

Title: Desperate need for Media Literacy

Introduction:

Let us first understand what media literacy is.

According to Britannica, media literacy is defined as the “use of critical thinking to parse or create mass media, especially as a consumer in an age of online misinformation and disinformation.”

Further, Britannica adds that media literacy involves the ability to analyze, evaluate, and produce various kinds of media. Media literacy is often used interchangeably with media education, which refers to the creation, primarily by teachers, of the necessary conditions for developing media literacy.

Objective: To make mass media students understand the need for media literacy and develop their insight into the academic topic of “media literacy.”

Content:

With the growing trend of fake news, content fabrication, planned and planted news, and above all, mainstream media increasingly turning tabloid by prioritizing non-serious content, media consumers are being cheated under the garb of freedom of speech and expression. Content, especially news and advertisements, aims to make audiences believe the information they receive. In the case of advertisements, the specific approach has been to influence buying behaviour, cajole consumers into joining the bandwagon, and make them feel exclusive.

In consumer product advertising, glamour is sold. Language, attractive phrases, and punchlines are used in a manner that dupes the audience; however, the reality is far removed from the facts.

Conditions are largely the same in audio-visual production methods. Camera angles and editing techniques are frequently used to conceal reality and distort facts.

The need for media literacy is therefore of great importance. But why?

Media students Nikhil Singh, Vaibhav Mani, Samagra Rudransh, and Pallavi Kumari have shared their opinions.

Nikhil Singh says,

“A media-literate society resists political propaganda, hate speech, and agenda-driven storytelling. It fosters awareness, inspires critical thinking, and prevents citizens from becoming pawns in political manipulation during elections, governance, and societal conversations.”

According to Vaibhav,

“Media literacy is important because the internet is full of mixed messages, including facts, lies, edits, and propaganda. If people can’t understand it, they can be easily misled. Smart scrolling leads to smart thinking.”

Another media student, Samagra Rudransh, based on his understanding and classroom lectures, says,

“Media literacy is a powerful tool that enables citizens to critically assess information, identify bias, and resist manipulation. It is an important aspect of democratic engagement that enhances decision-making and informed participation in news, digital spaces, and public discourse.”

A girl student, Pallavi Kumari, believes that media literacy matters because it teaches people to distinguish between what is real and what is not. She further adds that it shields audiences from false information, clears their minds, and helps in making better life decisions.

Conclusion

With the widespread expansion of media and the growing dominance of digital platforms, mere knowledge of reading and writing can no longer be termed literacy. In the electronic and digital era, the definition of literacy must evolve for the welfare of society at large.

Literate, well-informed, and educated individuals, under this new definition of literacy, can make logical and cognitive decisions in their own interest as well as for the benefit of society.

Reference: 1. Britannica

2. Opinion of Mass Media students

From: Rajeev Kumar

Mass Media Faculty

BA (JMC) department, IMPACT