Career Opportunities in Mass Media*

Thongkholal Haokip

Mass media generally refers to a medium specifically designed to reach large audience. The term was first used in the early twentieth century with the advent of radio networks, mass-circulation newspapers and magazines. The definition and scope of mass media keeps on changing as digital technology develops, taking it into new directions. Beth Lane (2007) writes, “Until recently mass media was clearly defined and was comprised of the eight mass media industries; books, newspapers, magazines, recordings, radio, movies, television and the Internet.” However, the continuing advancement of digital communication technology is producing confusion on the subject as new technology breeds new questions.

Lane raises a question four years back on whether cell phones can be included in a definition of mass media. With the rise of phone internet and some websites from where group SMS can be sent, and also looking at the definition of mass media, it is clear that phones can now be included in mass media toady. In the internet website www.smsgupshup.com, one can set up his/her own group and send free text messages to everyone in that group. And in fact this website is so popular among Indians that some group owners even earn money through advertisements.

Assessing the significant effect of media on people Shelly Field (2006) writes: “Every time you make a decision to buy a product, choose a vacation spot, vote for a political candidate, watch a television show, go to a movie, read a story about an entertainer, celebrity, new product or business, or even choose a Web site search engine you are feeling the effects of both of these disciplines.” As such, career in mass media is challenging and demanding. It is also glamorous, fun and rewarding.

Conventional Career Options
The traditional career options chosen by individuals or parents for their wards were:
- Civil Services
- Medical
- Engineering
- Banking

In fact, a lot of us had made good progress in these careers in the past decades establishing ourselves as secretary to federal governments, managers in banks and public and semi-public undertakings. And we are still strong in these sectors. However, a nation such as us in this trying time of our history needs professionals in other fields. By this I do not mean to trivialise or belittle their contributions.

* Redraft version of paper presented at KSO Shillong’s Interaction on Career Planning, held on November 6, 2010.
Listed Priority Areas for Kukis

1) Academics
Our neighbouring communities have written a lot about us, mostly despising us in a number of ways and areas. We need to debunk their false testimonies about how they push forward their propaganda. Lasting challenge in this regard can be done through academic research and publications of such works in journals and books. The focus of academic research since the early 1990s has made a milestone in this field, but we still need to reach a stage of audacity.

2) Legal
Even though one of the focus areas at the start of this new millennium we have not made a breakthrough is this profession. A legally strong community can check and question every intrigue policy of governments in collaboration with other civil society organisations. For example, some say Sadar Hills was in principle agreed by the central government for a revenue district and thus the creation of Sadar Hills Autonomous District Council. This can be legally questioned and forced the state government to declare it. For this we need a strong lobby headed by a guild of lawyers. In this regard the formation Legal Committee by Kuki Inpi, Manipur is appreciated and needs to be strengthened.

3) Mass Media
Media is such a strong force that shapes peoples mind and even institutions through their reporting and opinions. During the recent darkest years of Kuki history there were glaring instances of manipulation of facts in the medias, and therefore shapes the opinion of the babus at the centre. We have suffered in the hands of others mostly in these two decades albeit in a lesser degree prior to 1980s. Such sufferings, the landmine episodes in Chandel district and underdevelopment in the interior areas can be highlighted through this medium.

Why Mass Media?
Mass media has become an important agent that shape peoples opinions, desires and even decision, especially in this digitalised and revolutionised twenty-first century. With this revolution many areas spring-up as an employment potential as well as an opportunity to highlight the glaring apathy to our society by the state and central governments.

Mass Communication
Mass communication is the term used to describe the academic study of the various means by which individuals and entities relay information through mass media to large segments of the population at the same time. It is usually understood to relate to newspaper and magazine publishing, radio, television and film, as these are used both for disseminating news and for advertising.

Mass communication is a broader field that includes Journalism: the collecting, writing, editing, and presenting of news or news articles in newspapers and magazines and in radio and television broadcasts. It also includes the expanding and mushrooming news and entertainment channels: the wider spectrum includes: films, radio, television, newspapers/magazine and internet.
Journalism

A relatively different career option provides:

- Creative satisfaction - a subjective phenomenon
- Provides opportunities to meet interesting people
- Opportunities to visit all kinds of places
- Decent income
- Recognition for what one does
- A position to influence things – bring about small differences in the lives of the people through stories

Some facts

- Because of proliferation of mass media in India, there is a shortage of trained hands to do the required jobs,
- The electronic and digital revolution and the consequent communication revolution is certainly a fact of life in the twenty-first century,
- In this age of information revolution, mass media has assumed significant importance.

Types of Job

- Journalism
- Advertising
- Public Relations
- Development Communication
- Book Publishing
- Photography
- Documentary Films

Institutions

A) Post Graduate Courses (Top 8 Institutes)

1) Film and Television Institute of India
Established in 1974, Film and Television Institute of India, Pune offers courses in direction, acting, cinematography, art direction and production design, editing, animation and computer graphics, sound recording and sound design, and feature film screenplay writing. More information: www.ftiindia.com

2) Indian Institute of Mass Communication
The Indian Institute of Mass Communication in Delhi was established on August 17, 1965. The institute conducts training programmes for Group "A" and group "B" officers of Indian Information Service.

The institute offers postgraduate courses in Journalism: Advertising and Public Relations and Radio & TV Journalism. On August 14, 1993 a branch of IIMC was opened at Dhenkanal, Orissa. The branch conducts a PG Diploma course in Journalism, besides short courses and workshops.
4) Mass Communication Research Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia
Mass Communication Research Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia in New Delhi offers:

- M.A. in Mass Communication.
- M.A. in Convergent Journalism
- P.G. Diploma in Development Communication
- P.G. Diploma in Broadcast System Maintenance
- P.G. Diploma in Still Photography & Visual Communication
- P.G. Diploma in Graphics & Animation

Website: http://ajkmcrc.org

5) Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI)
The Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI) in Kolkata was established in 1995 as an autonomous academic institution under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. PG Courses offered are: direction and screenplay, cinematography, audiography, and editing. Website: http://srfti.gov.in

6) Asian College of Journalism, Chennai
ACJ founded in 1994 by the Indian Express group which offers PG courses in Journalism with specialisation in Print, Television, and Radio or new Media. Website: www.asianmedia.org

7) Mudra Institute of Communication and Advertising (MICA)
MICA, Ahmedabad offers postgraduate programmes in Communications Management (PGPCM), Crafting Creative Communications (CCC), Retail Communications (PGPRCM), and Visual Merchandising and Retail Communications.

It also offers online programmes in Post Graduate Certificate Program in Advertising Management & Public Relations, and Post Graduate Certificate Program in Research and Analytics. Website: www.mica-india.net

8) Xavier Institute of Mass Communication


There are also Certificate Courses in Technical Writing, Public Speaking, Photography, Radio Jockey, Creative Writing, Extension Programmes, Wins in Personal Selling, Poetry Writing. Website: www.xaviercomm.org

B) Under Graduate Courses

Almost every university in India is offering a degree course through its affiliated colleges

- St. Anthony’s College, Shillong
  (Mass Communication and Video Production, Media Technologies)
- Delhi University Colleges
- Patna Women’s College and J D Women’s College.
- Distance Learning Programmes offered by IGNOU.
- Most of these courses provide a must internship which exposes students to the field jobs in the areas of their choice.

**Judging an Institution**
When looking for admission one must judge a college by the competence of its faculty members, infrastructure for practical productions and fee charged.

**Job Titles**
Sweta Singh (2007) listed some of the job titles:

**Prospective Employers**
Some of the prospective employers of Mass Media graduates are Public Sector Undertakings, television channel companies, stations, libraries/museums, telecommunications, firms, labour unions, retail stores, hospitals, radio stations especially FM and health organisations.

**Media and Society**
In society most of our decisions, beliefs and values are based on what we know through our experience and also through our assumptions. However, in our daily lives we rely on the media to get acquainted with current news and facts about what is important and what we should be aware of. We have put our trust on the media as an authority to give us news, entertainment and education. Mass media also influence children, teenagers and society in a big way.

The media makes a lot of money through advertising and we are exposed to it. We buy what is told to be good in advertisements and we make decisions based on what we saw on television, newspapers or magazines. Teenagers buy what they see on television or what their favorite celebrity advertise.

There are some positive and negative influences in young people. An example of positive influence is that, if there is a sport that is getting a lot of attention by the media and gains popularity among friends and society, one would like to practice that sport and have fun with friends and be healthier because of the exercise one is doing.

However, negative influence on teenagers is smoking cigarettes and drinking wine by celebrities in movies, the constant exposure to sex images, violence and also thousands of junk food advertisements. Rayuso (2008) says, “Young people are in a stage
of life where they want to be accepted by their peers, they want to be loved and be successful. The media creates the ideal image of a beautiful men and women and tells you what are the characteristics of a successful person, you can see it in movies and tv.” The results are increasing immorality, anorexia and obesity. There are also women who are obsessive with losing weight even when they are not obese. Many thin women want to look like super models and celebrities, so they engage in eating disorder which leads to severe health problems and even death.

References


