

## Media and Information Literacy

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Paul G. Zurkowski was the first to introduce the term information literacy in 1974 to describe the techniques and skills necessary for utilizing “a wide range of information tools and primary sources”. It also included the ability to measure information value to “mold information to [meet] needs” and to create solutions to problems.<sup>1-2</sup> Since then, media literacy and information literacy has gained a base in advanced countries. But UNESCO is now promoting the composite concept of media and information literacy (MIL). To promote MIL and MIL research, it has founded the MIL Alliance and the Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue (MILID UniTwin) to enable people to use information critically, ethically and legally in quality decision-making. Other useful initiatives of UNESCO include “MIL MOOC; Media and Information Literacy: Critical-thinking, Creativity, Literacy, Intercultural, Citizenship, Knowledge and Sustainability (MIL CLICKS); MIL Policy and Strategy Guidelines; MIL Curriculum for Teachers; MIL Indicators; MIL Framework; and MIL Week Feature Conference and Youth Agenda Forum. The International Federation of Library Association and Institutions (IFLA) has its programme entitled ‘Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE)’ and developed the MIL Guidelines. IFLA/FAIFE’ programme is committed to ensure freedom of access to information and freedom of expression to empower people to realise their “right to be.” There are many models and standards to promote information literacy and MIL but MIL is not yet effectively imbedded in the developing countries. Hence, to sensitise the stakeholders about the concept and practice of MIL in India, this theme issue of the DESIDOC Journal of Information Technology (DJLIT) has been planned.

The special issue covers twelve research papers written by experts from different fields dealing with MIL and allied areas, including one review paper and one comprehensive bibliography on MIL. Out of 25 papers received, 12 quality papers were selected, including one from Russia and Nigeria.

Out of ten papers, the first three are directly related to MIL. The first paper by Ejike Udensi Igwebuikwe on MIL as a Panacea for National Integration in an Era of Hate Speech in Nigeria examined hate speech threat to national unity and integration. He suggested MIL in promoting national unity

and integration in Nigeria. He has suggested the need for sensitisation among Nigerians on the dangers of hate speech and the remedy provided by MIL to produce citizens who will harmoniously work together to build the country.

Information is necessary for eliminating uncertainty and facilitating decision-making. The quality of decisions depends upon the quality of information available to the stakeholders. But to manage access to quality information, information seekers have to depend upon different sources of information, media, and other information providers. Unfortunately, the commercial media is controlled by corporate tycoons, governments, politicians and various NGOs. In this regard Jagtar Singh and Alton Grizzle suggested e-ARTISTS, an innovative Media and Information Literacy Model for managing access to quality information for facilitating quality decision-making.

MIL is required in all levels of education and more so to research scholars. Therefore, Ramaiah and others studied the awareness about MIL among research scholars of Pondicherry University and presented the results in their paper. MIL provides a serious approach to critically question what they have read, heard, and learned. They found that the majority of the respondents are aware of the term MIL and also showed their interest in workshop-based training on MIL. Designed the required MIL syllabus for research scholars and suggested UGC to take necessary steps in implementing in the universities.

Next three papers addressed on fake news. In that first paper, Sheikh Shueb and others attempted to mapping fakeness through scholarly output lenses. They have looked into the scholarly publications that appeared on “Fake News” in Web of Science, the world’s top indexing/abstracting database. The study reveals that the research on “Fake News” is mainly published as “articles” in English and also their citations score shows a steady increase. The highest number of articles are published from the U.S.A. and U.S.A., England, and Germany have the highest collaboration links with other countries. Arizona State University published the highest number of articles and “Pennycook G” was the most productive author.

Jyotshna Sahoo and others analysed selected Library and Information Science journals to quantify the research on Fake News. These researchers used SCOPUS database to study the quantitative and qualitative assessment of published research

on fake news research. The quantitative analysis reveals that many research works (N:133) have been published in 52 academic journals and received 628 citations. The research works covered a wide range of topics, including social media and fake news, information literacy and fake news, the role of libraries and librarians in fake news, detecting and combating fake news, theories, models, and frameworks, as well as archiving, preservation of fake news.

Raj Kishore and Neha Pandey studied the wild spread of disinformation on Coronavirus (COVID-19) based on content analysis of news published on fact-checking sites in India. This paper focuses on the spread of disinformation on coronavirus and creating the larger phenomena of information disorder. They have used both quantitative content analysis and qualitative discourse analysis methods followed by in-depth interviews for fact-finding from media professionals, academicians, and psychologists to understand the purpose of disinformation and its impact on society. They found that fact-checking is a crucial method to identify fake/ misleading information and journalists, fact-checkers, the Government, and citizens are made responsible for checking the fake news.

The third set of four papers covers allied areas to MIL. Veronica Yarnykh studied media technologies in the corporate model of media education in a Russian perspective. The modern world has a significant impact on the development of the corporate education system, including the development of digital education tools, transmedia literacy, and generation Y and Z in the labour market. The corporate model of media education includes microlearning, mobile education, project management skills, etc. All these competencies could strengthen the company's competitive advantages in the corporate sector's new media and informational reality.

Students are the major chunk of the population who access information through different media platforms for various purposes and decide accordingly. The paper by Gopal Datt and others studied the student's perception about the use of media platforms. They found that many media platforms are not popular among students compared to YouTube, a highly accessible and reliable media platform.

The growing misuse of social media calls for an urgent move towards greater legal regulation to control the menace of fake news, hate speech and disinformation among democracies. Ravi Shankar and Tabrez Ahmad studied the Information Technology Laws and portrayed the evolution and impact of social media regulation in India. Information Technology Rules, 2021 fundamentally changed the regulation of online content in India. The paper maps the evolution of laws governing online content in India based on existing laws, regulations, policies, research papers, media reports, articles. They found a case of overreaching provisions that dilute free speech and privacy.

The final paper is a scientometric analysis of the global research output of media literacy based on the Web of Science

database during 1989-2020 by Vishal D. Bapte. Most of the articles were published during 2017-2020 with multiple co-authorship. Korea, South Africa and Norway showed the highest multiple collaboration ratio however, in terms of citations received USA, United Kingdom and Australia are the leading countries.

Nisha and Rekha Rani reviewed the literature on Information Literacy (IL) and gave an overview of the research conducted in India and abroad on various aspects of IL by analysing 104 studies. They indicated the importance of libraries in imparting IL and indicated that literacy training must be started at the school level and should be included in their curricula. IL certainly reduces the digital divide gap among the information-rich and information-poor citizens. In this regard, many initiatives have been started in India and abroad to bridge this gap and develop different standards and IL models for various information users.

Information literacy emphasises to the access, evaluation and use of information. Media literacy emphasises the ability to understand, evaluate and use media as a leading source and producer of information. Thus, UNESCO considered information literacy and media literacy together as MIL, which is essential to empower people with critical knowledge about media functions, information systems, and their content. Finally, Ramaiah and Rao compiled a comprehensive bibliography covering all MIL areas comprising information literacy and media literacy, from its origin to the end of February 2021 collected literature from all sources, including online indexing, full-text and digital theses and dissertations databases. This bibliography primarily covers journal articles, books, book chapters, conference proceedings, papers published in conference proceedings, reports, book reviews, and Ph.D. Theses on media and information literacy.

"The quest for profit by the corporate tycoons, lust for power by politicians, and urge for violence by criminals have made the need for MIL more compelling. Only MIL can change misplaced thinking of these derailed segments of society, and empower the 'have nots' to counter discretion, discrimination and injustice, disinformation, misinformation, mal-information and fake news across frontiers."<sup>3</sup> Basically, MIL is a human right of citizens to improve the quality of their life and work and counter-extremism and facilitate good governance. MIL is also necessary to promote intercultural and inter-religious dialogue to ensure peaceful co-existence and sustainable development in countries like India. In fact, to obtain this vision, MIL must be an integral part of national policies and promoted as the core of educational programmes across frontiers. "IL models and the e-ARTIST MIL Model are the need of the hour to enhance awareness of the 'have nots' about their rights and duties...to ensure that no one is left behind in realizing one's personal, occupational, education and social goals. In fact, the biggest human right on earth is the 'right to be' and the biggest contribution of MIL and the eARTISTS MIL Model is to liberate people from all types of boundaries and exclusion and the colonisation of their minds<sup>37</sup>". MIL must promote critical thinking, independent learning, attention management, socio-emotional intelligence, access

management and information analysis and evaluation skills to ensure quality decision making.”<sup>3</sup> “MIL and the e-ARTISTS MIL Model will contribute to what Grizzle and Hamada<sup>4</sup> called as Media and Information Literacy Expansion (MIL<sup>x</sup>), theory of change that means promoting MIL for all through designing MIL for individuals, groups and institutions concurrently”. We hope this theme issue of the DJLIT would profoundly sensitise the stakeholders about the need for MIL in India and other countries.

## REFERENCES

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