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A Study on the Extensive use of Digital Public Relations in Odisha

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ABSTRACT

We experience that public relations are prevalent everywhere we look. All the social media platforms we use is nothing but sort of individual brand building through public relations. Public Relations has also undergone an evolution from the traditional era to the digital era and social has been an integral part of the digital world. Since businesses are establishing their presence on pertinent platforms thanks to social media, it is inevitable that how they connect with their audience has altered. Professionals in public relations have been fast to adjust to new and changing trends. They have adopted a "digital-first" mindset and exhibited a preference for digital advertising and methods. The shift from traditional to digital and social media interaction is being driven by public relations professionals, who are always looking for new and inventive ways to use technology. Public relations practices have evolved to meet the needs of their clients. In this instance, technology has a significant impact on public relations' operations and interactions with society. This research is an attempt to map digital public relations trends of Odisha and investigate the necessary competencies for digital public relations. How do the PR professionals of Odisha, establish a connection with social media?What kind of changesare observed in the PR sector since the introduction of digital PR? In order to find the answers of these questions, a number of public relations professionals from various institutions and corporate houses of Odisha were interviewed. A qualitative descriptive approach was used to answer the research questions.

Key Words : Public Relations, Digiral PR, Odisha, PR Practice

INTRODUCTION

A nation's progress depends on its communication infrastructure. With the chronological growth of tools and techniques of communication, the aligned disciplines Public Relations has changed a lot. Digital media has profoundly changed the ways in which public relations professionals can communicate because it has created an ongoing channel of communication between an organization and its stakeholders (Whatmough, 2018). People's perceptions of PR have been impacted by the constant flow of information, which has strengthened relationships and knowledge. India's history with public relations is as old as human civilization itself. This study focuses on collective perspectives on the problems and developments in Odisha due to technological inclusion in public relations. The sole purpose of any social media network we use is to develop each user's personal brand through PR. The field of public relations has also evolved from the traditional to the digital eras, and social media has played a significant role in this transition. Public relations professionals, who are constantly seeking for novel and creative ways to employ technology, are driving the change from traditional to digital and social media interaction. In this case, technology greatly impacts how public relations works and engages with the public. A number of public relations experts from various Odisha corporate houses and institutions were spoken with in order to accomplish the objectives.

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Objective of the Study:

The study's goals are to examine the essential skills for digital public relations and analyse the state of Odisha's digital public relations trends. The study also seeks to understand how public relations professionals in Odisha use digital tools.

Rationality:

Using digital media, PR professionals can more precisely target specific audiences. This implies that PR professionals can effectively communicate with the correct audience at the right time. Second, it is a cost-effective choice to use digital media to reach a large audience. Digital media, on the other hand, is typically inexpensive and provides a range of metrics to determine a campaign's effectiveness.

Thirdly, digital media enables PR professionals to communicate with stakeholders in real-time. PR professionals have a space to communicate with stakeholders, address criticisms, and provide clarifications thanks to social media platforms.

METHODOLOGY

An methodology known as the qualitative descriptive method is utilized to address the study issues. Face-to-face interviews were done with the respondents' consent, and since a few PR professionals weren't available, video conference calls were used instead. The data was then analyzed using a theme analysis method based on the interview results. To make it simpler to understand the trends in public relations and the required competences, this was then summarized in highlights. Interviews were taped from February to April 2023. Public relations experts from various institutions were surveyed regarding their thoughts and experiences with digital public relations, as well as the most recent trends in public relations. For the purpose of gathering data, the research study used questionnaires, interviews, discussions, and content analysis.

The graphic below demonstrates the general progression of this study.

Meaning, definition and scope of Digital Public Relations in Odisha:

Numerous definitions, comparisons, or approaches to the subject are revealed by looking at the brief history of modern public relations. Ivy Lee, a pioneer in public relations, struggled with his identity but placed a great

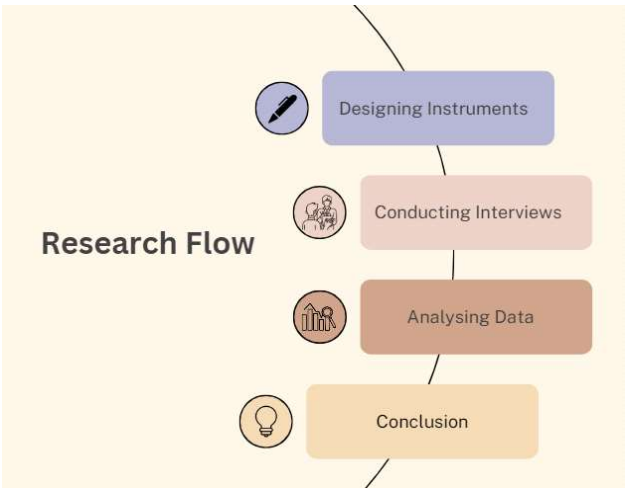

Fig. 1 : Graphical representation of Research Flow

emphasis on honesty, understanding, and compromise to help the general public and business make the "proper adjustment of the interrelations." He frequently imagined himself as a knowledgeable individual who could also serve as a fictitious "lawyer" for his clients in the court of public opinion. It's noteworthy that includes the idea of adjustment in his definition of public relations: "Public relations is the attempt to establish popular support for a course of action, a cause, a movement, or an institution through information, persuasion, and adjustment (Edward, 2015).

In simple words, Public Relations can be defined as the process of communicating with the key stakeholders in an effective manner to ensure that the desired information that is required to be conveyed is successfully communicated. Over the years, public relations has matured to become an industry marshaled by professionals. However, about a century ago, it was not considered worthy of being recognized as a separate industry (Bhattacharjee, 2020).

In order to manage and simultaneously improve an organization's reputation and comprehension, digital public relations leverages online digital media. The internet platforms employed in the Public Relations 4.0 era were fairly diverse, ranging from websites, YouTube channels, social media (including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), and podcasts. Online platforms' content is also regarded as being more interactive and varied, emphasizing the audio, visual, or both. This kind of information and online platforms have been employed by numerous for-profit and nonprofit organizations, as well as institutions from

both the public and private sectors.

Digital Public Relations is increasingly popular as it has a number of advantages. Grunig proposed some of the advantages of digital media, including being effective in field observations; able to track problems and issues in the cyber world relatively easily; utilized to monitor SEO and content analysis, used as a database to measure the type and quality of trust-based relationships, equality in control, satisfaction, and commitment.

The advent of the digital generation has fundamentally transformed the nature of public relations. This is the systematic and broad-based application of ICTs in all aspects of modern public relations practice that is computer compliant, computer driven or computer meditated.

Therefore, if a modern public relations manager or executive aspires to stay relevant and helpful to their organisation, regardless of where they are in the world, they must learn the principles and practices of digital public relations. Because digital public relations is computer-based, the first thing to do is to make sure the person is computer literate.

Considering that public relations is a communication discipline, one would think that the rapid proliferation of digital tools and rapid communication technologies would make public relations all that more powerful and effective (Jeffrey Geibel, 2006).

This has undoubtedly been the case in several consumer-related industries, but for the majority of technology-based enterprises and multinational corporations, many discover that their financial situations are not significantly better than they were prior to the digital era. How well your public relations strategy helps your company's brand, sales, and marketing by creating the crucial sales front of credibility and competitive differentiation, is the true test.

If you don't redesign it for digital application and digital audiences, the same is true of your PR programme. This suggests that, rather than just a hammer and saw tradesperson, the person you are working with in this attempt has the skills to be a public relations architect who can translate your vision into reality.

At the turn of the century, traditional PR tools such as press releases, press conferences, press kits, facility tours, and trade shows were created for a professional audience of journalists. In the internet age, a large portion of a PR campaign will target non-journalists, including stakeholders, prospects, customers, human rights organisations, business analysts, potential employees, etc. These audiences will find it tedious and bothersome because they are not used to receiving information in the traditional public relations format.

Significant changes to India's economic policy began to take place in the 1990s. In 1991, the government turned to the International Monetary Fund for help as it struggled under a mountain of debt and an impending financial disaster. IMF provided assistance under the condition that the government implement significant economic reforms to invite foreign investment into the Indian market. (Bardhan and Sriramesh, 2006).

Public relations practitioners need to be computer proficient to handle these problems. Modern infotech amenities including personal computers, laptops, digital phones, cameras, photo and video cameras, fax machines, e-mail addresses, internet access, and other devices must be available at their workplaces. Additionally, they must to understand how to use and access e-mail, browse the online, create websites, and operate digital cameras.

However, growth and change have their own difficulties, particularly in a changing context. India face the extra problem of being relative newcomers to the global sector due to the acceleration of market globalisation in the 1990s, despite optimistic expectations for the industry's growth. India will become more important in trade agreements like the South Asian Agreement for Regional Cooperation and the South Asian Free Trade Agreement as it awakens inside the emerging regional trading blocks (Singh, 2000).

Literature Review:

As part of this study, many research papers, articles, books and other literature were reviewed which gave a clearer idea about the topic and elements related to it. 'Worlds apart or a part of the world? Public relations issues and challenges in India' (Padmini Patwardhan, Nilanjana). The research study incorporates the opinions of practitioners from many sectors of the business and focuses on collective thoughts on issues and developments experienced by the industry in India. By examining regional specifics and connecting them to global issues, it also offers a chance to deepen understanding of public relations. It also says that as diverse as the region's prehistoric past is the history of public relations in India. After more than 200 years under British control, India attained independence in 1947. Previously, the entire south

Asian region was seen as a more cohesive one. It is still a region with significant ethnic, linguistic, racial, and religious variety today.

In another book titled 'Toward an historically informed Asian model of public relations' P: 243-251, authors Gregor Halff and Anne Gregory have found the themes, threads, and theoretical insights. This book is based on the research that conducts a meta-analysis of the 51 historiographies of public relations in Asia-Pacific nations. In this book, the authors put up a list of essential elements for the study of public relations in the Asia-Pacific region that are derived from a historical viewpoint different from the paradigmatic foundations of the main Western models. In a society that is becoming more globalised, they come to some conclusions regarding the epistemological and practical contrasts between public relations in the West and in the Asia-Pacific area.

In a journal named Revisiting Public Relations Profession in India: A systematic Literature Review written byhttps://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/09732586221095311 - con1Sanjaya Kumar Sahoo ,https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/09732586221095311 - con2Suresh Chandra Nayaksays that the rise of Indian PR scholarship and knowledge base was a side effect of the PR industry's growth in India. Despite an increase in studies on Indian PR, it is still insufficient. Although India has a multi-billion dollar PR sector that provides strategic communications services, there is hardly any knowledge on the current state of the profession and the difficulties it faces. By examining the available studies on PR in India, the aim of this essay is to provide a thorough study of the Indian PR profession, its evolution, growth, and challenges.

India's economic policies changed, albeit only little, in the 1980s. The deregulation of trade and industry started in the 1970s, but it picked up speed in 1985. The corporate sector grew more rapidly as a result, and the media and advertising sectors also saw development. A number of advertising agencies expanded their offering of PR services, while regional PR companies opened independently operating offices or partnered with international PR companies.

In another book titled Working of PR in Odisha : Training and Capacity Building written by Dr. Harihar Dash P: 8- 11 mentions that from a 3-tier structure at the Village, Block, and District level to a 2-tier structure at the Village and Block level, PRI structures in India differed from state to state. Three statutory institutions—Village Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis, and Zilla Parishads—were used to launch the experiment in Rajasthan. The state of Orissa adopted this three-tier model structure, which remained in use for three decades up until the important reform of 1992. The State Institute for Rural Development, a state-level institution run by the PR Department in Bhubaneswar, provides training and capacity building for elected PRI officials and field staff. It was founded in 1964 as one of the nation's most prestigious institutes by the Indian government to carry out training and research activities in tribal and community development.

In another book named A decade of social media in public relations research: A systematic review of published articles in 2010–2020 written by Osnat Roth-Cohen, Ruth Avidar has numerous research papers, journals, and other pieces of literature that provided a greater understanding of the subject and its components were evaluated in order to finish this study. From a 3-tier structure at the Village, Block, and District level to a 2-tier structure at the Village and Block level, PRI structures in India differed from state to state. This paper discussed about the three statutory institutions—Village Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis, and Zilla Parishads—were used to launch the experiment in Rajasthan. It says that the state of Orissa adopted this three-tier model structure, which remained in use for three decades up until the important reform of 1992. The State Institute for Rural Development, a state-level institution run by the PR Department in Bhubaneswar, provides training and capacity building for elected PRI officials and field staff.

According to a book titled New Media in Public Relations: The Evolving Scenario in India, Notion Press written by Tomojit Bhattarcharjee, the fourth State of the Industry Survey 2019 report by the Public Relations Consultants Association of India (PRCAI), the public relations (PR) industry grew 13% to reach Rs. 1,600 crore in FY19, in 2020. Although media relations are still the most popular service, non-media relations services currently account for 53% of total sector income. The market is expected to develop at a CAGR of 12.5%, reaching Rs 1,800 crore by 2020, according to an online survey performed by i2i Research between July and August 2019 among 34 PR firms in India. The public relations sector has slowly expanded across the nation. In 1943, the Tata Group became the first corporate entity to create a distinct public relations division. An internal periodical for the staff served as the department's initial

form of communication.

However, the industry essentially remained unorganised until the 1990s. Some ad companies had separate PR departments that provided PR services in addition to the ad campaigns. Although some multinational PR firms, such as Ogilvy PR, began operations in the middle of the 1980s, there was no real upsurge in the number of these firms. Similar to this, a few regional PR agencies were also founded throughout the nation without much notable success.

According to Scott M. Cutlip, Allen H. Centre, and Glen M. Broom in their book Effective Public Relations published by Pearson Education India, public relations experts who assist organisations in establishing and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships carry out a crucial management function that has an effect on society as a whole. They advocate organisational social responsibility and public relations' critical function in upholding social order. This idea of public relations includes a moral commitment to the harmonious coexistence of interdependent social components. The subsequent chapters are driven by that calling. Effective public relations aids marketing efforts by preserving a cordial social and political climate. For instance, a hospital that maintains excellent relationships with volunteers, nurses, doctors, employees, local government, and community groups is more likely to succeed in its marketing strategy to attract patients and referrals for treatment. Similar to how happy customers and successful marketing strategies support building and maintaining strong connections with other publics, including as employees, investors, regulatory agencies, and local authorities.

In the book named, Digital Public Diplomacy and Strategic Narrative for India, Strategic Analysis written by Kalathmika Natarajan mentions that an important responsibility for nations seeking influence is disseminating information and encouraging favourable understanding about a nation, its policies, and its future role. It is critical to examine how these beliefs are transmitted and accepted in society since international relations are moulded "not just by the power states have but the ideas the states hold about how that power should be used." In fact, individuals who are aware of how these narratives "are constructed and how to shape them" will likely control society in the twenty-first century. It's crucial to avoid categorising stories in a simple way as propaganda or as messaging that audiences passively consume. Individual narratives that support specific worldviews and concepts of identity (as well as collective narratives that concur with them) are produced in accordance with social conditioning. Information and stories aimed at intended (and unintended) audiences are interpreted using these "relationally" created narratives as a lens.

In the book named Public relations in contemporary India: current demands and strategy written by Raveena Singh says, the economic reform policies announced in India in 1991 and its resultant growth in privatization, together with the aggressive growth in the internationalization of economies and the impact of globalization, have caused India to face many new challenges. These include increased competition, an emergence of new needs for information and information technology, better service and service delivery, product restructuring and reengineering, infrastructure development, and closer attention to ecological and quality of life issues. The collapse of Communism assumes that marketization is unavoidable, and regional blocks are replacing superpowers, encouraging regional cooperation. India is endeavoring to pick up after the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of its past strategic partner, the former Soviet Union. As India awakens within the developing regional trading blocks, it will play an increasingly major role in trade agreements, such as the South Asian Agreement for Regional Cooperation and the South Asian Free Trade Agreement.

The movement has brought with it new demands for India to reposition itself internationally and to update its imagery or stereotypes. An accelerated need in communication management is now evident as India emerges as a world power in economics, trade, and manufacturing.

Genesis and development of Digital Public Relations in Odisha:

The Odisha government established the Information and Public Relations Department (IPRD) in 1949 to inform the public about policies and projects. In the 1950s and 1960s, public relations campaigns in Odisha were primarily focused on promoting tourism and luring business to the area. Beyond the public sector and the travel industry, public relations began to be used by private companies to market their products and services. Public relations are now a key part of the communication strategies of government agencies, for-profit companies, and nonprofit groups in Odisha. Since the emergence of social media, public relations has become more interactive

and mutually beneficial. The Government of Odisha's Department of Information and Public Relations serves as a communication link between the people and the government. This department's goals include ensuring that the public is informed about the government's plans, policies, and programmes as well as ensuring that the public participates in the effective implementation of a variety of development programmes and schemes (Samantaray and Prakash, 2016).

Public relations specialists in Odisha also deal with crisis communication, which is managing and speaking out in an emergency or crisis scenario.

In order to reach their target audience successfully, PR specialists in Odisha frequently give presentations and engage in public speaking. Overall, public relations professionals in Odisha combine conventional and modern tactics and strategies to reach their target audience and accomplish their organizational objectives.

There is no denying that media consumption habits have evolved, but this does not mean that conventional PR techniques are no longer effective (Cabot, 2012). These techniques have significance and remain relevant in today's society, serving as an invaluable complement to more contemporary techniques. Traditional PR strategies are sometimes thought of as concentrating on print media, including newspapers and magazines, as well as on television and radio. On the other hand, contemporary PR strategies frequently make use of the vast digital audience. Without other digital-only outlets like SEO, today's PR strategy could likewise seem lacking. The pandemic has caused a new change in PR strategies. In some ways, the epidemic has sped up the transition to PR strategies that are more digitally oriented. With more than 3.8 billion users now, social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram are more influential than ever before due to the demise of the physical medium.

The term "traditional tools of public relations" refers to the communication techniques and approaches that were commonly used before the advent of digital technologies (Okocha and Monday, 2023) On the other hand, the advancement of social media and digital technology has resulted in the development of modern public relations tools.

The introduction of the internet in Odisha, a state in eastern India, began in the late 1990s with the launch of internet services by state-owned telecom companies such as BSNL and MTNL. Since then, the use of the internet has grown rapidly, and today, the state has a large number of internet users.

The government of Odisha has taken several initiatives to promote internet usage and to bridge the digital divide in the state. It has also helped in the growth of the IT sector in the state, with many companies setting up operations in cities like Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.

Despite the progress made in recent years, there are still challenges to be overcome, such as poor internet infrastructure in rural areas, low digital literacy levels, and the need for more affordable and reliable internet services. Public Relations has developed over time to meet the needs of its consumers by adapting to various circumstances. Public relations professionals need a fresh set of abilities to be successful in their field, whether they choose to rely on the dependability of websites or the quick engagement of microblogs.

By giving businesses a way to communicate directly and in real time with officeholders, social media has given PR a chance to truly involve the general public. Social media is viewed in this way as a productive means of achieving research goals and organisational communication, especially from a financial standpoint. The dialogical, interactive, relational, and global characteristics of the new digital media make them ideal for a strategic management paradigm of public relations (Al-Jenaibi, 2022) Digital media managers have been coming up with creative and novel methods to use social media sites like Facebook as marketing tools. While public relations study has focused on how to skillfully use these social media platforms as public relations tools. Digital public relations in Odisha has grown in significance as a component of contemporary communication strategy. Organisations must, however, be aware of the particular difficulties and opportunities given by digital media in order to succeed in digital public relations.

Public Relations as an academic discipline in Odisha:

Public relations (PR) is seen as an essential component of management and communication in India as well as in Odisha. The number of academic institutions offering PR courses has expanded as a result of the sharp rise in demand for PR professionals in India in recent years.

Therefore, political education and training for PRI MPs is necessary in order for them to participate effectively and actively inside the democratic system.

As a result, various training institutions, such as the State Institute for Rural Development, Panchayati Raj Training Institutions (PRTIs), Extension Training Centres (ETCs), etc., have historically been involved in providing scheme-specific training programmes, including those aimed at enhancing the capacities of elected representatives and officials of PRIs (Dash, 2015).

In Odisha, many universities and colleges that provide undergraduate and graduate degree programmes in public relations. Some of the well-known PR programmes offered in India include the Bachelor of Mass Media (BMM), Bachelor of Journalism and Mass Communication (BJMC), Master of Mass Communication (MMC), Master of Journalism and Mass Communication (MJMC), and Post Graduate Diploma in Public Relations (PGDPR) (Sanjaya Kumar Sahoo ,https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/09732586221095311 - con2Suresh Chandra Nayak, 2022). The syllabus for PR courses in India includes PR theories and models, communication theories, media management, crisis communication, social media management, event management, advertising, and marketing. As a requirement for the practical training component of these degrees, students must perform internships in corporate communication departments or PR firms. Whereas in India, number of institutions are working hard to give students who want to work in this industry as PR is becoming an increasingly popular academic subject.

The growth of media, economic liberalisation and globalisation, trade wars and the resultant competitive marketing climate, as well as the increasing demand for public information, have all had a significant impact on the practise of public relations (Stallings, 2001). Now that it is more narrowly focused, public relations is at the forefront of corporate and governmental ideas.

Up to one lakh public relations professionals, over 30 lakh extension communicators, including about 9 lakh community health volunteers, 94,000 newspapers, 500 radio stations, 900 television channels, 30 crore internet connections, and over 100 crore mobile phones collectively formed the largest information and PR network in the world. To inform, educate, persuade, and motivate the public to take action, a wide network of information technology-enabled organisations engages in public communication. Public relations is a career that is expanding, yet public relations education in Odisha is still in its infancy (Avidar and Cohen, 2022).

Interviews and opinions of PR Practitioners of Odisha

In Odisha, public relations dates back to the early 19th century, when the British began to dominate the area. Public relations were utilized by the British government to engage with the community and foster a positive perception of the British Empire. They disseminated their message through a variety of media, including newspapers and pamphlets. Public relations became a crucial instrument for the government to engage with the populace after India attained independence in 1947. In order to inform the public about policies and programmes, the Odisha government formed the Information and Public Relations Department (IPRD) in 1949. Social media has become a critical tool in Public Relations (PR) in recent years.

Both PR and social media are based on communication but social media, with its real-time messaging, amplifies PR activities and campaigns and reaches out to new audiences through specific targeting. (Bibhu Panigrahi, Senior Manager, Corporate Communication. IMFA)

Social media management has been proved crucial for reaching and interacting with audiences in Odisha, social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram can be very effective tools. Running targeted advertising campaigns, developing and publishing frequent updates, and reacting to messages and comments are all possible components of a digital PR strategy.

Social media has largely affected the peer domain. In fact, it has been a boon for the peer professionals. Like the peer people earlier used to adhere to the traditional way of communication. But with social media, with the adamant of social media, it has made the Public Relations job easier. At the same time it is critical because until you give the clear facts or the clear logic of any situation or anything, then it will mislead the public opinion which is not good for peers (Dr. Bibhudutta Mohapatra, Vice President Corporate Communication, Odisha).

With the changing trends market and technology the practice of Public Relations has undergone a sea change in Odisha. Influencer marketing has become an essential part of PR. Brands are partnering with influencers to reach out to their audience in a more authentic way. Data-Driven Public Relations became the buzzward in practice. PR professionals are using data to inform their strategies. With the help of analytics tools, PR professionals can measure the impact of their campaigns and adjust their strategies accordingly.

In past it was basically traditional email messaging with journalists and stakeholders. But gradually it has evolved. With the course of time the PR professionals came to know about the digital platforms like twitter, facebook, LinkedIn etc. We have started using these digital platforms since 2014-15. Initially it was not user friendly but within a couple of years these digital platforms became an integral part of our practice. Social media also became a channel to interact or be in touch with the employees during the pandemic (Dharitri Satapathy, PR and Communication Consultant, Vedanta, Odisha)

Crisis management has become an essential part of PR. PR professionals are expected to be prepared for any crisis and have a plan in place to manage it. Companies are expected to be socially responsible, and PR professionals are playing a crucial role in communicating a company's CSR initiatives to the public. PR professionals are using personalization to tailor their messages to their target audience. PR professionals are using storytelling to create an emotional connection with their audience.

Drastic changes has been taking place like communication has become faster messages are now more transparent and clearer in fact, through social media you can also send video images for a very heavy capacity. (Dr. Bibhudutta Mohapatra, Vice President Corporate Communication, Odisha).

Improving your skills in public relations involves a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical experience. The field of public relations is constantly evolving, so it's important to stay up-to-date with the latest industry trends, best practices, and emerging technologies. Social media is a key component of digital public relations, so it's important to have a strong presence on the platforms that matter most to your audience. Spend time building your social media profiles, developing a content strategy, and engaging with your followers to build relationships.

Both PR and social media are based on communication but social media, with its real-time messaging, amplifies PR activities and campaigns and reaches out to new audiences through specific targeting. (Dr. Bibhudutta Mohapatra, Vice President Corporate Communication, Odisha)

Handling fake information in digital public relations can be a challenging task, but there are several strategies that can be employed to effectively deal with this issue.

It is important to monitor social media channels for any fake information that may be circulating. This can be done through social listening tools, which can track keywords, hashtags, and mentions related to your brand or organization. If fake information is discovered, it is important to respond quickly to prevent it from spreading further. This can involve issuing a statement or correcting the misinformation with accurate information. Providing accurate and timely information is crucial in preventing the spread of fake information. This can include publishing official statements or press releases, as well as engaging with journalists and influencers to ensure accurate reporting. Building trust with your audience is important in combating the spread of fake information. This can involve being transparent about your organization's practices and policies, as well as engaging in open and honest communication with your stakeholders. Working with fact-checkers can help to identify and correct misinformation. Fact-checking organizations can help to verify the accuracy of information and prevent the spread of fake news.

If it pertains to your organization then, being a Public Relations professional one needs to check with the fake information. Cross check is essential for all the information that one disseminates in the public domain. Then with the approval of the competent authority. As for the quota flow, you have to make it very clear by giving a press release or statement in the press. (Dr. Bibhudutta Mohapatra, Vice President Corporate Communication, Odisha).

Modern Public Relations (PR) activities now include digital media as a crucial component. Reaching target audiences and increasing brand recognition have become simpler for businesses and organizations thanks to the growth of social media platforms and digital communication channels. Communications with stakeholders can be more specialized and personalized thanks to digital media. Businesses can engage with their followers and consumers directly through social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Businesses have the chance to interact more personally and earn the trust and loyalty of their target market thanks to this open channel of communication. Businesses can also utilise social media to get public comments and insights, which can help them with their PR and marketing initiatives. The use of digital media is now crucial in PR campaigns today. Digital media in PR has many benefits, including the capacity to interact in real time, reach a

larger audience, and directly communicate with stakeholders. Businesses may develop a strong brand image, interact with their audience, and ultimately accomplish their PR goals by using these tools efficiently.

Social media is not the only factor for making PR crucial, it is one of the many factors or you can say it is a trend. Overall there are changes in the business, changes in the management, changes in the way the business is being operated and most importantly the awareness level of the stakeholders. For these reasons in PR social media became a very important and crucial tool for professionals and communicators to deal with the stakeholders. (Dharitri Satapathy, PR and Communication Consultant, Worked with Nalco and Vedanta, Odisha)

Keeping in view the growing importance of public relations, number of private and government institutions offer specific courses of PR. Public Relations as an academic discipline started from Berhampur University in the year 1975. Later, all other colleges and universities started implementing the course. There is a increase in the in demand of this course by the communication students. Very little or no research has been made so far on the quality of Public Relations education in Odisha. As it is purely practical professional field it needs specific infrastructure, industry interface and a rigorous teaching-learning system in order to impart the updated skills and knowledge to the students.

Public relations courses are offered at a number of universities and institutions in Odisha with merely 50 or 100 marks. Public Relations is rarely included as an elective in courses in Odisha. No university offers a full-time, exclusive Public Relations course. The majority of PR courses' syllabuses are likewise out of date and hardly it has any space for digital Public Relations. Industry exposure should be covered in the PR syllabus. Because of the weak academic infrastructure in public relations at the college level, there are not enough qualified entry-level practitioners. Generally speaking, Odisha's public relations industry is battling to become a legitimate business (Dr. V.R Raju, Former Public Relations Officer, Gridco, Odisha).

The opportunities in the Public Relations industry have increased in recent years, with corporate and state governments looking to take bright communication students. PR pitching involves writing press releases to attract media outlets and carry a story. Everything is now digital and physical interfaces are gradually diminishing. Online focus is more and earlier it was just newspaper, now TV and social media.

Because the internet and social media are becoming an increasingly important part of communication, a relatively new field called "Digital PR" has emerged. The way businesses and individuals connect with their audiences has undergone a considerable change as a result of the growth of digital channels including social media platforms, blogs, and online news sources.

The most important details in this text are the challenges of public relations, the choices available in the field, and the jobs available in the field. In Odisha, there are subdivisional PR officers who can sit for an examination and become additional CPRO, district information Public Relation officer, joint director, and technical director. There are also many jobs in PR in govt bodies, but people don't know about them. Internships are also required to gain exposure, and educational institutes should bring internship opportunities in the PR field, but due to the lack of knowledge institutes don't do so. (Mr. Ashok Panda, Chairman PR Council of India)

Findings:

The above discussion makes it quite evident that digital media significantly affects public relations. Reaching potential influencers, managing crises, and successfully interacting with internal and external stakeholders all require the use of digital media. As a result, digital media is guaranteeing that every aspect of organizational communication is efficient and that the organization has positive, mutually beneficial relationships with all of its stakeholders.

Based on study into the effects of digital media on the sector, the following suggestions have been made to develop public relations as a profession and increase its quality of teaching in universities and colleges:

1) Emphasize the value of public relations as a managerial, commercial, and strategic activity that goes beyond marketing.

2) Assist people in using contemporary PR tools like blogs, LinkedIn, Twitter, and others.

3) Spread knowledge about the modern era's shifting communication landscape.

4) Convey the importance of continually being prepared for a crisis in the lightning-quick digital environment.

Conclusion :

Therefore, businesses with a public relations department are more likely to use social media in their daily operations. A general picture does emerge despite the scattered character of the studies on public relations in Odisha. By putting these issues in their proper national contexts and comparing them to global patterns, we can more accurately gauge how the industry is doing on a global scale. In conclusion, public relations specialists increasingly rely largely on digital media to effectively reach their target audiences. Thanks to the widespread use of social media platforms, email marketing, and digital advertising, organizations can now reach a larger audience, monitor and participate in online conversations, and assess the success of their communication efforts. The paper claims that the traditional practice of public relations has been significantly altered by the use of digital media and businesses that don't adapt risk becoming obsolete. According to a report by the Public Relations Consultants Association of India (PRCAI), the PR industry in India made 16 billion rupees in revenue in 2019. If public relations professionals want to effectively use digital media, they must stay abreast of the most latest trends and technologies as the digital world continues to develop.

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