



Dr SANGEETHA UNNITHAN

Date of birth: 21/07/1983

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Profile Summary

I am a communication professional turned academic with 14 years' experience as a journalist, media and communication teacher and corporate communications manager. As a journalist in two leading English dailies in India, I have reported extensively on development, civic, social welfare and gender issues among others. As an academic I trained journalism post graduate students in one of India's most prominent government-run media institutes. My experience in corporate communication includes managing the internal communications division of a leading MNC in the IT sector, as well as leading the corporate communications division of a global entertainment company in the kids and family entertainment sector. I am currently working as a faculty in Communication Area at Indian Institute of Management, Indore.

Professional Objective

To effectively utilize my intellect and varied skills acquired so far to groom future leaders and world class communication professionals.

Experience

- **Since August 2022:** Working as Visiting Assistant Professor in Communication Area at Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Indore.
- **May 2020 to August 2022:** Worked as Senior Manager, Corporate Communications at *Toonz Media Group*, a global major in kids and family entertainment.
- **August 2015 to March 2019:** Worked as Associate Manager, Internal Communications and Branding at *IBS Software*, a leading IT solutions provider for the Travel Transportation and Logistics industry.
- **August 2012 to August 2015:** Worked as Assistant Professor at Kottayam Branch of *Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC)*, an autonomous mass communication training institute under Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India.
- **August 2008 to August 2012:** Worked as Senior Reporter at the Thiruvananthapuram Bureau of *The Hindu*.
- **November 2006 to July 2008:** Worked as Staff Reporter at the Thiruvananthapuram Bureau of *The New Indian Express*.

Educational Qualifications

- Ph.D. in Communication and Journalism from University of Kerala with specialization in *Science Communication* - 2021
- Master of Communication and Journalism (MCJ), University of Kerala, India – **First Rank** – 2006
- B.Sc. (Physics), University of Kerala, India – First Class – 2004

Additional Qualification

Qualified **National Eligibility Test (NET)** for lectureship in Journalism conducted by University Grants Commission (UGC), New Delhi in 2007.

Research, Publications and Paper Presentations

- **December 4, 2021:** Presented a paper at the **Asia Media & Information Center (AMIC) International Conference** titled '*Mass Media Engagement of Health Experts & Frontline Health Workers in Kerala During The Covid-19 Pandemic*'. The paper probed how the frontline workers and health experts in Kerala engaged with the media during the Covid-19 pandemic by evaluating their media consumption patterns and informed views on pandemic mass communication and best practices.
- **July 2021:** Completed Ph.D. in the area of **Science Communication**, with focus on the role of mass media in Public Understanding of Science (PuS). My study titled *Science Communication Through the Mainstream Media India* involved analysis of coverage, news prioritization and engagement level of science and technology related stories published in mainstream news media. The theoretical framework for the study was provided by the Agenda Setting Theory, Framing Theory and Hierarchy of Influences Theory. A mixed methodology involving both qualitative and quantitative content analysis was adopted for the study, which was supplemented by structured interviews with some of India's leading scientists.
- **February 6, 2014:** Presented a paper at the **National Mass Communication Research Conference**. This paper was done as a preliminary study for my PhD research. I analyzed the coverage of science and technology related stories on digital news media, by studying the home page of BBC World and NDTV 24x7.
- **December 2014:** Published the research paper '*Science Communication through the Mainstream Media in India*' in **Communication & Journalism Research**, Vol 3, Issue 1 & 2; ISSN 2348-5663, based on the above-mentioned study.
- **December 2014:** Bagged a one-year research fellowship in Science Communication offered by **Kerala State Council for Science Technology and Environment (KSCSTE)**, a Kerala Government organization. As part of this I authored a book on Science Communication in Malayalam titled '*Aashayavinimayam Indian Shaasthra Sankethika Rangathu*'. The draft of the book has been submitted for publication at the Kerala Bhasha Institute. The book follows the early science communication efforts in modern India,

starting from the pre-Independence era of vernacular scientific publications and rural science fairs to the current SciComm activities in India, in the age of New Media.

- **December 8, 2013:** Made a paper presentation at **Humour: Text & Contexts International Conference**. The presentation titled '*Humour and News: An Analysis of Comedic Journalism Shows*' was centered around the use of humour in news-based shows. The presentation explores the blurring lines between news and entertainment, as news channels compete with entertainment channels and programmes for prime time audience attention. And how this shift has contributed to the rising popularity of satirical news programmes.
- **December 2011:** Published research paper '*Depiction of George W Bush in Indian Cartoons*' in **Indian Journal of Communication**, Vol 3, Oct – Dec 2011. This study was done as part of my post-graduation dissertation. For this study, political cartoons in leading newspapers depicting George W Bush from February-March, 2006 were analyzed. This covered the period in which Mr Bush was on a state visit to India in March 2006 to sign a much-debated nuclear deal.

Summary of Teaching Statement

The discipline of Communication, like any other liberal arts discipline, thrives on continuous discussions and debates between teachers and learners. I believe that the role of the teacher of Communication is more that of a facilitator, who encourages vibrant classroom discussions by prodding learners to closely observe society's interaction with media, and help them understand it in the context of concepts, theories and research done over the years. Hence, my efforts would be centered around creating an innovative learning environment in the classroom by encouraging critical thinking and free flow of ideas. Equally important is to introduce learners to the latest tools and techniques in gathering and processing information, and presenting it in a manner that is compelling to every category of the mass communication audience. This, I believe, is important to groom smart, engaging and effective communicators who appreciate the tenets of inclusivity and democratic values.

Summary of Research Statement

My area of research is Science Communication, which is still a nascent field in India. Science and Technology (S&T) lies at the core of many of these contemporary issues, right from the Covid pandemic to climate change, natural disasters, unethical use of technology and so many more. Hence, the dire need and urgency to communicate and discuss issues related to S&T. My research interest specifically lies on the role played by mass media in public understanding of science. I have developed an extensive list of news categories covering topics ranging from pure science, to emerging technologies, to issues, controversies and debates that reflect the matrix between science and society. I have also developed specific parameters to measure aspects such as impact of media routines on science news coverage, volume of development communication and public engagement with science, etc.

Other Achievements

- Bagged Best Reporting Award instituted by **Kerala State Chalachitra Academy** for coverage of 13th International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK) for The Hindu in 2008.

- Bagged Excellence Award for best performance at **IBS Software** in 2018
- Was festival director of the prestigious **Animation Masters Summit**, an international creative event organized by Toonz Media Group, in 2021
- Secured **First Rank** in the Master of Communication and Journalism Examination -2006 of University of Kerala.
- Holding **Air Wing NCC 'C'** certificate

Languages Known

English, Hindi, Malayalam