

MCJ Department organizes national-level seminar on :

Media Literacy in the Age of Convergence

The Department of Mass Communication & Journalism of Tezpur University, Assam is happy to invite all concerned to participate in the national-level seminar on the above theme on January 30 and 31st, 2017. Persons from academics, field practitioners and all others with an interest in the theme and the broad sub themes are welcome to take part in the deliberations for an enriching experience in due course of time.

INTRODUCTION :

The ongoing media revolution has brought in a situation in which an average human being is subject to thousands of media messages every moment of one's life. And majority of them with hardly any relevance at all. In such circumstances of being bombarded with information in the form of news, entertainment, infotainment etc. human beings need to confront a serious question. That is, how do we sift through such a sea of information or messages of all imaginable kinds and decide to take cognizance of only those which one may feel is relevant for his or her life at all.

The term 'media literacy' has a very significant role in the 21st century's knowledge society in which it fosters development of a vigorous public sphere. It is the holistic approach to utilize media as the fourth pillar of an informed democratic country like India.

However, in an era when information has become packaged commodities, media literacy helps to develop the skills to protect from the harmful effect of media content in the society. The media and culture theorists of communication research argue that media can influence the accessibility and quality of information we use in our day-to-day life while interacting with the social world. In such a situation it is important to inculcate the cognitive skills to improve our control over media in creating meaning.

In a democratic country like India, it is important to develop strong public opinion free from the influence of politicized and corporatized

media content. The increasing growth rate of media and entertainment industry in India reflects enormous changes in creation of media content, access to media and consumption during the period. This was 12.8% in 2015 over 2014 as reported by the Federation of Indian Chamber of commerce and Industry (FICCI), 2016.

According to the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE), USA media literacy is “the ability to Access, Analyze, Evaluate, and Communicate information in a variety of forms”. Here, the term “access” refers to both physical accesses to media and to the content of the media and “ability” means both cognitive and practical skills in using media.

Media literacy equips people with competencies to execute the fundamental human rights, right to freedom of opinion and expression as declared by the Article 19 of the United Nation’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To emphasize on media literacy UNESCO prepared a declaration on media education which argued that media are an increasingly significant and powerful force in society and as such a coherent and systematic form of education about media must be prerequisite of citizenship.

Our concern here is how the masses in general can develop a sense of media literacy to a basic minimum level. This category of people includes those who may not have had an opportunity to study a course or programme mass media or communication including those who did have the opportunity but could not develop such a sense at all.

WHY MEDIA LITERACY :

The question may arise why is there a need for media literacy at all. Because, most of the media contents cutting across all media including new media are constructed with a specific purpose. This purposes may range from those highly commercial ones intent on selling something to people to those with a hidden agenda like that of

politically partial messages, all kinds of propaganda spreading amongst the unsuspecting audience.

The question assumes much more relevance particularly after the advent of the phenomenon called ‘paid news’ which has become an established norm for a majority of the media and communication entities of the country.

The need of the hour is to create a sense of understanding how media messages or contents might influence ourselves to become passive users of media messages even at the peril of being fully driven by them in each and every decision-making effort of our life – both in private and public.

Further, in the seminar efforts would be on for identifying various inherent aspects of media literacy in the different types of media so that common grounds can be arrived at for preparing an all-inclusive approach for the upcoming generations.

The sub themes are ---

- 1) Media literacy for print media, television, radio, films
- 2) Media literacy content in the syllabi of PG programmes of media and communication studies
- 3) Digital media literacy
- 4) Information literacy
- 5) Paid news syndrome and media literacy
- 6) Media literacy for the new media platform
- 7) Media literacy for the convergent media platform
- 8) Media literacy for school children

This is not an exclusive list of sub themes. If any new aspects can be thought of that is relevant to the main theme, abstract submission is welcome for the purpose. The organizers are interested in a meaningful discussion of the theme and sub themes for arriving at a consensus about the steps to be taken for achieving the ultimate goal

of inculcating ‘media literacy’ among the youths and relevant population in the near and distant future.

EXPECTED OUTCOME :

It is expected that the seminar shall be able to provide new insights into the ground reality as well as future scope of media literacy as an emerging discipline in the country. This is comparatively a newer area of deliberation in the Asian continent and thus it is hoped that this kind of endeavours would usher in newer aspects of the discipline in the near and distant future and thereby enable us to become more enlightened in the field.

Besides, the combination of resource persons both from reputed and well-established field practitioners and academics should prove to be a judicious platform for deliberations in the different areas of the discipline which would be beneficial and fruitful for future generations.

Further, as the UNESCO has also envisions in its declaration, the convener and the organizing team would do its level best for making this a continuous process for understand the role and functions of media in democratic societies, critically evaluate media content in the light of media functions and engage with media for self-expression and democratic participation

XXX

Abstract / paper submission details :

Paper submission is solicited from persons from media industry, media academics, others with an interest in the field keeping it within the framework of the theme and sub themes mentioned above. The following points should be noted strictly --

- i) Abstracts must not be more than 300 – 400 words
- ii) Authors of only those abstracts declared suitable should submit their full paper,
- iii) Abstract should give an outline of the topic, methodology of arriving at conclusions etc. relevant points

- iv) Abstracts would be blind peer-reviewed for suitability
- v) Abstracts should be sent to these e mail ids -
abhijitbora71@rediffmail.com / abhijitsusi@gmail.com
- vi) Length of the full paper – provided abstract is found suitable – shall be limited to 5,000 words and should be follow APA style of writing with three to five keywords
- vii) Full papers would also be subject to blind peer review as a comprehensive volume is planned to be published from amongst the papers
- viii) The abstract should be mentioned again at the time of submitting the main paper
- ix) **In-absentia participation is not allowed and intending scholars need to be present and take part in the deliberations**

XXX

Accommodation : Accommodation can be arranged in TU guest house on payment basis by the person concerned on twin-sharing basis. Guest rate card is as follows --- Rs 800/- per room per day (Deluxe) for double occupancy and Rs 500/- per room per day for single occupancy. Hostel accommodation at Research Scholar's hostel may be arranged depending upon availability for which payment is about Rs 100/- per day.

Food : The participants would be provided with tea, snacks and lunch at the seminar venue and breakfast and dinner at guest house / hostel on both days of the programme

Participation fees : Rs 1,000/- for faculty members; Rs 500 for research scholars. Fees should be paid in the form of DD drawn in favour of Registrar, Tezpur University and maybe submitted at the time of registration. Participant's name and other details should be written at the back of the DD. However, a scanned copy of the same must be e mailed by December 31st, 2016.

Travel : Tezpur University is about 200 kilometres from Guwahati – the nearest major railhead and airport. Public buses are available to Tezpur for Rs 200/- per person and taxis are also available at the Guwahati Lokapriya Gopinath Bardolai airport. From Tezpur town to Tezpur University, bus services are available at regular interval from Assam State Transport Corporation depot in town till about 8.30 p. m.

Otherwise tempos, autorickshwas can also be hired. Participants would be expected to arrive at TU guest house by evening / afternoon of January 29th and leave by noon of February 1.

Travel subsidy : NO TRAVEL SUBSIDY is available for any participant and they are expected to arrange for the same on their own.

Important dates :

Abstract submission : September 30th, 2016

Abstract decision intimation : October 30th,

Paper submission last date : December 31st,

Registration : December 31st,

Seminar : January 30, 31, 2017

