

Challenges and Opportunities of Media Education in The State Universities in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Media education was introduced to the Sri Lankan university education in 1973. But the undergraduates in mass Communication/media studies are struggling to find job opportunities in the media industry. Therefore, the main issue is that the undergraduates are not updated with the industrial and practical knowledge. In this context, the purpose of the study is to examine the challenges and opportunities in media education at the state universities in Sri Lanka by using Technological pedagogical content knowledge framework (TPACK) model. The Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and the in-depth interviews were conducted to collect data of the study. The results show that there are some challenges and opportunities in curriculum, teaching methods, assessments, technologies related to media education. The opportunities in media education are introducing several special degree programmes in mass communication/media studies by the newly established media/communication departments, covering a wide range of areas in communication discipline in the curriculum, introducing some resources and infrastructural facilities to facilitate the undergraduates etc. On the other hand, limited expansion of the discipline of mass communication/ mass media within the university system, limited post graduate studies, most of the courses in Sinhala and Tamil, heavily concentrated on theoretical aspects in the curriculum and assessments, non-availability of the text books, media instruments and tools, teachers without professional practice, training and research, non-availability of opportunities in the media industry etc. are the main challenges in the media education in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the state universities should take necessary actions to address the challenges in media education specially to cater to the requirements and needs of the media industry in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Challenges; Opportunities; Media education; State Universities; TPACK; Sri Lanka

INTRODUCTION

The UNESCO has emphasized that, media education should be mainly given at the tertiary and, non-formal and lifelong education in a country. Media education is not only learning about media, but also improving journalism skills, creativity, critical and analytical thinking etc. to understand the contemporary and practical scenarios in the society as well as to cater to the industrial needs and requirements (Report on recommendations addressed to UNESCO by the Youth Media Education seminar at Seville, 2002).

Media education was introduced to the world hundred years ago. Now Media education is taught in all over the world in the secondary and tertiary education. But media education is gradually developed based on the requirements and needs of the society, the media industry and the improvements of the technological innovations. Media education was introduced to

world in the 1920s by France mainly focusing on film studies. Furthermore, early media education (1920s- 1940s) is mainly based on film and press. In 1970s, media education is mainly focused on the media studies (Fedorov, 2008).

It is understood that the media education was mainly developed based on the changes, improvements and requirements of the media industry. Media education was introduced to Sri Lankan education system in 1970s. Raguram and Rupasinghe (2016) note that at the initial stage, the University of Kelaniya started offering an undergraduate programme in Mass Communication in 1973. At present, five state universities out of fifteen universities offer special degrees in media education in Sri Lanka. Apart from these programmes, Journalism, communication and media related course and programmes are offered by the various government and private institutions.

This shows that, the several programmes are offered in media education in Sri Lanka. But there is a complaint from the media industry that there is a wide gap between what is being taught and the reality of the functioning of media. According to the Assessment Report of Rebuilding Public Trust (2016) also, the degree programmes in Mass Communication/Media Studies are not sufficiently covered the practical needs and realities of the media industry. The university education is mostly focused on mass communication theories and the theory-based learning does not cater to the competencies required for the practical journalism. Therefore, it is suggested to revise the curriculum and introduce innovative teaching strategies to address the requirements of the media industry.

In this context, the problem is what are the challenges and opportunities in media education in the state universities in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the challenges and opportunities in media education at the university level in Sri Lanka by using Technological pedagogical content knowledge framework (TPACK).

TPACK framework mainly focuses on curriculum, teaching methods, assessments, technologies related to education. This is the best model to find the strengths and weaknesses of education related matters in a qualitative manner (Schmidt et al, 2009). Therefore, TPACK is the most appropriate model for this study since the purpose is to examine the challenges and opportunities in media education at the university level in Sri Lanka in a qualitative manner.

Context of Study

As far as the media education in Sri Lanka is concerned, it was introduced to the university education many decades ago. Media education was introduced to Sri Lanka based on the suggestions and recommendations given by the commission appointed by the government in 1972 to look into the 1971 Jantana Vimukthi Peramuna -JVP insurrection. As a result, some media courses were introduced by the technical educational centers to empower the Sri Lankan youth with the media education. But in 1973 only, the University of Kelaniya introduced the media education to the tertiary education. That was the first time, media education was formally introduced to the education system in Sri Lanka. Professor Ediriweera Sarachchandra, Professor M.B Ariyapala, Professor Wimal Dissanayala, Professor Sunanda Mahendra, Kalakirithi Edwin Ariyadasa, Doctor W.D Amaradewa, Doctor D.B Nihalsinghe are the pioneers who contributed in establishing the Department of Mass Communication under the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Kelaniya in 1973. Now Undergraduates and postgraduates' degree programmes in Mass Communication are offered by the department (Dissanayake 2003).

In 1993, the Department of Sinhala and Mass Communication at the University of Sri Jayawardenapura started to offer degree programmes in Mass Communication. After a few

years in 1996, Sri Palee campus, University of Colombo launched the degree programmes in Mass Media. The Department of Languages and Communication in Trincomalee Campus of Eastern University of Sri Lanka and the Department of Media Studies in the University of Jaffna are the other two departments which offer special degrees in Communication and Media studies (Rebuilding Public Trust, 2016). Raguram and Rupasinghe (2016) note that only five state universities out of fifteen universities offer special degree programmes in Mass Communication/ Media studies in Sri Lanka. Apart from these programmes, Journalism, communication and media related course and programmes are offered by the various government and private institutions.

Apart from the five universities mentioned earlier, some other state universities such as Journalism unit at the University of Colombo, the Department of Social Studies at the Open University of Sri Lanka, Department of Management Science at the University of Uva Wellassa, Department of Language at the University of Sabaragamuwa and Department of Social Sciences at the University of South Eastern also offer media studies as a subject or an unit or a stream in the other degree programmes (Rebuilding Public Trust, 2016). The Department of Humanities at the University of Rajarata has also very recently introduced a special degree in Mass Communication for the undergraduates.

According to the literature review, no research has been conducted to examine the challenges and opportunities in media education in the state universities. Some reports and studies were done in media education in Sri Lanka. But any of these researches were not done mainly focusing on media education in the state universities in a theoretical and methodical manner. In order to fill in this gap and to achieve the purpose of the study, this research was conducted.

Technological pedagogical content knowledge framework (TPACK) is the main theoretical framework of this study.

“TPCK was introduced to the educational research field as a theoretical framework for understanding teacher knowledge required for effective technology integration. The TPCK framework acronym was renamed TPACK (pronounced “tee-pack”) for the purpose of making it easier to remember and to form a more integrated whole for the three kinds of knowledge addressed: technology, pedagogy, and content. TPACK is a framework that introduces the relationships and the complexities between all three basic components of knowledge (technology, pedagogy, and content)” (Schmidt et al, 2009, p. 123).

This shows that technology, pedagogy and content play a significant role in education. Schmidt et al, (2009) further note that this framework mainly focuses on designing and evaluating teachers’ knowledge in pedagogy, content and technology. Technological knowledge (refers to knowledge about the technological improvements, updates, trends), content knowledge (knowledge about the subject matter) and pedagogical knowledge (refers to the methods and processes of teaching and includes knowledge in classroom management, assessment, lesson plan development, curriculum and student learning) in this framework have combined with each component without maintaining separately in order to facilitate the learning and teaching process.

When applying the TPACK framework to this particular study, role of the university teachers in media education is vital. Because the updating subject knowledge and technological advancements, assessing students, developing curriculum, teaching are the main responsibilities of university teachers. In other words, successful learning and teaching process

in media education usually depends on the updated curriculum, inspiring teaching, effective assessments and updated technical and practical knowledge etc. In this context, TPACK is the most appropriate model for this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication and Media studies is one of the academic disciplines in Humanities and Social Sciences that mainly deals with human communications as well as with mass communications.

“Communication's specific character as a discipline thus can be understood in terms of its contributions to knowledge in certain intellectual traditions, its evolving institutional forms, and its relevance to "communication" understood as a sociocultural constituted category of problems and practices. The third of these factors — the sociocultural context of disciplinarity — has, I maintain, a primary role. Communication as a practical discipline has been constructed upon (even as it reflexively reconstructs) the foundation of communication as an increasingly central category in modern societies and global culture” (Craig, 2008: p. 7).

This shows that communication plays a significant role at the individual, societal, institutional and global levels in terms of building human relationships, contributing to social cultural phenomenon and media industry in the global and modern societies. Therefore, it is important to study the communication process at the individual, societal, institutional and global levels. In this context, media education was initially introduced to the education system in France in 1920. Then media education was gradually introduced to Great Britain and Russia, Germany, Canada, Australia and USA. Now media education is taught in the secondary education and tertiary education in all the countries in the world (Fedorov, 2018).

“Media education in the modern world can be described as the process of the development of personality with the help of and on the material of media, aimed at the shaping of culture of interaction with media, the development of creative, communicative skills, critical thinking, perception, interpretation, analysis and evaluation of media texts, teaching different forms of self-expression using media technology. Media literacy, as an outcome of this process, helps a person to actively use opportunities of the information field provided by the television, radio, video, film, press and Internet” (Fedorov, 2018, p. 8).

It is understood that media education covers a wide range of areas in communication such as human communication, media for shaping the socio-cultural economic, political settings etc. The UNESCO has given an operational definition for media education.

“Media education is about teaching and learning with and ABOUT media, rather than THROUGH media - It involves critical analysis AND creative production - It can and should take place in formal and informal settings - It should promote the sense of community and social responsibility, as well as individual self- fulfilment”. (Report on recommendations addressed to UNESCO by the Youth Media Education seminar at Seville, 2002, p. 5)

The UNESCO has further emphasized that media education should be at least given at the tertiary and, non-formal and lifelong education. It was also recommended at the Youth Media Education seminar at Seville in 2002 to conduct research on media education, develop curricular in media education and train teachers and other stakeholders, develop media partnership with schools, universities etc. and network all the stakeholders in the media industry and consolidate and promote public sphere.

The most important thing is that media education should lead to cater to the industrial needs and requirements. Media education is offered at the university level all over the world. Many state universities in Asian countries also offer journalism and media degree programmes to empower students with the media education and journalism skills. Though these degree programmes target to achieve the expected outcomes, but still there are some opportunities as well as challenges in media education in Asian countries. Pawar (2021) notes that media education was officially introduced to India in 1940s, but after many decades still the state universities face their own challenges and limitations in catering to the fast-changing media industry requirements. Yusof et al (2018) also state that it is important to learn journalism skills such as writing, researching, producing videos and interviewing from the university. Some universities in Malaysia provide good training facilities for students while some do not provide proper training or education to the students. The most important thing is that the students should update themselves with the past moving technologies, general knowledge, critical and analytical skills while training themselves in the media industry.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study used a qualitative approach to obtain data using in depth interview method and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The purposive sampling was used to select samples for the study. Gill et al (2008) note that interviews provide a deeper understanding of a social phenomenon. Therefore, interviews were conducted to collect in depth details of industry requirements, curriculum, teaching methods, assessments, technologies from three senior academics and three senior media persons who represent the print, TV and Radio media institutions (one from each media) for the study. The senior academics are attached to the Department of Mass Communication at the University of Kelaniya, the Department of Mass Media, Sri Palee Campus, University of Colombo and the Department of Sinhala and Mass Communication at the University of Sri Jayawardenapura. The reason for selecting these senior academic members is that media education was initially introduced to the university education in Sri Lanka by these three departments and the other three departments started offering the special degree programmes in Mass Communication quite recently (Dissanayake 2003). The selected universities also offer Mass communication/ mass media undergraduate degree programmes (four-year special degree programmes).

The personal interviews were formally conducted in the early January 2021 with the academics and media persons over the phone due to the pandemic. Mostly open-ended questions were asked to get critical, insightful and informative data. The interviews were conducted with senior academics to examine the strengths and weakness of curriculum, teaching, assessments and technical and practical knowledge input in the media education. The purpose of conducting interviews with the media persons is to examine whether the university media education caters to the skills, competencies etc. required for the practical media industry.

The final year undergraduates in the Bachelor degree programmes (special) attached to these three departments were selected for the study. Because the final year undergraduates can directly join to the media institutions after completing the Bachelor Degree in Mass

Communication/ Mass Media. FGD is a structured discussion used to obtain in-depth information (qualitative data-insight) from a group of people about a particular topic. In FGDs, it is good to have 8-12 individuals to obtain more in-depth information (Omar, 2018). Therefore, it was decided to have 12 final year students in each FGD. Altogether there were three FGDs with 36 undergraduates in three universities. The FGDs were conducted with the support of three experienced moderators/ facilitators. Mostly open-ended questions were asked to get critical, insightful and informative data on the given issue/ topic. The location and the samples of this study were selected based on the above-mentioned criteria, statistics, facts and justifications to examine the challenges and opportunities in media education at the university level. The qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The demographic details of thirty-six respondents are presented in the following table.

TABLE 1. Demographic details of respondents

University and department	Gender and student number		Degree programme	Final year
Department of Mass Communication, University of Kelaniya	2	Male	Mass Communication (special)	Final year students
	4	Female		
	3	Male	Public Relations and Media Management (Special)	
	3	Female		
Department of Sinhala and Mass Communication, University of Sri Jayawardenapura	5	Male	Mass Communication (special)	
	7	Female		
Department of Mass Media, Sri Palee campus, University of Colombo	6	Male	Mass Media (special)	
	6	Female		
	36	Total		

Some limitations were caused in this study due to some geographical and subjective reasons. The academics and students were only selected from three universities and media persons were also selected only from three media institutions representing print, TV and Radio. But the population and sample size can be expanded and more research area can be covered in order to find more practical findings/ results in a future study in a systematic and methodical manner.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are mainly presented focusing on the main components of the TPACK framework such technological knowledge (refers to knowledge about the technological improvements, updates, trends), content knowledge (knowledge about the subject matter) and pedagogical knowledge (refers to the methods and processes of teaching and includes knowledge in classroom management, assessment, lesson plan development, curriculum and student learning) related to the undergraduates' programmes offered by the three departments.

As far as the curriculum is concerned, the University of Kelaniya and University of Sri Jayawardenapura have developed the curricula specializing Mass Communication studies

while the curriculum of the Sripalee campus was developed focusing on Mass Media studies. Luthra (2009) notes that Mass Communication is an umbrella term which deals with broader areas like human communication, news, public relations, advertising, print, broadcasting, internet etc. while Mass media specially focus on media such as TV, radio, print, new media etc. But journalism studies are more on gathering and reporting information on TV, radio, print and new media.

The findings show that in the early stage, Mass communication degree programmes were introduced and recently Mass Media degree programmes are promoted by the state universities. Furthermore, Sri Palee campus, Trincomalee campus and Jaffna university are mainly focusing on Mass Media studies while University of Kelaniya and University of Jayawardenapura are mainly focus on Mass Communication studies. A senior academic attached to Sri Palee campus stated that:

“The main purposes of developing the curriculum in Mass Media studies are to provide the conceptual, theoretical, and practical knowledge of Media Studies, Print Media, Television, and Radio to create a graduate with fair knowledge of theoretical and practical knowledge of Mass Media”.

The other two senior academics from the Jayawardenapura and Kelaniya emphasized that curriculum in Mass Communication studies cover a board area that facilitate undergraduate to be sound in both theoretical and practical knowledge. Mass Communication mainly focuses on human communication, news, public relations, advertising, print, broadcasting, etc. as wells as TV, radio, print and new media studies.

The results also show that the Department of Mass Communication at the University of Kelaniya as the pioneer of introducing communication studies to Sri Lanka, also offer the Bachelor Degree in Public Relations and Media Management apart from the Bachelor degree in Mass Communication (Special and General). This is the only Communication department which offers two special degree programmes compare to the other departments. When it comes to postgraduate programmes, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Mass communication is only offered by the Department of Mass Communication in the University of Kelaniya though the postgraduate diplomas and Masters programmes are available in other universities. This shows that Communication studies is not broadly expanded within the university system at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Dissanayake (2003) also notes that only five universities offer the undergraduate degree programmes (special) in mass communication/ mass media within the university system though the Mass media/ Mass Communication discipline was introduced to the academia 48 years ago. The other factor is that media education was only introduced to the Sri Lankan secondary education in 2006.

The findings show that, in student’s perspective, curriculum is not addressed to the requirements and needs of the media industry. A final year female student (Mass Communication- special) in the Kelaniya University stated that:

“The curriculum should be updated to cater to the requirements of the media industry rather than just only teaching theories and history of mass media. It is important to provide practical examples and new trends related to the topic in the theory classes. The more practical knowledge and experiences should be provided to the students to get the opportunities in the media industry. The students are also rejected by the media institutions without giving job opportunities specifically highlighting the fact that undergraduates who

complete the mass communication/ mass media degrees from the state universities only have theoretical knowledge. It is true that what we learn from the university not really help us to do our internship or work in the industry. The practical knowledge and the training are lacking in our degree programmes. The vacancies are available in the media industry, but we are not given any of these opportunities due to this gap in the education. Finally, the undergraduates become government teachers, development officers and so on without working in the media industry. The lecturers do not have industrial expose or practical knowledge to keep the curriculum updated based on the industrial requirements”.

The students attached to the Sripalee campus and the University of Sri Jayawardenapura also emphasized the same experience when it comes to content of the curriculum, job market etc. A final year student in Sri Palee campus stated that editing subject or TV production subject should be completely taught practically rather than only teaching theories and concepts in the class. A senior media personal in a television channel also emphasized that:

“The communication undergraduates are not capable enough to work in the media organizations due to a lack of practical and new technical knowledge. The students are not updated with contemporary scenarios, new technology, practical components, language competencies etc. At least their general knowledge is insufficient to work in media institutions”.

As far as the results are concerned, it shows that there is a wide gap between the industrial needs and requirements and the university education in mass communication/ mass media. The findings mainly show that curricula are heavily concentrated on theoretical and conceptual knowledge rather than focusing on updated practical, contemporary and technological knowledge. Teachers are also lacking in practical and professional practices. Apart from the challenges, coving all mass media such as TV, radio, new media, print etc. in the curriculum with sound theoretical knowledge etc. can be identified as the opportunities of media education.

TPACK framework also highlights that, technological knowledge, resources and innovations are also important in the education same as the curriculum, assessment and teaching. The findings also show that Kelaniya university and the Sri Palee campus have the audio-visual studio, print media lab, and radio to facilitate the students to gain the practical experience while the communication students in University of Sri Jayawardena are not separately given any audio-visual studio, print media lab, and radio parallel to the course units though the university has these infrastructural facilities. But all three departments conduct workshops, seminars etc. with support of media professionals and media practitioners to give some practical exposers to the students. Moreover, the lecturers also encourage students to participate in freely available practical sessions conducted by the government and private institutions. Furthermore, the departments facilitate to organize competitions, magazines, festivals etc. to improve the skills, talents etc. of students.

Moreover, the students in the University of Kelaniya and Sri Palee campus highlighted that, books in communication studies are available in the library while the students in Sri Jayawardenapura university mentioned that book are not that available in the library. But it was highlighted that the students are struggling to refer to the English books due to the English language barrier. The results show that the internet facilities, multimedia facilities etc. are also

available for the students in the libraries. A final year student in the Sri Palee campus emphasized that:

“The media education should be given in the English medium to prepare the students for the future job market. At least bilingual education should be introduced by the departments. Providing English and IT as supportive subjects is not the solution to prepare the undergraduates for the future job market”.

All the students highlighted that English medium education should be introduced to the media education in Sri Lanka. A few courses are being taught in English in Jayewardenepura university and there is also a flexibility for students to write the final examination and assignments in English medium. A lack of equipment, tools, materials etc. is another challenge faced by students. A final year student in Kelaniya university stated that since a few cameras and editing tables are available, the students should be in the waiting list to use them for the practical sessions.

Apart from the curriculum and the resources available for the students, the teaching and learning process is also important in media education as highlighted in the TPACK framework. Makovec (2018) notes that the role of a teacher is very important in the teaching and learning process. The pedagogical skills of teachers such as knowledge of subject, curriculum, teaching methods and strategies and technological skills and creative skills etc. are important to have an effective teaching and learning process between the students and the teacher.

This shows that the role of teacher is also important in media education. A senior academic at the Kelaniya University stated that:

“As the pioneer of the media education in Sri Lanka, qualified and experienced academics in the discipline of communication studies have been contributing to the development of the media education in Sri Lanka. Several teaching methods and strategies are used to provide the theoretical and practical knowledge to the students with regular, service and supplementary courses. The teachers are experienced in preparing curricula in Mass Communications and Public Relations. Furthermore, curricula have been updated several times catering to the contemporary industrial needs and requirements at the local and international levels. The teachers update their knowledge by engaging in their postgraduate studies, training programmes, practical sessions, productions, research work and participating in the national and international media development work. Assigning administrative work load to the academics creates an unnecessary burden for them”.

The other two senior academics from the other universities also emphasized the same points during the interviews. Having qualified and experienced teachers in developing curriculum and teaching can be considered as opportunities in media education in Sri Lanka.

On the other hand, the literature shows that there are some challenges in terms of research, theoretical and practical knowledge of university academics in Mass Communication/ Media studies. Raguram and Rupasinghe (2017) note that the majority of academics in Mass Communication/ Media studies do not have practical or industrial training to provide a proper practical training to the students. The other thing is that academics are not sound in doing research in the discipline of Communication. A final year student in the Department of Mass Communication at the Sri Jayawardenapura University also mentioned that

“The most of the lecturers are not updated with current media trends or practical scenarios. Teaching too much of theoretical stuffs does not really help students to achieve the expected outcomes of the communication degree programme without providing up to date practical knowledge or proper industrial training. The students will be more benefited, if the lecturers can do more research and publish more books rather than just conducting lectures to cover semester work. The more experienced senior academics should be there in the department rather than just hiring visiting academics for teaching. If there is a separate Department for Mass Communication rather than having a combined department with the discipline of Sinhala Language, the students as well as academics will be more benefited in terms of maintaining the quality of the study”.

The findings also show that there are about twelve professors in Mass Communication/ Mass Media in the university system and about seven professors were already retired. According to the results, the academics in Communication Studies should engage in more research, training, and work at the industrial, national and international levels. But it is important to provide a space to the academics to engage in research, teaching and curriculum development without adding more administrative responsibilities.

The assessments are also important in evaluating students’ knowledge as well as facilitating students to improve their knowledge by giving the feedback as highlighted in the TPACK model.

“Assessment has an important role in education and it has a critical role in the teaching process. Through appropriate assessment, teachers can classify and grade their students, give feedback and structure their teaching accordingly. Practical and theoretical knowledge are equally important in the discipline of Mass Communication/ Mass Media. Therefore, assessments should also be given to equally evaluate the theoretical and practical knowledge of the students” (Irfan, 2018, p. 163).

A senior academic at the Sri Palee campus also stated that the assessments are designed to improve and evaluate the theoretical and practical knowledge of the students. The purpose of having this kind of assessment system is to prepare the undergraduates for the media related professions and challenges. This shows that practical and theoretical knowledge are evaluated by the assessments. But a final year student in the Sri Palee campus highlighted the important of giving equal percentage to the theoretical and practical assessments rather than giving more marks to the final examination.

“Assessing theoretical knowledge by conducting a three-hour final examination does not help to evaluate an undergraduate in a systematic manner as media studies is a more practical discipline. Is it reasonable to evaluate a student by giving a three-hour paper? Because this process only facilitates the students to just memorize the facts and writing them in a paper within the given time period”.

The findings show that there are some issues in distributing marks for assignments, presentations etc. (formative assessments) and final examination (summative assessment). There should be an equal distribution of marks for both final assessment and formative assessment. Some issues in assessing the summative and formative assessments are found in the FGDs. A final year student in Kelaniya university highlighted that there are some issues in getting marks for assessments. The lecturers expect students to reproduce what they have taught in the lectures in a descriptive manner. That is the only way of getting marks for the assessments. Therefore, more systematic mechanism should be introduced to evaluate the assessments. On the other hand, the senior academics have highlighted that the quality of marking is always maintained by having second marking, following a marking scheme etc.

CONCLUSION

The findings show that the purpose was achieved and problem was answered in this study. In other words, there are some challenges and opportunities in media education at the university level in Sri Lanka. The challenges and opportunities are mainly connected with the curriculum, teaching, assessment and technology which are the main elements of TPACK model. Moreover, main challenges occurred in the media education are limited expansion of the discipline of mass communication/ mass media within the university system, limited post graduate studies in communication studies, most of the courses in Sinhala and Tamil, heavily concentrated on theoretical aspects in the curriculum and assessments, non-availability of the text books, media instruments and tools, teachers without professional practice, training and research, non- availability of opportunities in the media industry etc. On the other hand, availability of qualified university academics, covering most of the sub areas of communication studies in the curriculum, providing some facilities and resources to the students such as library, internet, multimedia, radio services, media lab, audio visual centers etc. are the opportunities available in the media education.

The findings also show that due to the challenges of the media education at the university level, there is a wide gap between what is being taught and the reality of the functioning of media. In other words, the degree programmes in Mass Communication/ Media Studies are not sufficiently covered the practical needs and realities of the media industry. Therefore, curriculum should be revised to cater to the needs and requirements in the media industry. Moreover, English medium education, practical based assessments etc. should be introduced to the media education. The practical activities of students should be also improved by providing more technical facilities and resources. The communication departments should invite media professionals to conduct the lectures, practical sessions, workshops etc. for the students to give some training. It is also very important to build the relationship with the media industry to provide internship, training and work opportunities for the students as well as to arrange work experience for academics if necessary. Another suggestion is to expand postgraduate level education in mass communication/ mass media. The other suggestion is that the undergraduates should update with the past moving technologies, general knowledge, critical and analytical skills while studying at the university. In conclusion, curriculum, teaching, assessment and technology should be developed to ensure the quality of the media education.

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