

# The awareness of Media literacy and Media education among the users of University library in India: a Case study

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## Abstract

*Information literacy is a combination of related concepts of which media literacy is an important one. It deals with the skill development required to understand and critically analyse the messages sent via different media, print and non-print with its constructive and destructive implications. Countries have developed and are developing on this. Media education aims at teaching and learning about media aiming to develop young people's critical and creative abilities. A case study shows the awareness about media literacy and the current trend in the usage of the media of information for satisfying information requirements among the library and information science students of the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Calcutta.*

**Keywords:** Media literacy, media education, Information and communication technology.

**1. Introduction:** With the advent of radio and the film in the early twentieth century, the term 'media literacy' came to the forefront in the globe. It has a great impact on society and helps the people to uplift the necessary skills to recognise, collect, organise and critically analyse the content that are sent and received by various media like print media, non-print media (i.e., radio, television, films) and the internet. In addition, media literacy has been focused on wider extent; indicate the significance to the present media. It is also called as 'future lives' of our future citizens as they are the rising sun in media. Media (literacy) education is the process that will induce to the media literacy ability in the present information society. With the fusion of information technology/ information and communication technology (IT/ICT) the application and involvement of media has changed from print to the non-print or any virtual form. Today, the arrival of internet and its connectivity has made it easier to overcome the physical and geographical barriers and help to access right information ant right time. Likewise, in this era Indian society has undergone a conveyance over print form to a virtual or electronic form. Further, these transitions and the explosion of information communication have

seen the society changing its features from media scarcity to media abundance. This article also illustrates the objectives, scope and coverage along with a case study (survey questionnaire) that enumerates how the future citizen of our country acquainted with the term media literacy and awareness on media education.

**2. Scope & coverage of the study:** 50 students of the department of library and information science, University of Calcutta were randomly selected from the MLib.Isc second and fourth semester and the fifth semester of the 5 years Integrated MLib.Isc course for the survey to find out the level of knowledge about media literacy and media education. It was also aimed to find out what role media literacy and media education plays among the students as far as the usage of different Medias of information is concerned.

**3. Objectives:** There are various objectives which were examined during survey. A list of typical objectives is given below:

1. To know the actual awareness on media literacy among the users of university library.
2. To review the actual usage of information through different media.
3. To observe about the knowledge of the users and also consider their satisfaction on the collection of library collection.

**4. Review of Literature:** There are various studies and assessment on media literacy. However, it as an umbrella term and have the ability to comprehend, analyse and create images in a variety of media in order to communicate effectively and efficient. According to European commission (2007) media literacy, that has been work with digital world and is the key concept for our citizens better recognise the cultural and economic aspect of media. Likewise, Patricia Aufderheide (1992) defined it as a movement used to produce and understand the culture of images, sounds and words <sup>1</sup>. B Duncan (2006) cited the definition given by Ontario Association for Media Literacy (AML) on media literacy and its educational aspects. It is the literacy that helps to understand, enjoyment the media of work and also helps to produce the media products <sup>4</sup>. A.G. Gutiérrez Martín and A. Hottmann (2006) enumerated the skills and knowledge essential to create various media products and understanding, organised these products in a proper manner <sup>7</sup>. P Mihailidis and R. E. Hiebert (2005) described the application of media literacy to higher education <sup>12</sup>. In addition, R. Hobbs (2007) illustrated the relationship between the media literacy skills and print literacy skills <sup>8</sup>. G. Schwarz (2005) identified media literacy and media education that has a close impact with mass media i.e. radio, television on schooling and people's daily life <sup>15</sup>. G. Cappello, D. Felini and R. Hobbs (2011) postulated the impact of media literacy with social environment and also maintain a balance between protection and

empowerment with society<sup>3</sup>. S. Livingstone, E. Van Couvering and N. Thumin (2004) explained three purposes of implementing information literacy and these are democracy, knowledge economy and lifelong learning<sup>11</sup>. R. Kubey (1998) indicated the recent developments of media literacy and now it is being mandated and taught in many countries in the globe<sup>9</sup>. According to S. S. Lim and Nekmat E (2008) described the media literacy program, practices in formal or information education in India and its associates Asian countries<sup>10</sup>. J. A. Brown (1998) inclined the concept of media literacy that deals with many things to many people. The term media literacy has also indicated the ability to analyze and use the literature exhaustively and pin-pointed<sup>2</sup>. Likewise, W. J. Potter (2004) pointed about the good knowledge structure that has built by media literacy and it was also depicted media literacy as the set of competencies of people in order to achieve the meaning of the message we encounter<sup>13</sup>. J. E. Rosenbaum, Beentjes J. W. J, and Konig R. P. (2008) depicted media literacy helps in the scatter of scientific knowledge about media or media education in our society<sup>14</sup>. R.L Duran, Yousman B., Walsh K.M., and Longshore M.A. (2008) has given an approach that a media literate person must have consensus of media consumption and the person who is media literate should knowledgeable of the political economy of the media<sup>5</sup>.

**5. Methodology:** The population of the study was students of Library and Information science, University of Calcutta. The data were collected by means of a questionnaire having close-type questions and that was distributed among these members. For instance, collected data were then organised into a tabular form. The questionnaire included the use of print, non-print media, usage of information and their satisfaction about database collection. The students or the users have long observed that there are major gaps in accessing their skills. Generally, there is a perception that some students know very little, or nothing at all, about basic media research. The goal of this survey is to verify whether these impressions have validity and to determine whether students entering the graduate or post-graduate courses have the ability to retrieve process and evaluate information.

## **6. Are we media literates and use the different Media of information knowingly and how much are we information satisfied? A case study**

In a survey conducted among 50 students of the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Calcutta, to find out how much the future library and information science professionals are aware of the concept of media literacy. At the present age of fast moving life where time is short, it was also attempted to find out how much popularity the old print media holds in comparison to the non-print media or the humans as media of information. It was also attempted to find out whether the media literate persons are in a better position in using the various Medias of

information than the media illiterates or the level of knowledge about media literacy is same for the both. It was also attempted to find out whether the usage of the available Medias of information satisfies the information requirements of the users. The entire study was conducted on the basis of the usage of the different Medias of information and their sub-formats in the Central Library, University of Calcutta. The results that were uplifted are interesting to note and on its basis certain conclusions were drawn on certain aspects which provided an overall picture of the targeted aim of the survey.

### 6.1 Media literacy: It's awareness

Table 1: awareness about the concept media literacy (in %)

| Parameters                  | yes | no |
|-----------------------------|-----|----|
| Heard about media literacy  | 92  | 8  |
| Knows the concept correctly | 76  | 24 |

From the data derived it is eminent that the majority of the users have heard about the term media literacy. It can be therefore said that the topic is either a part of the course curriculum or that respondents have come across it somewhere else. But it is quite unfortunate that they are not aware of the correct meaning of the concept as almost 24% of the known, knows it wrong. It is said that even if one person of a group of people aware of anything has a wrong conception, then the entire process of knowing it becomes a failure. Hence this misconception about media literacy must be rectified for a better future prospect.

### 6.2 Media usage: General purpose and in university library

Table 2: media usage (in %)

| Parameters         | Print | Non-print | Human | Institutional |
|--------------------|-------|-----------|-------|---------------|
| General purpose    | 34    | 28        | 21    | 17            |
| University library | 80    | 16        | 4     | -             |

As far as the usage of different Medias of information is concerned, knowledge about 'media literacy' is not important. The maximum proportion of the users is still inclined towards the use of the

print media for gathering information; for the day to day life as well as at the university library. Non-print media accounts for the second largest media of information retrieval source.

### 6.3 Mostly used and proper representation of information in various formats of print media

Table 3: usage and information representation (in %)

| Parameters            | Textbooks | Reference books | Journals | Newspapers | All of these |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------|----------|------------|--------------|
| Mostly used           | 80        | 16              | 4        | -          | -            |
| Proper representation | 8         | 28              | 8        | -          | 56           |

Coming to the print media, then it was found that textbooks account for the maximum usage in the university library. However to the contrary, only 8% feel that the information is properly represented in it. However 56% agree that information is properly represented in all the mentioned print forms when newspapers are not at all read in the library? This self contradiction of the respondents indicates that the lack of proper media literacy has created confusion among the respondents in the usage of the different Medias of information.

### 6.4 Print media: satisfaction with the present collection and scope for improvement with the available print media

Table 4: satisfaction and improvement (in %)

| Parameters            | Yes | No |
|-----------------------|-----|----|
| Current satisfaction  | 52  | 48 |
| Scope for improvement | 72  | 28 |

The level of satisfaction among the users with the present print media collection in the university library is almost balanced. However a majority has ‘voted for’ the scope of improvement. Thus it may be said that the lack of a better collection has barred almost half of the respondents to derive the level of satisfaction of use in the university library.

### 6.5 Mostly used non-print media

Table 5: non-print media use (in %)

| Parameters | Computer | CD's /DVD's | A-v | Not used |
|------------|----------|-------------|-----|----------|
| Usage      | 88       | 4           | -   | 8        |

Of the non-print Medias available to get information, computers account for the maximum usage. It is quite normal and expected that this type will account for the major share in the overall usage. However there are respondents who do not use the non-print media at all in the university library. Here lies the option for improving the scenario.

### 6.6 Internet usages

Table 6: internet usage (in %) per week

| Parameters     | Less than an hour | 2-10 hours | 10-20 hours | More than 20 hours |
|----------------|-------------------|------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Internet usage | 4                 | 84         | 8           | 4                  |

Of the respondents who use the non-print media, internet is the major point of attraction. It literally connects the whole world in a click. In the library, the maximum average usage of the internet is 2-10 hours a week. It gives an indication that the respondents at least use the internet for an hour a day. Thus non-print media is daily used by all.

### 6.7 Information providing scholarly databases used

Table 7: scholarly database usage (in %)

| Parameters    | Yes | No |
|---------------|-----|----|
| Whether used? | 58  | 42 |

It may so seem from the data derived that internet is daily used, however the scholarly databases are not used by all the users surfing the internet. It gives a few conclusions; either the databases are difficult to operate or they are not fulfilling the needs of the respondents. If so, then this media must be learned, both by the users and the persons selecting the content so as to make 100% utilisation of the available resources. It may also happen that the non-users are not interested in these scholarly contents.

### 6.8 Mostly used non-print forms

Table 8: mostly used non-print forms (in %)

| Parameters | E-books | E-journals | E-indexes | Citation databases |
|------------|---------|------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Usage      | 32      | 60         | 4         | 4                  |

As seen from the data derived, maximum use of the non-print forms holds for the e-journals. The reasons for this conclusion are two; firstly most of the used and quality content journals are now available only online and secondly search facility is easier in the online format. The share of books is quite low mainly because it is difficult to read a book on the screen.

### 6.91 Print and non-print media: fulfilment of information requirement

Table 9.1: fulfilling information requirement (in %)

| Parameters      | 10-20% | 21-40% | 41-60% | More than 60% |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|
| Print media     | -      | 24     | 20     | 56            |
| Non-print media | 4      | 24     | 24     | 48            |

This parameter is quite balanced where it is indicated that 56% of the respondents get more than 60% of their information when it comes to using print media whereas 48% of the respondents get more than 60% of their information when it comes to using the non-print media. Hence it can be concluded that in the present scenario, print media is being put in front of a big challenge as far as the amount of fulfilment of information requirement is concerned.

### 6.92 Satisfaction with the present library collections and library operations

Table 9.2: satisfaction with library collections and operations (in %)

| Parameters                | Yes | No |
|---------------------------|-----|----|
| Whether satisfied or not? | 40  | 60 |

It is clear from the response got that most of the respondents do not know about what media literacy actually mean. They do not use all the Medias and their various forms. Yet majority of them are not satisfied with the library collections and operations. This indicates a lacking on the part of the respondents; they have not understood the basics of the different medias and the information represented in them and the skills to use them neither the educators have properly presented the entire concept in front of the respondents so that they can use it properly with a sound understanding of what they are using.

### 6.93 Comparison of multiple aspects of print and non-print media of information

Table 9.3: multi-aspect comparison (in %)

| Parameters                         | Print | Non-print | Human | All of these |
|------------------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|--------------|
| Ease of usage                      | 40    | 60        | -     | -            |
| Used when all medias available     | 68    | 32        | -     | -            |
| Better media of information        | 12    | 20        | -     | 68           |
| Preferred media of information     | 26    | 31        | 3     | 40           |
| Importance in the present scenario | 16    | 84        | -     | -            |

There were certain related aspects of print and non-print media which brought out certain results. According to the easiness of usage most of the respondents favoured non-print media. It is so may be because the search facilities and the exact content retrieval is much easier. However the respondents favoured to choose print media even when all the different available Medias of information were available at one place. Majority thinks that all the Medias of information are equally good; however human media is not at all used by them. It shows that the users are not aware of the skills required to use the Medias of information. Respondents prefer to use all the Medias of information with individual importance given to the print and non-print media as and when they are available. Whatever may the usage pattern or amount be, non-print media is of the utmost importance in the present scenario. It is evident that all the proliferated aspects are related in nature; however the lack of proper knowledge about media and its use and understanding has barred them from the maximum utilization of all the Medias available.

#### 6.94 Multi-aspects of human component as media of information

Table 9.4: multi-aspect comparison (in %)

| Parameters                          | Yes | No | Not aware about it |
|-------------------------------------|-----|----|--------------------|
| Information kiosk in library        | 12  | 72 | 16                 |
| Service from reference librarian    | 72  | 28 | -                  |
| Satisfied with reference service    | 68  | 32 | -                  |
| Regular seminar attendance          | 76  | 24 | -                  |
| Regular group discussion attendance | 40  | 60 | -                  |
| Regular workshop attendance         | 32  | 68 | -                  |
| Regular class lecture attendance    | 80  | 20 | -                  |

Humans also act as good Medias of information. But in the university library the scenario is a bit different. The presence of tan information kiosk is not clear from the response received. Even though a large portion of the respondents take the service of the reference librarian, there is a fair level of dissatisfaction about the service given. It may either be a lacking on the service providers end or the users are not skilful enough to extract the necessary elements they need. However it was a positive angle of viewpoint when it came to seminar and class lectures which majority of the respondents attend. However group discussions and workshops are of not much importance to the majority. It gives one straight conclusion; the potential human media remains unexploited to its actual potentiality mainly due to lack of the skills to use them.

### 6.95 Media of communication with the library

Table 9.5: library communication (in %)

| Parameters     | Telephone | E-mail/ Sms | Personal visit | By post |
|----------------|-----------|-------------|----------------|---------|
| Preferred mode | -         | 20          | 80             | -       |

Majority has given consent to personal visit to the library as the mode of communication; whereby knowingly or unknowingly respondents themselves act as human media. The non-print form is also used. However print mode is not at all preferred by the users.

### 6.96 Opinion about the inclusion of new formats as information source

Table 9.6: inclusion of new formats (in %)

| Parameters    | Yes | No |
|---------------|-----|----|
| Opinion given | 100 | 0  |

In this regard all the respondents feel that mew formats of all the modes of information must be included in the library collection. It means that even those who are satisfied with the present library collections and operations still want the unavailable forms to be at their hands.

### 6.97 The new formats which has been given preference for inclusion

Table 9.7: preference for the formats for inclusion (in %)

| Parameters    | Audio | Visual | Audio-visual | Magazines | Booklets |
|---------------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|----------|
| Opinion given | 0     | 0      | 40           | 52        | 8        |

Almost 50% of the respondents want the inclusion of print media (magazines and booklets) while the rest want to see non-print media (audio-visual) in the library. It gives a clear indication that even in today's ICT sloganeered world, print media is still very much in demand.

## 7. Analysis & Findings

From the above cited data as received from the respondents it is prominent that with their individual advantages and disadvantages, both the print and non-print media are of equal importance, subject to the conditions of use, requirements to be fulfilled and availability in the university library. Human media is also of importance and usage in the respective fields of concern. The use is not determined by the factor "media literacy"; rather proper utilisation, necessary information gathering, maximum utilisation of the medias and proper understanding and critical analysis of the messages deciphered gets hampered because of being "media illiterate". Hence media literacy is important at any stage and for anyone to derive information rightly. Thus we are media literate to a great extent; but our interpretation and understanding of media is incorrect and we are not at all media educated or else contradictory responses would not have come on two related aspects of the same element of concern.

## 8. Conclusion

It may be concluded that media literacy and media education are very much related and required in today's life and proper understanding of these concepts are very much necessary in order to use the different media of information, pin pointedly get the required information, decipher and understand it, analyse it and critically examine it for the optimum utilization. For these things is necessary to be media literate. Media literacy and media education is to be made an integral part of the course curricula so that a theoretical and practical education is possible. A lack of it has made people get a wrong understanding of all the Medias of information as understood from the case study. Thus education must not be confined to the traditional contents; but also to the newer concepts of emerging fields of study.

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