

Clarification from CMS Academy on Editors Guild's Statement on Manish Tewari's speech, at the symposium on NEWS Media Education

New Delhi, 23rd August, 2013: Earlier this week on August 19, 2013, the Information & Broadcasting Minister Manish Tiwari inaugurated the Symposium on NEWS Media Education in India organized by CMS Academy at IIC, New Delhi. The minister wondered whether there could be some kind of common test in journalism education to set some standards. He was talking in the context of an observation made by Dr. N. Bhaskara Rao, who spoke before the minister, that journalism schools, despite proliferation have not made the kind of impact on news media scene in the country.

This CMS Academy Symposium was addressing the quality and standards of NEWS Media education especially journalism courses in the country. There were faculty of various University Departments, Institutes and private colleges across India along with senior media professional assembled to explore the gaps and requirements for the current Indian media landscape to encourage excellence in NEWS media education. More specifically, the critical role of research culture, quality standards and faculty in the education sector will be reviewed. The Symposium will also act as a platform for all stakeholders in the NEWS media education and industry sectors to address the challenges and concerns.

In this context, the Minister's detailed comments elaborated the systematic issues ailing the current media ecosystem that he felt needed to be addressed. In this speech, he referred to the need to debate on issues confronting the media for wider public discourse with involvement of stakeholders. He referred the system to come up with a common entrance exam as for a lawyer or a chartered accountant as an example; he referred to various professions who maintained the credentials and standards by such test. He recognized that most journalists were highly qualified in various disciplines and would in fact, not mind giving such a test to be a journalist.

To be fair to the Minister, he has not suggested a Government intervention but wondered whether there could be some kind of a system like the common entrance exam test by an independent professional Journalism Network. At no point of his speech he talked of licensing for journalists directly or indirectly. It is unfair for the Editors Guild to criticise the minister without verifying what exactly he spoke and in what context.

The reports appearing in the news media have not referred to the context of the symposium or the participants, who were primarily academicians from news media institutes whom the minister was addressing.

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