Promoting Media Literacy in Schools: Crucial Aspect of Modern Education

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ABSTRACT

Today media has become an important part of everyone's life. Media helps us to provide important information. In today's era life cannot be imagined without media. Even the students are using media at a large scale. Students use media for different purposes. But it's very important for them to have knowledge of media literacy as wrong and misleading information is also available on media. They should be aware about the reliability of the concerned information available on media. They should be taught how to escape themselves from wrong information. They should be aware of media etiquettes. Media can change the life of the students in both directions. We cannot deny the need and importance of Media Literacy for the students. Because the wrong information or wrong media can result adversely for the students. We should teach them how to be responsible while using media.

Key words: Media Literacy, School Students, Media Awareness

Prologue:

Media is one of the most if not the most influential and indispensible component of human life. may be explicated as a means of communication i.e., Newspaper, TV, Radio, Internet etc., which have capability to influence the people at a large.Media is a broad term, and encircled different forms of means of communication. Media may be any form of communication channel, used to communicate information, idea, message and data. Essentially, media is the method by which messages are conveyed to the target audience.

When we take media as 'mass media' this is described in relation to forms of media that has ability to reach to mass audience at a time(such as newspapers and television and internet). Social media (includes social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. We use these to communicate the content amongst our connections on these platforms), Films, Online games, Books, Radio and Artificial intelligence devices are some other commonly forms of media:

What is literacy?

We can define'Literacy' as the capability of identifying, analysing, interpreting, understanding and communicating. Ability to read, write, speak and listen effectively are the important skills which are included in literacy.By the term Media literacy, we mean the ability to understandand how to respond appropriately to the information that is presented to us by different means of media. A conscious effort is needed to understand how these forms of media are being created and consumed.

Media Literacy:

When we talk about the word 'Media', newspaper, social media, electronic media comes to our mind. We are so much fenced in by the media that it has become an integral part of our life. As per research, we spend almost 6 to 8 hours of our day using various forms of media. But the question that arises is that how much actually we know about the basics of media or in other words, are we media literates?

It's good to use media for our different purposes but it's equally important to know the framework of media. It's necessary to have knowledge regarding how the mass media works. It is simplest meaning of Media Literacy. It is an approach to education which gives a structure to the user to analyse, evaluate, interpretand access to the messages that they are sending and receiving in various forms and are creating an understandingabout the role of media in our society as well as self-expressions required for responsiblecitizens of the nation. It's good and smart of us if we have the knowledge of what we are using and responding every day in our life. Similarly, knowledge is required by us about media including how the information is organized, how they are produced, their meaning and how they can be used wisely.

A media literate person can clearly explain the role of media in their lives. Media literacy provides different tools which help the users to analyse messages and offer opportunities to the users to widen their experience of media. It even provides help you to enhance your skills of creativityto express yourself on media platforms, like blogging or posting your views on social media. This assists you to critically analyse every message you read or come across, with a conscious mind and helps you to understand the real purpose of the message. Sometimes, Media literacy is considered as a path to show the negative side of media which includes media violence, cyberbullying, loss of privacy, sexualisation of children. Indeed, it helps children to know about the media and its uses in deep manner so as to protect themselves from media issues and take conscious decisions regarding ethical and safe consumption of media platforms. By helping kids and teens to become media literates, we can help them protecting them from pressurizing advertisements and traps of use of drugs, alcohol, unhealthy food and various criminal activities.

In nut shell, media literacy is not a medium to bash the media. Rather, it's a useful channel to promote correct and conscious use of media for children and teens which are worse effected by unethical issues occurring on media platforms. It's a way to tell the users to make the ethical use of media platforms and to encourage them to know about the things they are using in their lives.

Now it is necessary for the students to change misty attitude towards media. Hence, it has become necessaryto provide a basic course, formodellingtheabilityto know moreplentifuland practice-based models, based on the featuresand needs of the media according to the future students group (Park and Nam, 2007).

All the practices are included in Media literacy that permits us to access, evaluate, andto create or manipulatedifferent types of media. By Media literacy we mean the ability to identify different forms of media and understanding the nature of content they're sending and receiving. Children are taking of informationin a large amount from different sources, except the traditional media (TV, radio, newspapers, and magazines. There is a reason for creating a information, available on media.

Need of teaching Media Literacy to the Students:

Why there is need of teaching Media Literacy to the students? Why should they have proper knowledge of using media? Why they have need to be more careful while using media? All these questions can be answered with the help of following points:

- Media Literacy incorporates and furthers current didactics, which have main focus on child-centred approach of learning, the development of multiple intelligence, analysis and administration of information,not just the simple gathering of information.

- With the help of media literacy,the whole world can be brought intoa classroom, providingcontiguity and importance to the subjects e.g. Social science, English, Language, Health, Political science and the Fine Arts. It also helps inthe integration of subjects and interdisciplinary studies.

- Media literacy helps in encouraging and motivating the school students to ask question, understand, assess, and appreciate culture of media. Media literacyprovides help tothe students to become more active& engaged media users.

- The main concern of the modern society is about growing youth. Media Literacy engages the studentsinthe issues of real-world. It also helps current generation to assess them as an active citizen.

- Media education encourages the students to use multimedia tools creatively and critically. It also makes them aware towards the use of different media Applications

- Media literacy helps in growth and development of school students by expressing the relations between diverse cultures all over the world regarding music, Knowledge, eating habits, dressing style, art and drama.

- Media literacy provides help the school students to assess content provided bymediabytelling them how to compare thereality and imagination as they do compare between media violence and real-life violence.

Imortance of Media Literacy for school students:

Media Literacy helps to create a media-saturated world around the user. when the useris media literate, he/she will always askand answer two questions: First the intention of the sender or nature of the message and second, whois the creator?These two questions create the basis of media literacy.

Here the role of teachers is very important in helping the students in understanding the differences in outcomes of media, the information they receive and ethics for creating their own content on media platform. Now it has becomevery important for teachers to understand and learn how to teach media literacy to their students. We can understand the importance of Media Literacy for the students with the help of the following points:

To Create media responsibly: Media Literacy helps the students in recognizing their point of views, what they intendto express, how they need to express it, and understanding that their content have a positive impact is main requirement of effective communication.

- *Inidentifying the role of media in our life:* Fromthe gossips of the celebrity on magazine covers, media is telling us a lot, shapes our understanding about the world, and even makes our mine to act or think in certain ways.

- *To develop critical thinking:* As students can evaluatethe nature of media, theycan decide either the content makeany meaning or not, why this particular informationhas been involved, what is not involved and why, and what the main ideas are in the information.

- *To recognize thepoint of views of others:* Every sender has his/her own thinking. To Identify the point of view of an individual's point of view helps the school students to evaluate different perspectives. It also helps them to apply the information in the context of what they already have knowledge or think they have knowledge about.

- *Helps in becoming a conscious consumer of content and information:* Media literacy provides help to the students in learning how to decide either something is credible, reliable or not.

- *Helps in understanding the intention of the sender:* What is the intention of the sender of sending the message?Is this information is proper, is its intention is to change the mind of the receiver, or is it giving new ideas or information that they never knew? When studentsunderstandthe type of the impact something has?

When to educate media literacy?

The most important question arises is 'when to teach Media Literacy'? It's never too late to teach the child about media literacy.This is not so major for parents and teachers to teach the students either something is correct or wrong. Media literacy involvesputting some queries andtell them your opinions with examples. By backing the steps of media-literacy the students are allowedto have knowledge for themselves about the nature of the given media, why ithas been created, and their thinking about it? Teaching the students about media as one daylesson will not be working, it. For instance: parents and teachers can talk with school students with the help of media, they enjoy and interact with.

Role of Parents:

Parents should try to make media consumption as a non-passive activity. Parents can ask some basic questions to their childrenregarding any media, they are using, it may be in a form of post uploaded on social media, news report, movies or videos on YouTube. Parents can ask following questions:

- What type of message is this?
- What is the intention of including the images and figuresto the message?
- Do they have knowledge about the creator of thecontent, and what is their intention?
- Do they have knowledge either the information is factual or not?
- Why they got attracted towards the message.
- How might their friends or the children of same age group will take this content?
- Are they aware about the type ofthe points of view, ideas, values or lifestyles are being presented or missed in the message or uploaded post?

Role of Teacher:

The role of teachers is very important in educating the students about the media literacy. Teacher can teach media literacy in his/her classroom by using different methods and activities. Teacher can ask the questions regarding the type of social media they are using, the type of content, they usually search, the nature of the message they send or receive and many more. There may be open ended discussions about the media. Teacher can use standardized or non-standardized tools for measuring the knowledge of media literacy of the students.

Benefits of educating Media Literacy to students:

1. Media Literacy helps the students in becoming wise consumers of media. They can judge thesenders of information and responsible producers of the information that they are using.
2. Media literacy keeps the students engagedin bringing the world of media into the classroom that helps the students inconnectingtheir learning with "real life" and validates their media culture as an enriched environment for learning.
3. Media Literacy provides students and teachers a common approach to develop critical thinking that, when internalized, becomes second nature for their life.
4. Media literacy provides an opportunity to the students for integrating all subject areas and creating a common vocabulary that applies across all disciplines.
5. Media Literacy helps the students to meet state standards while, at the same time they use fresh contemporary media content which they love.
6. Media Literacy helps the students in increasing their ability and proficiency to communicate (express) and disseminate their thoughts, ideas and point of views in a wide (and growing) range of print and electronic media forms - and even international venues.
7. The inquiry process of media literacy transforms teaching and learning process and make the teacher free to learn along with students - becoming a " good guide on the side" rather than a "sage on the stage."
8. With the help of media literacy, the students can focus on process skills rather than content knowledge.Students can develop the ability to analyse *any* message in *any* media and in this way,they are empowered for living all their lives in a media-saturated culture.
9. Media Literacy does not only benefit anindividualstudentonly but benefits whole society by providing tools and methods that encourage respectful discourse that give rise to mutual understanding and builds the civilized citizenship skills needed to participate in and contribute to the public debate.

Epilogue:

We can say in succinct that Media Literacy is must for school students. Today students use media for every purpose. Media has become an important part of their life. They should be aware of using media safely. Parents and Teachers can play an important role in teaching media literacy to the students.

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