*).

Despite of these pioneering efforts, media education struggled hard for recognition as a discipline in India. A long discourse on its necessity continued for decades, which resulted in a slow development of the discipline in first six decades from 1920 to 1980. Only six university departments were set up in between 1920 to 1961, which increased to 25 by 1981. That means 25 departments came into existence in first six decades from 1920 to 1981 (Muppidi, 2008). Thereafter, it developed at a fast pace in the era of globalization. More than 300 media departments are functional in govt. as well as private university system as of now (UGC, 2017).

MEDIA EDUCATION IN NORTH-EAST INDIA: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The journey of media education has completed five decades of its existence in North-East India. A 'Diploma in Journalism' program was launched in 1967 at Department of Communication & Journalism, Guahati University. Initially the department started functioning as a part of Department of Political Science under headship of Prof. K. Venkatarao, but it was upgraded as a full-fledged department in 1983 with an intake of 25 students. It became part of one of the first ten university departments of media education in India (Dutta, 2017). The department offered 'Bachelor of Communication & Journalism' in 1994 and MA in Mass Communication in 2005 (Dutta & Ray, 2010).

Despite of this pioneering effort, media education scenario in North-East India marked very low presence in first five decades from 1947 to 2000 in post-independence era. Only two media departments at Guahati University and Assam University came into existence during that period. Even the first Master program was offered through conventional mode after four decades of independence in 1996 at Department of Mass Communication, Assam University, Silchar, which is a central university (Dutta & Ray, 2010).

The reason is that a long discourse on fate of media education in India, which continued till the era of globalization. First Press Commission (1952-54), Indian Association for Education in Journalism (1956), Central Institute of Journalism (1959) IIMC Seminar (1977), UGC Panel on Communication (1978), Behrampur University Report (1978), Hyderabad Workshop on Modernization of Journalism Curriculum (1979), Second Press Commission (1982), UGC Document on Journalism/Communication Education (1990-91) made several recommendations for orderly growth of media education in India. But it could not take shape due to lackadaisical approach. Therefore, the discipline grew in its own way and reflected a haphazard development across the nation (Eapen, 1995).

Lack of media network, poor media coverage and absence of a clear media education policy badly affected its development in North East India too. It resulted in a very low opening of media departments in the university system and high level of student's migration towards National Capital Region of Delhi and other metropolitan cities for acquiring media education.

But, the discipline has flourished from the first decade of 21st century, when central universities of North-East India established media departments and nurtured them. It reflects progressive media education scenario in the region, but the discourse on qualitative issues still remains.

MEDIA EDUCATION IN NORTH-EAST INDIAN CENTRAL UNIVERSITIES: AN OVERVIEW

North-East region is officially consists of seven states of Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh, which is commonly known as 'Seven Sisters'. It also includes the Himalaya state of Sikkim. That means total eight states are officially recognized under the North-Eastern Council (NEC) and geographically cover eight percent area of Indian Territory.

Seven out of eight states in north-east is having a central university each. Those include, North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong,

However, it is also a fact that seven out of nine central universities came into existence after 1990. Only two universities i.e., North-Eastern Hill

Table 1.1:
Beginning of Media Education in North-East Indian Central University

Sl. No.	State	Central University	Establishment Year	Beginning of Media Education
1.	Assam	Assam University (AUS), Silchar	1994	1996
		Tezpur University (TEZU), Tezpur	1994	2001
2.	Sikkim	Sikkim University (CUS), Gangtok	2007	2010
3.	Meghalaya	North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong	1973	2012
4.	Manipur	Manipur University (MU), Imphal (Established as a state university in 1980 and upgraded as central in 2005)	2005	2005
5.	Mizoram	Mizoram University (MZU), Aizwal	2001	2010
6.	Nagaland	Nagaland University (NU), Lumani	1994	2007
7.	Tripura	Tripura University (TU), Suryamaninagar	1987	2009
8.	Arunachal Pradesh	Rajiv Gandhi University (RGU), Itanagar (Established as a state university in 1984 and upgraded as central in 2007)	2007	2004

Meghalaya, Manipur University, Imphal, Mizoram University, Aizwal, Nagaland University, Lumani & Kohima, Tripura University, Suryamaninagar, Rajiv Gandhi University, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh and

University (NEHU), Shillong, Meghalaya and Tripura University, Suryamaninagar came into being in 1973 and 1987 respectively. But they could set up their media departments in 2012 and 2009 respectively.

NORTH EAST INDIA



SOURCE - https://www.pecad.fas.usda.gov/highlights/2006/03/india_13mar2006/images/mapneIN.jpg?w=1400

Figure: 1(A)

Sikkim University, Gangtok. Only Assam is having two central universities i.e., Assam University, Silchar & Tezpur University, Tezpur (mhrd.gov.in/central-universities-0, 2017).

Assam University, Silchar and Tezpur University came into existence in 1994 in Assam. They could establish their media departments in 1996 and 2001 respectively. Mizoram University, Aizwal and Sikkim University, Gangtok came into

existence in 2001 and 2007 respectively, but their departments came into existence in 2010.

Manipur University, Imphal and Rajiv Gandhi University, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh were established as state universities in 1980 and 1984 and they were upgraded as central university in 2005 and 2007 respectively. Their media departments came into existence in 2005 and 2004 respectively, whereas Nagaland University was set up in 1994, but their media department came into existence in 2007.

OBJECTIVES:

- To identify the types of academic programs being carried out in the departments;
- To analyze the nomenclature of departments & academic programs and;
- To examine research programs being offered by the departments.

METHODOLOGY

The study undertakes an exploratory and descriptive research design in which qualitative approach have been used. An extensive literature review has been done through research papers, articles, policy papers, councils, commissions and committees' reports on subject matter for historical background of media departments. The researcher has collected secondary data from websites of media departments of central universities, University Grants Commission (UGC) and Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Govt. of India and has conducted telephonic interviews of media educators and research scholars for seeking and verifying data.

MEDIA PROGRAMS IN NORTH-EAST INDIAN CENTRAL UNIVERSITIES: AN OVERVIEW

Assam: Department of Mass Communication under School of Creative Arts and Communication Studies is one of the oldest departments of media education amongst all central universities located in the North-East region, which was established in 1996 at Assam University, Silchar. It takes the credit to begin first MA program in Journalism & Mass Communication in the region (Dutta, 2017). The department focuses on research and offers Ph. D., D. Litt. & M. Phil. programs. D. Litt. is the only program in the region, which is being offered by the department (Prof. G. P. Pandey, personal communication, September 25, 2017).

Department of Mass Communication and Journalism under School of Humanities and

Social Sciences came into existence in 2001 at Tezpur University, Assam and started offering MA in Mass Communication and Journalism from 2002. The department also runs doctoral program and another MA program in Communication for Development (Mr. Saket Bhardwaj, personal communication, September 25, 2017).

Sikkim: Department of Mass Communication under School of Professional Studies was set up in 2010 at Sikkim University, Gangtok. It offers MA in Mass Communication and also runs Ph. D. and M. Phil programs (Prof. Silajit Guha, personal communication, September, 25, 2017).

Meghalaya: North-East Hill University, Shillong is the oldest central university in the region and came into existence in 1973. But its Department of Journalism & Mass Communication under School of Economics, Management and Information Sciences came into existence in 2012 with launching of a Master program (Mr. Barath N., personal communication, September 25, 2017).

Manipur: Department of Mass Communication under School of Social Sciences was set up in 2005 at Manipur University, Imphal with launching of a one-year PG Diploma program in Journalism and Mass Communication. It was upgraded to MA in Mass Communication in 2008. Doctoral program was launched from 2011 (Singh & Rabindranath, 2017).

Mizoram: Department of Mass Communication under School of Economics, Management and Information Sciences was established in 2010 at Mizoram University, Aizwal with launching of a Master in Journalism & Mass Communication. It began doctoral program from 2016-17 (Prof. K. V. Nagraj, personal communication, September 25, 2017).

Nagaland: Department of Mass Communication under School of Humanities & Education was set up in 2007 at Nagaland University, Lumani. Initially, it was offering short term media programs in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), New Delhi. Later, it started offering one year PG Diploma in Mass Communication from 2014-15 (Singh & Rabindranath, 2017).

Tripura: Department of Journalism & Mass Communication came into existence in 2009 at Tripura University, Suryamaninagar with launching of a Master program. It started Ph.D. program from 2017 (Mr. Deepak Upadhyay, personal communication, September 25, 2017).

Arunachal Pradesh: Department of Mass Communication under Faculty of Information

Technology was established in 2004 at Rajiv Gandhi University, Itanagar. It offers Ph. D., M. Phil., Master, PG Diploma & Certificate programs (Department of Mass Communication, Rajiv Gandhi University, 2017).

Table 1.2: Media Programs in North-East Indian Central Universities

Sl. No.	Media Departments in Central University	No. of Academic Programs
ASSAM		
1.	Department of Mass Communication (DMC) AUS, Silchar	Four (04) Ph. D., D. Litt., M. Phil., MAJMC
2.	Department of Mass Communication & Journalism (DMCJ), TEZU, Tezpur	Three (03) Ph. D., MAMCJ, MAC4D
SIKKIM		
3.	Department of Mass Communication (DMC) CUS, Gangtok	Three (03) Ph. D., M. Phil., MAMC
MEGHALAYA		
4.	Department of Journalism & Mass Communication (DJMC) NEHU, Shillong	One (01) MJMC
MANIPUR		
5.	Department of Mass Communication (DMC) MU, Imphal	Two (02) Ph. D., MAMC
MIZORAM		
6.	Department of Mass Communication (DMC) MZU, Aizwal	Two (02) Ph. D., MJMC
NAGALAND		
7.	Department of Mass Communication (DMC) NU, Lumani	One (01) PGDMC
TRIPURA		
8.	Department of Journalism & Mass Communication (DJMC) TU, Suryamaninagar	Two (02) Ph. D., MAJMC
ARUNACHAL PRADESH		
9.	Department of Mass Communication (DMC) RGU, Itanagar	Five (05) Ph. D., M. Phil., MAMC, PGDMC, CPGA

Media Programs Analysis: Assam tops with seven media programs being offered by the

departments of Assam University and Tezpur University in the North-East region. The program includes Ph.D., D.Litt., M.Phil. and Master. Arunachal Pradesh comes at second position with five media programs being offered by the department of Rajiv Gandhi University. Those are Ph.D., M.Phil., Master, PG Diploma and CPGA.

Sikkim comes at third position with three media programs being offered by the department of Sikkim University. The program includes Ph.D., M.Phil. and Master, whereas Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura University offer two media programs each through their departments. The program includes Ph. D. and Master. Meghalaya and Nagaland University offer a single media program i.e., Master and PG Diploma respectively.

Nomenclature Variation: The media programs being offered by the North-East Indian Central universities use the term 'Department' under which they are running various media programs. Further, the entire nomenclature of the media departments is uniform in nature among central universities except a few. Assam University, Sikkim University, Manipur University, Mizoram University, Nagaland University and Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh have used common nomenclature i.e., Department of Mass Communication (DMC).

Whereas Tezpur University, Assam has used common nomenclature in first three terms, i.e., Department of Mass Communication (DMC), but used additional term of 'Journalism'. That means Department of Mass Communication and Journalism'. North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Meghalaya and Tripura University is using same term of Department of Journalism & Mass Communication (DJMC).

Table 1.3: Analysis of Common Media Programs

Sl. No.	Academic Programs	Media Departments in Central University
1.	Ph.D.	1. Department of Mass Communication (DMC), AUS, Silchar 2. Department of Mass Communication & Journalism (DMCJ), TEZU, Tezpur 3. Department of Mass Communication (DMC), CUS, Gangtok 4. Department of Mass Communication (DMC), MU, Imphal 5. Department of Mass

		Communication (DMC), MZU, Aizwal 6. Department of Journalism & Mass Communication (DJMC), TU, Suryamaninagar 7. Department of Mass Communication (DMC), RGU, Itanagar
2.	D.Litt.	1. Department of Mass Communication (DMC), AUS, Silchar
3.	M.Phil.	1. Department of Mass Communication (DMC), AUS, Silchar 2. Department of Mass Communication (DMC), CUS, Gangtok 3. Department of Mass Communication (DMC), RGU, Itanagar
4.	Master	1. Department of Mass Communication (DMC), AUS, Silchar 2. Department of Mass Communication & Journalism (DMCJ), TEZU, Tezpur 3. Department of Mass Communication (DMC), CUS, Gangtok 4. Department of Journalism & Mass Communication (DJMC) NEHU, Shillong 5. Department of Mass Communication (DMC), MU, Imphal 6. Department of Mass Communication (DMC), MZU, Aizwal 7. Department of Journalism & Mass Communication (DJMC), TU, Suryamaninagar 8. Department of Mass Communication (DMC), RGU, Itanagar
5.	PG Diploma	1. Department of Mass Communication (DMC), NU, Lumani 2. Department of Mass Communication (DMC), RGU, Itanagar
6.	Certificate	1. Department of Mass Communication (DMC), RGU, Itanagar

Common Media Programs: The departments of North-East Indian central universities offer a varied range of media programs, which includes Ph.D., D.Litt., M.Phil., Master and PG Diploma.

Presently doctoral program is being offered by seven media departments. Those are Assam University, Tezpur University, Sikkim University, Manipur University, Mizoram University, Tripura University and Rajiv Gandhi University (Arunachal Pradesh). That means seven out of nine media departments of central universities are offering Ph. D. program, whereas D. Litt. is being offered by media department of Assam University, Silchar only.

M. Phil. is being offered by three media departments. Those are Assam University, Sikkim University and Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh. That means three out of nine departments are running this program, whereas Master program is being offered by eight media departments. Those include Assam University, Tezpur University, Sikkim University, North-East Hill University, Meghalaya, Manipur University, Mizoram University, Tripura University and Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh. That means eight out of nine departments of central universities are running this program. PG Diploma program is being offered by the departments of Nagaland University and Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh, whereas certificate program is being run by department of Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh only.

Table 1.4: Nomenclature Variation in Media Programs

The nomenclature of media programs in North-East Indian central universities reflects uniformity except one.

Sl. No.	Academic Programs	Nomenclature Variation
1.	Master	1. Master of Arts in Journalism & Mass Communication (MAJMC) 2. Master of Arts in Mass Communication & Journalism (MAMCJ) 3. Master of Arts in Communication for Development (MAC4D) 4. Master of Arts in Mass Communication (MAMC) 5. Master of Journalism & Mass Communication (MJMC)

It includes Master of Arts in Journalism & Mass Communication (MAJMC), Master of Arts in Mass Communication & Journalism (MAMCJ), Master of Arts in Mass Communication (MAMC), Master of Journalism & Mass Communication

(MJMC) and Master of Arts in Communication for Development (MAC4D). Most of the nomenclature of media programs is consonance with University Grants Commission (UGC) prescribed norms.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of above discussion, the following trends have been observed:

1. Nine media departments of North East Indian central universities are offering 23 programs. Assam tops with seven media programs, which is being offered by the media departments of Assam University (AUS) and Tezpur University (TEZU), whereas Arunachal Pradesh comes at second position with five media programs, which is being run by department of Rajiv Gandhi University (RGU). Sikkim has third position with three media programs, which is being offered by department of Sikkim Central University (CUS). Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura offers two media programs each from their departments of Manipur University (MU), Mizoram University (MZU) and Tripura University (TU), whereas Meghalaya and Nagaland runs a single media program each through departments of North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU) and Nagaland University (NU).
2. Doctoral program is being offered by seven media departments out of nine in the region. Those include departments of AUS, TEZU, CUS, MU, MZU, TU and RGU. That means seven Ph.D. programs are being offered out of 23 media programs. D. Litt. is the only program, which is being offered by media department of AUS, whereas M. Phil. program is being run by three departments of AUS, CUS and RGU out of nine in the region.
3. Master program is being offered by eight media departments out of nine in the region. Those include departments of AUS, TEZU, CUS, NEHU, MU, MZU, TU and RGU. That means eight master programs are being offered out of 23 media programs, whereas two PG Diploma programs are being run by departments of NU and RGU. A single certificate program is being offered by the department of RGU. Bachelor program has not been started by any of the media department in the North-East Indian central universities.
4. The nomenclature of media departments in central universities reflects uniformity and conventional pattern. AUS, CUS, MU, MZU, NU and RGU, Arunachal Pradesh have used common nomenclature i.e., Department of Mass Communication (DMC), whereas NEHU, Meghalaya and TU is using Department of

Journalism & Mass Communication (DJMC). Only Tezpur University is using Department of Mass Communication & Journalism (DMCJ).

5. The nomenclature of media programs in North-East central universities also reflects uniformity and conventional pattern. It is MAJMC, MAMCJ, MAMC and MJMC. Only MAC4D is a different nomenclature being offered by the media department of Tezpur University.

Recommendation:

1. Keeping fast changing information & communication technology scenario in view, more Masters' programs with specializations should be offered. The curriculum of these media programs should also incorporate socio-polity, cultural and economic aspects of the region.
2. Bachelor program in Journalism & Mass Communication is totally missing in the media departments of North-East Indian central universities. It should be offered on priority basis. Five Year Integrated MA program may be launched in the region, which will include both Bachelor and Master programs.
3. Research programs such as Ph.D. and M.Phil. is in primitive phase in most of the media departments, which needs to be given top priority.

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