

Proceedings of the National Seminar –
Media Literacy in the Age of Convergence

Organized by

Mass Communication and Journalism Department, Tezpur University, Assam,

Seminar Director – Prof. Abhijit Bora,

Dates January 30, 31, 2017, Seminar
Director – Prof. Abhijit Bora,



Photo: Inauguration of the event and photo exhibition

Inaugural Programme :

The national seminar on the theme “Media Literacy in the age Convergence” was inaugurated by the Hon’ble Vice Chancellor of Tezpur University, Prof. MK Chaudhury at 9. 30 a. m. on 30th January at the Screening Hall of the Department. The HoD-cum-convener of the seminar Prof. Abhijit Bora initially welcomed the guests and participants to the programme and explained very briefly about the theme of the seminar to familiarize the participants and invited guests.

Following this the Vice Chancellor spoke for about half an hour about the relevance of the topic in today’s world which was increasing even more every passing day. He also emphasized upon the growing significance and need for making the population of the world ‘media literate’ so that people were able to enjoy the benefits of mass media contents to the proper extent and objectives.

This was followed by the keynote address delivered by eminent communication scholar Prof. Biswajit Das, Director of the Centre for Culture, Media and Governance (CCMG), Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi on the topic

'Media Literacy in the age of Convergence : Challenges and Prospects'. In his illuminating speech Prof. Das traced the evolution of the concept of media literacy from the earliest times to the present period in a smooth flowing trajectory which was lucidly explained and understood by all the participants. The keynote speaker spoke about the various conventions, developments, nuances and issues related directly and indirectly to the concept and how all these things have shaped the discipline till the present era. Prof. Das also spoke about the future prospects of the domain as well as proposing ways and means for increasing the media literacy of the people in general. More so for the young generations as 'catch them young is the mantra nowadays.'

The inauguration programme came to an end with a few words of Prof. Das, Dean, Humanities and Social Sciences School and vote of thanks delivered to the participants.

First Technical Session :

The first technical session of the seminar started at 11.30 a. m. with Prof. Ram Mohan Pathak, Director of Madam Mohan Malaviya Institute of Hindi Journalism chairing the programme. Prof. Pathak also spoke briefly about the status of 'Media Literacy in the Indian languages print media. The scholar illuminated the participants with his deep insight into the actual scenario prevailing in the language print media of the country. All the three technical sessions were designed in the way to have a brief lecture session by a prominent communication scholar prior to chairing the session by the same scholar.

This was followed by the much-awaited and lively session of paper presentations by participants.

The first scholar Ms Debarati Dhar, a Ph D scholar of Burdwan University on the topic 'Coping with Digital Literacy – a study of aged population in select areas of Kolkata. The presenter examined the crucial issue of the aged population of the country being forced to come to terms with digital literacy because of various factors including loneliness for children out of home for professional purpose among others. In a well-researched paper the scholar has been able to make an authentic analysis of the issue at hand. The paper is part of the scholar's Ph D studies topic.

The next paper threw some important light on the theme by Dr Chintamani Rout, Associate Professor and Head of Law Department of North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong. The paper titled 'Media – the fourth pillar of democracy' shed light significance of freedom of the press and media literacy proceeding side-by-side for a better life of the society at large. It was interesting to look at the theme of the seminar from the legal point of view which is highly important and necessary.

Ph D scholar of Central University of Odisha, Mr Aniruddha Jena in his paper 'A study on WHY and HOW of Media Studies as an academic discipline' primarily focused on the significance and relevance of a basic level of media education for all people concerned for maintaining a balance in the social relationship in general. The scholar has been able to successfully emphasize upon the topic establishing the arguments with adequate justification.

Another Ph D scholar of KK Handiqui State open University of Guwahati, Assam – Ms Gayatri Baruah in her thesis ‘The impact of media literacy on school children of the Hill Tiwa tribe of Assam’ researched and analyzed in-depth the impact of media on the school children of this tribe of the state which was quite illuminating and enlightening as there has not been any such studies in this direction. It has also looked into the traditional practices of this tribal community connecting them to the judicious fusion of modern and traditional media activities.

Mr Debajit Borah, Ph D scholar from Jawaharlal Nehru University in his paper ‘Media literacy and digital politics : The performance of active citizenship’ reflects on the challenges of expanding media literacy which is an utmost need of the society. Taking examples from the current political scenario he has analyzed the issue from socio-political points of view and arriving at possible solutions to help the adverse situation of too much media contents confusing the masses.

At the end of the presentations, a detailed question answer session followed from all participants which lasted for about an hour of lively discussions about various observations, issues of relevance to the papers presented in the session.

Second Technical Session :

The second Technical Session of the first day began at 2 p. m. with Prof. B Balaswamy of Mass Communication Department of Osmania University in the chair. In his short speech, Prof. Balaswamy dwelt at length upon the title ‘Media literacy in the present day communication context’ in which he spoke about the information explosion and media revolution being witnessed by the present generation that was unthinkable even a decade ago. He said that this unprecedented speed of media contents development needed to be produced and presented to the people in a balanced judiciously-proportionate manner so that it did not disturb the general media ecology of the society as a whole.

A total of five papers were presented in this session. The themes of the papers included Critical perspectives on the significance of media literacy components in media education, media literacy for school children and its impact on them, media literacy contents in syllabi of PG programmes of media and communication studies in the state, digital media literacy among college students etc. The range of the themes of session were highly-varied and wider demanding an in-depth and interesting mix of aspects of the media literacy concept for the human society across the world.

Mr Alakesh Das from Institute of Distance and Open Learning, Gauhati University in his paper spoke on the issue of the urgent need of incorporating media literacy in the syllabus of PG programmes of media and communication studies in the country as it was a requirement for orienting the future citizens of the country towards a balanced usage of media contents.

Mr Neelatphal Chanda, Ph D scholar of Assam University in his paper deliberated upon the critical perspectives on the significance of media literacy its impact on them.

Ms Kumari Pallavi, Ph D scholar of Tezpur University (MCJ Dept.) discussed about the importance of inculcating media literacy in the minds of the underdeveloped communities like the Tharu community which is also her Ph d research area.

One highlight of this session was a joint paper by Mr Deepjyoti Bhattacharjee and Ms Sukanya Mukherjee, both Undergraduate students in the Integrated MA in English Literature of Tezpur University. They have highlighted on the issue of ‘digital media literacy’ among college students which has been assuming a major importance over the years now.

Ms Madhusmita Boruah, Ph D scholar of MCJ Dept., TU, emphasized upon the aspect of media literacy and developing critical thinking for empowering democratic public sphere.

Ms Swikrita Dowerah, Ph D scholar of TU discussed about creative memories and censorship : media literacy as an alternative. She focused on the cultural aspects of the theme more as her Ph D topic is also in this direction.

Mr Raj Kiran Doley, Ph D scholar, TU in his paper put the focus mainly on media literacy linked to health communication in the state of Assam. This was an interesting and welcome topic as this aspect of communication is of a major relevance these days.

Dr Pratiham Pallai, from Education Department of TU in her paper discussed threadbare on the issue of media literacy and value education which was a fresh insight into the area.

The scholars have been able to establish and strongly present their arguments on the basis of their research findings which properly reiterated their studies’ findings in a reasonable way.

The question-answer session following the presentation was actively participated by all those present – both presenters as well as non-presenting ones. In-depth insight into the topics and presentations and their arguments were expressed which opened up further vistas of scholarly engagement for all participants.

Third Technical Session :

The Third Technical session of the seminar was held from 10 a. m. on the second day – January 31st. This session was chaired by eminent former journalist (South Asia Correspondent of The New York Times, USA) and Director, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, New Delhi and former Director of Centre for North-East Studies of Jamia Millia Islamia, Prof. Sanjoy Hazarika. Dr Hazarika made a brief deliberation on the topic ‘Power, prejudice and media : Balancing digital literacy and responsibility’. The scholar highlighted the issues of power politics, prejudice in practice in some portion of the mass media and how the incumbents needed to take up the challenge of balancing the various developments taking place demanding utmost attention to their requirements and prejudices from time-to-time. He has compared the media worlds of the West primarily the Americas with that of Asian, mainly Indian situation and drew parallels including merits and demerits of both the systems. Being a man from field experience to have embarked on the academics at a higher level his speech was highly enlightening infused with examples from the real world.

The topics of presentation in the session embraced a wide range of issues including case studies method in academic learning, contouring media with a niche for Indian judicare scenario, critical approach to re-define information literacy etc.

Ms RD Padmavathy and Shraddhanjali Pradhan of Education Department of TU presented their paper on critical approach to re-define information literacy with a view of imparting education to the upcoming youths of the country.

Dr Runumi Das of MBA Dept., TU in her paper discussed in details about infotainment being at the crossroads – leading to reflective thinkers. It discussed how infotainment can also be utilized as a tool for imparting media literacy skills to the consumers of media contents.

Dr Sashapra Chkrawarty of Education Dept., TU in her joint paper discussed different angles of value education in this direction.

Ms Ipsita Barat of St Xavier's College, Kolkata in her paper discussed the politics of media ownership in the country with possible intervention in the way of expanding the horizon of media literacy for vested interests.

Ms Dakter esse, Ph D scholar of TU in her paper deliberated upon the emerging public spheres with social media politics as a double-edged sword and its impact on media literacy as a whole.

Another participant Mr Sourav Gupta of CJMC, Odisha Central University discussed various aspects of the Bengali new wave cinema and potential links to media literacy.

The last participant of this session Mr Shivajyoti Das Baruah, Ph D scholar of Gauhati University in his paper discussed at length about the growing influence of social, participatory media with reference to Arab Spring and Anna Hazare movement and their possible links to the media literacy aspects.

He discussions came to an end with the question and answer session which was lively one with majority of the participants and non-presenters also taking active part in it. The chair of the session also shared his valuable insights into the papers presented.

The valedictory session of the seminar was also chaired by Prof. Hazarika who had spoken a few words on the significance of media literacy in the present age with an ever-increasing significance that needed to be sustained for the foreseeable future. Prof. Hazarika urged upon the future media personnel for keeping the standards of the profession high under any circumstances so that peoples' trust in it would never diminish even by a bit.

The certificates were also distributed by several dignitaries including Prof. Hazarika.

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Contribution of the National Seminar Towards expansion of knowledge in the relevant field

Seminar topic - Media Literacy in the Age of Convergence

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Media literacy – the emerging concept of mass communication and media studies domain has been growing in significance with each passing day because of the ‘information revolution’ that the masses across the world are going through over the last about a decade or so. In simple words, it is the literacy about the media contents by which one can understand which messages or information is correct or which one is incorrect. Further, if there is any hidden agenda or vested interest behind each and every media content that is published or broadcast in any of the media right from conventional ones to new media.

This main focus of this seminar was to initiate a dialogue of like-minded scholars from various areas of academic studies and field practitioners to discuss at length about the different aspects of the domain. The idea has been to contribute towards enhancing the knowledge level of the scholars and practitioners involved in the area. The seminar can be found to have been successful in bringing together scholars from different fields including Education, Literature, Law, management etc. to have deliberated about various issues and aspects and sharing of their knowledge for the benefit of the domain to move forward.

The speeches from experts, participants’ discussions, questions and answers all have contributed to expanding the horizon of the theoretical as well as practical aspects of the domain of media literacy. More so in the age of convergence as it is the need of the day today. The papers presented in the seminar have focused on a wide range of subjects related directly and also indirectly to this subject so that all related areas of the domain got represented in it.

More importantly, the seminar has set the tone for a series of future dialogues in this direction as this is being a dynamic subject of study is slated to evolve in the near and distant future. In a nutshell, the deliberations have helped in advancing the already-existing knowledge level of the domain and at the same time setting the standard for future discourses in this regard.

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Few words about the Seminar :

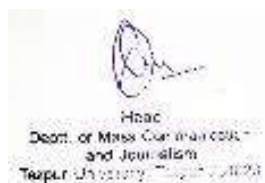
Media Literacy is the ability of being able to identify the correctness of media contents or messages and thereby knowing if they are circulated with any hidden agenda or vested interests etc. The ongoing media revolution – right from conventional mass media to new media has brought in a situation in which an average citizen is subject to lakhs of messages every second of the day or night. While majority of them do not have any relevance for peoples' life at individual level, yet many a times masses seem to be effected by them without any valid reason. Thus, under such human beings need to circumstances

confront all those messages in the field of news and entertainment which underlines the express need for finding out the background of the messages so that they can't influence the people in a unproductive way. This is why media literacy is the need of the hour. More so at the age of convergence when all media are congregating inot one single platform with the advent of the internet and digital media across the world. As the human society is becoming more of a knowledge society or wired community in the situation of a global village as Marshal McLuhan has said several decades ago, a detailed study of this domain is becoming all the more important and relevant. This shall allow the humankind to live a better life with at least a basic semblance of media literacy. The idea is to utilize the media as the fourth pillar of an informed democratic country like India.

A concept primarily developed in the Western media theoretical background, it is constantly gaining a steady ground over all other schools of media theories and practices because of its growing importance for the humankind. As the concept is still in a somewhat nascent stage in the Indian context, this seminar is a humble approach for popularizing the same in this country's context. Also thereby establish a chain of dialogues for future deliberations in this direction.

The various sub themes of the seminar that includes media literacy for print, electronic and new media, information literacy, paid news, convergent platforms, school children among others would be highly relevant ones in the direction. This is the main and underlying purpose for organizing the seminar.

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Registration of participants for National Seminar on Media Literacy (30-31st Jan, 2017)

Sl No	Name	Designation, Institution	Contact (mobile phone / e mail id)	Paper title	Signature with date
1.	Rajkiran Doley	Ph.D Research Scholar Dept of M.C.J, T.U	9707124972	Media and Literacy and Health Awareness: A Case Study on Open Defecation in Nafamukhies of Sonitpur district.	<i>R. Doley</i>
2.	DR. CHANDAN KR. GOSWAMI (cash)	Asst. Professor, Dept. of Communication & Journalism Gauhati University.	9854072096		<i>Chandan</i>
3.	Ratul Chandra Nath	Technical Officer, Dept. of M.C.J, TU	9435181447 ratul@tezu.ernet.in		<i>Ratul</i>
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Photo: Registration of participants for National seminar on Media literacy in the age of convergence

		North-Eastern Hill University (A Central University), Shillong-793022			
6.	Alakesh Das <i>Cash</i>	Assistant Professor, Mass Communication GU IDOL & Administrative Supervisor, Radio Luit, GU	alakeshdas.153@gmail.com	Media Literacy Content in the Syllabi of the PG Programmes of Media and Communication Studies in India	<i>Alakesh</i> 30/1/2017
7.	Bronson Korad <i>(Participant only)</i>	<i>Sankardeva Mahavidyalaya (Lecturer)</i>	bronsonkann@gmail.com	Media Literacy for School Children and its Significance and Impact on them	<i>Bronson</i>
8.	Neelatphal Chanda	Ph.D Scholar Department of Mass Communication Assam University (Central University), Silchar	9401752968 neelatphalchanda48@gmail.com	Critical Perspectives on the Significance of Media Literacy Components in Media Education	<i>Neelatphal</i> 30/1/17
9.	Rituparna Bhattacharjee	Assistant Professor N.E.F Law College Guwahati, Assam	9890576189 rituubhatt@gmail.com	Contouring Media: The Niche of Indian Judicature	<i>Rituparna</i>
10.	Anupa Lahkar Goswami	Asst. Professor, Department of Communication and Journalism,	anupalahkar@gmail.com	Decoding media information from new media	<i>Anupa</i>
11.	Moon Moon Das	Student, GU	moonmoondas@yahoo.com	Media Literacy for School Children	<i>Moon</i>
12.	Gayatri Baruah	Ph.D Research Scholar, Department of Mass Communication K.K. Handiqui State Open University	8721075872 gayatribaruah84@gmail.com	The impact of Media literacy in school children of the Hill Tiwa Tribe of Assam	<i>Gayatri</i> 30/1/2017
13.	Debarati Dhar	UGC- NET (SRF) PhD Scholar	+91-9477022154	Coping with Digital Literacy: A	<i>Debarati</i> 30/1/2017

2

Head
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