

## **IUST's Journalism Department organises 1-Day National Seminar on 'Covid and Communication'**

**Awantipora March 26:** A One Day National Seminar on the theme 'Covid and Communication' was organised by the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication (DJMC) Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) here Thursday. On this occasion, special invited lectures were held for the students of Journalism and Mass Communication to orient them towards better career and professional goals.



Vice Chancellor, Prof. Mushtaq A. Siddiqi, who was the Chief Guest on this occasion, contextualized need for suitable crisis communication with medical science during the times of corona and said, “the vaccine has is a silver lining during this pandemic but not the final hope and all we need is proper and accurate communication as has happened in case of HIV etc.” Prof. Siddiqi, while calling the virus a ‘disruption’ of the sorts, talked about how disruptive technologies had contributed earlier also and how a scientific temperament and protocols were still required to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

While delivering his special lecture on the topic ‘COVID impact on media and communication and their careers’ Pro Vice- Chancellor, Adamas University Prof. Ujjwal K. Chowdhury discussed future of all media formats and career avenues and corona times called for a break from myopic vision or fixation and out of box solutions were needed. “During Covid, newspapers were badly hit and their circulation went down drastically, which has still not stabilized increasing the printing, distributing costs and even led to over 11000 jobs in India. However, digital media and web has become the order of the day and as such focus should shift to Mojo in journalism schools and industry”, he said.

He further noted the presence of ethical issues in journalism at the moment and spoke about upsurge of false content in media and said, “there is a challenge of false content, misinformation versus disinformation and media’s questionable role as lapdog vs that of a watchdog and that it is the of media professionals to ask questions to those at the helm of affairs unlike that of ‘friendly-media’ which always criticizes those who question on government

Prof. Chowdhury, who regularly writes for various national publications on issues of education, media, society and politics like The Tribune, Assam Tribune, Sunday Guardian, DNA, Deccan Herald, Newslandry, The Wire, Gomantak Times, and others also discussed in detail the emergence of new paradigm in the entertainment industry and said that the blockbusters will come back but mid and small budget cinema will go online or on digital cinema as the OTTs are the trend to grow.

While delivering his special lecture on ‘Practical PR during Covid: Purpose, Skills and Tips’, Vice-President –Content Marketing at Adfactors PR, Aditya Chatterjee presented case studies from various leading PR campaigns of brands like Godrej, Mahindra, Johnson and Johnson etc. to help students understand the theoretical and practical concepts. Chatterjee, who has also had editorial stints at India’s leading media houses like The Times of India spoke about various campaigns strategies and philosophies and said ‘every campaign has to have a tangible output and outcome. During coronavirus, brands have been adapting to the market as well as societal needs to expand the outcome.’ He also noted the importance of ‘empathy’ in a branding campaign without which nothing could be achieved.

Dean School of Humanities and Social Sciences and leading economist Prof. A.S Bhat also addressed the gathering and analyzed the impact of pandemic on economy. He talked about the social costs of a ‘false and biased’ reporting during the pandemic due to which muslims and migrants were mostly affected and said “the pandemic brought out the communal and capitalist face of the media.”

Earlier, while welcoming the guests, HoD Department of Journalism and Mass Communication Dr Ruheela Hassan shared her observations about this ‘Infodemic’ and how misinformation and disinformation about the pandemic during the initial stages led to some deaths. She further impressed on how professionals should work in times of pandemic or during any war like situations to spread prevent of false contents.

While submitting the seminar report, Seminar Coordinator and Sr. Asst. Prof, DJMC Dr Monisa Qadiri who also proposed the vote of thanks expressed her contentment over the seminar, and called on students to focus on the skills and training that would enable them to be relevant to the industry after few years.

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