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## ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION ON UNIVERSITIES

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### ABSTRACT:

Nowadays, public relations in higher education institution become an integral part of the management team. It must contribute to achieve organizational goals and demonstrate an organizational accountability identified by measurable result. Placement public relations at certain positions in management have consequences in the process of implementation of the public relations function. It happened because the management, workflow and hierarchy greatly affects work patterns as well as patterns of decision making in carrying out communication tasks performed by public relations. The goal of research to find out the role and position in public relations in management education institution (universities) in achieving its objectives. They also do not have the same understanding about the role of a public relations officer will just place public relations in same position as marketing. It is particularly in the era where public needs information and organizations need their existence in society. It prevails for universities as well. Almost all universities also have public relations in the structure of their organization and the role has been truly required. The success of communication depends on strong internal public relation program, and the focus on building relationship as well as conveying message. Therefore, universities should build good internal communication. In fact universities have different internal audience with profit and nonprofit organizations in general. In the universities, the audience consists of either lecturers and employees or mostly students classified as adolescents. In this matter, university public relations have to have its own way to carry out its communication activities.



**KEY WORDS:** Public Relations, Role, Reputation. Universities.

### INTRODUCTION

The existence of public relations institution in an organization is a must. Almost all organizations have public relations in the structure of their organization. It relates to public demand right now that it requires an organization to make communication with its audience. It prevails for universities as well. Almost all universities also have public relations in the structure of their organization. More and more, the role is admitted. The existence of public relations in universities definitely can make communication with audience easier. For this purpose, the universities need a unit of public relations that carries out the function of communication to various stakeholders. The main attention in carrying out the function of communication is audience. Concerning audience, it can be read in form of the organizations themselves. Moreover, the organizations can be divided into two types, i.e.

profit and non-profit. The profit organizations are frequently similar to corporation, and nonprofit ones are called the government or organizations that carry out public policies.

The communication function conducted by universities has no difference which with other institutions both government and private institutions. That distinguishing the communication function undertaken by these institutions is public communication component. The public then expanded his understanding Become stakeholders who are individuals and groups within or outside the college institution that has a role in determining Success of the company. College is interesting to be examined from the side of communication conducted by Public Relations because there are specific challenges.

The issue of accountability is a matter that must be maintained by the university. One indicator of accountability is good communication. Other than that Universities have a significant role in educational development Community. Not just as an educational provider but a college is expected to contribute academically and practically in development. Accountability becomes a more crucial issue in state universities because of the cost the education used for raising one of them is obtained from taxes paid by the people. Form of social responsibility of state universities become heavier than related to finance is also related to that output resulting from graduates. By making Public Relations (PR) the main channel of communication is a big challenge as it relates to media perceptions of relationship work society. Parents of students and prospective students are also the ones who it is important to manage the communication for the benefit of the college. Another interesting aspect is the independence of public relations as a tool management, status and position determine the performance of Public Relations as a tool communication. Position of Public Relations in a company can be a tool identification of work objectives and may also reflect a communication policy outlined by management. Education is a wide sector in India that includes schools, colleges, universities etc. Public relations plays an important role in enhancing these educational institutions and increases their awareness amongst the target audience.

In the present scenario, all educational organizations require public relations for their successful functioning, brand recognition and promotion. Higher and specialized education has become a trend nowadays, and to inform aspiring students about these courses is a challenging job where PR comes to action. With the help of PR agencies educational institutes increase their visibility.

People usually trust a PR agency more than an advertising agency as they know the latter has been paid to glorify a client. The job of PR professionals is to highlight the positive about their client, including the background of the institute, courses offered, achievements of its students and faculty etc.

Events are one of the ways PR is done for an organization as they offer scope for instant feedback and two-way communication as well. The various events can be cultural events, donation drives, meetings, launches, fashion shows, sports events etc. It is the duty of a PR company to plan and execute the event and to disseminate the press release to various media houses for coverage.

PR experts build an image of the organization by spreading and circulating its positive information and policies. Nowadays, online PR tool is a common tool for communication and with the help of social media it is easy to share various updates and activities related to the institution. Blogs, essays, SEO friendly articles etc. all help in social media management and search engine optimization. The education PR activities help the institutes in expanding number of applicants, making the institute better known, enhancing its reputation, improving internal relations etc.

### **Importance of PR in Education Sector**

Education is the basic need of humankind. Not only parents wish their child to be educated but even nations want their citizens to acquire knowledge and become a resource for them. This trend has led educational institutions to come up with new ideas and innovative approaches. Indian institutions are not behind their counterparts in foreign countries at this front. They are utilising modern resources and enhancing requisite facilities to produce learned and skilled citizens. The massive education sector of India comprises primary schools, colleges, universities and many other institutions. Edtech companies are new addition to the list. Hence, the fierce competition among these stakeholders can be imagined. The question arises here that how guardians and students can recognise institutes offering

great learning? If an institution is doing anything different, it must spread awareness about its products. The best way to do the same is Public Relations. Education sector can reap the benefits of PR in multiple ways- from creating an image to organizing an event.

PR professionals with their outstanding methods make institutes grab the attention of prospects. Agencies work to create an indelible perception in the minds of the potential students and their parents. This very image works as a solution for guardians looking for a place of education for their child and creates an opportunity for the institute. PR firms help institutions inform the public about their infrastructure, courses, fee structure, exchange programs, important collaborations, job prospects, etc. It becomes easy for an informed parent to take decision. Agencies further inform public about changes and developments. Educational events play a key role in earning knowledge that is why events have become an integral part of the learning system of institutions. PR agencies hold expertise in organizing such programs and help institutes to do the same. PR firms ensure the coverage of the event in national as well as local newspapers. Digital platforms have gained immense popularity in this tech-savvy world. In such circumstances, engaging virtual population has become significant.

PR agencies with expertise in social media marketing help institutes establish a rapport with their online audience. It helps in executing real time conversation. Educational institutions are more prone to crisis. Increase in fee structure, falling student satisfaction, and issues related to hostels draw protests from concerned parties, malign the image of the institute. These incidents create one-sided debate without listening the point of the institute. Owing to the good relationship with media, PR agencies help eliminate or mitigate the effect of crisis. Public relations has become an indispensable exercise for almost every sector. Education sector is also availing the opportunity and it should. PR firms use both traditional and modern methods of communication to build a reputation of an institute among all the stakeholders. Institutes are hiring the best PR firms to make people aware of their quality education and to ensure their wider reach. Our PR experts with brilliant PR strategies help institutes establish as a brand.

### **Educational Organizations and PR Development**

Educational institutions include programs that provide child care, instruction for primary and secondary students, colleges, universities, trade schools, and schools for special needs students. Educational institutions take on a staggering array of organizational structures and functions.

A public information officer for a local school district must constantly deal with parents, the school board, and other community and governmental organizations.

A university director of public relations or even marketing communications, on the other hand, has less interaction with parents but must deal with ongoing student recruitments, campus controversies, and alumni relations.

### **Colleges and Universities and the need for PR**

Higher education is big business in India as it is worldwide. India spends around 6% of its GDP on Educational sector (approximately 72000 crore INR) annually on public colleges and universities. It's also a business that has millions of customers—students. In India itself, almost 20 million students are enrolled at more than 700 universities and 35000 colleges.

Almost every one of these institutions has personnel working in such activities as public relations, marketing communication, and fund-raising. Increasingly, public relations officers need to monitor social media to stay atop emerging issues for the institution to forestall embarrassing and damaging blows to the reputation of their institution.

### **PR Building in Educational sector- Advantage of Fund-Raising and Development**

Finding ways to pay the bills is a critical problem for virtually all nonprofit organizations like educational institutions or others that advocate social or environmental causes, offer social services, provide health care, and even provide education from kindergarten to college. Many also receive

government funding, but the amount usually covers only a small part of the operating costs. Consequently, better PR building strategies is an important component of any nonprofit in fund-raising. Public relations professionals participate directly in fund-raising by organizing and conducting solicitation programs or by serving as consultants to specialized development departments in their organizations. However, organizations may instead employ professional firms to conduct their fund-raising campaigns on a fee basis. In those instances, the organizations' public relations professionals usually serve a liaison function.

### Role of Universities on Public Relations

Public Relations of Universities is working with media/journalists to report objectively to the stakeholders. Media relations activity is one of the activities PR is important, but in creating two-way communication required for more direct communication. The PR is active facilitate management to conduct communication process between management and stakeholders. By directional communication is dynamic, in which information is exchanged in two direction between universities management and stakeholders. In that communication two-way is the most important thing is the occurrence of feedback. Feedback is information which is important and useful to be input management in carrying out its duties to achieve organizational/university goals.

When viewed the structure of the organization PR in the management of the University, they are not in a dominant position. Structurally Public Relations universities are a technical implementation unit. Technical implementation unit in organizational and system of documents work is a necessary supporting element for the organization of education within the University. Public Relations of Universities is directly responsible to the rector and coaching is done by Vice Rector II. If seen from the documents of organization and working procedure of Vice Rector II is the only petition Rector in the field of Public Relations in addition to carrying out activities in the field of general administration, planning and finance. The Public Relations position has influence in the process of establishing relationships between management and the public. Such that delivered, a public relations practitioner who successfully practices public relations effectively those who use the new model of symmetry as two-way practice. Effective public relations practice according to this model is the result of accumulation of the practice of two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical models. Each party will persuade to get agreement. In this condition, it could happen that is pure asymmetrical model, i.e. the situation of dominant coalition trying to press the public to accept the position of the organization, or it could happen corporation model, that is where the situation public use communications to convince dominant coalition to accept positions public.

### CONCLUSION

Public relations in universities has important role in supporting internal communication. However, public relations cannot carry out the role totally. Obstacles that public relations has to face come from the university management's policies itself. Moreover, internal audience of the universities is mostly students and they need their own strategy to build appropriate communication. The role of public relations gives understanding on the importance of maintaining reputation as main capital of university existence to internal audience. Other informants argue that the responsibility and authority of PR is imaging campus. So how to imaged this campus well so that it can be known all over community layer. Opinions given by each informant have not been able provide an appropriate and detailed perception of responsibility and authority of PR in the universities. That function PR is a multi-perception. Confusion about the role and function of PR is still very high, even to the level of decision makers. Especially for Public Relations Universities, stakeholders stated that still need to be improved coordination between Public Relations with other parts. Head of Public Relations Universities held by a lecturer is considered as a separate obstacle in coordinating internally PR and coordination with other parts. According to informant job informants are responsive and need high coordination speed.

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